



Thailand

Education for All 2015 National Review

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Thailand

EFA 2015 Review



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Executive Summary

Thailand's EFA 2015 Review has been prepared to follow up and evaluate the country's progress in achieving the six goals of Education for All that were set and agreed to by the signatories of the 1990 Declaration on Education for All. A brief description of the goals, which were to be realised by 2015, are: Goal 1 Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education; Goal 2 Ensuring that all children have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality; Goal 3 Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs; Goal 4 Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy; Goal 5 Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieving gender equality in education; Goal 6 Improving all aspects of the quality of education.

There is an urgent need to improve and strengthen the country's human resources as an important tool for economic and social development, and to produce skilled and accomplished manpower to respond to domestic and global changes taking place. In the management of education to realize these national aims, Thailand has also sought to achieve the specific goals of Education for All by the 2015 time-frame. The progress made thus far in attaining each of these goals is described in this report.

Goal 1 Expanding and Improving Childhood Care and Education

To support and encourage the establishment and expansion of quality programs in early childhood education, in 2008, the Thai government appointed a National Committee on Early Childhood Development, chaired by the Prime Minister, and announced a national policy for early childhood development to implement urgent measures for overall development of young children from birth to entry into the first grade. In addition, a National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development in accordance with the Government Policy 2012-2016 was formulated to ensure that all relevant agencies worked together in meeting objectives in the development of young children.

An evaluation of the development of young children has been designed, consistent with desired standards and attributes as specified in the 2003 Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, which stresses readiness as well as appropriate physical, emotional, social and intellectual development commensurate with age. In addition, a set of national standards for early childcare centers was formulated in 2011, and a program has been launched to identify and recognize model child care centers in each district that excel in management, curriculum development, arrangement of facilities and learning resources, and provision of services.

Goal 2: Expansion of the Provision of Basic Education

The Ministry of Education and other related agencies have worked to provide basic education for all and to expand opportunities to access quality education services for every group, including the physically and mentally disabled, the disadvantaged, the impoverished, those with learning disorders, as well as members of ethnic minority groups. To lessen the burden for families of limited means, the government has allocated financial resources to support the costs of this education at no charge to the learners, for twelve years, from kindergarten through the final year of basic education. These efforts have resulted in most Thai children being enrolled in basic and vocational education programs.

Goal 3: Provision of Opportunities for Learning and Developing Life Skills for Young People and Adults

Thailand has formulated strategies to develop a society of lifelong learning through the development of continuous learning at each stage of life, with a focus on manpower needs.

The core content of the Basic Education Curriculum of 2008 includes an emphasis on the acquisition of life skills, and the 2008 Basic Education Curriculum of the non-formal stream calls for the development of income-generating capability and occupational strengthening commensurate with the capacities of the learner, the community, and the society. In 2012 a set of standards for non-formal and informal education were defined to ensure quality.

Vocational education is being strengthened as a mechanism for occupation and manpower development. A number of agencies are joining in the efforts of the Ministry of Education through their own programs. For example, the Department of Corrections organizes short-term training programs in various occupational and skill areas, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is establishing senior citizen centers that offer programs to assist older people in acquiring skills to augment their incomes and advice and knowledge to improve their quality of life.

Goal 4 Raising the Level of Adult Literacy

Thailand has a policy to strengthen the ability of all Thais to read, write, and have a basic ability in numeracy, and a knowledge of science and technology, that is applicable and useful to them in their daily lives, and that enables them to solve problems and meet their needs and interests. In addition, survey tools have been developed to more accurately identify and assess the level of literacy of those of working age (15-59) in every area of the country to update information on literacy levels of the population and prepare a database linking local and central data.

Goal 5 Ensuring Gender Equality in Education

Gender equality is an important consideration in Thai education as well as in Thai society overall, and the elimination of disparities in rights and opportunities between males and females is given attention through legal measures, and through revision of laws and regulations to ensure gender equality. Training programs for government officials interject gender considerations and strengthening the role of women in various capacities. The gathering of statistics for databases and reports now provides a gender category to facilitate observations and reflect problems relating to the status of women, as well as to point to progress made in the development of women.

Curriculum and learning content is being revised to correspond to learner interests and capabilities taking into account individual and gender-based differences. Strategies to be implemented during 2013 to 2016 to develop the potential and capabilities of women in education establishments are underway.

Goal 6: Improvement in the Quality of Education

A number of policies are being policy implemented to bring about improvements in the quality of education. Reform of the learning system of Thai society to raise quality to international standards and the current world requirements is considered an urgent task that must be accomplished through improvements in the teaching-learning processes to effect critical thinking, problem solving, and independent learning. Learner achievement must be improved, and teachers must possess capabilities, skills, and knowledge to organize teaching that is consistent with the needs for manpower. Vocational education is being emphasized to produce skilled individuals in the quantity and quality required for the economic development of the country. To bring this about, a policy has been formulated to increase enrollment in the vocational stream at a ratio of 60:40 over the general stream.

Improvement in teacher preparation is also a priority, to raise quality to an international standard, and to remedy the shortage of teachers in certain disciplines and regions of the country. Improvement in the quality of small schools is a focus as is the strengthening well-qualified schools to enable them to reach international standards.

Post-2015 Focus for Thai Education

1. Create a quality learning society; ensure that the citizenry are prepared in skills and knowledge to respond to the challenges of change through teaching-learning that is interdisciplinary in nature, combining knowledge in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to apply in problem solving, in research, and in innovation to meet future needs.
2. Continue the focus on quality improvement of education through curriculum reform and reform of teaching-learning processes. Develop systematic thinking in the learners, while at the same time instill strong moral and ethical values and a sense of patriotism and loyalty toward the country and its institutions. Continue to improve the quality of schools and education establishments of every type and at every level.
3. Improve vocational education to bring the instructional system more in line with the needs for manpower, both in quality and quantity, and develop individuals with both mid-level and high level skills to meet the needs of the economy. Encourage research and development for national progress.
4. Reform of teacher education and training to improve quality and to attract qualified individuals into the profession
5. Utilize information and communications technology to expand access to and opportunities for education; for example, develop 'Cyber Homes' so that knowledge can be sent directly to learners *via* high-speed Internet; expand educational television and radio; develop effective learning through mobile devices; and expand 'smart classroom' technologies to more schools to enable learners to enter the world of knowledge wherever they are.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The Impact of Economic and Social Conditions on Thai Education

Thailand is facing dramatic changes, domestically and in the international arena, that are having impact, both positive and negative, on the national development. Some of these changes result from new global rules and covenants in a number of areas that are requiring countries to adapt and prepare for what is to come. In addition, the formation of regional and global economic partnerships among countries, particularly the upcoming entrance of Thailand into the ASEAN Community, is resulting in structural transformation of production, from labor-intensive to knowledge - and technology - based production and national development.

In addition, Thailand is entering a new era of slow population growth and probable eventual decline, along with an expanding aging population. The changing population structure means that replacing skilled manpower for industry and national development ensuring a good quality of life for senior citizens will become critical issues.

These changes require that Thailand must rapidly develop its human resources to compete successfully in the global society of the 21st Century, through the creation of knowledge, skills and expertise, along with technological development to replace manpower shortages and to better respond to the lives and livelihoods of the population and to help to drive the economic and social development of the country.

The country is thus accelerating the readiness of its population to enable appropriate adaptation to the impacts of change and to ensure balanced national development and administration that adapts to change with **‘people-centered development’**. This effort requires a reform of the education system at every level that inter-links the formal, non-formal, and informal streams with quality learning processes that are appropriate to the age and developmental stages of learners from pre-school through completion of basic education. Measures are being implemented to raise quality to international standards while maintaining the Thai cultural identity and values. Emphasis is on raising learner achievement at every level and instilling a sense of citizenship and love of country, and on ensuring that the education programs in the higher education and vocational education levels are consistent with manpower needs, both in quality and quantity, and include opportunities to gain experience while still studying.

2. Education Development in Thailand

A great deal of attention has been given to the development and expansion of quality education in Thailand to enable access by all its people to diverse sources of learning and knowledge consistent with the interests of the learners, and to promote lifelong learning in the society, as stipulated in the Thai Constitution of 2007, the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) as well as in the Eleventh National Education Development Plan of the Ministry of Education (2012-2016), which calls for continual development to create a society of lifelong learning, to foster acquisition of skills and creative thinking to prepare for a variety of careers consistent with future employment trends, and to ensure the country’s competitiveness in the global arena.

Education development has been consistent with the Constitution, the national policies, and the national economic and social development plans of every government, with a focus on the development of quality, on access to and expansion of opportunities for education, and on equity and fairness for all groups within the society, with inter-linking reform of the entire education system to effect quality on par with international standards.

In 2012, the government declared education improvement a **‘national priority’** and called for joint efforts to elevate the quality of education by 2015, with the important goals of developing in the learners the ability to think, analyze, and learn independently, and to exhibit

the desired qualities and necessary skills required for the 21st century so as to drive national development and raise competitiveness, with every sector of society participating in the improvement of the country's education system.

In 2014 Thailand is focusing on six major reform issues: implementing teacher reform; increasing and expanding access, equity, and opportunity to education; reforming school administration; strengthening competitiveness through improved skill development; improving the teaching-learning processes; setting a strong information and communication technology system for education.

3. Management of Education for All

Thailand has long focused on providing a quality education to all members of the society. In 1990 the country joined in signing the World Declaration on Education for All at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Pattaya. The Declaration stipulates that education is a basic human right and that governments must manage education so that all have access to and equal opportunity for quality education through at least the primary level. Subsequently, in 2000, UNESCO requested that member countries evaluate their educational progress during the previous decade and report to the World Education Forum held in Dakar to set a frame-work for implementing the commitment to education for all, and requested that each country develop a strategic national plan from 2003 through 2015 consistent with the Dakar Framework for Action. In 2005, a Cabinet resolution expanded opportunities for foreign workers and their children living in Thailand to access education programs of every type and level, in public and private institutions, with the issuance of academic credentials upon completion.

In 2011 Thailand hosted the Tenth Meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA and reported on the country's progress in providing opportunities for quality education, giving examples of projects initiated that participating countries might study and adapt for use in their own programs, such as: Learning Project for Disadvantaged Children; financial support of quality education from kindergarten through the basic education level; and Community Learning Centers. Projects such as these are consistent with the country's commitment to the World Declaration of Education for All, to ensure that all children have equal access to quality education, with the country providing free basic education through the 12th grade to all, including impoverished, disabled or mentally handicapped individuals, or those in difficult circumstances.

4. Measures Taken in Implementing the Specific Goals to Meet the Aim of Education for All

Goal 1: Provision of Early Childhood Care and Education

Thailand has expanded programs that provide knowledge regarding the education and care of young children from before birth through infancy to ensure effective quality care of both mother and child, and that support age-appropriate education and development from pre-school age, as well as provide knowledge to parents and family members. Thailand has also set a policy to ensure that all children have the opportunity to study from kindergarten through high school at no cost, and is accelerating implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development in accordance with the Government Policy 2012-2016, so that all pre-school children have the opportunities for continual quality development consistent with their age.

Close attention has been given to the elimination of constraints in early childhood care and education reported in Thailand's Mid-Decade Assessment on Education for All (2000-2005), which found that education at this level lacked coordination and integration with the education system as a whole. In 2008 the Cabinet established **the National Committee on Early Childhood Development**, with the Prime Minister serves as Chairperson, to improve the quality of early childhood care and education, with an emphasis on continued

improvement in and assessment of quality of services. A project was implemented to establish a 'Model Early Childhood Center' in every *amphur* (district) to demonstrate quality facilities and services and to serve as a learning center to coordinate with other facilities and provide academic support and knowledge relating to child development. Assessment of these model centers during 2007-2013 found that the majority were operating at an 'excellent' level, particularly in the organization of facilities and learning resources. Programs to train teachers and teacher assistants provide knowledge and understanding of the development stages of young children from birth through 5 years of age and have improved the quality of instruction and care.

Goal 2: Provision of Universal Basic Education

Thailand's policy is to create and expand education opportunities, taking into consideration the need for equity and fairness for every group within the society, including the poor, the disadvantaged, and those with physical and learning disabilities, as well as minority groups, to respond to the second goal in the provision of education for all. The country is now focusing on expanding compulsory education from 6 years to 9 years (from completion of Primary 6 to completion of Secondary 3), which has resulted in an increase of students continuing on to secondary education during 2004 - 2011. To this end, the government enacted the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999), which requires parents to send their children to secondary school after completion of Primary 6.

While the expansion of education opportunities for all groups in the society has resulted in a greater number of Thai children gaining access to learning, Thailand's EFA Mid-Decade Assessment indicates that some groups are still unable to access these opportunities, including children of ethnic minorities, stateless children or those without household registration documentation, and some disabled and disadvantaged children. The government is working to include those groups in the education opportunities available, and to ensure equality and equity for all. The goals are to provide quality education appropriate to age and developmental stage from pre-school through basic education. A number of agencies have been integrating efforts to implement the measures stipulated in the Eleventh Education Development Plan of the Ministry of Education (2012-2016). A positive outcome has been the increase in the average number of years of education of the population between 16 and 69 years of age, from 5.3 years in 1986 to 8.3 years in 2010¹. And in the Four Year Action Plan of the Ministry of Education (2013-2016), the goal is to raise this number to 9.7 years. Also, during the past five years, the dropout rate has decreased steadily, perhaps as a result of the policy to provide cost-free schooling from kindergarten through basic education.

Goal 3: Provision of Opportunities for Learning and Life Skills for Young People and Adults

The government has emphasized learning and literacy and the development of life skills among the young through the promotion of lifelong learning activities, including the development of education programs for occupational and career development, to provide skills and expertise corresponding to local conditions and needs, and to develop life skills that respond to the needs of the community, including the provision of basic knowledge and education consistent with the lifestyles of those in highland communities. Additional activities such as literacy promotion and non-formal education programs enable the disadvantaged, illiterate children, and the handicapped to participate in occupational and career development programs.

In 2008 a core curriculum for basic education was introduced that set the acquisition and development of life skills as an important competency for all learners, particularly in knowledge, emotions and reasoning capacity, along with good interpersonal skills. In the same year, a similar curriculum was introduced in the non-formal basic education

¹ 2014 Education Action Plan, Office of Basic Education Commission, Year 2014

stream, focusing on the development of life skills to generate a secure livelihood and income level consistent with the capabilities of the learner. Subsequently, the number of hours in the non-formal basic education curriculum devoted to activities aimed at improving the quality of life was increased from 100 to 200 hours, with emphasis placed on practical application of the information learned, particularly the skills of reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking and analysis, communication and creativity, to ensure that learners are acquiring requisite skills to enable them to adapt to change and to live successfully in the 21st Century.

Goal 4: Raising the Level of Literacy in Youth and Adults

Learning and literacy among young people and adults is a major concern of the government; campaigns are integrated with programs in the formal, non-formal and informal education systems, and a policy has been set to promote reading and to increase the percentage of literacy among the Thai people. Community centers serve as venues where non-formal and informal education activities are organized to provide opportunities for learning to read and write. These activities have shown success, enabling the country to achieve its fourth goal; the percentage of illiteracy has been reduced. 81.6% of Thais six years of age and older are able to read and write, with the male population showing a slightly higher percentage (82.8% of males, 80.8% of females)². This is a 10% increase over the findings in 2001 for both males and females. In 2013, the capital city of Bangkok was designated ‘World Book Capital’ by UNESCO, which reflects the country’s efforts in this area.

Strategies and measures for strengthening lifelong learning among senior citizens are included in the Second National Plan on the Elderly (2002-2021), focusing on enabling seniors to receive lifelong educational services systematically and continuously, not only through the formal stream, but also through the non-formal and informal streams, as well as through diverse modes of training, and other means of access to information and learning. In 2014 a project has been introduced that makes a serious effort to eliminate illiteracy in Thai society. In this connection, surveys are being conducted to derive an accurate picture of literacy levels of the population, and to determine the needs for and interests in knowledge and learning activities in every area of the country.

Goal 5: Ensuring Gender Equality in Education

Through its Education Act of 1999 as well as its Compulsory Education Act of 2002, the Thai government expanded opportunities for both males and females to have equal access to formal continuing, and informal education programs. The Eleventh Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) emphasizes the commitment to equal opportunity for girls and boys and the current development of curricula for both girls and boys demonstrates the country’s determination to eliminate sexual inequality in education, and has resulted in achieving its goals.

A draft resolution by the Cabinet proposes strategies in 2013-2016 to improve the capacity and potential of young women in educational institutions at all levels, from kindergarten through higher education, to serve as a guideline for public and private sector agencies dealing with the role of women and their development. A project is being implemented to gather statistics and create databases that separate the genders for ease of data analysis and to provide perspectives that may accurately reflect gender-related issues as well as to indicate progress being made toward gender equality.

Goal 6: Improvement in the Quality of the Education System

Improving the quality of education to enable learners to think, analyze, solve problems, and to learn independently and continually has been the focus of education reform that links curriculum and learning to respond to change consistent with modern learning approaches, along with teacher development and improvement in evaluation and testing procedures as

² The 2013 Survey on Reading Population, National Statistical Office of Thailand, April 2557.

well as development of the learners. Education improvement has been declared a national priority, with 2013 designated as the initiation of a focus on joint efforts among all sectors of society to drive improvements in education.

In addition, emphasis has been placed on improving the academic standards and quality of facilities of educational institutions of every level and type. Smaller schools are being introduced to mixed-grade classroom teaching methods; budgets are being provided to support purchase of teaching aids, for new buildings, and for setting up operations in sections of larger schools with available space. School improvement is being undertaken in co-operation with stronger schools in 'Partner School' arrangements, and attention is being given to strengthening the teaching of mathematics, science and technology through research, curriculum and instructional material development, modern teaching-learning processes, as well as improved testing and evaluation techniques. At the tertiary and vocational education level, attention is being given to producing graduates with knowledge and skills consistent with manpower needs, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The measures being undertaken in all areas of its education system demonstrate Thailand's commitment to improving the quality of, accessibility to, and equity in education at all levels, of all types, for a variety of purposes, for everyone in the society.

Chapter 2

Tracking Progress in the Improvement of Education in Thailand

Since becoming a signatory of the World Declaration of Education for All in 1990, Thailand has given a great deal of attention to education and is committed to achieving the targets of the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000, which has the following goals to be reached by 2015:

1. expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs;
4. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Herewith is the progress that Thailand has made toward these goals:

Goal 1: Early Childhood Care and Education

The Thai government is committed to achieving the goal of providing early childhood care and education through imparting knowledge to the populace regarding proper pre-natal care, and offering quality education programs appropriate to age and stage of development from pre-school through basic education, with the awareness that the development of a quality citizenry must begin at an early age with family at the core.

1. Early Childhood Care and Education

UNESCO defines 'early childhood' as the period from birth through eight years of age, and 'Early Childhood Care and Education is the scope, processes, and mechanisms for development during the early years of life, including provision for education, attention to physical, social, and emotional growth, and stimulation of intellectual development, hygiene and nutrition. In the development of every child, the participation of family and the community are essential³.

In Thailand's Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007-2016, early childhood is described as the period from birth to those under age six, while the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Graders) in Accordance with the Government Policy 2012 - 2016, defines early childhood as children from birth up to entry into first grade, covering all children, including disadvantaged and handicapped children as well as foreign children living in Thailand.

Arrangements for early childhood are divided into two periods: the period for children under three years of age and the period for children from three to five years of age. No fewer than nine ministries and no fewer than 30 agencies and organizations are involved, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Development

³ Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All : Early Childhood Care and Education, Published by UNESCO Bangkok, UNICEF EAPRO and UNICEF ROSA, 2012

and Human Security, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labor, the Office of the Prime Minister (the National Police Office), the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Private foundations include the Children's Foundation, the Foundation for Slum Child Care, Books for Children Foundation, the Duang Prateep Foundation, the Holt Saha Thai Foundation, etc.

2. *Challenges and Issues in Early Childhood Care and Education*

Globalization and the influx of external cultural influences have had a marked impact on the Thai way of life at the family, community, and national levels in a number of ways:

- Thai children have a slower pace of development and lower intelligence than international standards⁴, which may result from a lack of parental attention and care. Because parents have no time to be with their children, they enter them early on into the education system, where the teachers become the care givers, or send them to nurseries that may be below standard, which has a negative impact on the child's development.

- **Problems in Child Care**

- Parents of children care for at home from birth to five years of age often lack good parenting skills and do not spend adequate time with their children.

- Many early childhood development centers are of inferior quality, with regard to both management and organization, including standards of care, facilities, teachers and assistants, and there is a lack of standards for effective and continuous quality control.

- **Problems of Child Development**

- There is a lack of understanding of the philosophy of early childhood development and a lack of knowledge and understanding about children's rights and human rights in general.

- There is a lack of a holistic approach to early childhood development and effective integration with health, education, security, and social welfare matters.

- There is a lack of coordination among the many agencies providing development activities, services, and information relating to early childhood care and in giving information and training to parents.

3. *Implementation of Measures to Provide for Early Childhood Care and Education*

Because of the problems and challenges involving the implementation of early childhood care and education, both in the overall development of young children in all aspects and in the integration of effective holistic growth, it is essential that there be improvement in the approaches to education and care of young children so as to produce sound, moral, and ethical individuals who are able to adapt effectively in society. In this effort, Thailand has undertaken a number of measures:

3.1 Actions taken to Improve Early Childhood Care and Education in Thailand

Implementation of the Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007-2016 has resulted in children from three to those under age six years having opportunities to attend pre-school education programs, with the family as the main unit and all sectors of society participating in care and development of the children to ensure that activities are age-appropriate and consistent with the local conditions. The ministries of Education, Public Health, Interior, and other ministries and agencies have been charged with implementing the policy.

A research project was undertaken by Suan Dusit Rajabhat University in 2012 to monitor and evaluate the first phase of the policy implementation from 2007-2011. The study found that a number of agencies had become involved in implementing the policy through a variety of important programs and projects, including, among others, a National Child Care Center Standards Project, Iodine and Children Project, Breastfeeding Promotion Project,

⁴Strategies, Indicators, and Guidelines in Data Collection, Ministry of Public Health for FY2014

Instructional Materials Improvement Project, a Project to Produce Instructional Materials in Science, Mathematics, and Technology, Little Science House Project, Dental Health Project, a Royally initiated Mother and Child Health Project for Remote Areas, Agriculture for Lunches and Supplemental Meals Project, Milk for Small Children Project.

3.2. Sector Integration and Cooperation to Effect Linkages

An evaluation study of the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment in Thailand in 2000-2005 found that the many agencies (8 ministries and organizations) arranging programs for children from birth to five years of age and providing knowledge and information for parents and guardians in the rearing and training of children were not able to reinforce the family unit sufficiently in children's development in terms both of quality and number of family units. The lack of coordination and unity in policies and direction in implementing education programs to correct the deficiencies mentioned earlier prompted the Cabinet in 2008 to appoint a National Committee on Early Childhood Development, with the Prime Minister as Chair, along with a sub-committee to move forward the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development. Subsequently, a National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development was set to ensure that all children from birth through entry into first grade receive continuing quality and age-appropriate learning and development activities. The National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Graders) in Accordance with the Government Policy 2012 – 2016 was introduced to encourage agencies in all sectors to work together to implement activities for the development of young children and to ensure that the goal for early childhood care and education is reached by the year 2016, with the responsible agencies and their missions and activities shown in the table below.

Table 1 Implementing Early Childhood Care and Education

Agency	Mission and Activities
Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Education Council serves as Secretariat to the National Commission for Early Childhood Development and is responsible for drafting and ensuring implementation of the National Policy and Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development. • The Office of the Basic Education Commission is responsible for children aged 4 to 5 years in schools under the supervision of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. Instruction follows the Early Childhood Education Curriculum of 2003, which emphasizes setting the foundations for children from birth through age 5 through guidance and care, strengthening learning processes, and developing the potential of each child, with love, generosity, and understanding within the context of society and culture, to ensure that each child becomes a whole person. Announcement of the new Early Childhood Education Curriculum is pending. • The Office of the Private Education Commission is responsible for children aged 3 to 5 years in private education institutions.
Ministry of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes good health in people of every age through the concept of effective 'person development' at each stage of life on a continual basis, starting from before birth, through early childhood, into school age, working age, and through the golden age of the elderly • Develops plans for quality development of children in early childhood and women through participation of the family, the community, and the school to improve health for mothers and children, their intelligence (IQ), emotional maturity (EQ) and social intelligence (SQ). • Ensures quality in the provision of overall health services for women and children • Integrates and coordinates overall development plans for women and children among public, private, and local sectors

Agency	Mission and Activities
Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced the National Plan for the Development of Children and Young People (2012-2016) to ensure their security, strength, well-being and creativity through four strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strengthen the capacity of children and young people to manage their lives; - encourage and support children who require protection and children with special needs; - support and strengthen participation by network partners in the development of children and young people; - improve the management system for protection and development of children and youth. • Develops standards, mechanisms and innovations for promoting safety and rights protection for infants and children from birth to entry into first grade. All children in Thailand are to be assured of safety and protection of rights and a quality upbringing overall with an absence of violence. • Provides essential knowledge and understanding to parents and guardians relating to the upbringing of children in their early years; arranges activities to promote learning experiences for children in disadvantaged communities • Provides private child care centers with supplemental foods and instructional materials in child development • Provides services to children in welfare centers and apparatus for children from birth through 6 years of age who have been abandoned, orphaned, or are poorly treated or impoverished • Improves the conditions in and raises the standards of private child care centers
Ministry of Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes child development centers for small children aged 3 to 5 years • Initiates useful projects such as 'Healthy Child Clinics', 'Welcoming the Newborn' <i>etc.</i>
Ministry of Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements projects to improve the quality of life of workers and projects for their young children
Ministry of Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes childcare centers in industrial parks • Oversees and regulates production in iodized salt and fish soy industries
Royal Thai Police, Border Patrol Police Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements school lunch farm programs and supplemental snacks and milk for young children in schools administered by the Border Patrol Police in remote border areas • Operates a project for promoting nutrition and health for mothers and children.
Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertakes activities to enhance knowledge and capability and instill strong moral and ethical values of volunteers in child care centers and pre-schools under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration • Improves physical conditions in pre-school centers and raise standards in centers to respond to needs.
Ministry of Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes programs that instill moral and cultural values for young children through participation in Buddhist-related activities
Private Sector Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up nurseries and child care centers along with rooms for breastfeeding infants and changing diapers in the workplace for the welfare of workers with young children.

Source: Bureau of International Cooperation, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Year 2014

Table 2: Enrollment in Pre-primary Programs in Formal and Non-formal Education Schools during AY2009-2012

Academic Year	Children aged 2-5 years	Number and Percentage of Enrollments		
		Total % (number)	Enrollment in Formal Education Institutions % and (number)	Enrollment in Non-Formal Education Institutions % and (number)
2012	3,076,742	88.12 (2,711,236)	58.47 (1,799,125)	29.64 (912,111)
2011	3,131,218	87.04 (2,725,696)	57.88 (1,812,538)	29.13 (912,158)
2010	3,156,976	86.26 (2,723,397)	57.37 (1,811,203)	28.89 (912,194)
2009	3,187,298	82.91 (2,642,698)	55.84 (1,780,074)	27.06 (862,624)

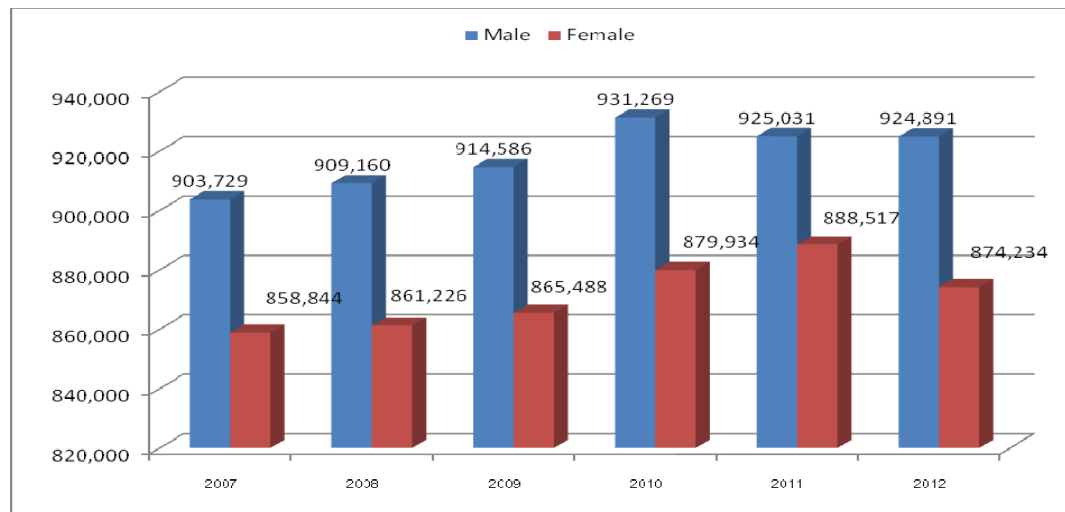
Source: Bureau of Information and Communication Technology, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thailand Year 2009-2012

Table 3 Students in the Formal School System as a Percentage of School-age Population at Pre-primary education (3-5 year olds): AY 2007-2012

Year	Number of Students			School-age population	Students as a Percentage of School-age Population	Students as a Percentage of total students
	Total	Male	Female			
2007	1,758,573	903,729	858,844	2,383,662	73.78	12.33
2008	1,770,386	909,160	861,226	2,391,976	74.01	12.54
2009	1,780,074	914,586	865,488	2,394,796	74.33	12.89
2010	1,811,203	931,269	879,934	2,382,100	76.03	13.41
2011	1,812,538	925,031	888,517	2,361,448	76.80	13.55
2012	1,799,125	924,891	874,234	2,333,110	77.11	13.48

Source : 2007-2012 Educational Statistics in Brief, Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

Chart 1 Number of Pre-Primary Students in the Formal School System (3-5 year olds): AY 2007- 2012



Source 2007-2012 Educational Statistics in Brief, Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thailand

Table 4 Number of Classrooms and Students at Pre-primary Level in the Formal System by Jurisdiction and Grade : Academic Year 2012

Organization	Total		Kindergarten 1		Kindergarten 2	
	Classrooms	Total	Classrooms	Total	Classrooms	Total
Ministry of Education	85,715	1,598,672	7,419	198,207	38,076	700,372
1.The Office of Private Education Commission	23,642	616,310	7,193	198,207	7,484	212,576
2.The Office of Basic Education Commission	61,895	978,145	205	3,005	30,520	486,822
3.The Office of Higher Education Commission	174	4,217	21	1,636	72	974
Others	7,007	200,453	1,859	50,446	2,856	80,638
4.Ministry of Interior	4,753	138,331	1,859	50,446	2,856	80,638
5.Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	3	62	1	19	1	21
6. Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	2,005	56,009	-	-	999	27,439
7.Royal Thai Police	246	6,051	-	-	-	-

Source 2012 Education Statistics in Brief, Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

Table 5 Number of Learning and Child Care/Development Centers, and Number of Students and Percentage of Students at Pre-elementary Level in Non-formal School System by Jurisdiction: Academic Year 2011-2012

Organization	Year 2011 Number			Year 2012 Number		
	Learning and Child Care/ Development Centers	Students	%	Learning and Child Care/ Development Centers	Students	%
Total	19,748	912,158	100	19,780	912,111	100
1. Ministry of Interior	19,718	911,184	99.89	19,718	911,143	99.89
2. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	8	247	0.03	36	224	0.02
3. Royal Thai Police	22	727	0.08	26	744	0.08

Source 2011-2012 Education Statistics, Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

3.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Office of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education has constructed an evaluation tool to measure the developmental status of young children that is consistent with desired development traits as set out in the Curriculum for Early Childhood (2003). The aim of early childhood education focuses on readiness for learning and overall age-appropriate development incorporating physical, emotional, social, and intellectual attributes. The results of the evaluation are given in Table 6

Table 6: Results of Evaluation of Development of Children in Kindergarten 2

Development Traits	Evaluation of Children's Development					
	AY2005			AY 2008		
	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Physical	69.65	30.31	0.04	71.67	28.30	0.03
Emotional	90.53	9.41	0.05	93.86	6.11	0.03
Socialization	97.98	2.02	0.00	98.00	1.99	0.01
Intelligence	52.67	46.02	1.32	59.17	39.92	0.91

Development Traits	Evaluation of Children's Development					
	AY2010			AY 2012		
	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Physical	75.23	24.73	0.04	75.15	24.81	0.04
Emotional	92.66	7.33	0.01	95.84	4.15	0.02
Socialization	98.97	1.02	0.01	99.44	0.56	-
Intelligence	65.53	33.95	0.51	73.88	25.88	0.24

Source: Office of Basic Education, the Ministry of Education, Thailand, Year 2014

The evaluation compared young children completing Kindergarten 2 in the academic years 2005, 2008, 2010, and 2012 and found that the developmental growth in all four areas of investigation (physical, emotional, socialization, and intelligence) increased each year as a result of the Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age group) 2007-2016 and the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Graders)) in accordance with the Government Policy 2012 -2016.

Table 7 Summary of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Action Plan in Accordance with the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (2012 - 2016) in 2013²

Strategy 1	All children receive essential services in order to develop their full potential through 92 projects: for example, projects aimed at improving the management of schools offering courses for pre-school children; projects to promote the organizing of experiences to enable disadvantaged young highland children to develop their potential; projects to improve teaching-learning activities in private schools; projects to provide knowledge and information about early childhood; projects to support hospitals providing pre-natal and family care; sub-district, or <i>tambon</i> , projects to promote breastfeeding, <i>etc.</i>
Strategy 2	The provision of iodine to children in early childhood is supported in 26 projects, including control and prevention of iodine deficiency in 2013; integration of efforts to prevent iodine deficiency; careful supervision of quality of iodized household salt; management and strengthening of network partners; public communications regarding products containing salt and consumer behavior; <i>etc.</i>
Strategy 3	Provision of training programs for effective child-rearing is the aim of 68 projects: for example, creating overall equality in provision of health care for women and children; promoting women's overall health during pregnancy; encouraging breastfeeding; supporting community child care centers to foster early childhood development of young children, <i>etc.</i>
Strategy 4	Establishment of mechanisms to effect development of children in early childhood is undertaken through 10 projects, including: research and studies to follow up and monitor the status of development in young children in remote areas through continuing studies, research and development projects to improve models of learning for young children in remote areas; studies to analyze proportional height, intelligence, and general health, <i>etc.</i>

Source: Action Plan in accordance with the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Graders) in Accordance with the Government Policy Year 2012 - 2016

3.4 Setting Standard for Early Childhood Care Centers

In 2009, the Office of Promotion and Protection of Children, Youth, the Elderly and Vulnerable Groups of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, in cooperation with Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, undertook research to urgently develop tools to improve the standard of early childhood centers. The study included the participation of all sectors in identifying key indicators, evaluation criteria, the child development processes so as to serve as a national standard that would be acceptable to all agencies and that all childhood care centers could follow the implement. The set of evaluation guidelines developed was trailed in 18,056 centers in 76 provinces, yielding in 2010 a draft for evaluating early childhood centers consisting of 5 standards and incorporating 32 key indicators. Latter, to be applicable and fair to consist of 3 standards, 14 indicators, and 85 criteria, the draft evaluation instrument was revised and modified to consist of 3 standards, 14 indicators, and 85 criteria. The resulting “National Standards for Early Childhood Care Centers” comprises criteria of three types: center management and administration; teaching-learning processes to strengthen child development; and learner quality. This evaluation tool is the basis for quality assessment of early childhood centers, particularly in the internal, or self-assessment stage, as well as for the external assessment process which is being conducted by the Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment through 2016.

4. Best Practices in Early Childhood Care and Education

4.1 Model 'Early Childhood Center' Schools

In each education district in the country, one school has been selected to set up a child care center to serve as a model, or prototype. There are currently 943 such schools, and another 933 schools in the network in 183 *amphur* (administrative districts)

The Office of Basic Education conducted evaluations of these model and network early childhood centers in four areas during 2007-2013: 1) management; 2) use and improvement of center curriculum; 3) environs and learning facilities; and 4) quality of services. The assessments for the majority of model centers were rated as 'very good', with most of the 'very good' ratings given for 'environs and learning facilities'. The area rated lowest was the 'use and improvement of the center curriculum'.

Table 8 Results of Evaluations of Model Early Childhood Centers during AY 2007- AY 2013

Area 1: Management		Academic Year			
		2007	2009	2011	2013
1	The administrator demonstrates leadership and serves as a good model in managing academic matters in line with early childhood education principles	91.04	86.94	79.95	84.13
2	Assigns teacher responsibilities consistent with qualifications, knowledge, and ability; undertakes continuous self-development; and ensures a sufficient number of teachers	81.86	81.92	75.36	77.62
3	Organizes data information structure and content relating to the center management	78.36	60.38	58.86	75.69
4	Sets and systematically implements improvement plans for the center	78.47	67.08	63.9	64
5	Continuously supervises, oversees and follows up and evaluates the operations of the center	65.68	52.46	52.7	76.74
6	Encourages parents and the community to participate in the activities and management of the center	84.59	69.53	70.81	58.81
7	Strengthens the knowledge and ability of teachers to undertake child-centered instruction	80.55	71.32	73.97	72.44
Area 2: Use and Improvement of Center Curriculum		Academic Year			
		2007	2009	2011	2013
1	Development and improvement of the center's curriculum so as to be consistent with the learning nature of young children and appropriate to the local context and culture	70.27	57.37	61.86	65.33
2	Organization of learning experiences through integration with play and of children's learning through direct experiences	89.07	82.25	80.6	83.87
3	Evaluation of the children's total development is conducted through diverse methods and appropriate to each child	84.92	70.2	72.74	76.16
4	Innovative instructional materials are appropriate to the development stages and interests of the children and are used throughout the learning facilities	68.31	54.24	54.74	57.48
Area 3 Effectiveness in organizing environs and learning facilities		Academic Year			
		2007	2009	2011	2013
1	Organization of classroom environment and learning facilities is appropriate for the children	92.13	73.00	87.50	87.23
2	Organization of surroundings outside the classroom and learning facilities is appropriate for the children	86.34	71.43	85.00	82.98

Area 4 Quality of Services		Academic Year			
		2007	2009	2011	2013
1	The center has classrooms, washrooms and toilets, yard play equipment, and appropriate conveniences consistent with the age of the children and the local content.	90.71	87.28	82.81	83.65
2	The center provides services and is a resource for research and analysis, and effectively cooperates with individuals or agencies	81.2	70.09	62.29	64.48
3	The facility is made known as a 'model center' to those concerned.	73.99	54.69	53.51	61.06
4	Those concerned are satisfied with the operations of the facility as a model center	91.15	85.49	80.66	80.18

4.2. A Project to Develop Indicators for Behavioral Competencies of Children Aged 0-3 Years and 3- 5 Years

The Office of the Education Council, in cooperation with UNICEF Thailand, undertook a project, “**Development of Behavioral Competencies**” for children aged 0-3 years and aged 3-5 years with the purpose of understanding of the behavioral abilities of children aged 0-3 years and 3-5 years, respectively. The details of the research methodology, which utilized individual child observation and the results appeared in Guidelines for Teachers and Caregivers and Guidelines for Parents or Guardians.

The behavioral competencies of children aged 0-3 years consisted of 286 indicators, under 4 main domains: motor development and physical well-being; learning development; language development; and emotional and social development. The behavioral competencies of children aged 3-5 years consisted of 419 indicators, under 7 main domains: motor development and physical well-being; social development; emotional development; cognitive development; language development; moral development; and creativity development.

In putting the research into action, the Office of Education Council launched a pilot project in twelve schools to implement the guidelines and test the 419 behavioral competencies of children in the 3-5 year age group in real classroom situations, and at the same time, enabling teachers and teacher aids to gain a greater understanding of the development processes of young children and adjust their instructional methods accordingly.

Goal 2: Provision of Universal Basic Education

The Thai government policy is to create and expand education opportunities in Thai society to bring about equity and fairness among those in every group, including the handicapped, the disadvantaged, the impoverished, those with physical and learning disabilities, as well as ethnic minority groups, to enable them to receive a quality education. Advancement of Thai education focuses on equity and the use of technology in basic education to ensure quality for all young people, from kindergarten to the twelfth grade, whether residing in urban or rural areas. This focus is consistent with Goal 2 of the World Declaration of Education for All.

1. Provision of Universal Basic Education

UNESCO has defined Goal 2 of its aspiration to achieve Education for All as the ‘provision of education that is aimed at enabling every child, particularly girls of difficult and impoverished status, as well as those from ethnic minorities, to receive a basic primary education through the compulsory level at no cost’⁵.

In accordance with the Thai Constitution of 2007, which stipulates that **‘every person is equally entitled to the right to receive at least twelve years of a quality education**

⁵ Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All : Universal Primary Education, Published by UNESCO Bangkok, UNICEF EAPRO and UNICEF ROSA, 2012

provided by the government at no cost', the Thai government is able to report that it has conformed to the second goal by providing twelve years of basic education, which includes not only primary, but secondary education through the twelfth grade.

2. *Challenges and Issues*

Thailand has actively worked to ensure that all children receive a basic education to develop the knowledge and strong skills in reading, writing, and numeracy that are the bases for further learning and future livelihood. However, even though the country has been successful in implementing basic education, challenges still remain:

2.1. **Children in Marginalized Groups**

While opportunity for a basic education has expanded to all groups in the society, with a relatively high percentage of Thai children in the system, some children of ethnic minorities, as well as non-documented and non-Thai children, still do not have access.

2.2. **Inequity of Access because of Economic Status**

Although compulsory education was increased from six to nine years in 1988 in order to raise the level of education, and the Education Act of 1999 stipulated that the state was to provide twelve years of education at no cost from FY2003 onward, inequities in access remain, particularly to quality education, with children from lower-income families having a lesser opportunity than those with higher incomes, which has had an impact on skill development and future occupations⁶, as illustrated in Table 9:

Table 9 Percentage of children not studying compared by age and income level during three periods

Year	1990		2011		2012	
	Lower income	Middle – High Income	Lower income	Middle – High Income	Lower income	Middle –High Income
6-11 years	1.58	0.63	1.01	0.34	0.66	0.37
12-14 years	4.93	1.82	4.78	1.97	4.58	1.43
15-17 years	27.93	15.08	30.55	16.80	31.03	15.00
18-21 years	73.86	52.08	75.94	49.70	76.09	45.18

Source: Data from Survey of Household Economic and Social Conditions by the National Bureau of Statistics; Evaluation by the Office of Social Data and Indicators of Social Conditions, National Economic and Social Development Board

2.3 **Continuing Education of Teen-Aged Mothers**

As reported by the United Nations Fund and the National Economic and Social Development Board, teen-age pregnancies have risen continually during the past five years, particularly during 2012, when 53 of every 1000 girls aged from 10-14 years gave birth⁷, the highest percentage in Asia and second highest in the world. This number included girls in both the formal and non-formal education streams. Previously, girls in these streams who were discovered to be pregnant were not permitted to continue in school; however, at present, the school, parents, and the community cooperate in supporting these young mothers to continue their studies, to learn proper care for their children, and to prepare for a bright future.

⁶ **Social Situation and Outlook**, National Economic and Social Development Board, 4 November 2013, P. 3

⁷ Statistic of Ministry of Public Health, Year 2012

2.4. Decentralized Authority of Basic Education

Although it has been possible to make education available to all, there is no uniformity in administration and standards; it is also difficult to set a unified data information system among the varied agencies responsible for the management of education, which makes collection of national education data a problem.

3. Administration of Basic Education

The Ministry of Education is the primary agency responsible for the administration of education, in accordance with the stipulations of the Thai Constitution of 2007, the National Education Act of 1999 (as amended by the Third Revision of 2010) and the Compulsory Education Act of 2002. Additionally, responsibility for education also lies with the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, the Border Police Department, the Ministry of Interior, the National Office of Buddhism, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, and the Ministry of Culture, all working to achieve the objectives of the revised National Education Plan of 2009-2016 to create a society of virtue, wisdom and learning.

The following activities and programs have been implemented to achieve the targets of Goal 2:

3.1 Broadening Education Opportunities

The creation and expansion of education opportunities is given a great deal of importance in the Thai education system, to ensure equity and fairness among all groups within the society, including the needy, the disadvantaged, the handicapped, those with physical and learning disabilities, as well as those belonging to ethnic minority groups, and to provide quality education and development appropriate to age from birth through basic education. Several agencies are involved in this work, as shown in Table 10 :

Table 10 Expanding Access to Education in Thailand

Agency	Projects and Programs
<p>Ministry of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Basic Education Commission • Office of the Private Education Commission • Office of the Higher Education Commission • Office of the Vocational Education Commission • Office of Non-formal and Informal Education 	<p>The Ministry of Education has expanded educational opportunities in four areas:</p> <p>1. Access to resources and facilities to ensure equity through the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning this academic year a pilot trial of a ‘Smart Classroom’ project to incorporate technology in instruction has begun in 20 schools of various levels and sizes in each region of the country. • Learning rooms set up in various locations equipped with software and e-books for use in place of regular textbooks. • e-Learning centers established in schools to foster lifelong learning consistent with the needs and interests of the learners • Elementary and secondary ‘Dream Schools’ established to prepare students for higher education • Model Schools introduced in every district to develop the capacity for excellence through the use of modern technology <p>2. Access to financial resources so that students and their parents do not need to worry about the costs of education. Projects initiated include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Smart Card’ Project for basic education

Agency	Projects and Programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Income Contingency Loan Program’, with the amount of repayment dependent upon income earned after graduation One District One Scholarship Project 3. Opportunities to enhance skills through Activity-Based Learning in projects such as the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Create Geniuses’ Project, or the • ‘1 Musician - 1 Athlete - 2 Language Specialists’ Project 4. Opportunities for life-long learning through <i>tambon</i> and Village Internet Projects of the non-formal education system 5. Opportunities for female students with children to continue their education to reach their fullest potential.
Ministry of Social and Human Security	Developing learning processes for children and young people to strengthen their ability to adapt to their surroundings in present day society in conducting their lives.
Ministry of Interior	Encouraging access to basic education and information technology for education
Border Police Department of the Royal Police Force	Supporting and managing education of children in remote border areas of the country
Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	Managing the quality of basic and early childhood education in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration area to ensure that learners build strong foundation for a promising future
Ministry of Defense	Providing basic education and specific curricula for military personnel for their personal benefit as well as for the military.
Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Promoting and developing programs in basic physical education, recreation, athletics, and health
Ministry of Culture	Arranging and promoting educational and academic programs from basic to advanced vocational levels related to Thai and international performing arts, dance, music, singing, and crafts, as well as local and national culture and art
Ministry of Health	Raising the level of village health volunteers
Ministry of Justice	Providing basic education for illiterate and poorly educated prisoners in penitentiaries following the criteria and methods of the Non-formal Basic Education Curriculum of 2008

Table 11 Summary, Number of Students in Formal and Non-formal School Systems by level of Education: Academic Year 2009-2012

	Year 2009			Year 2010		
Educational Levels	Total	Formal School System	Informal School System	Total	Formal School System	Informal School System
Pre-primary	2,642,698	1,780,074	862,624	2,723,397	1,811,203	912,194

Educational Levels	Year 2009			Year 2010		
	Total	Formal School System	Informal School System	Total	Formal School System	Informal School System
Primary	5,284,161	5,138,475	145,686	5,238,546	5,066,745	171,801
Secondary	6,722,277	4,795,820	1,926,457	7,320,063	4,872,779	2,447,284
Higher Education	2,377,219	2,377,219	-	2,400,136	2,400,136	-

Educational Levels	Year 2011			Year 2012		
	Total	Formal School System	Informal School System	Total	Formal School System	Informal School System
Pre-primary	2,725,696	1,813,538	912,158	2,642,698	1,780,074	862,624
Primary	5,132,903	4,991,835	141,068	5,284,161	5,138,475	145,686
Secondary	5,940,108	4,772,143	1,167,965	6,722,277	4,795,820	1,926,457
Higher Education	2,377,219	2,377,219	-	2,283,959	2,283,959	-

Source 2009-2012 Educational Statistics In Brief, Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thailand

3.2 Providing Education for the Disadvantaged, the Disabled, and Ethnic Minorities

Based on a recent survey conducted by the National Office for Empowerment of Persons with Disability (*NEP*)⁸ in 2009 1,031,429 individuals with disabilities who have registered with the government agency. Among these, 224,290 are children with disabilities under the age of 18 (0-18 years of age)

Table 12 Number of Students with Special Needs Access to Inclusive Education

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Students	8,670	33,330	69,039	100,365	168,247
School	390	2,000	2,700	5,000	13,770

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Students	188,783	*211,891	*242,417	*242,554	*252,182
School	15,530	16,910	18,467	18,467	17,932

* Some do not wish to be registered

Source : Bureau of Special Education, the Office of Basic Education Commission, Year 2014

Table 13 gives information on projects that support and promote basic education for children who are disadvantaged, who are disabled, or who come from ethnic minority groups:

Table 13 Projects and Activities in Support of Learners with Special Needs

Agency	Programs and Activities
Ministry of Education • Office of the Basic Education Commission • Office of the Private	- Development of education in specific areas, particularly the southern border provinces, to ensure access and quality for all - Education programs in special needs schools and welfare schools to ensure equal access and opportunities for education consistent with

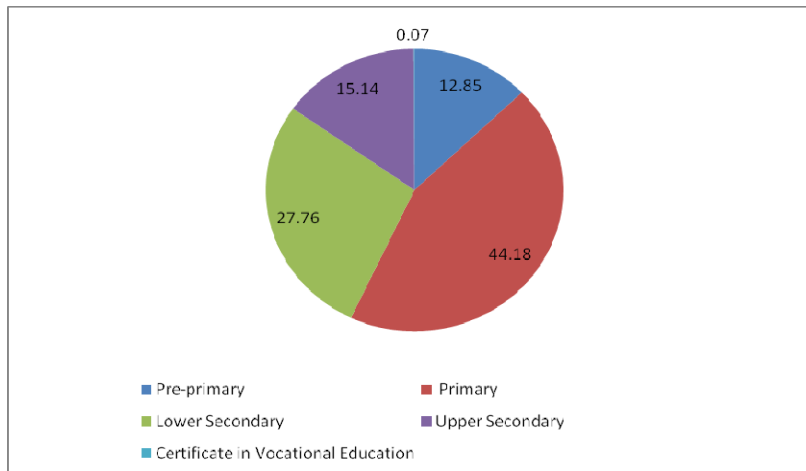
⁸ Bureau of Special Education, the Office of Basic Education Commission, Year 2014

Agency	Programs and Activities
Education Commission • Office of Non-formal and Informal Education	the particular needs of the learners - Projects to improve the quality of life for disabled children through networking with parents and special education centers - ‘Home as Classroom, Parents as Teachers’ Project, aimed at strengthening and developing the understanding and skills of caregivers of seriously handicapped home-bound children - Project to improve instruction of deaf children following the Waldorf bilingual approach. - Professional development to improve the quality of special education teachers - ‘Inclusive Education’ Project: Quality improvement in the instruction of children with learning disabilities - Expanding access to education for stateless, non-Thai, and undocumented children - Providing per-head payments to schools to support stateless, non-Thai, and undocumented children at the same rate as provided for Thai children. - Implementing an education loan program for children of low-income families to enable them to continue on to higher education.
• Office of the Private Education Commission	Supporting and encouraging access to educational opportunities for children in private schools through: - Government provision of full costs of education fees to disadvantaged or handicapped children in private charitable and welfare schools; • Provision of specific curricula to special education schools to support the development of capabilities of special needs children; - Support to <i>pondok</i> schools and <i>tadika</i> centers in mosques for instruction of Muslim children consistent with the principles of Islamic education.
• Office of Non-formal and Informal Education	Provision of education for young people aged 15 years or above through the non-formal education system
• Department of Corrections	Provision of education to inmates in the country’s penal system

Table 14 Student Enrollment in 2013 Classified by Type of Institution/Learning Situation

Type of Institution/Learning Situation	Number of Students	Percentage
Regular Schools	7,619,491	99.06
Basic Education in Workplace/ Home Schooling	5,808	0.07
Welfare Schools	44,557	0.57
Special Education Schools	15,217	0.19
Special Education Centers	6,680	0.08

Source: Implementation Guidelines for Supporting Education Costs from Kindergarten through the Basic Education Level in FY 2013

Chart 2 Students Enrollment Classified by Level of Education in 2013

Source: Implementation Guidelines for Supporting Education Costs from Kindergarten through the Basic Education Level in FY 2013

3.3 Increasing the Number of Hours for Developing Quality of Life Skills

In 2008, the Ministry of Education increased the number of hours for activities focusing on the development of quality of life from 100 to 200 hours in its non-formal basic education programs in order to provide increased time for real-life application of the knowledge gained, to practice reading, writing, and numeracy skills, along with analytical and creative thinking and communication capabilities required for living in the 21st Century.

3.4 Provision of Education for Inmates in Penal Institutions

The Department of Correction provides basic education to individuals incarcerated in general institutions around the country following the course outlines and instructional methodology of the Non-formal Basic Education Curriculum of 2008. Instruction is undertaken by the penal institution or in cooperation with the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education. The aim is to enable these individuals to re-enter society as good citizens with knowledge, vocational skills, and good reasoning ability upon completion of their sentences. In 2013 the programme produced the following results:

Table 15 Results of the Basic Education Programme of the Department of Corrections in Year 2013.

Academic level	Number of students	Students Sitting for examination	Students Passing the Examination	Students Completing the Course	Remarks.
General Stream					
Pre-Literate	2,812	2,494	2,411	1,706	The Department of Corrections provides literacy and numeracy education

Academic level	Number of students	Students Sitting for examination	Students Passing the Examination	Students Completing the Course	Remarks.
					to those without any prior education
Primary	3,650	3,350	3,233	511	Curriculum of the Department of Non-formal and Informal Education
Lower Secondary	7,096	6,293	6,074	1,233	
Upper Secondary	7,255	6,560	6,434	1,086	
Total	20,813	18,699	18,152	4,536	

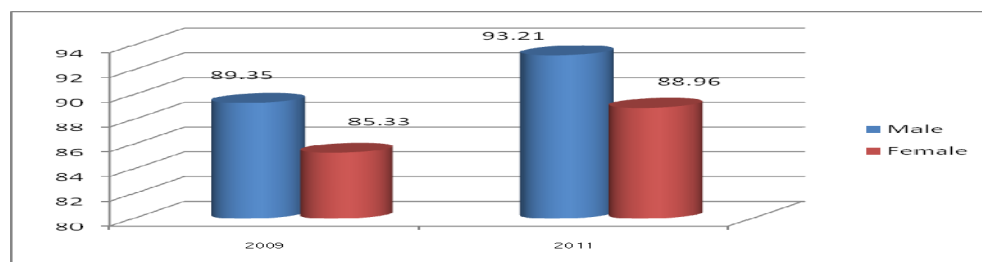
Source: Principled Prisons 'Project' Report on the State Services for the Public 2013; Department of Corrections, Ministry of Justice.

4. *Implementation of Measures to Provide Opportunities for a Quality Education for All Children*

In Thailand's fulfillment of the aims of the second goal of Education for All, access to quality education has been achieved among female learners, those in difficult circumstances, and members of ethnic minority groups

1. Every child in Thailand has been given opportunities to receive a basic education at the primary and lower secondary levels, because the Compulsory Education Act of 1992 ensures that all have the right to nine years of basic education. Government policies also reflect the stipulation of the Constitution of 2007, that everyone has the right to access at least twelve years of a quality basic education at no cost, and this has resulted in an increase of those attaining a primary and secondary education, as shown in the following chart:

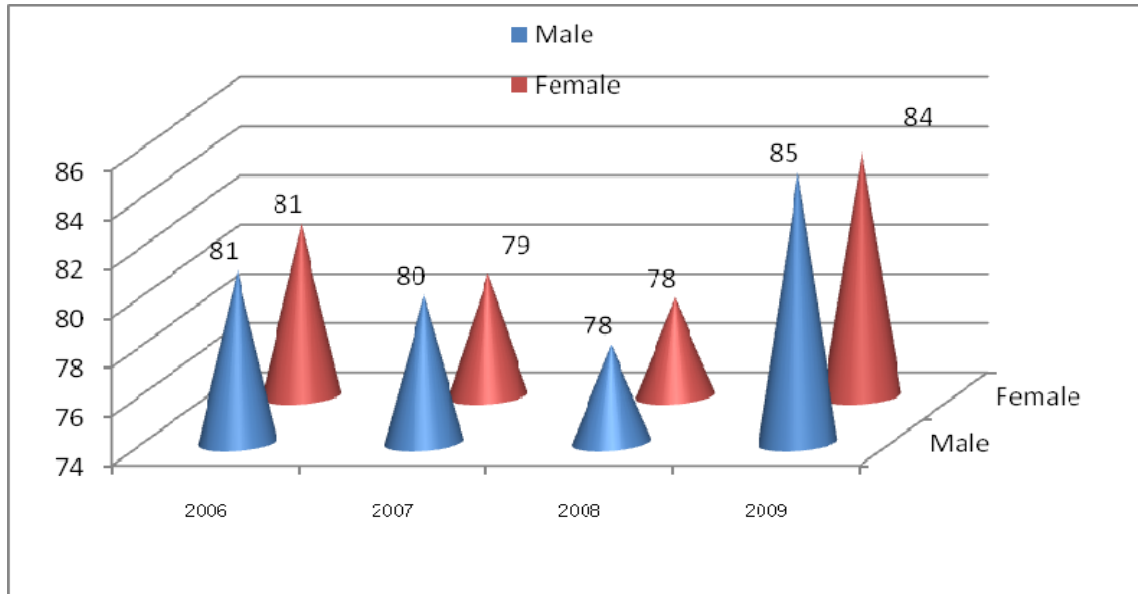
Chart 3 Gross Intake Rate (GIR) in primary education by gender



Source: Thailand Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013, Office of the Education Council, the Ministry of Education, Thailand

The national education policy focuses on equitable opportunities for education in Thai society. Thus, the rate for the total number of students newly attending school (net enrollment rate) in 2009 increased for both male and female students, when compared with 2006-2008, as shown in the following chart

Chart 4 Net Intake Rate (NIR) in primary education by gender



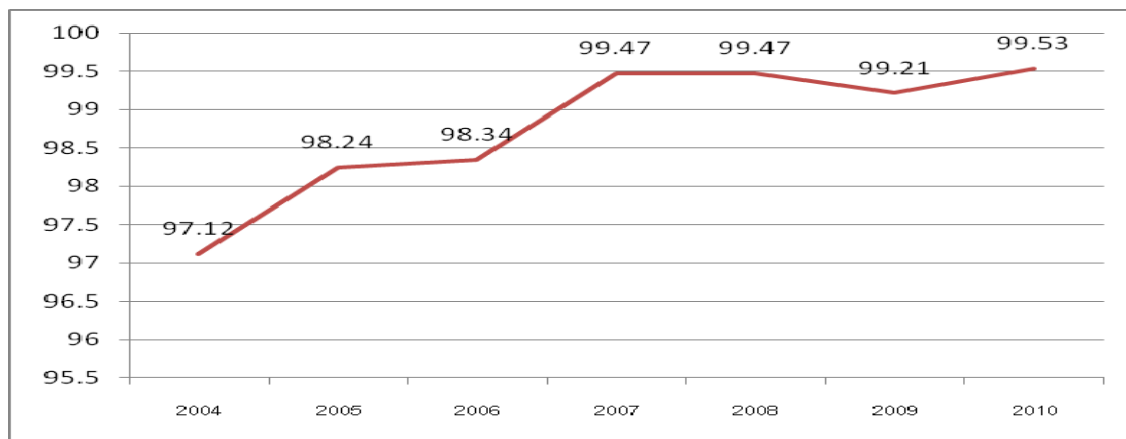
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Table 16 Students in the Formal Schools Systems as a Percentage of School-age Population in Basic Education: Academic Year 2012

Level of Education	Age	Total Number of Students	School-age Population	Students as a Percentage of School-age Population Students	Students as a Percentage of total Students
Primary Education	6-11	4,935,721	4,745,773	104.00	36.98
Lower Secondary Education	12-14	2,497,692	5,483,670	84.60	34.76
Upper Secondary Education	15-17	2,141,289	2,925,949	73.18	16.04

Source : 2012 Educational Statistics in Brief, Office of Permanent Secretary, Year 2012

Chart 5 Proportion of Enrollments at the Secondary Level (Mattayom 1) per Population of Those Completing and Not Repeating the Final Year of Primary Level (Prathom 6)

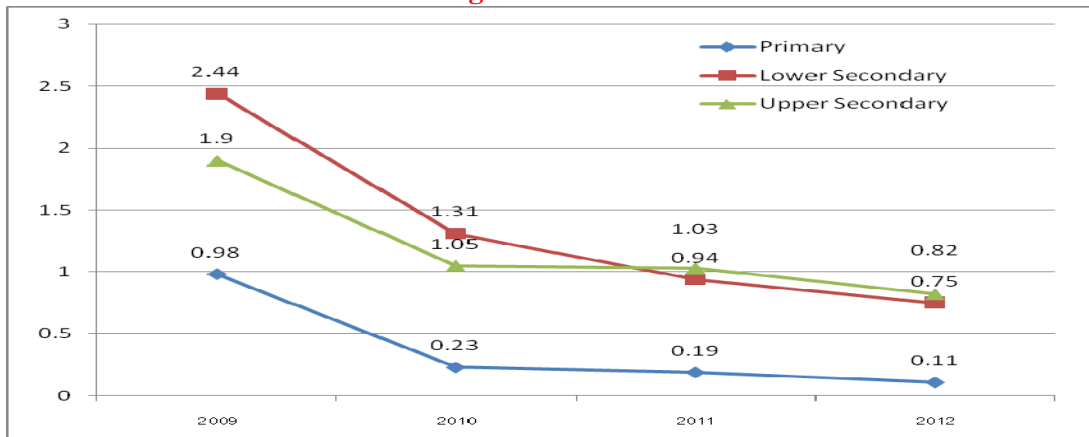


Source: Office of the Education Council, Year 2013

From the above table, it can be seen that during the period 2004-2010 enrollment in lower secondary education increased consistently, as a result of the extension of compulsory education from completion of Prathom 6 (Primary 6) to completion of Mattayom 3 (Lower Secondary 3), through enactment of the Compulsory Education Act of 2002, which required parents to send their children on to the secondary level.

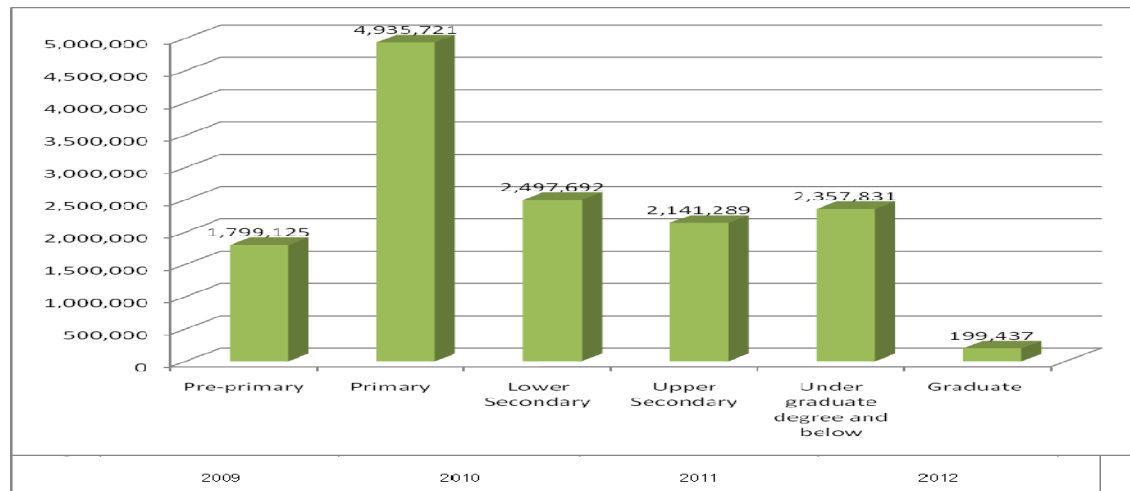
2. A report of the Basic Education Commission⁹ concludes that Thailand has been successful in its mission to expand access to basic education, with an increase in the average number of years of education among those aged between 16-69 years from 5.3 years to 8.3 years in 2010. In addition, during the past five years the dropout rate has declined, perhaps as a result of the government policy to provide basic education from kindergarten onward through completion at no cost.

Chart 6 Drop-out Rate at Primary-Upper Secondary Levels under the Office of Basic Education Commission during Academic Years 2009-2012



Source : 2009-2012 Statistic In Brief, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

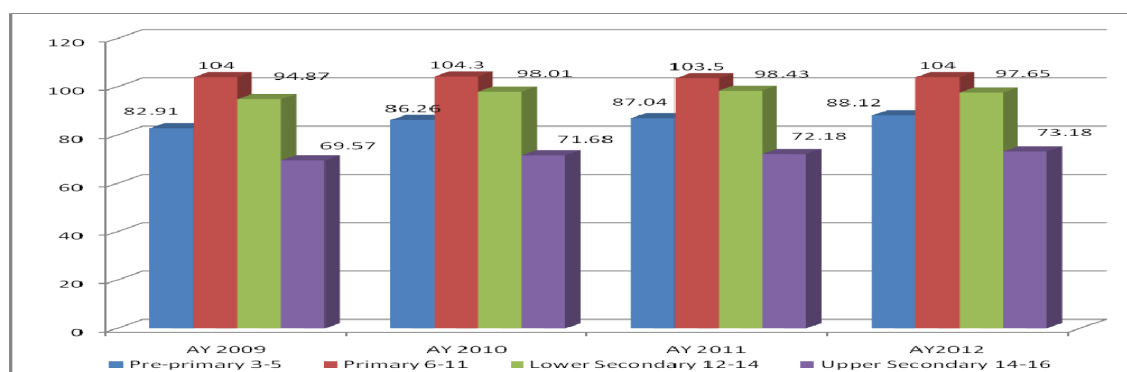
Chart 7 Number of Students in the Formal School System by Grade, Level and Type of Education : Academic Year 2012



Source 2012 Statistic in Brief, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

⁹ The Report from the Office of Basic Education Commission, Year 2014

Chart 8 Estimated Percentage of Age Group Enrolled in Basic Education during AY 2009-2012



Source: Bureau of Information and Communication Technology, Office of the Permanent Secretary, the Ministry of Education, Year 2012

Table 17 Per-head Subsidy for Students from Kindergarten through Completion of Basic Education in AY 2011

Type of Expenditure	Amount (in Baht)	Amount (in USD)
Instruction	25,223,076,300	776,094,655
Textbooks	5,641,156,100	173,574,034
Educational Equipment	2,949,607,100	90,757,142
Student Uniforms	3,053,223,200	93,945,329
Activities for quality development of learners	5,025,565,300	154,632,778
Total	41,892,628,000	1,289,003,938

This policy to provide the costs of basic education has created the opportunity to access education and employment, particularly for children of lower income families. The quality improvement of the learners through strengthening their imaginations and participation, and through reducing the financial burden of their parents, has contributed to making it possible to take advantage of further quality educational opportunities available to them.

5. Best Practices in the Provision of Quality Education

5.1 Projects to Develop Children and Young People under the Patronage of HRH Crown Princess Sirindhorn

Since 1980, Her Royal Highness has supported a number of education projects and schools in remote and border areas of the country, to build capacities and self-reliance so as to appropriately respond and adapt to change, and to create a better quality of life following the precepts of His Majesty King Bhumibol for developing self-sufficiency and a sufficiency economy. The intent is to strengthen the capabilities of young people to enable them to drive the development of the community. These projects are also aimed at:

- improving schools and education centers to better reach young people and to serve as a basis for developing the community;
- strengthening self-reliance through activities that encourage learning by doing, and that generate understanding of Buddhism and ethics, as well as providing training to develop skills in handicrafts and physical education, knowledge and skills that will be useful in the learners' own lives and which can be further developed independently;

- encouraging community participation in school activities to foster learning of various technologies that will improve the quality of community life, create self-reliance, and support sustainable development;
- supporting economical and efficient sharing of resources in implementing development projects.

In 2013 a total of 119,169 students in 762 schools and educational centers were involved in educational activities and projects under Royal Patronage, comprising the following:

- 176 schools managed and operated by the Border Police;
- 202 schools and branch classrooms operating under the Office of the Basic Education Commission;
- 268 ‘Mae Fah Luang Education Centers’ for children of Thai hill tribe communities in several northern border provinces, and one education center for children of the Mogen Thai community in the Surin Islands National Park in Pangnga, under the Department of Non-formal and Informal Education;
- 52 private Islamic education schools under the Office of the Private Education Commission and Buddhist general education schools under the Office of Buddhism;
- 25 schools in Bangkok, under the Bangkok Municipal Administration;
- 39 primary schools and toddler development centers under local administration offices

5.2 Border Patrol Police Schools: Creating Wisdom, Improving Quality of Life, Achieving Stability

The Border Patrol Police, as they conduct patrols in remote areas of the country or areas where security is a problem, particularly along the borders of the country, have frequently found homes with children of school age who are unable to access education services because of the difficulties in reaching them, where the establishment of schools is not feasible because of heavily forested or mountainous terrain or, in more recent times, because of instability and danger as a result of hostile anti-government groups who create discord and tensions that often erupt into violence.

In 1965 the idea was born to establish schools where children of hill tribes families could learn the Thai language to help them communicate more easily with the Thai-speaking society and to provide knowledge and technologies to help them improve the quality of their lives. The first of these schools was set up in 1966 in Chiang Khong District of Chiang Rai Province, and the Border Patrol Police Department thus assumed a new role of operating and overseeing education in remote and difficult-to-access regions of the country.

In order to provide the children in these remote areas with an education on par with those living in towns or rural areas of the country, the Border Patrol Police Headquarters initiated new approaches to implementation, setting clear objectives to overcome the lack of opportunity for all children in these regions to receive quality education, following curriculum set by the Ministry of Education at no cost to the learners, and adhering to its philosophy of ‘Creating Wisdom, Improving Quality, and Achieving Stability’. These schools have three major roles: to serve as centers of learning; as centers for upgrading the quality of life; and as units to ensure peace, safety, and stability for the community.

One of the special characteristics of the administration of the Border Police schools is the development of curriculum that is consistent with the local context and way of life of the communities, integrating local wisdom and Thai knowledge with modern learning and expertise. The schools undergo the same internal and external quality assessment processes as do schools under the Ministry of Education, and are evaluated on achievement of the same key indicators. A special feature of these border schools is their implementation of eight

royally sponsored projects, which has resulted in successful operations despite constraints in resources. These projects are:

- 1 Agriculture for School Lunches
- 2 Improvement of Educational Quality
- 3 Conservation of Natural Resources and Environment
- 4 Occupational Training
- 5 Control of Iodine Deficiency
- 6 Co-operatives Promotion
- 7 Nutritional and health promotion for mothers and children
- 8 Aid to Children under the Patronage of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

In 2013, 177 schools were operating under Border Patrol Police Units, 175 of them primary schools and 2 at the lower secondary level, with 22,895 children enrolled and 1,628 teachers. A total of 71,171 students have graduated from these schools between 1982 and 2012, and 92.69% of the graduates have gone on to study at the secondary level, a lower figure than targeted, which means that the schools will continue to work toward increasing this number

Goal 3 Learning Opportunities and Life Skills for Youth and Adults

Thailand is actively working toward bringing about a society of sustainable lifelong learning through quality development of its citizenry, and providing opportunities for learning and appropriate skill development at every age that focus on the principles of self-sufficiency, that strengthen individual capabilities in all dimensions, physically, mentally, and emotionally, that instill perseverance, along with moral and ethical values, and that imbue a sense of pride of being Thai.

1. Provision of Opportunities for Learning and Developing Life Skills for Young People and Adults.

UNESCO describes Goal 3 of its Declaration of Education for All as *'ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs'*¹⁰. Responding to these needs requires a focus on secondary education, technical and vocational education and training, and non-formal education. In addition, 'life skills education' is defined as education that develops psycho-social skills, skills for health promotion and HIV prevention, and skills for income generation.

The Ministry of Education has set a policy to develop life skills, which is defined as attributes or social and psychological capabilities that aid a person in responding effectively to various situations that arise in daily life, that enable him to be prepared for contingencies and to enable him to lead a good, moral, and ethical life, to maintain good health and safety, and to avoid AIDS and drugs. The necessary components of life skills include decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, judgment, developing effectiveness, building interpersonal relations, self-awareness, understanding and sympathy, emotional control and stress management.

2. Challenges and Issues

2.1 The rapid changes that have taken place in society in the new century, along with developments in technology and communications, and tensions related to ethnic and cultural diversity, have had an impact on children of school age. Children and young people have had to adapt and adjust to these changes, both emotionally and physically, and to respond appropriately to the ensuing unwanted issues of health maintenance threats, violence, and drug abuse. The Ministry of Education is thus obliged to urgently promote the development

¹⁰ Report of Asia-Pacific End of Decade : Note on Education for All : EFA Goal 3 : Life Skills and Lifelong Learning' Year 2013

of appropriate life skills at each age level as a shield against the negative impacts of changes that occur.

2.2 Thailand has given priority to the development of skills of young people, adults, as well as the disadvantaged, to enable them to develop their own potential, thereby developing the country. In addition, measures have been taken to develop and improve skills needed by the labor market as well as skills required for living in the 21st Century.

3. *Implementing Thailand's Mission to Expand Opportunities for Learning and Acquiring Life Skills among Youth and Adults*

3.1 Expanding Opportunities for Learning and Life Skills Development

Several agencies in Thailand are implementing programs to provide increased opportunities for learning and life skills development to support the continued development of its citizenry throughout their lives, from before birth through childhood, adolescence, adulthood, to old age, and to ensure the acquisition of life skills that are needed for present and future living. The chart below describes some of these programs:

Table 18 Activities and Programs Supporting Learning and Life Skills Development for Young People and Adults

Agency	Mission
Ministry of Education through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau of Special Education, Office of the Basic Education Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic education system is tasked with strengthening life skills of the learners • Focus is on development of occupational skills for gainful employment of disabled and disadvantaged children through training programs to attain knowledge and internships to gain experience for use in future study or work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages life-long learning through educational programs for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occupational development • the development of life skills • community development • Implements programs to promote literacy, equivalency studies for basic education, non-formal programs in the general and vocational education streams, and non-formal education programs outside Thailand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Vocational Education Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens and develops vocational education and occupational training programs, cooperative education, recognition of prior learning, short course training programs, and education for the disadvantaged (prisoners, the elderly, members of hill tribes, and the disabled) • Arranges teaching-learning programs that prepare learners for semi-skilled, skilled, technical, and technological work at the standards required by the labor market and that supports occupations
Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts community-focused learning aimed at enhancing the quality of life through two types of programs: welfare programs for the disadvantaged and those in difficult circumstances; and programs that strengthen values and culture of the local area to build strong families and members of the community. • Enhances the quality of life following the precepts of self-sufficiency

Agency	Mission
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens skills and life experience of children in welfare institutions through community-supported opportunities to learn adaptation to the greater society and to develop to their fullest potential. • Works toward prevention and resolution of problems of adolescents through strengthening the role and understanding of the family and the community, so that young people, their communities, and society in general possess the knowledge and skills to respond to problems that arise. • Helps homeless and rootless children develop the skills to conduct their lives effectively and to become productive members of society
Ministry of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides services and training in life skills for health and hygiene - Incorporates life skills development into the instructional curriculum and activities aimed at prevention and remedy of social problems such as AIDS and drug abuse. • Implements the student guidance and counseling system aimed at developing young people physically, emotionally, and intellectually, at strengthening their capabilities and at instilling in them ethical and moral values and the means to live a happy life. The system comprises five processes: 1) familiarity with individual students; 2) effective screening; 3) encouraging development; 4) assistance in preventing and responding to problems; and 5) referrals and transfer of responsibilities
Department of Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeks to raise the level of knowledge and increase the occupational potential of those incarcerated (as well as employees of the Department of Corrections) through vocational education training programs that will be useful to them once they have served out their sentences.
Cooperation between public sectors and Private organizations and development agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'Right to Play' Foundation project develops life skills using sports and play, through a network of <i>tambol</i>(sub-district), provincial, and national agencies that expand activities in schools and detention centers, focusing on developing life skills in the basic education system and providing effective rehabilitation approaches by strengthening leadership skills among young people in detention centers under the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection of the Ministry of Justice.

3.2 Development of life skills is an important component of the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008. To build capabilities of every learner, in both knowledge and attitudes, in developing interpersonal relations, solving problems and conflicts appropriately, adapting to changes in society and the environment, avoiding undesirable behaviors that negatively impact oneself and others, protecting oneself at critical times, and arranging one's life to be consistent with the social and cultural context.

In order to provide guidance to teachers and other relevant individuals in strengthening life skills consistent with the curriculum and with the life skills specified by the World Health Organization, the Ministry has set four components: 1) awareness and appreciation of one's own self worth and that of others; 2) analytical thinking, judgment, and creative problem solving; 3) emotional control and stress management; and 4) interpersonal relations. The core curriculum of 2008 specified two categories of life skills education: 1) general category of basic life skills needed by the learner to deal with everyday life and problems that occur; and 2) specific life skills required for contending with crises and overcoming obstacles that arise.

3.3 In implementing basic education programs in the non-formal education stream in accordance with the 2008 Curriculum, the focus of the policy and curriculum is to enable the learner to earn income and to achieve economic security and stability commensurate with his abilities, and the community and social context.

3.4 Instruction materials for basic education programs at the primary and secondary levels, and in vocational preparation programs have been thoroughly revised, improved, and restructured to be consistent with the needs of learners in the non-formal stream. Learning methods are presented in a variety of ways to ensure a strong level of literacy and a basic education foundation so that learners are prepared to continue learning through informal education programs and at higher levels to meet the goals of lifelong learning.

3.5 In April of 2012, a set of standards for Non-formal and Informal Education was introduced for implementation in all institutions under the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education Commission to serve as a target for improving quality and for continued strengthening of internal quality assessment system.

3.6. The Ministry of Education set a policy to establish at least two community learning centres in every amphur (district) to serve as a central facility for conduction training, holding demonstration, developing products, and creating occupations, and to systematically and comprehensively store, exhibits, sell, and distribute community products and services. These centers reflect surveys and analyses of the interests in education for occupations and employments as well as needs for manpower, products, and services consistent with the local capacities in the areas of human and natural resources, climate, topography and location; and the arts, culture, traditions and ways of life.

3.7 Curriculum is then developed in the five occupational areas of *agriculture, industry, commerce, creativity, along with administration and service management* in order to set new directions in education for employment for a secure income, not only following, but during the education process. Included in the curriculum is the application of technology to add value and develop competencies to build competitiveness.

Table 19 Enrollment in Career Development Programs and Life Skills Development Programs

Enrollment by Type of Curriculum	2010		2011		2012	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Career Development	390,695	46.55	741,308	57.05	629,956	58.61
Life Skills Development	488,654	53.45	558,082	42.95	442,741	41.39

Total	839,349	100	1,299,390	100	1,069,697	100
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Source: Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education Year 2014

Table 20 Percentage of Students Registering for Continuing Education Programs in the Non-Formal Education System in AY2013 (by Type of Program)

Type of Education Program (AY2013)	Number of Registrations		% Above or Below Target
	Target	Actual Number	
Career Development	840,000	642,121	-23.55
Life Skills Development	583,000	964,633	+65.46
Community Development	407,140	456,535	+12.13
Short Courses	347,140	349,582	+0.70
Highlands Area Community Development	60,000	106,953	+78.26
Literacy Promotion	80,000	267,029	+233.79
Processes for learning following principles of 'self-sufficiency'	100,000	394,176	+294.18
Total	2,417,280	3,181,029	+31.60

Table 21 Percentage of Students Completing Continuing Programs in the Non-Formal Education System in AY2013 (by Type of Program)

Type of Education Program (AY2013)	Number Completing Program		% above or below target
	Target	Actual Number	
Career Development	391,270	560,987	+43.38
Life Skills Education	524,700	869,531	+65.72
Community Development Education	381,400	339,960	-10.87
Short Courses	277,000	314,440	+13.52
Highlands Area Community Development	60,000	25,520	-57.47
Promotion of Literacy	64,000	100,513	+277.89
Processes for learning following principles of 'self-sufficiency'	95,000	359,000	+53.12
Total	1,793,370	2,569,951	+43.30

3.8 Projects aimed at improving education in the southern provinces to strengthen peace in areas relating to education, religious and culture focus upon development based on cultural diversity and a rapid development of education at every level that is truly consistent with the interests and ways of life and culture of the local people and their society.

3.9 Vocational Education is considered a mechanism for building livelihoods and generating manpower, and contributes to economic development in general. In addition, development of manpower at all levels to achieve a high quality of knowledge and skills to create knowledgeable people in vocational fields strengthen excellence of young people to become craftsmen develop centers for students and the public to gain knowledge and experience before they enter the workplace set up community repair service centers in the community to train craftsmen and develop skills in servicing the public has resulted in an increase in vocational centers and courses each year.

Table 22 Number of Vocational Centers/Courses and Training Centers for Young People and Adults

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Vocational Centers and Courses	4,303	4,702	5,250	4,473	5,386	7,427	5,113	5,167	5,210

Source: Bureau of International Communication and Technology, the Office of Permanent Secretary, Year 2013

3.10 The Bio-Way Project for Sustainable Development of the College of Agriculture and Technology follows the tenets of the ‘Sufficiency Economy’ and self-reliance doctrines of H.M King Bhumiphol, and works with neighboring agencies and communities to disseminate information about concrete approaches to successful agriculture and to foster awareness and concern for the environment and conservation of nature. Currently, the project is being implemented by 44 agricultural colleges, 3 fishery colleges, and 45 vocational colleges, and is being expanded to additional agencies.

3.11 The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has established centers for elderly citizens to organize activities in their communities that encourage learning and acquisition of occupational skills in line with their interests. Activities include programs suggesting approaches to a fulfilling life following retirement, strengthening financial security, measures to ensure good physical and mental health, and approaches to attaining a secure environment and living conditions. In 2013 a pilot project was implemented, establishing 99 centers in 73 provinces as described in the following table:

Table 23 Quality of Life and Vocational Centers for Senior Citizens FY 2013

Agency	Centers under Operation	Venues and Provinces
Office for Promotion and Protection of the Elderly	Multi-purpose Center	15 venues in 13 provinces
Office for Promotion and Protection of the Elderly	Social Development Centers	76 venues in 72 provinces
	Social Welfare Centers for Senior Citizens	8 venues in 8 provinces
Total		99 venues in 73 provinces

Source: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Year 2014

4 Best Practices in Implementing Education Programs Aimed at Expanding Opportunities for Learning and Gaining Life Skills among Young People and Adults

4.1 The Ministry of Education supports projects initiated by the Royal Family to provide education for children, young people, and the general population through the establishment of 755 community learning centers in 14 provinces to serve Thai hill tribes living in the northern highlands, the Chao Le communities (the fishing families inhabiting the coast along the western peninsula of the country), and those living in remote border areas. In addition to providing literacy instruction, the centers offer activities aimed at improving the quality of life, such as programs in nutrition and health for mothers and children, prevention of iron

deficiency, and agriculture for school lunches, as well as vocational training course and programs to support cooperatives, conservation of nature, and protection of the environment.

4.2 The Department of Corrections, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security organizes a number of skills training and occupation development programs for incarcerated individual to prepare them for honest work and a good quality of life upon completing of their sentences. More than 20,000 of incarcerated individuals participated in these programs annually, comprising courses offered under the Department of Vocational Education and the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education Commission

Table 24 Occupational Skills Training for Incarcerated Individuals under the Department of Correction, Year 2013

Vocational Stream (Concentrated Curriculum)				
The Office of Non-formal and Informal Education Commission	11,606	11,453	11,453	
The Office of Vocational Education Commission	14,892	14,720	14,729	
Total	26,498	26,182	26,182	
Lower Vocational Certificate	4,655	4,573	296	Curriculum of the Office of Vocational Education Commission
Higher Vocational Certificate	1,307	1,102	180	
Total	5,962	5,675	476	

Source : ‘Principled Prison’ Report on State Services for the Public 2013, Department of Corrections, Ministry of Justice.

In 2013, the following programs were implemented to develop occupational skills throughout the penal system:

- Continuing carpentry training in cabinet-and furniture making to raise skills and craftsmanship to the level demanded in the market place. A budget was allocated for training in nine penal institutions; 125 individuals completed the programs.
- Short course training programs of 30-hours’ duration to provide income-generating skills for independent occupation such as hair-cutting, glass teaching, production of fragrant and gel candles, basic computing, making floral arrangements, producing bakery products, and providing care for the ill.
- Skill competitions among inmates in 23 penal institutions in activities such as : preparation of processed meat products (such as dried shredded pork), wood carving, and wood furniture-making.
- Sale of 23 products made by inmates of 51 penal institutions at modest prices, to respond to the policy of lowering costs for the public.
- 3,780 inmates received training in 2013 in agricultural production, including plant propagation, use of agricultural equipment, and mushroom cultivation.
- Evaluation of skills in furniture crafting and carpentry of 270 inmates from 9 penitentiaries by the Department of Skill Development of the Ministry of Labor to designate the level of craftsmanship.

Goal 4: Raising the Level of Adult Literacy

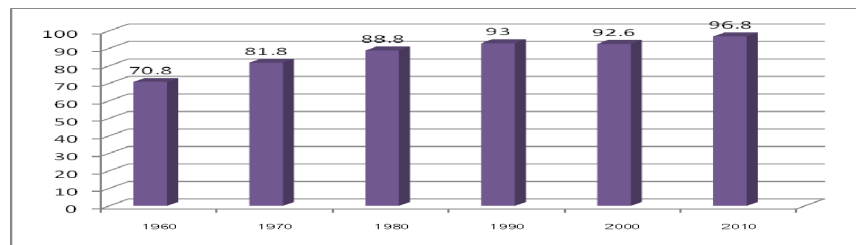
The ability to read is not only a most important component of national development but is considered throughout the world as a human right. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to education”, and that it is a basic right, along with the opportunity to develop skills and gain knowledge that will enhance one’s quality of life and ability to respond and adapt to change. The Ministry of Education acknowledges that the ability to understand, speak, read and write is fundamental to the development of its human resources and is the right and the basic skill that each person needs to live well.

1. *Achieving the Expansion of Adult Literacy*

UNESCO defines achievement of Goal Four as achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially among women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.¹¹

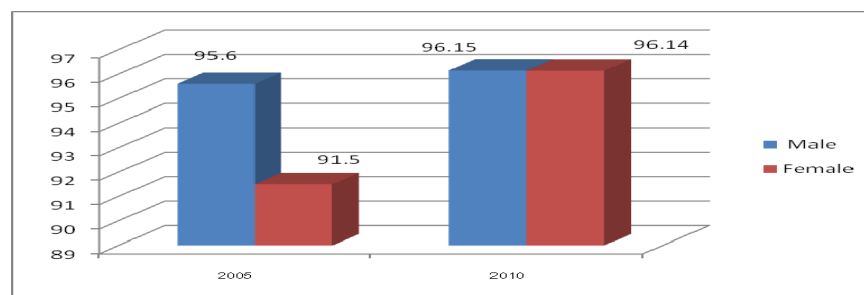
Thailand defines literacy as the ability to speak, read, and write words and sentences with understanding and to apply this ability in various situations¹². The government policy aims to continually raise the literacy level, to ensure that all young people and adults are able to read and write, have basic knowledge of numeracy as well as science and technology, and can use this knowledge in their daily lives. Education management is focused on responding to the problems and needs of the target groups, with 2014 designated as the year of ‘Stamping out Illiteracy’.

Chart 9 Literacy rates in Thailand during Year 1960 – Year 2010



Source National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Year 1960-2010

Chart 10 Adults (15 years old and over) literacy rates by gender in Year 2005 and 2010

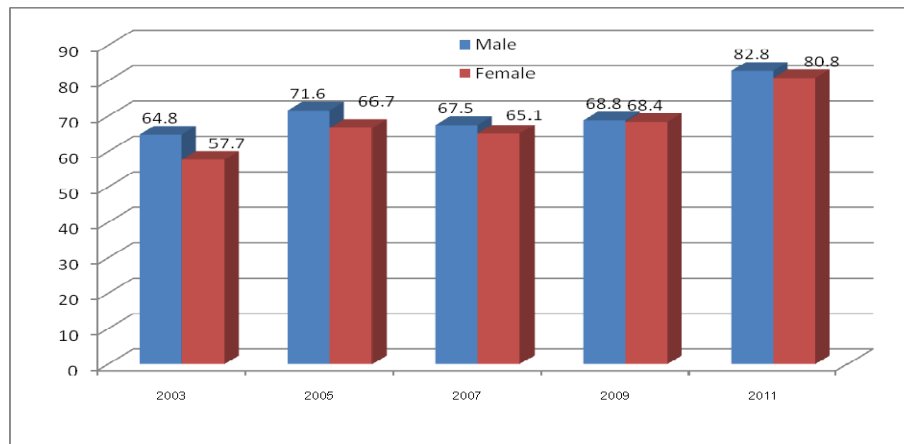


Source : Thailand Education for All Monitoring Report 2013, Office of Education Council

¹¹ Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All : Goal 4 : Youth and Adult Literacy Year 2013

¹²Structure of the Core Curriculum for Literacy, Office of Formal and Informal Education, February 2, 2014

Chart 11 Reading rates by gender of 6 year old and above outside classroom/working hours of during Year 2003-2011



Source National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Year 2012

2. *Issues and Challenges*

Even those able to read and write often do not have opportunities to practice their skills, or do not have access to reading materials, and eventually lose their ability. Those living in outlying rural areas have less of an opportunity to maintain their literacy skills than do those in towns¹³. This is particularly true of the older generation. Maintaining literacy capability among the adult population is a challenge that must be met.

3. *Measures Undertaken in Achieving the Goal of an Increased Level of Literacy among Adults*

In effecting a reduction in the number of adults who are unable to read and write, Thai government policy has long sought to integrate its efforts with formal, non-formal and informal approaches to education.

3.1 *Targets for the Improvement of Quality*

- The disadvantaged, who are categorized as; those lacking the opportunity to access state education services because they reside in remote areas; those living in border areas who are unable to enroll in formal education institutions because of their inability to read or write, such as the Thai hill people in the north and Thai Muslims in the five southern border provinces, as well as those living on the plains; those for whom the inability to read or write impacts their capacity to develop occupational skills and social integration, such as the handicapped and the incapacitated; the elderly, ethnic minority groups; as well as the general population

- Those of working age, both in the formal and informal education systems, who need to develop their capabilities consistent with the needs of the productive sector to compete effectively and be able to prepare for future requirements of the economy

- Foreign workers who require language skills and knowledge of the law as well as an understanding of Thai culture, customs, and ways of life in order to adjust and adapt successfully

- Attesting to a clear focus on the ageing population is Thailand's long-term plan to strengthen lifelong learning for the elderly (The Second National Plan for the Elderly (2002 - 2021), and has set strategies and measures for implementation, emphasizing the provision of continuous services throughout life through the formal, non-formal, and informal education systems, along with various kinds of training programs and systematic access to information, to ensure that seniors are knowledgeable and enjoy a good quality of life.

¹³ Life-long Learning Journal, December 2013, Office of the Non-formal and Information Education commission

3.2 The Promotion of Lifelong Learning Among the Thai Citizenry

The Ministry of Education policy and focus in 2014 is the support of lifelong learning and vocational education for employability and quality occupations anywhere and at any time, that is available to everyone equally, in order to create a learning society, careers and employment, and sustained competitiveness in the ASEAN Community. Immediate policy directions to raise the level of literacy are to:

- Develop a system of local and central survey tools and evaluation techniques to generate an accurate and current picture of literacy levels among the Thai population, particularly those between the ages of 15-59 years, and set quarterly targets for improvement.

- Set up courses based on the results of the surveys and evaluations of literacy levels to provide instruction in reading and writing, using the curriculum of the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education and textbooks appropriate to the situations and locales of the target groups.

- Improve the capability of teachers in the Non-formal Education system and its partners who organize literacy training programs.

- Encourage education institutions to organize literacy-oriented programs and activities directed towards maintaining reading and writing ability, developing literacy skills, as well as acquiring computer skills for use as a tool in education and continued learning.

Table 25 Literacy Level of the Thai Population over 10 years of Age in 2010

	Number	Percentage
Thai Language	58,160,132	
Able to Read and Write	56,076,929	96.42
Unable to Read or Write	1,927,036	3.31
Unknown	156,167	0.27
Other Languages	58,160,132	
Able to Read and Write	9,282,186	15.96
Unable to Read or Write	48,489,803	83.37
Unknown	388,142	0.67

Source: Office of National Statistics, Year 2010

As shown in the table above, the total number of those literate in the Thai Language was 96.42%, while those literate in another language, for example, English, Chinese, Japanese, or the languages of Southeast Asian countries, as well as local dialects, such as Northern Thai, Isan Thai, Southern Thai, *etc.* was 15.96%

Table 26 Enrollments in Adult Education and Continuing Education Programs

Year	2010		2011		2012	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Adult Education Programs	1,069,307	56.02	1,207,987	48.18	1,267,218	54.23

Year	2010		2011		2012	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Continuing Education Programs	839,349	43.98	1,299,390	51.82	1,069,697	45.77
Total	1,908,656	100	2,507,377	100	2,336,975	100

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report: Thailand, Office of Education Council, the Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2013

3.3 Promoting Literacy through Informal Education Programs

The Ministry of Education policy for the informal education system is that reading is to be promoted through improvement of reading skills of all target groups to generate facile reading ability with understanding and basic analytical skill as well as the ability to write easily, through the use of good quality teaching-learning techniques and materials.

Leisure Reading

A survey of 55,290 households taken by the National Statistical Office of Thailand during June and July of 2013 indicate that 81.8% of Thai people 6 years of age and above (82.8% of men and 80.8% of women) read during their leisure time. This is an increase of 10.0% over the survey results of 2011 for both men and women.

'Smart Home Books' have been created in villages and communities as a mechanism to promote and broaden reading on a continuing basis among the population to strengthen capacities stability and to emphasize the importance of reading. Activities are organized to ensure the care and further development of the collections. In Bangkok, the Smart Home Books are housed at the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education and the adult education schools in every district. In the provinces, Smart Home Book Centers are established at provincial, district (*amphur*), and hamlet (*tambon*) adult education schools and community centers. In 2013 a total of 41,800 'Smart Home Books' centers were opened, with a target to open a further 84,000 centers in 2014. The government provides a budget of Bht. 11,500 to each center for the purchase of books and subscriptions to two daily newspapers, and two monthly magazines

- 100 'Chalermajakumari' Community Libraries are to be established by 2015 to commemorate the 60th birth anniversary of HRH Sirindhorn, to provide good sources of knowledge for every age group and to promote the printing and distribution of publications. Thus far, 95 libraries have been established.

3.4 Support of Special Projects

The Ministry of Education, through its non-formal and informal education programs, supports royally-sponsored and initiated education projects for individuals and communities in a systematic and continuous manner, and has developed a data-base of the projects and activities for use in planning, monitoring, evaluation, and improving efficiency. 'Mae Fah Luang' Learning Centers for Thai hill tribe communities are being improved to administer effective non-formal and informal programs.

3.5 Four-year Action Plan for Non-Formal Education (2012-2015)

The Office of Non-formal Education has developed a 4-year action plan and articulated its vision for all Thai people to have equal opportunities for access to lifelong learning and vocational training for quality work, to create a learning society and sustainable careers. Targets for service provision and key indicators have been set out as described below:

Table 27 Targets for Service Provision to Involve Thai People in Lifelong Learning Activities

Service Provision to Agencies / Key Indicators	Targets					
	Basis	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012-2015
1. Number of students in <i>pondok</i> schools in the five southern border provinces served by non-formal and/or continuing education programs	#	26,105	26,105	26,105	26,105	104,420
2. Percentage of students in <i>pondok</i> schools in the 5 southern provinces indicating satisfaction with the non-formal and/or continuing education programs provided	%	90	90	90	90	90
3. Number of students in the non-formal basic education stream receiving funding support for which they are eligible	#	1,086,239	1,227,989	1,227,989	1,227,989	1,227,989
4. Percentage of students in the non-formal basic education stream receiving funding support for which they are eligible	%	90	90	90	90	90
5. Individuals registering for every course and ..	#	2,418,940	2,418,940	2,418,940	2,418,940	9,675,760
6. Percentage of individuals expressing satisfaction with courses/activities in which	%	80	80	80	80	80
7. Number of individuals participating in all types of informal education	#	10,000,000	11,000,000	12,000,000	13,000,000	46,000,000
8. Percentage of individuals expressing satisfaction with activities in which they participated	%	80	80	80	80	80

Source: Four-Year Action Plan (2012-2015) Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education

3.6 Preparation of Literacy Programs

Statistics of the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education show that in 2009 there were 11,190,758 people of working age (between the ages of 15-59) in the country, with 162,708 of this number illiterate. In addition, it was found that many other individuals were able to read and write, but were not using their skills and were in danger of forgetting, as well as a significant number of foreigners in the country who were unable to read and write Thai.

As a result of these findings, the Ministry of Education developed a literacy program for these target groups that would create alliances among educational institutions, communities

and the public and private sector organizations. The program consists of twelve units aimed at developing skills in understanding, speaking, reading and writing, using a minimum of 800 common words used in daily life, along with basic numeracy consistent with the learners' way of life. The units comprise the following topics: 'Our Thailand'; 'Our Way of Life'; 'Dangers to Avoid'; 'Our Work'; 'Sustaining the Environment'; 'A Strong Community'; 'Law We Need to Know'; 'Virtue Leads to Tranquility'; 'Our World of Learning'; 'Technology in our Lives'; 'Energy'; and 'Places to See in Thailand'. Those completing the program will be able to speak, understand, read, and write a minimum of 800 words and pass the evaluation process of the institutions designated by the Office of Non-formal Education.

3.7. Development of Texts and Technologies for Education

In order to provide students and all members of its target groups in the general population a variety of quality options in approaches for learning, the Ministry of Education has developed programs relating to occupational development, the ASEAN Community, as well as tutorials in various subjects, for transmission and broadcast over the Ministry of Education radio stations and educational television channels (ETV), as well as *via* public television channels and the Internet. Materials are produced and disseminated through electronic media not only for the general population but for handicapped learners as well, improving the quality of teaching-learning through distance education technologies for lifelong learning opportunities.

3.8 Investment of Financial Resources and Budgets to Achieve Goal Four

An annual budget of Bht. 44,000,000 was obligated each year during FY 2010 through FY 2013 for improvement in the level of literacy among adults through the Literacy Promotion Project. A target of 80,000 individuals per year was set; however the total number of participants each year was far greater than planned: 127,931 individuals in 2010; 189,461 in 2011; 191,849 in 2012; and 267,029 in 2013.

4. Best Practices in Adult Literacy Programs

4.1 Community Learning Centers

Community learning centers (CLC) are popular learning facilities that serve as mechanisms for promoting lifelong learning, as gathering places or central venues where various models of learning are available. Activities are organized in these centers under non-formal and informal education schemes to provide opportunities for learning, for the transmission and dissemination of knowledge, as a forum for the exchange of experience, for demonstrating new techniques, and for sharing local wisdom.

Community learning centers are categorized as those in mountainous areas, those in areas of special concern, and those in areas throughout the country. In 2009 the Ministry of Education established non-formal education centers in *tambon* (sub-districts) around the country providing four services: 1) community information and news; 2) opportunities for learning; 3) centers for basic and continuing education, programs under the non-formal education scheme as well as informal education activities; and 4) community activities, such as discussion forums, religious activities, art and culture programs, sports, and democracy-related programs. There are currently 7,424 *tambon* centers throughout the country.

The Ministry is currently focusing on improving community learning centers in the *tambon* and urban subdistricts to expand educational opportunities for community residents and to actively encourage lifelong learning through a variety of contemporary and creative activities that respond to the needs and interests of the people in the community. Programs include basic education courses, vocational training, courses in science and mathematics, disaster prevention, narcotics addiction prevention, environmental preservation, the development of democratic processes, getting to know about ASEAN, as well as programs of importance and urgent need for each community.

4.2 Survey and Analysis of Basic Data on Literacy Levels

The Office of Non-formal and Informal Education has initiated a survey of basic data on literacy and the interests in education and learning activities, along with analysis and evaluation of the literacy levels of the working age population (ages 15-59) in order to strengthen the capacity of the populace in reading, writing, and numeracy to contribute to the development of the country and to ensure a stable and secure life capable of competing in the world society. Implementation of government policies is geared toward achieving 100% in literacy of the population. To this end, the Office of Non-formal Education is working toward ascertaining the exact number of those unable to read and write by 2015.

Goal 5: Gender Equality in Education

Eliminating gender inequality in education at the primary and secondary level is an important commitment in Thailand, and girls and women are given opportunities to access education as well as the resources and social services on par with males.

1. Ensuring Gender Equality in Thailand

UNESCO seeks the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education and the achievement of gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

The Thai Constitution sets out the rights and freedoms of the Thai people, with men and women held equal before the law and protected equally by the law. In addition, Thailand is a signatory to many international protocols and conventions, *i.e.* The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women –CEDAW (1985); the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2000); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), which included the topic of access by women to education and training. Also, the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations calls for its members to strengthen equal treatment of men and women.

2. Issues and Challenges

2.1. Thailand has achieved a success rate of more than 90% in achieving gender quality, with women having rights and opportunities to develop their capabilities as specified under the law. Women are thus ready, under the conditions and potential, to use their prerogatives, whether in the home, the society, or the political arena. Nevertheless, the gap between men and women with respect to holding positions of authority and decision-making is still too wide, and this issue should be placed at the forefront of measures to achieve gender equality, along with effecting a change of attitudes and beliefs still existing in society and creating greater understanding.

2.2. In the area of education, although Thailand has been successful in promoting education of girls and bringing about gender equality in accessing primary and secondary schooling, there is still disparity between the general and vocational streams, perhaps because the subject choices of girls and boys is different as result of social biases and perceptions. Recognition of the need for gender equality in all matters will positively influence equality in education .

2.3. Gender equality is not a major issue for the Thai government, since there are no serious gender disparities in education compared to other countries; therefore, operations are directed towards the main missions rather than towards strategies of women's development plans. Also, data collection has not systematically separated findings on a male/female basis, so that administrators and officials do not have an overall perspective of the gender issue as relates to their work.

3 Measures Aimed at Achieving the Goal of Gender Equality in Education

A plan for women's development was included for the first time in the Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-1976) and has been a part of every national plan since. Under the 11th national plan for 2012-2016, approved by the Cabinet on July 3, 2012, the current proposals for women's development consist of 5 strategies: 1) reinforce the commitment to and acceptance of gender equality; 2) develop women's potential and increase their social and economic opportunities; 3) develop women's health conditions and quality of life and ensure their security; 4) strengthen possibilities for women to be involved in politics, administration, and decision making at various levels; and 5) support and develop mechanisms and organizations for women at all levels

A Cabinet resolution on July 31, 2001, established the position of Chief Gender Equality Officer in department-level government agencies, as well as a Gender Focal Point, a center to serve management as a coordinating body to address gender equality issues and ensure practices consistent with policies.

With regard to legal mechanisms to ensure gender equality, a bill proposed by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is currently awaiting action by the Parliament. Previous laws and regulations have been revised to further strengthen gender equality; for example, a law passed in 2008 enables a woman who has registered her marriage to choose to use either the title '*nangsao*' (Miss) or '*nang*' (Mrs.) before her name. Another act, passed in 2008, stipulates that a married couple may choose to use the surname of either spouse, or each spouse may keep his or her original surname. Also, government regulations allow 15 days' paternity leave at a time for a new father to assist in the care of his wife and newborn child.

Measures implemented to ensure gender equality in the administration of education include encouraging single sex schools, particularly secondary and vocational education institutions, to offer co-educational programs. The offering of course and instruction should be consistent with the needs and capabilities of the learners, taking into consideration individual and gender differences. The Ministry has set regulations for provision of facilities such as infirmaries, public utilities, athletic fields, and cafeterias, to ensure that they are convenient for the students and of equal quality for both girls and boys. Toilet facilities are to be planned in accordance with the number of male and female students at the school.

In addition, in July 2013, the Cabinet approved strategies proposed by the Education Council for development of women in educational institutions (2013-2016), defining 'young women in education' as girls and women enrolled in formal, informal, and informal education programs in 6 categories:

- Girls enrolled in kindergarten programs;
- Girls enrolled in primary schools;
- Girls enrolled in lower secondary schools;
- Girls enrolled in general education programs in upper secondary schools and in vocational schools and institutes studying in lower vocational certificate programs; certificate programs in dramatic arts and fine arts;
- Girls enrolled in diploma programs, higher vocational certificate and diploma programs, diploma programs in performing arts, and in fine arts, higher diploma programs in technical education, and in baccalaureate degree programs
- Girls enrolled in post-baccalaureate degree programs

The main idea is to develop the potential of young women at every level, from kindergarten through higher education. In this effort, three strategies have been articulated to serve as guidelines for implementation by public and private agencies, communities, local administrative agencies, and educational institutions that are involved in working with young women to develop their physical and emotional capabilities, their skills and occupational knowledge, their economic potential, and their ability to respond to social problems, in order to ensure their role in building strong families, communities and the nation. These strategies are as follows:

- Strategy 1: Strengthen the capacities, life skills, and creative values of young women while maintaining the desired cultural characteristics of Thai womanhood
- Strategy 2: Promote the development of a good quality of life, occupational skills, and secure economic foundations of young women
- Strategy 3: Support the strengthening of family bonds and ensure that young women develop defenses against societal threats and problems

4. Dimension of Equality in Access to Education

Table 25 Gross Enrollment Ratio by Gender AY 2009- AY2012

Gross Enrollments	2009		2011		2012	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Pre-Primary	74.27	74.39	76.11	77.52	78.06	78.21
Gender Equality Index	100.16		101.85		100.19	
Primary	104.68	104.02	104.09	102.88	105.85	104.86
Gender Equality Index	99.37		98.84		99.06	
Lower Secondary	93.31	95.72	97.25	99.67	97.83	100.07
Gender Equality Index	102.58		102.49		102.29	
Upper Secondary, General Stream	34.10	53.33	37.93	56.15	38.68	59.71
Gender Equality Index	156.39		148.04		154.37	
Upper Secondary Vocational Index	28.85	23.13	28.85	21.54	28.75	21.37
Gender Equality Index	80.17		74.66		74.33	
Upper Secondary, General and Vocational Stream Index	62.95	76.46	66.78	77.69	67.43	81.08
Gender Equality Index	121.46		116.34		120.24	

Source: Bureau of Strategic Planning, Office of Permanent Secretary, Year 2014

The gross enrollment ratio for pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary is relatively high and when comparing enrollments of boys and girls, equality index is close to 100. A higher percentage of girls are enrolled at the pre-primary and lower secondary levels, while at the primary level there is but a slightly higher enrollment of boys. It can therefore be said that gender equality has been achieved at the pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary levels.

At the upper secondary level in the general stream, the ratio of girls enrolled is much higher, raising the equality index to 150 in some years. On the other hand, boys outnumber girls, in the upper secondary vocational stream, reducing the equality index to around 70-80 and the trend is declining. This may reflect the tendency for boys to choose vocational studies, where the main fields comprise industrial trades, as shown in Table 23.

Table 26 Enrollment in Lower and Higher Vocational Certificate Programs, by Gender (AY2012)

Course	Boys	Girls	Proportion of Girls to Boys
Industrial Trades/Industrial Technology	432,516	21,330	5
Commerce / Business Administration	113,890	347,532	75

Course	Boys	Girls	Proportion of Girls to Boys
Arts and Crafts Technology	9,251	7,271	44
Home Economics	3,572	14,707	80
Agricultural Trades	16,049	7,834	33
Fisheries	1,292	460	26
Information Technology	2,111	3,001	59
Tourism	5,106	20,776	80
Textile Industry	102	236	70
Total	583,889	423,147	42

Source Bureau of Information and Communication Technology, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Year 2012

A review of student dropouts in schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission reveals that more boys than girls leave school before completion of their programs. Parents moving out of the area, family problems, poverty, and adjustment issues, are some of the reasons for students not completing their programs. However, more girls than boys drop out of school because of marriage, an issue that reflects a serious problem in Thailand: that of teen-age pregnancy. The National Bureau of Statistics reports that in Thailand, an average of 54 of 100,000 girls under 18 years of age give birth, a figure higher than the 15 births *per* 100,000 given by the World Health Average as the world average. In response to these findings, Thailand has initiated several projects and programs to address the issue of teen pregnancies, including occupational training for young mothers below 20 years of age under the project, 'Young Mothers Plan for the Future'; and 'Stop Teen-aged Moms', a Royally-sponsored program under the 'Family Web of Love' project to increase awareness of the problems of pregnancy among girls not ready to have children, and to provide guidance in appropriate teen life-styles. In addition, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health, works with local hospitals to send doctors and experts in this field to visit schools in the area to provide advice and information to young students.

4. Dimension of Educational Quality

Table 27 Achievement in Basic Education Subjects as indicated by O-NET Average Test Scores of Students Completing Upper Secondary Level at the end of AY2007

Region	Thai language		Social Studies		English		Mathematics	
	boys	Girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls
Total	47.62	54.74	37.63	37.86	30.40	31.28	33.12	32.11
Bangkok	56.85	63.03	42.61	44.55	39.47	41.97	40.55	39.01
Central Region	49.71	55.28	38.45	38.70	30.71	31.66	34.19	32.94
Northern Region	46.95	52.45	37.42	37.69	29.28	30.48	32.24	31.81
Northeast Region	43.27	48.88	35.52	36.04	27.34	28.34	30.15	29.82

Southern Region	45.89	50.18	36.67	35.75	29.11	29.85	31.81	31.03
Region	Sciences		Physical Education		Arts		Workshop	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls
Total	34.66	34.62	52.16	53.09	39.98	42.70	49.13	49.81
Bangkok	41.57	41.91	53.89	54.92	42.79	47.29	52.27	53.21
Central Region	35.80	35.59	53.17	53.55	40.97	43.94	50.45	50.89
Northern Region	34.36	34.83	52.48	53.36	39.90	42.61	49.54	50.16
Northeast Region	31.65	32.08	50.90	52.47	38.55	41.30	47.18	48.58
Southern Region	33.17	33.00	51.37	52.10	38.81	40.68	47.91	48.06

Source: Bureau of Information and Communication Technology, Office of the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education

On average, girls tend to perform better in their studies than do boys. As can be seen in the results of the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-Net) shown in Table 27, girls achieved higher scores in Thai Language, Social Studies, English, Physical Education, Shop, and Art, with the spread widest in Thai Language. At the same time, boys performed slightly better than girls in mathematics and science. Students located in Bangkok performed better on the O-Net than those located in other areas of the country, with the lowest scores reported in the Northeast Region.

Results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Year 2012, in various countries show that boys scored higher in mathematics and science than girls and that girls performed better in reading. However, in Thailand, the scores did not correspond to this tendency, where girls perform better, not only in reading, but in mathematics and science as well.

At the same time, however, Thai students who represent the country in International Science Olympiad competitions (Table 4) are overwhelmingly boys, with a few girls competing in computer, chemistry and biology subjects. Thus, even though girls perform better in school than boys overall, the outstanding students still tend to be boys.

Table 28 Students Representing Thailand in the International Science Olympiads

Subject Area	2004		2009		2012	
	Boya	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mathematics	6	0	6	0	6	0
Computer	4	0	3	1	4	0
Chemistry	3	1	2	2	4	0
Biology	2	2	2	2	3	1
Physics	5	0	5	0	5	0
Total	20	3	18	5	22	1

6. *Other Dimension*

Aside from the dimensions of accessibility and quality, social attitudes towards gender remain a problem deriving from deep-rooted cultural beliefs, values, social norms and traditions of Thai society, wherein authority and power is vested in the male. Inequality between male and female in other areas have an impact on gender equality in education; for example, in the workplace where disparities in income, career advancement, participation, and leadership roles may influence decisions relating to education, whether to continue one's studies or in the selection of subjects that are considered gender specific. Because of these factors, the Ministry of Education has joined with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to develop a program focusing on the role of gender to serve as a framework for use in teaching-learning to foster positive attitudes toward gender equality.

7. *Best Practices in the Enhancement of Gender Equality in Thailand*

7.1 A project sponsored by Princess Patcharakittayapa features courses that are aimed at developing skills and providing knowledge to increase opportunities for mothers and children in prisons, to encourage them to improve their lives, and to raise their morale in facing life's challenges.

7.2 Measures to foster gender equality in government agencies²

7.2.1 The Irrigation Department has discontinued its practice of hiring only graduates of the Irrigation College, which traditionally accepts male students, and has ended its dress code for women officials, enabling them to wear trousers to work, which are more convenient and comfortable.

7.2.2 The Royal Police Cadet Academy has revised its regulations to allow women to enroll in the institution, after 107 years of being a strictly male institution, and has focused on gender appropriate roles for women to investigate and work on cases involving women and children, as well as rape and sexual harassment cases. Women receive the same academic training and physical and emotional preparation as do the men, and upon successful completion of the 4-year program, are inducted into the police force with the rank of Police Sub-Lieutenant. These measures have opened opportunities for women to serve in the same capacities as men and promote gender equality in the profession.

7.2.3 The Office of the Civil Service Commission has prepared training programs that include gender equality issues in the topics discussed. For example, in the course, 'Developing Leadership in Civil Service Administrators', there is a section giving perspectives on the role of gender, and in a course for high-level administrators is the topic 'Leaders of Moral Principles and Vision'. Another course deals with 'Gender in the Workplace'.

7.3 The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

- A project to develop statistical databases and reports that incorporate data with gender descriptions to aid perspectives on the gender dimension that will reflect problems accurately and indicate progress made in the development of women.

- A project to encourage pregnant girls and young women to continue on in school and complete their education to enable them to use their credentials for occupational advancement and to ensure economic security for themselves and their family.

Goal 6 Improvement in Quality of the Education System

The Thai government has set a policy to urgently effect improvements in the quality of education and has initiated reform of the approaches to learning in Thai society. The policy calls for raising the level of knowledge to international standards, reforming the education curriculum at every level to respond to the changes occurring throughout the world, and meeting international standards consistent with the current global society. The mission is considered a priority for the country: 'Education is a National Agenda Item'; and 2013 was

set as the ‘Year of Joint Effort in Raising the Quality of Education’, with all sectors of society asked to push implementation of the policy to ensure that learners are able to analyze and learn independently, and that they will possess the desired characteristics and necessary skills for living and working in the 21st Century, and assisting in moving national development to a higher level.

1. Improvement of Quality

UNESCO defines achievement of Goal 6 of its declaration of Education for All as *‘Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.’*

Thailand sees the improvement of education as a critical mission and is included in the strategies of the National Economic and Social Development Plan and in the Eleventh Education Development Plan of the Ministry of Education (2012-2015) to improve the quality and raise standards of the learners, teachers, education personnel and institutions at every level and of every type of education.

2. Issues and Challenges

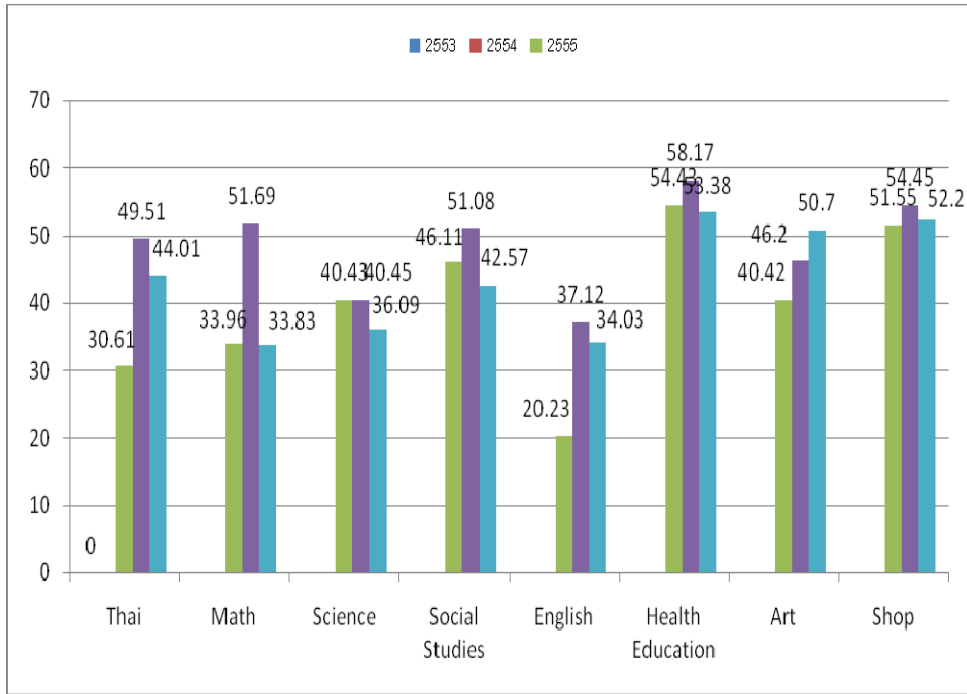
2.1. The Thai government is focusing on the improvement of the current teaching-learning system and ensuring equality between urban and rural schools as well as those in areas of unrest in the southern border provinces. The aim is to produce learners who are able to think and analyze, solve problems, and learn independently on an ongoing basis, and to raise their achievement level and knowledge commensurate with international standards, beginning with science, math, technology, and foreign language, as well as analytic thinking. A comparison of results of the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-Net) for 2010-2012 finds that average scores in mathematics, science, and English Language were lower than those in health, shop, social studies, and Thai Language, as shown in Table 29 and charts 10-12 below:

Table 29 Comparison of Scores on National Quality Assessment Tests of the Office of Basic Education in 2010 and 2012

Grade Level	Year	Thai Language	Math	Science	Social Studies	English	Health Education	Art	Shop
Primary 6 (Prathom 6)	2553	30.61	33.96	40.43	46.11	20.23	54.43	40.42	51.55
	2554	49.51	51.69	40.45	51.08	37.12	58.17	46.20	54.45
	2555	44.01	33.83	36.09	42.57	34.03	53.38	50.70	52.20
Lower secondary 3 (Mattayom 3)	2553	42.89	24.22	29.29	40.85	15.80	72.26	28.51	47.03
	2554	48.35	32.19	32.28	42.88	30.13	51.16	43.61	47.59
	2555	54.57	26.94	35.40	47.15	28.29	46.93	43.41	47.69
Upper Secondary 6 (Mattayom 6)	2553	42.95	14.79	30.90	46.70	18.75	63.10	32.80	44.10
	2554	42.12	22.53	27.89	33.40	21.34	54.92	28.65	49.21
	2555	47.68	22.62	33.26	36.47	21.71	54.04	32.98	46.20

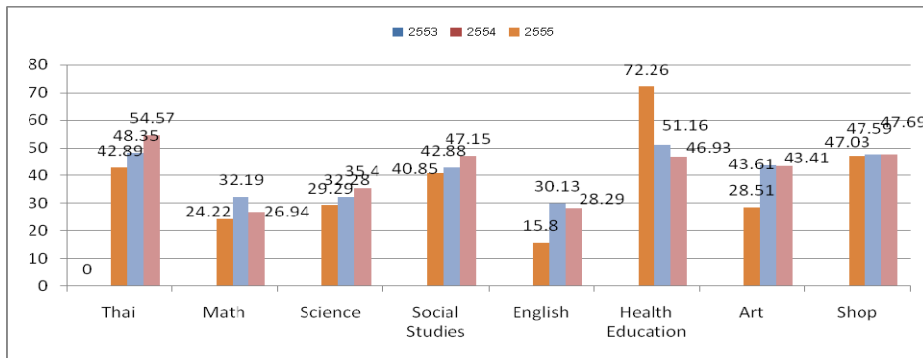
Source: 2012 Annual Report of the Office of the Basic Education Commission

Chart 10 Comparison of Scores on National Quality Assessment Tests of Primary 6 students of the Office of Basic Education in 2010 and 2012



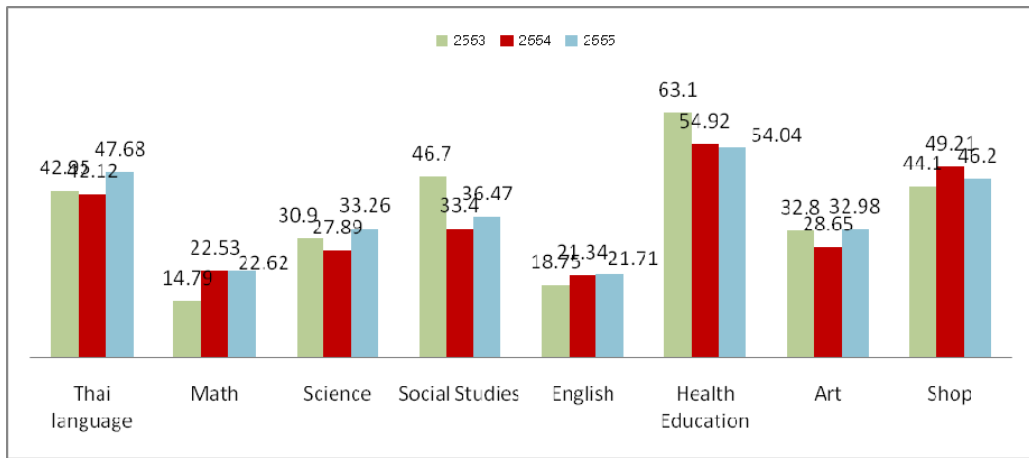
Source: 2012 Annual Report of the Office of the Basic Education Commission

Chart 11 Comparison of Scores on National Quality Assessment Tests of Mathayom 3 students of the Office of Basic Education in 2010 2011 and 2012



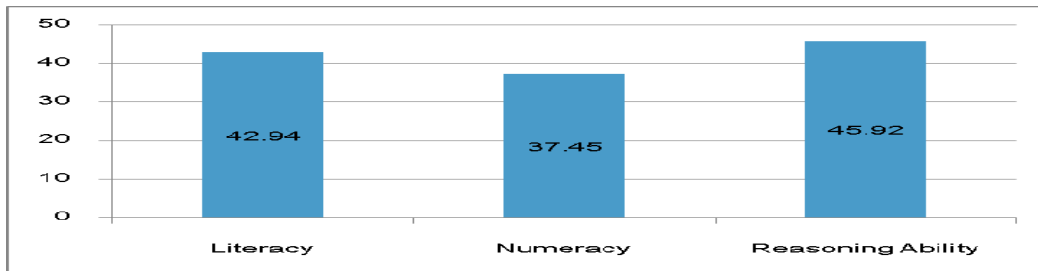
Source: 2012 Annual Report of the Office of the Basic Education Commission

Chart 12 Comparison of Scores on National Quality Assessment Tests of Mathayom 6 students of the Office of Basic Education in 2010, 2011 and 2012



Source: 2012 Annual Report of the Office of the Basic Education Commission

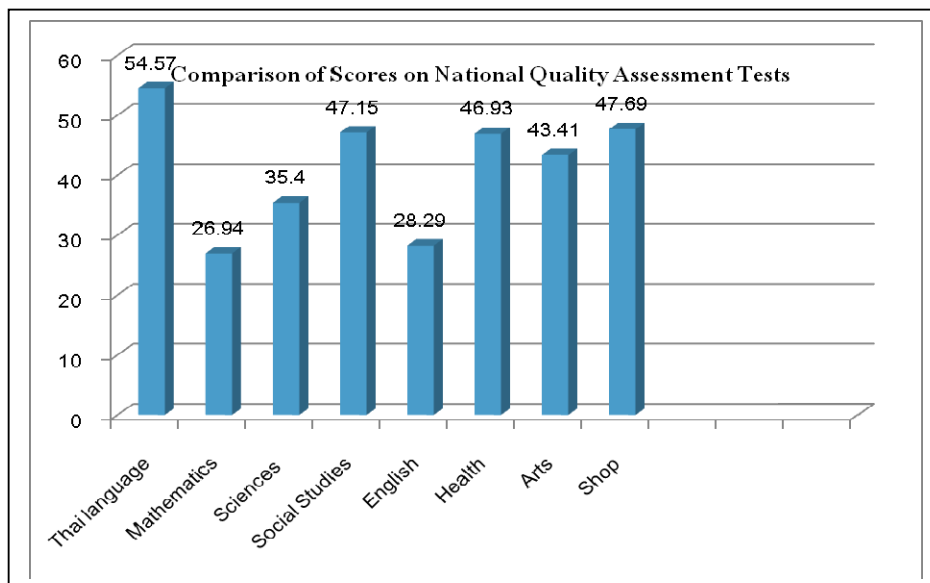
Chart 13 Comparison of Student Achievement of Primary 3 Students in Literacy, Numeracy, and Reasoning in 2012



Source: Evaluation of Achievement of Students on a nation-wide test in Schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission

Chart 13 gives the results of an assessment test of learners at the primary 3 level administered nationally in 2012 to students in schools under the Office of Basic Education. It was found that scores in reasoning ability, language proficiency, and in numeracy were lower than 50%, with reasoning ability highest at 45.92% and numeracy scoring lowest at 37.45%. Measures need to be taken urgently to ensure that achievement in these three areas is raised.

Chart 14 Comparison of Scores of Primary 3 Students on National Quality Assessment Tests in 2012



Source: Evaluation of Achievement of Students on a nation-wide test in Schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission

Chart 14 provides a comparison of results of the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-Net) of Primary 3 students in 2012. The results also shows that average scores in mathematics, science, and English Language were lower than those in health, shop, social studies, and Thai Language.

2.2 Performance in National and International Assessments

Thailand has been a member of the international consortium of countries using the same educational assessment instruments (PISA and TIMMS) for some time, and the results of the tests administered to Thai students reflect an urgent need to raise standards to be on par with international levels. The national assessment tests (O-NET) reflect a similar need for quality improvement in education, while at the same time, scores from school-based assessments show a very different picture. Analysis of the reasons for this disparity indicates that the system of school-based assessments lacks credibility and academic professionalism, and teachers do not have sufficient knowledge to develop quality measurement and evaluation tools. School-based assessments therefore cannot be used to transfer credits across institutions.

2.3 The Need to Expand Vocational Education

While importance is given to producing graduates who have potential, knowledge, and skills consistent with the needs for manpower, particularly from the vocational education stream, in sufficient quality and quantity, fewer students enter these programs, preferring to enroll instead in the general education stream. Table 30 provides a comparison in this matter:

Table 30 Proportion of Students Entering General Education and Vocational Education Streams

Type of School	Academic Year				
	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553
Upper Secondary General Education Stream	973,408	1,037,179	1,077,555	1,101,298	1,057,389
Vocational Education Institutes (Government and Private)	774,042	770,044	772,818	749,952	735,330
Ratio of Students Enrolled in the General Education Stream: Vocational Education Stream	57:43	57:43	58:42	60:40	59:41

Source: Monitoring and Evaluation Study of Implementation of Strategies to Promote Basic Education Vocational Stream Programs of Private Sector Institutions, Office of the Education Council February, 2012

The above study shows that a higher proportion of students enroll in the general education stream than in the vocational stream. The government has therefore set a policy to increase the number to at least 60:40, with the target for 2014 being an increase of 9% in vocational stream enrollments to bring the ratio to 51:49 comparing to general stream in 2015

2.4 Teacher Shortages

Even though teacher education reform is a priority in order to raise the quality of teachers to an international standard, the country remains faced with a shortage of teachers, particularly in the small rural schools, and in the fields of science, mathematics, English Language, and technology; and professionals with knowledge and skills in these areas are seriously lacking in many sectors of society

2.5 Quality of the Smaller Schools

Many small schools, particularly in rural areas, do not meet the quality standards set by the Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment. The second phase evaluation of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) during 2006-2008 found that very few small schools met the evaluation criteria, and that student achievement was low, particularly in the core courses of Thai Language, English, mathematics, science, and social studies, where scores were under 50%. In addition, the operation of these small schools experienced similar problems: management with respect to lower than standard ratio of teachers to students, and students to classrooms; difficulty in traveling to other schools; and a serious shortage of teaching aids and equipment. Teaching-learning processes were not up to standards, with most teachers lacking skills in organizing learning activities for situations where grade levels had to be combined because of a lack of teachers, and curriculum and teaching plans were often inconsistent with the local context. Teachers themselves were often unable to use their full energies or to spend full time in class because of additional duties required of them.

2.6 Literacy and Proficiency in the Thai Language

A screening of students in Primary 3 and Primary 6 following the first semester of AY 2013 found that a large number had problems in reading and writing Thai Language. This situation reflects a failure to emphasize Thai Language instruction from the first grade on because of the need to cover 8 subject areas, and the lack of standard assessments of reading ability and knowledge of Thai Language prior to Primary 3 when a national test is administered. It is therefore incumbent upon the state to ensure that there is improvement in reading ability, in critical thinking, and in communication skills to enable learners to attain knowledge at higher levels and to find employment, earn a living, and become life-long learners.

Group 1	Students unable to read	
	Primary 3	28,117 students
	Primary 6	9,012 students
Group 2	Students able to read but without understanding	
	Primary 3	16,158 students
	Primary 6	7,836 students
Group 3	Students able to read and communicate what they have read	
	Primary 3	258,289 students
	Primary 6	259,557 students

As a result of the survey, the Ministry of Education set a policy to urgently improve the ability of Thai students to read and communicate with understanding and to ensure that every region work toward the goal of improving the capacity and the quality of Thai learners.

3. *Implementation of Measures to Improve the Quality of Education*

Improvement in the education system is a long-standing goal, beginning with the first National Economic and Social Development plan to the current 11th plan (2012-2015), which has as its goal the elimination of illiteracy and the placement of teachers of quality in every classroom to produce a population that has achieved an average of 12 years of education. In addition, improvement in the quality of education is a component of the National Education Policy, through reform of the Thai learning system of Thai society, through raising the level of knowledge through curriculum reform throughout the system to respond to change on par with international standards, and through increasing student achievement as measured by

national and international assessments. In addition, the basic education curriculum has been revised to include desired characteristics of the learners in the 21st Century: promotion of learning skills; work ethics and life skills; occupational skills; and acquisition of new knowledge in the ever increasing and never ending accumulation of information and experience available. The expectation is that learners will be capable of acquiring knowledge and applying critical thinking rather than memorizing content and information through the revision of teaching-learning and evaluation methods.

4. Measures Taken to Improve the Quality of Education

1. Reform of the learning system has been undertaken to link curriculum and teaching-learning methods so as to foster critical thinking and problem solving as well as independent learning on an ongoing basis, and the ability to adapt to change and in line with learning in the modern era through undertaking of several courses of action:

1.1. The secondary curriculum has been revised through a national reform effort¹⁰ to develop the potential of learners in work skills as well as to modernize instructional texts, audiovisual aids, and laboratories in educational institutions. Cooperation in curriculum development and teacher training between higher education institutions and secondary schools has resulted in higher achievement, greater flexibility, and increased capability on the part of the learners.

1.2 The quality and standards of education institutions are being improved at every level. Several measures have been taken to improve different types of small schools, such as combining some grades, combining levels, or even combining entire schools. Academic improvements are being initiated through: the mixing of classes; disseminating successful initiatives and exchanging ideas from model small schools that serve as centers for support to other schools; supporting increased budget resources and materials, buildings, and other facilities to small core schools; developing a strong and active network of schools; supporting the study through mobile electronic devices

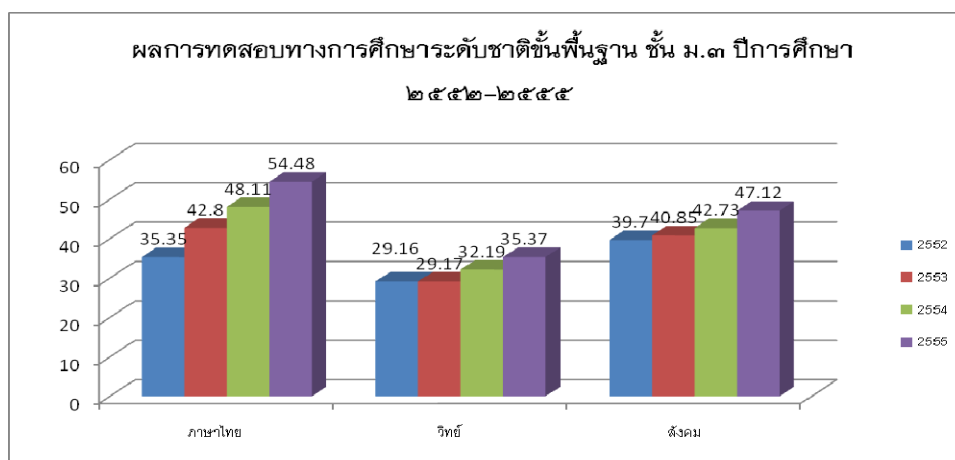
In addition, the Ministry of Education is moving to raise well-qualified schools to an international standard through: having them develop strategic plans; establishing school networks and coordinators nationally and internationally; arranging for instructional materials of an international standard; supporting school initiatives in curriculum and teaching improvements; providing training for teachers and administrators and other school personnel; developing activities for improvement to raise standards to equal those of their partner schools; sharing experiences among network schools; and monitoring, evaluating and publicizing, and disseminating results to move them to model school status.

2. Improvements are being implemented in the teaching and learning mathematics, science, and technology through: the promotion of research; revision of curriculum and instructional materials; changes in teaching-learning methods; modernization of testing and evaluation tools; upgrading of curriculum standards and teachers' guides; and an emphasis on learner understanding and analytic skills.

With regard to evaluation, the Ministry has initiated a national aptitude test at Primary 3 level that measures literacy, numeracy, and reasoning ability to familiarize learners with the format of national tests; and has implemented a project to improve the ability of supervisors and teachers to develop evaluation tools to measure learner achievement.

In addition, a policy has been set to improve learner achievement in schools under the Basic Education Commission throughout the country, which has spurred relevant agencies to implement ongoing activities for quality improvement. These measures have resulted in continued improvement in achievement of learners in certain subjects, as shown in the performance of lower secondary students (Mattayom 3, or 10th grade) on the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) during the past four years. The graph in Table 3 below illustrates this improvement:

Chart 15 Results of the O-Net Achievement Test at Mattayom 3 in AY 2009-2012



Source: Office of the Basic Education Commission, Results of the O-Net Achievement Test at Mattayom 3 Level AY 2009-2012

The improvement in Thai Language, Science, and Social Studies indicated in the graph reflects the emphasis placed on the O-NET as an indication of the efforts of the agencies involved at all levels to upgrade the quality of learner achievement.

Also, in 2014, the Ministry of Education is implementing a project to eliminate problems that exist with the national test administered to Primary 3 students to assess aptitudes in literacy, numeracy, and reasoning ability, and to develop evaluation tools for education supervisors and teachers to assess student learning achievement

3. A number of projects and activities have been initiated to upgrade learner achievement in mathematics and science as well as to develop more effective instructional approaches in these subjects:

3.1 Study of “Strategies for Thinking Mathematically”, aims to promote techniques for solving problems with a focus on skills for teaching mathematical processes;

3.2 A project to improve teachers of mathematics in provincial primary schools throughout the country, for example, training programs for science teachers focusing on: accuracy of teaching material used; improvement of skills in teaching scientific processes as well as cognitive processes; integrating creativity in presentation; learning strategies and models of problem solving.

The continuous and concrete efforts to develop Thai education has borne fruit in learner achievement as can be seen in the results of the 2013 PISA test; Thai students showed a marked improvement in scores for reading, science, and mathematics, as can be seen in the graph below:

Chart 16 The results of the 2013 PISA test during 2006, 2009, 2012

2009	1	3	-	-	4	-	1	5	-
2010	3	1	-	3	1	-	1	4	-
2011	2	2	-	2	2	-	3	2	-
2012	2	1	1	1	1	-	3	3	-
2013	2	2	-	1	3	-	1	4	-
	Physics Olympiad			Junior Sciences Olympiad			Computer Olympiad		
Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2009	6	7	-	1	2	-	3	3	-
2010	7	4	-	1	2	-	2	4	-
2011	3	3	-	2	1	-	3	3	-
2012	6	3	1	-	-	-	2	3	-
2013	7	4	-	-	1	-	5	1	-
	Astronomy and Physics Olympiad				Earth and Space Olympiad				
Year	Gold	Silver	Broze	Gold	Silver	Bronze			
2009	1	1	-	-	1	-			
2010	2	1	-	-	3	-			
2011	-	1	-	1	3	-			
2012	1	-	-	-	2	-			
2013	2	1	-	1	3	-			

Source : The Institute for the Promoting of Teaching Sciences and Technology, Year 2013

6. System for Testing and Development of Measurement and Evaluation Tools consistent with educational standards

In improving the internal and external evaluation and measurement system to serve as a tool for learning reform and quality improvement of the learners, the Ministry of Education announced a revision in the weight to be given to results of the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) administered to students at the end of Primary 3, Mattayom 3 (10th Grade) and Mattayom 6 (12th Grade) in the consideration of grades in the basic education core subjects, from an earlier weight of 80% for grade point average (GPAX) and 20% for the O-NET test scores to a ratio of 70%:30% beginning in 2014.

7. Using Technology as a Tool for Improving Education Quality

The Ministry of Education has introduced electronic tablets for use as a tool to enhance the quality of education, as a teaching aid and as a means of seeking knowledge. In 2012, the Ministry distributed one million tablets to teachers and students of Primary 1 (Prathom 1), along with 400 units of ready-to-use digital content. 9,600 schools have been

equipped with fiber optic systems for high-speed Internet connections, and teachers were given training in the use of tablets in their teaching.

8. Focus on Learning a Second Foreign Language

The Ministry of Education is in the process of improving quality in the study of a second foreign language in order to enable the Thais to compete successfully in the international arena. Major world languages, both eastern and western, are the focus of instructional development, along with those of the country's trading partners, including Japanese, Korean, German, French, Spanish, and Russian, as well as the languages of the ASEAN community, such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Burmese, and Malay/Indonesian.

Implementing this plan includes undertaking a survey and development of a database of second foreign language teachers for planning purposes and to strengthen the quality of teachers of these languages, as well as conducting proficiency tests of the teachers as a starting base for further development, for evaluation, as well as for remuneration and gratuities. Systematic improvement in language proficiency, pedagogical skills, classroom research, and also testing and evaluation skills of current teachers, along with development of the new generation of teachers will be undertaken in cooperation with institutions of higher education as well as with agencies of countries where the languages are spoken. The project is supported through a fund to produce teachers of second foreign languages where shortages exist. In 2014, 600 new teachers of second foreign languages were graduated and were inducted into service and placed in schools in new positions or to replace teachers retiring from service.⁷⁴⁷

8. Best Practices in Improving the Quality of Education

8.1 Setting a National Quality Assurance Framework for Education

8.1.1 Quality Assurance of Educational Institutions Section 47 of the National Education Act of 1999 specifies that a quality assurance system be established to improve quality and set standards in education at every level. Three important objectives of quality assurance identified were: (1) to assure learners, parents and society in general of the quality and standards of educational services being provided; (2) to promote continuing improvements of educational quality; and (3) to ensure transparency and accountability of educational institutions. The system that was developed consists of both internal and external evaluations of educational institutions and incorporates a set of standards to ensure quality of operations, academic services, and management, with key performance indicators used to measure the progress toward those standards. The quality assurance processes are applied to educational institutions at every level, from kindergarten through higher education. Evaluations are conducted on a 5-year cycle. The first round of assessments, completed in 2006, found that only 34.6% of the more than 35,000 schools in the country achieved the quality standards set. In the second round, completed in 2011 of 28,938 schools assessed, 5,232 schools, or 18%, did not meet the standards. The third round, which began in 2011, is currently in progress and will be completed in 2015.

8.2 Administration of Education in the Southern Border Provinces

The unrest in the southern border provinces of the country has had a widespread impact on the social, economic, and political status of the region. The government has declared the provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Satun, along with 4 districts of Songkla (Jana, Natawee, Sabai Yoi, and Tepa) as a special development area, and has focused particular attention on development of education. The Ministry of Education has devised six strategies to deal with strengthening the education sector in the region: 1) improvement of education quality; 2) promotion of religious education; 3) increasing educational opportunities and lifelong learning; 4) developing education programs for careers and employment; 5) improving educational administration; and 6) management of education to strengthen security.

Efforts to improve the status of education in the region include several tangible results:

8.2.1 Improvement in Education in the Context of Cultural Diversity

- Quality improvement in 45 primary and 45 secondary *amphur* district) schools;
- Development of instructional materials and technology in 1,035 schools;
- Strengthening the 'Peace through Language' program, with 11,816 participants;
- Provision of a budget of Bht. 59,000,000 to assist education development in private schools in the region;
- Training of 1,415 teachers, government officials and education personnel in organizing non-formal education programs.

Teachers have received professional training in the organization of teaching-learning activities, as well as in measurement and evaluation techniques; and schools have been able to improve technology and other learning resources.

8.2.2 Strengthening Religious Education Development of curriculum and instructional materials for the teaching of Buddhism was undertaken in 315 schools;

- 1426 teachers of Islam were provided remuneration;
- 462 Islamic education centers (*tadika*) attached to mosques and 275 tandem schools received support.

These programs have enabled students to strengthen their religious beliefs in the context of their communities, and schools and Islamic religious centers (*tadika*) have been able to work together in utilizing teaching resources efficiently

8.2.3 Creating opportunities for Education and Lifelong Learning

- Materials were prepared and courses organized for supplementary instruction to assist 10,197 individuals preparing for entrance examinations to higher education institutions;
- Activities were organized to improve the quality of life for 5,979 senior citizens;
- Scholarships were awarded to 6,680 individuals;
- Scholarships to undertake community development programs in higher education institutions were awarded to 1,862 individuals to assist in improving the conditions in the southern provinces. Greater opportunities for education are contributing to greater stability and understanding in the communities of the region

8.2.4 Measures to strengthen security:

- Establishment of closer relationships between the school and the community in 13 education districts, comprising 1,305 schools;
- Repair of 339 teachers' living quarters
- Employment of security guards in 847 schools
- Strengthening of instruction through a bi-lingual approach (Thai-Pattani Malay) in 137 schools
- Distribution of Baht. 15,700,000 in donations to the families of teachers and educational personnel who lost their lives as a result of violence in the region;
- Setting of guidelines to promote government officials and educational personnel working the troubled areas of the southern border provinces. These measures are providing increased security and safety for personnel and property, resulting in a higher morale and level of confidence, with closer cooperation from the communities in the areas of conflict.

8.3 A project to Improve Learning Achievement in the Malay-speaking Region of the Country

The Patani Malay-Thai Bilingual Education Project, begun in 2007, and focuses on the goal of improving educational quality and increasing access to primary education for at-risk children from minority communities through the use of bilingual instructional approach.

Children in the Malay-speaking communities of the Southern border region of Thailand have traditionally performed poorly on national tests, lagging far behind children in other areas of the country. The Patani Malay-Thai project seeks to address this problem through the development and implementation of a bilingual education curriculum. Introduced in four Thai government schools in the southern provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, Patani, and Satun, the project curriculum initially employs local Malay as the language of instruction in the classroom, gradually transitioning to Thai and building children's competence and fluency in both languages, while the curriculum is firmly based on Ministry of Education standards for primary grades.

The project teams conduct regular monitoring and evaluation. The Yala Rajabhat University Longitudinal Study of the project compares the academic performance of project students to that of students in monolingual Thai control schools, and has found that in the early primary grades project participants tend to achieve scores 40-60% higher in all subject areas. In addition, Patani-Malay speaking boys in project schools are 123% more likely to pass their Thai exams than their non-project school counterparts, and girls in project schools have a 156% higher chance of passing their mathematics test than do girls who are not in the project.

Since its inception, the programme has reached around 1200 students from the communities in which the four schools are located. In 2012, the number of schools was expanded to 16, and an additional 50 schools have asked to join the program.

In addition to the successful academic achievements, the project has increased the confidence of Patani-Malay speaking communities in the Thai educational system, and parents report that the program has had a positive impact on the social and intellectual development of their children. The project is conducted by Mahidol University, in partnership with UNICEF, SIL International, the Royal Institute of Thailand, the Faculty of Education, Yala Rajabhat University in Southern Thailand, the EU and UNESCO Bangkok.

8.4 A Project to Improve the Quality of Education in Strong *tambon* Schools

The Ministry of Education has undertaken a project to support the development of strong rural schools to become 'model schools' that serve as centers to demonstrate quality education approaches to partner schools and to provide services that involve the community in learning activities and develop local pride and trust in their operations.

Activities are being introduced into the curriculum that encourage learning by doing and focusing on project-based or problem-based learning that strengthens the ability of the students to develop and express their creativity and to generate closer ties with and concern for their communities.

Schools selected to join the project must:

- provide instruction at the primary level, combined primary-lower secondary level or lower secondary schools located in *tambon* (hamlets);
- be situated on a land area large enough to accommodate activities suggested by the project;
- have a capable and dedicated administrator able to involve the community;
- be located in an area with good communications and serve as a partner with other schools and with the community;

- have good relations with the community;

6,545 schools have been selected for the 'Strong *tambon* School' Project during the past 5 to 8 years, depending on funding available. In 2013 a budget of Bht. 934,000 - 935,000 was provided to 836 schools to renovate and repair their facilities, improve the landscape, obtain instructional materials to support teaching-learning and activities.

Chapter 3

Thailand Strategies to Achieve Education For All

Thailand's National Education Plan of 1992 and the revised plan of 2009-2016 were aimed at responding effectively to the country's needs and to the rapid changes occurring in the society, to develop a high-quality citizenry that is adaptable, creative, and progressive, along with balanced social, economic, and political development incorporating environmental concerns, science and technology. The plans also focus on providing opportunities for individuals to acquire knowledge to improve themselves, and to expand and ensure a basic education for all, incorporating learning networks and education services for the public. The objectives of the plans are consistent with the six goals of the UNESCO Declaration on Education for All.

The Eleventh Education Plan (2012-2016), incorporates the framework of the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, and is consistent with the provisions of the 2007 Constitution and the revised National Education Plan for 2009-2016. It calls for balanced and sustained development that envisions a good, happy, adaptable population engaged in lifelong learning of quality, able to compete in the world arena. The plan includes the following five strategies:

Table 33 Strategies for Implementation of the Eleventh Education Plan (2009-2016)

Strategy	Target
1 Improve quality and standards of learners, teachers and education personnel as well as educational institutions	Focus is on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improving every level and every type of education service to ensure quality of learning and to improve the achievement of learners, enable them to learn independently and to increase their quality of life and to live comfortably and happily; - training and raising the level of professionalism of teachers and education personal; - improving quality and standards of educational institutions at every level to attain accreditation.
2 Produce and train manpower consistent with the needs to ensure the country's competitiveness	Focus is on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - producing qualified manpower in science, technology, and vocational fields, individuals who are knowledgeable and skilled at the occupational standard and level required who will be competitive internationally; - preparing learners and manpower to perform successfully in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community
3 Strengthen research and development; disseminate knowledge in technology and innovation	Focus is on promoting and supporting research and development for national development, health services, and for academic excellence, particularly applied research for improving education and for commercial applications

Strategy	Target
4 Expand opportunities to access educational services and continuous lifelong learning	Focus is on -urgent expansion of access to educational services of every level and type throughout the country, in both urban and rural areas; - ensuring equitable opportunity for disadvantaged groups to access formal education as well as non-formal services to encourage independent lifelong learning; - improving the data information system to support management and administration.
5 Improve the educational management and administration system, and strengthen participation by all sectors of society	Focus is on - restructuring the system of administration and management to improve flexibility in provision of accepted services; - strengthen education district offices and education facilities at all levels and of all types for increased flexibility and administrative independence to operate under greater decentralization; - strengthening the acquisition of resources from all sectors and encourage networking for the improvement of education and educational administration.

In its focus on providing education for all in line with the six goals of the World Declaration, Thailand has set several strategies:

Goal 1 Early Childhood Care and Education

The focus on child development from birth through entry into the first grade includes attention to disadvantaged and disabled children as well as foreign and undocumented children, since efforts at this age have an impact on the quality of the population and the country in general. A number of strategies for improvement of care and education of young children have been set, as described in the following table:

Table 34 Policies and Guidelines in Administering Early Childhood Education

Legislation/Implementation Plan/Policy	Year of Policy Implementation	Policy Target/Focus/Strategy
Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age group) 2007-2016	2007-2016	Focus is on the quality development of all children from birth through 5 years of age, with the aim that, by 2016, all children in this age group will have appropriate balanced development to their full potential, with an enjoyment of learning and growth appropriate to their age to set a strong foundation for future growth and development. Three strategies have been employed in this effort: 1. Strategy for Strengthening Early Childhood Development

Legislation/Implementation Plan/Policy	Year of Policy Implementation	Policy Target/Focus/Strategy
		2. Strategy for Supporting Parents and Care Givers in the Development of Young Children 3. Policy to Strengthen the Environs and Context to Reinforce Development of Young Children
Implementation plan for early childhood development (from birth to 6 years of age) of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	2008-2010	Focus is on development of young children from birth through 6 years of age through Plan 1: Preparing the readiness of Thai society for the development of young children Plan 2: Improving the capacities of care givers Plan 3: Improving instructional materials, surroundings and development processes used in early childhood care and education
Master plan for Smart and Moral Thai Children the Ministry of Public Health	2006-2008	Strategies to solve problems and raise the intellectual capacity and emotional development of young children include: Strategy 1: Strengthen medical services for early childhood care and development Strategy 2: Improve the quality and capacities of nursery and childcare centers Strategy 3: Develop the capacities of young children to their fullest potential Strategy 4: Use public relations and improve media to strengthen early childhood development Strategy 5: Revise laws to support the Development of young children
Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on Early Childhood Care and Development B.E. 2551 (2008)	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointment of a National Commission on Early Childhood Development, with the Prime Minister as Chairman - Appointment of sub-committees to push forward implementation of the strategies for early childhood development

Legislation/Implementation Plan/Policy	Year of Policy Implementation	Policy Target/Focus/Strategy
National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Grader) in Accordance with the Government Policy 2012-2016	2012-2016	Four strategies have been set for implementation of the policy on early childhood development: Strategy 1: Work with all young children to develop to their full potential Strategy 2: Reduce iodine deficiency in young children Strategy 3: Train caregivers of young children Strategy 4: Set mechanisms and procedures for development of young children
Implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Grader) in Accordance with the Government Policy 2012-2016	2012-2016	Determination of integrated projects and activities that foster the development of young children in line with the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood (from Birth through Entry into First Grade) in Accordance with the Government Policy on Early Childhood

Thailand's long-term policy and the appointment of a national commission with the Prime Minister as chairman was aimed at integrating and energising efforts to increase early childhood development. Subsequently, the strategic plan for early childhood further clarified the implementation strategies:

Table 34 The National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (Newborn to Pre-First Grader) in Accordance with the Government Policy 2012-2016

Strategy 1	Work with all Young Children to Develop Their Full Potential
Goals	By 2016, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. all children from birth through 5 years of age, or to entry into first grade, will have access to health services 2. 90% of all children from birth to entry into first grade will have achieved age-appropriate stages of development 3. all children six years of age will have entered first grade
Strategy 2	Reduce Iodine Deficiency in Young Children
Goals	All children of pre-school age should receive diets containing an adequate amount of iodine <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All pregnant women should receive adequate amounts of iodine in their diets and through iodine tablets 2. Women who breast-feed their children during their first six months of life should receive adequate amounts of iodine in

	their diets and through iodine tablets
Strategy 3	Train Care-givers of Young Children
Goals	All pre-school children should receive quality care and training to ensure proper development in all aspects commensurate with their age.
Strategy 4	Set Mechanisms and Procedures for Development of Young Children
Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor measures set by each ministry to ensure compliance with government policy and resolutions of the National Commission for Early Childhood Development 2. By 2016 a provincial level committee should be established in each province 3. Undertake data collection, surveys, and research to assist in planning and monitoring assessing conditions

The efforts to implement the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood in accordance with the Government Policy on Early Childhood (2012-2016) and the companion Implementation Plan is resulting in achievement of the targets set for early childhood development under Goal 1

Goal 2 Provision of Universal Basic Education

Ensuring that all children receive an education is specified under Section 3 Article 49 of the 2007 Constitution, which stipulates that “*persons shall enjoy an equal right to an education for the period of not less than twelve years, which shall be provided for all, at quality, by the State without charge.*” The Education Act of 1999, as amended in the Third Revision of 2010, states in Article 10, Paragraph 1, “*The management of education shall provide everyone equal rights and opportunities for a quality basic education of at least twelve years provided by the State at no charge*”. This, then, is the stipulation for basic education.

In addition, Thailand is a member of international conventions and became a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on February 12, 1992. The Convention stipulates four rights of children: the right to live, the right to be protected, the right to develop and the right to participate. Access to and expansion of opportunities for education is found in the Government Administration Plan for 2512-2515:

1. Create opportunities for education through supporting scholarships and educational costs and the selection system for continuing studies at a higher level.
2. Improve the system of recognition of prior learning and experience, revise the measurement and evaluation of learning, set procedures for flexible and diverse learning approaches so that all citizens of all ages have the opportunity to access education and learning throughout their lives
3. Make available opportunities and alternatives for children and young people and the general public both through formal and non-formal systems to access diverse education services to create a society of lifelong learning.

1. Strategies for the Administration of Basic Education

The Ministry of Education has set strategies for the provision of basic education for all individuals of school age through a variety of alternatives in order to reduce the rate of attrition, and to promote continuing study or entering the workforce:

1. Students, teachers, and education personnel in all educational institutions in the southern border provinces have the opportunity for development consistent with the special characteristics of the region;

2. All students, teachers, and education personnel will be prepared to join the ASEAN Economic Community and will be able to adapt to the diverse cultural *milieu*.

3. All education institutions will be improved to their full potential and will have strong internal quality assessment systems that will enable them to be accredited from external quality assessment bodies.

4 All education district offices will be of quality standards. The information in the table below describes the third strategy of the Office of the Basic Education Commission for 2013, which provides for expansion of educational opportunities, consistent with the aims of UNESCO's Goal 2 of Education for All.

Table 35 Strategy 3 : Expanding Opportunities to Access Education and Ensuring that All Learners have Opportunities to Develop their Full Potential

Focus	Measures	Key Performance Indicators
All individuals have opportunities to access education through alternative education services to reduce attrition and promote continued learning or entry into the workforce	- urgently enable everyone of school age to acquire a basic education	- a 2% increase in the number of learners compared to the total school age population - 100% of those enrolled in basic education complete their studies on time
	- support the costs of education from kindergarten through the basic education	- 100% of learners receive support for the costs of basic education - 100% of parents are satisfied with the basic education services provided
	- strengthen teacher-student relations and support and assistance to students	- fewer student dropouts - increased number of Mattayom 3 students going on to higher levels

Source“ Strategy 3”, 2013 Implementing Plan, Office of Basic Education Commission , Year 2013

The Ministry of Education has set a Four Year Implementation Plan for 2013-2016 in which equitable access to and an opportunity for education for every group in society is the major feature.

Table 36 Key Indicators of Four Year Implementation Plan for 2013-2016

Key Indicators	Targets for 2013-2016
Percentage of learners receiving support of education costs from kindergarten through completion of basic education	100%
Average number of years of education completed by of the Thai populace	9.7 years
Percentage of the workforce completing at least upper secondary level	46%

Source :Four Year Implementation Plan for 2013-2016, Ministry of Education, Year 2013

In general, Thailand is close to achieving its goal of providing education for all at the primary and lower secondary level, demonstrated particularly by the rate of new enrollments at the primary level. In 2012, 93.21% of boys and 88.96% of girls were enrolled in primary education. Legislation, policies, and agencies all clearly support basic education. While the main responsibility for basic education lies with the Office of the Basic Education Commission and the Office of Private Education, other agencies that operate schools include the Local Administration Offices of the Ministry of Interior, the Bangkok Administration, the Border Police Bureau of the Royal Thai Police, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, which oversees athletic schools and colleges, the Office of the Higher Education Commission and higher education institutions, which operate demonstration schools, the Office of the Vocational Education Commission, the Ministry of Culture, which oversees fine arts schools, and the Office of the Prime Minister, which operates schools under the National Office of Buddhism.

Goal 3: Learning Opportunities and Life Skills Acquisition for Youth and Adults

The development of life skills is a learning process that focuses upon enabling the learner to improve his knowledge, skills and attitudes, to have respect for his own worth and that of others, to use good judgement in solving problems, to control his emotions and deal with stress, to have good relationships with others, to adapt and protect himself in various circumstances and to handle himself appropriately and effectively in conducting his life. Strengthening life skills and promoting lifelong education of the populace are stipulated in the National Education Act of 1999 and as amended in the second revision of 2002 under Article 4, which defines lifelong learning as education that derives from a combination of formal, non-formal and informal education to improve the quality of one's condition continually throughout life. This is consistent with the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, which focuses on the development of the Thai people to be ethical, to learn throughout life, to be skilled and to conduct oneself appropriately during each phase of life.

In addition, providing opportunities for learning for young people and adults and development of life skills is consistent with the objectives of the core components of the basic education curriculum of 2008, which specify development of life skills as the process of learning that focuses on self-improvement in knowledge, skills, and attitudes

Life skills are divided into two major groupings:

General life skills are the basic skills that learners require to deal with problems faced daily in life. Teachers can organize teaching-learning of these skills through learner-centered activities in the classroom, using experiences familiar to the learners in group work or games

Specific life skills involve skills needed in dealing with specific problems such as drug addiction, HIV-AIDS, sex-related matters, unwanted or unprepared pregnancies,

adapting to crises, poor interpersonal relations. Developing skills to deal with matters such as these strengthens the learner and builds strong emotional control.

The Office of Non-formal and Informal Education has also developed activities to improve life skills in its basic education curriculum, and has adopted 10 skills identified by the World Health Organization for inclusion in its courses of study. These skills are decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, skills in interpersonal relationships, self awareness, empathy, coping with emotions, and dealing with stress.

The Vocational Education Act of 2008 specifies the management of vocational education and occupational training under formal, non-formal, and co-operative education systems. Learners in the vocational education stream are able to study at the bachelor's degree level, on par with those studying in the general education stream

A policy has been established to harmonise higher and vocational education qualifications consistent with the needs for manpower, both in quantity and in quality, with practical experience income income generation being a part of the study programs. Cooperation with the private sector is underway to offer employment immediately upon completion of studies. Occupational training centers for various skills as well as repair and service centers are being established in cooperation with the private sector for students as well as the general public in communities around the country.

Goal 4: Raising the Level of Adult Literacy

The ability of the population to read and write is recognized as an important factor in the development of all countries. It is also a basic right of all individuals. As stated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'Everyone has the right to education' , and the ability to read and write provides the basis for opportunities to access education to develop skills and knowledge to improve one's life and to adapt appropriately in the modern world.

Literacy education in Thailand began in 1940, the Year of Literacy. Currently, the measures for increasing literacy lie mainly with the non-formal education system. Programs are regularly conducted to support, not only the development, but the retention of skills and practical applications in reading, writing, numeracy, basic science, and technology consistent with the needs of the target groups. The country's policy literacy includes:

1. improvement of non-formal education centers in *tambon* and districts to expand opportunities for literacy education
2. improvement in and modernization of the local and central data information systems to completely and accurately identify those unable to read or write to assist in planning and implementing literacy education programs
3. support and encouragement for educational institutions to offer literacy programs for retention of skills and training in basic computer skills to serve as a tool for continued competency and literacy skills throughout life
4. improvement in curriculum, instructional materials, measurement tools, and implementation devices to ensure that instruction is consistent with the context and conditions of the target groups
5. training of non-formal education teachers and network partners who organize literacy training programs to improve capabilities and skills in utilizing effective teaching-learning methods

The Ministry of Education has designated 2009-2018 as the Thai Decade of Reading, with the aim of promoting good reading habits and a love of reading among the Thai populace. Surveys are being conducted to determine literacy levels and needs, along with reading promotion activities in communities and training centers around the country to raise the level of and quality of literacy skills of the people.

The Ministry has developed a literacy curriculum for the benefit of Thais as well as other nationalities who wish to learn to read and write Thai, to be used by government schools as well as private sector and community services.

In 2013, Bangkok was selected as a ‘World Book Capital’, by UNESCO, demonstrating the country’s commitment and involvement in improving literacy.

Goal 5: Ensuring Gender Equality in Education

Gender equality is a provision of the 2007 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. Article 30 states, “Individuals have equal rights under the law and are given equal protection under the law:

Unjust discrimination toward individuals, whether because of differences in place of birth, national origin, gender, physical or mental limitations, health conditions, economic or social status, religious affiliation and beliefs, level of education or training, or political ideology, contravenes the tenets of the Constitution and is not to be accepted.

Thailand was also a signatory to the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985 and to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2000, demonstrating its commitment to gender equality in Thai society.

Every national economic and social development plan formulated by successive governments has included sections to support and strengthen gender equality. The current, eleventh, plan for 2012-2016, calls for the strengthening of attitudes and opinions that uphold gender equality through cooperation of the family, school, places of worship, and the media in instilling the appropriate values and attitudes, encouraging a rejection of abusive behaviour toward women, and enabling women to have opportunities to hold positions of management and decision-making at the national and local level in the public and private sector, in politics, government and business. In this effort, women must be supported in developing their potential and knowledge, along with acquiring ethical principles and values to increase their participation in decision-making processes.

The Women’s Development Plan formulated during the implementation of the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan focuses on ensuring that Thai society is a society of equality, and that Thai people have accepting attitudes towards equal opportunities for the role of women in economic, social and political contexts; that women have equal opportunities to access education at every level, engage in learning throughout life, and are able to develop their potential appropriately, enjoying health, security and an improved quality of life.

In the commitment to ensure equality between men and women, Thai law has guaranteed rights that had previously been denied; for example, allowing women to retain their own family name after marriage, permitting a choice of female address (Mrs, Ms, Miss), enabling women to hold various government positions, allowing husbands to take leave to look after their wives following child-birth, *etc.*

Gender equality-related curricula have been developed for introduction in schools and universities under the Ministry of Education.

Goal 6 Improvement in the Quality of Education

Thailand has announced a policy to implement urgent improvements in education through reform of the system of learning to raise the level of quality to international standards through curriculum reform at every level to respond to the rapid change and to be on par with the global community. Reform of the learning system is aimed at connecting and integrating levels and areas of knowledge and raising the achievement and quality of the learners. As part of the reform effort, a curriculum development institute has been created to prepare a national curriculum. Efforts and policy decisions focus on the teaching-learning of science,

and mathematics and on improving learner performance on PISA assessment in two ways: improvement of the traditional approaches to teaching-learning in these subjects; and on changing the teaching-learning paradigm through an emphasis on teaching-learning to develop thinking skills and the utilization of mobile electronic devices as an important tool for learning. Testing and evaluation processes and standards are to be improved and more closely related to the curriculum.

A reform of teacher preparation and training is being undertaken to conform more closely to the needs, to respond to teacher shortages in certain areas of the country and certain disciplines through development of a 10-15 year long term plan. New approaches are being taken in the preparation of teachers through selection of bright students in various fields or bringing in specialists or experts to become teachers, and through improvement in the quality and capacity of teacher training institutions. Information and communications technology has been introduced into the system to aid in teaching-learning. Teachers are also trained in using the technology in their teaching.

Vocational education is also being improved to an international standard of quality through the application of the Vocational Qualifications Framework, which is part of the National Qualifications Framework and serves as a tool to describe and accredit skills, knowledge, and capabilities as required by the development needs of the country. Higher education institutions are being improved and are encouraged to compete in ranking with outstanding institutions in the international arena.

In compliance with the directives and policies of the military National Council for Peace and Order taking charge of the country in mid 2014, the education sector is to serve as an important mechanism for human development. The Ministry of Education has therefore developed the following policies for the improvement of education:

- Bring about conditions that will favor the creation of harmony, reconciliation, and concord;
- Increase and distribute opportunities for equal access to education;
- Increase the competitiveness of the country, focusing on production and training of mid-level and highly skilled manpower, and on research and development for national development;
- Increase the quality of education through curriculum reform, through modernisation of the teaching-learning process, as well as through upgrading the quality of education institutions; focus on systematic thinking, instil ethics, moral values, and discipline, along with pride in being Thai and dedication to the nation, religion and the monarchy; reject dishonesty and corruption;
- Reform the system of teacher preparation and professional development to improve quality; attract good people into the teaching profession;
- Reform the administration and management of education for greater efficiency through decentralisation of authority, and focus on participation by all sectors of society;
- Improve education in the southern border provinces;
- Ensure readiness to join the ASEAN Economic Community;
- Improve and modernize the system of information technology for education.

Chapter 4 Emerging Challenges and Government Priorities

1 Factors Impacting the Development of Thai Education

Quality education for all has been a priority for Thailand, to prepare young people to become adults who will make positive contributions to society. Educational development has been consistent with the stipulations of the 2007 Constitution and the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, which focuses on continual lifelong learning as a strategy for the development of human resources and on the creation of a quality society, adhering to the principles of self-reliance and the sufficiency economy to maximize the physical, intellectual, and emotional potential of the population.

Continuing efforts are being made to ensure equitable access to and opportunities for a quality education, along with a focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system and raising standards to strengthen the competitiveness of the country in the contact of the global society. The goal is to ensure a basic education of 12 years for everyone, to bring all to a level of knowledge, skills and expertise required by the current and future needs for manpower, along with the development of technology to compensate for shortages of labor or expertise that may arise as the country moves toward an ageing society with fewer children born to replace the retiring generation of people in the workforce.

2. Policies and Directions of Thai Education

The Ministry of Education is implementing a Four Year Plan for Education (2013-2016) that responds to the policy of improving quality and to fulfill the following urgent goals:

2.1 Reform of teaching and learning, through:

- curriculum reform, in tandem with modernization of teaching-learning processes and integration with curriculum, and including learner acquisition of life skills appropriate to level;

- improvement of the teaching-learning processes to ensure that learners are able to think, analyze, solve problems, and learn independently, and to raise the level of learner achievement on par with international standards, particularly in science, mathematics and technology, foreign languages, and critical analysis;

- improvement of testing and measurement processes to ensure consistency with curriculum and teaching-learning methods; application of the quality assurance internal and external assessment system as a tool for improving the learning system and raising the quality of learners; improvement in the selection process for entrance into higher education institutions so as to correspond to teaching-learning and curriculum processes in the basic education system.

2.2 Reform of teacher preparation and professional development, through:

- improving the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of teachers;
- ensuring that the number and specializations of teachers are consistent with the needs;

- producing and/or training teachers who can effectively organize teaching-learning methods; consistent with the present curriculum and can adapt to new curricula; and who are knowledgeable and up-to-date on current and world affairs;

- improving the system of teacher accreditation and academic standing, linking teachers' professional advancement to achievement of their students;

- giving importance to teacher welfare and improvement of teacher morale and motivation, which will have an impact on student learning and quality.

2.3 Improvement of learning, through

- utilization of information and communications technologies, such as mobile devices, in teaching and learning to raise standards;
- development of instructional materials, training of teachers, and development of standardized evaluation and measurement tools;
- setting the foundations for lifelong learning in Thai society

2.4 Improvement in and raising of standards of vocational education to meet the manpower needs of the country, through:

- implementing the Vocational Qualifications Framework of the National Qualifications Framework to identify skills, knowledge, and abilities of workers consistent with the needs of employers;
- improving teaching and learning of vocational subjects through increasing joint efforts with the productive sector and enterprises;
- implementing approaches to motivate the private sector to join in partnerships to improve vocational educational institutions and to increase the ratio of learners in this stream over those in the general stream

2.5 Raising of standards of higher education institutions, through:

- encouraging a focus on improving quality and standards rather than on expanding facilities and increasing enrollment;
- promoting research, innovation and technology;
- encouraging institutions to attain World Class University status by instituting an evaluation and ranking system to encourage development of standards and investment of resources to increase quality and efficiency;

2.6 Encouraging all sectors of society to increase participation in supporting education;

2.7 Increasing and distributing opportunities for quality education to individuals in all age groups, particularly the disadvantaged;

2.8 Improving education in the southern border provinces through support of schools and educational approaches consistent with the economy, society, and unique characteristics of the region, as well as with the interests and needs of the population.

3. Using Education to Create Harmony, Reconciliation, and Concord, Love of Country, Religion and the Monarchy, and Pride in being Thai

In June 2014, the Ministry of Education set a plan and urgent project to raise the level of quality of education and to create understanding, harmony, and reconciliation in the country in accordance with the human resource development policy of the National Council for Peace and Order. The plan consists of the following urgent measures:

- 1) Bring about conditions that will favor the creation of harmony, reconciliation, and concord;
- 2) Increase and distribute opportunities for equal access to education;
- 3) Increase the competitiveness of the country, focusing on production and training of mid-level and highly skilled manpower, and on research and development for national development;
- 4) Increase the quality of education through curriculum reform, through modernisation of the teaching-learning process, as well as through upgrading the quality of education institutions; focus on systematic thinking, instil ethics, moral

values, and discipline, along with pride in being Thai and dedication to the nation, religion and the monarchy; reject dishonesty and corruption;

- 5) Reform the system of teacher preparation and professional development to improve quality; attract good people into the teaching profession;
- 6) Reform the administration and management of education for greater efficiency through decentralisation of authority, and focus on participation by all sectors of society;
- 7) Improve education in the southern border provinces;
- 8) Ensure readiness to join the ASEAN Community
- 9) Improve and modernize the system of information technology for education.

In implementing the policies above, a national committee will be appointed to set directions for the education reform, the revision of relevant laws and regulations, and the drafting of a new national education plan.

4. Future Factors Impacting the Administration of Thai Education

The administration of education following 2015, which corresponds to the 4-Year Plan of the Ministry of Education (2013-2016), the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2016), and the policy directions for education, will be based on the following factors:

1. Significant changes in the global context, for example, the formation of economic alliances among groups of countries in various regions of the world, particularly the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, will require countries like Thailand to develop the skills and versatility of their people, for example, in language proficiency and in occupational skills.

2. The continued preponderance and increase of elderly citizens in the society will have significant impact. This emphasizes the need for improvements in the human capital of the Thai workforce, in order to enable the economy to keep expanding in the face of aging population.¹⁴

3. Advances in technology are having an ever increasing role in economic and social development and in the lives of the people, and are resulting in creative economic development that will require knowledge, creativity, and innovation as the critical components for advancing national progress in the future.

4. The increased opportunities for education that have opened for children and young people have raised the average number of years spent in school, and in 2010, the average number of years in school of those 15 years of age and above was 8.2 years; the goal is to further increase this figure to 9.7 years by 2016.

5. National development will rely more on knowledge and technology, so research and development in science and technology will be an important factor in the nation's progress, a shift from the present reliance on natural resources, capital, and manual labor that results in lower productivity to an economy that is based on knowledge and expertise in science and technology. A society and economy based on knowledge will guard and move Thailand forward in the new world context.

6. Creating intellectual capital among the people requires the development of their capacities to think analytically, to synthesise, to be creative, and to seek knowledge. They must also possess strong ethical and moral values, know their rights and duties and those of

¹⁴ Impact of Demographic Change in Thailand - SITUATION AND POLICY RESPONSE, Office Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board and UNFPA, Page 4, Year 2013

others, along with the strengthening of their intellectual foundations and the learning resources of the comity.

7. Strengthening communities will require reinforcing the role of the general public and private enterprise in improving Thai society. Efforts must be made to increase the capabilities and capacities of communities in developing a good quality of life of the residents. Managing knowledge

4 Areas of Focus for Achieving Improvement in Education by 2015

4.1 Creation of a society that stresses quality lifelong learning through developing appropriate skills to enable citizens to adapt and live in a world of rapid change through teaching approaches that integrate the subject matter of various disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics in order to enable the learner to apply the knowledge gained in solving problems, and in researching and developing new ideas.

4.2 Improvement in the level of education to create a knowledgeable society that is harmonious and united through curriculum reform, teaching-learning processes, and improvement of educational facilities, and focusing on systematic thinking and instilling strong ethical and moral values and discipline, pride in being Thai, respecting the nation, religion and the monarchy, and rejecting corruption and dishonesty.

4.3 Augmentation of the level of vocational education, both in quantity and quality, to be consistent with the needs of the labor market for semi-skilled and skilled manpower. The focus should be on practical training rather than theory, on expanding co-operative education and partnerships between the private sector and the educational system, as well as on increasing internships and work-study arrangements. In this effort the private sector should be encouraged to contribute its knowledge, expertise, and participation in managing education to ensure that learners are prepared to enter the workforce in the ASEAN Community, in regional economic alliances, and in the world marketplace.

4.4 Reform of teacher education and training to improve quality and to attract qualified individuals into the profession.

4.5 Use of information and communications technologies to raise the quality of education and to expand the opportunities for access to quality learning; through, for example, development of 'Cyberhomes', where learning materials are delivered directly to learners *via* high-speed Internet; expansion of educational television, Mobile Learning through portable devices, and the creation of 'Smart Classrooms' to stimulate the imaginations and intellect of the learners.

Chapter 5

Summary and Recommendations

Achieving the six goals of the World Declaration of Education for All is an important commitment of countries throughout the world. Thailand is determined to join with the global community in achieving these goals to ensure that by 2015, all children and young people will be able to receive a quality education, and that work will continue towards improvement of opportunities for quality lifelong education, which UNESCO is proposing for inclusion in the Post-2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations.

During the past two decades since the Declaration of Education for All was proclaimed in 1990 in Thailand, every successive government has placed importance on providing quality education throughout the country. The Thai constitutions of 1991, 1997, and 2007 all have emphasized the responsibility of the state to provide education for everyone, and the 2007 Constitution stipulates that “*Individuals have a basic right to twelve years of a quality education provided by the State at no cost.*”. In addition, every national development plan has emphasized the importance of education as a tool for developing the country’s human resources. The Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) places the individual at the center of development in conjunction with the creation of knowledge, creativity, innovation, and the development of science and technology as the key to national development.

As an indication of the prominence given education, the annual budget allocations for the Ministry of Education ranks at the top and have increased nearly every year, particularly the budgets from 2008 to the present, which can be seen from the following table:

Table 37 Budget Allocations for Education 2008-2014

Fiscal Year	Allocation (in Baht)	Percentage of Annual Budget Allocation
2008	301,437,400,000	18.2
2009	350,556,691,200	18.0
2010	346,713,093,300	20.4
2011	392,454,037,800	18.1
2012	420,490,032,600	17.7
2013	460,411,648,800	19.2
2014	482,788.5859	20.5

Source Office of Permanent Secretary, 2014.

The government supports the costs of pre-school through completion of basic education at no charge to enable all children and young people of school age to acquire an education. A loan fund has also been established to assist young people at the upper secondary and tertiary levels in the general and vocational streams in bearing cost of living and other expenses to enable them continue on in school. In 2014, the Ministry of education allocated a budget of three billion six hundred ten million Baht for loans in support of 204,000 individuals¹⁵. Measures to improve the quality of education have included system reform to ensure a coordination among the various components, and a focus on developing modern curriculum and

¹⁵ Office of Permanent Secretary, 3 June 2014

teaching-learning methods that promote critical thinking, problem solving, independent learning, and adaptive responses to change. Teacher training is emphasized, along with upgrading standards of testing and measurement and ensuring that assessments correspond to curriculum content and learner development. Improvement in the quality of education has been declared a national priority, with all sectors of society urged to join in upgrading learner achievement and driving implementation of the policies.

A Four-Year Action Plan has been formulated to implement policies established, setting clear targets to be met within specific timeframes. The plan covers the period 2013-2016 and follows education policies and the Government Action plan for 2012-2015, in the context of situations and changes in conditions that have an impact on the administration of education. Major features of the plan include improvement in the quality of education and expansion of access to opportunities for lifelong learning, with increased participation in these efforts by all sectors of society, to ensure a quality population possessing strong moral and ethical standards.

Education policies during this decade, therefore, focus on developing the country's human capital to achieve a quality population of knowledgeable, capable, and ethical people who can compete successfully. However, in this effort to provide quality education, and to achieve the six goals of education for all, many challenges continue to demand attention and to require resolution.

Goal 1 Early Childhood Care and Education

A number of actions have been initiated to ensure effective development of the country's human resources. Policies have been set to strengthen efforts to provide understanding and knowledge about pre-natal care to ensure appropriate and effective health care for expectant mothers and infants; and a national commission on early childhood development was established in 2008, chaired by the Prime Minister, to increase efficiency, coordination, and systematic management of early childhood development. A long term policy and strategies for early childhood development was formulated, along with an accompanying implementation plan, to encourage all agencies and sectors to work together in implementing measures to improve the development of young children. These efforts have resulted in an increase in the percentage of children in pre-school programs from 82.97% of the total number of children from two to five years of age in 2009 to 88.12% in 2013.

Despite these advances, greater attention must be given to improving overall quality and raising standards; to ensuring proper prenatal and postnatal care for mothers and infants; to disseminating the results of effective programs of one agency to others; to responding to the specific needs and interests of each community and social group; and to improving the care and supervision of young children, along with strengthening their intellectual and physical development. Facilities and services of pre-school nurseries and learning centers need to be improved in quality and continually monitored, using effective evaluation tools, to meet standards, and data information and mapping systems need to be developed to accurately survey the number of children not yet receiving services.

Goal 2 Providing Basic Education Services to All

Thailand's policy is to provide opportunities to expand access to quality continuing education for all groups and individuals in society equally, including the disadvantaged, the impoverished, the physically and mentally disabled, as well as members of ethnic minorities. This policy has resulted an increase in the average number of years of education completed by Thais between 16 and 69 years of age from 5.3 years in 1986 to 8.3 years in 2010. In 2013 it was found that a total of 4,892,062¹⁶ disadvantaged children were enrolled in formal education programs, and increase from 2011 and 2012, when enrollment of disadvantaged children was 4,298,001, and 4,323,142, respectively.

At the same time, there still remain many children and young people of all ages in remote and outlying areas who are impoverished, disabled, orphaned, or abandoned who have

¹⁶ Education Statistics, Office of Basic Education Commission, Year 2009-2013

no opportunity for a quality education. A survey of household economic and social conditions conducted by the National Statistical Office from 2010 to 2013 reported that not all children have studied through the compulsory education level, particularly those in impoverished circumstances. It was found that the number of children from families whose annual income was less than US\$1,200 was 4,585,207¹⁷, and while the majority of these children were enrolled in school, there is a risk that many in this group will have dropped out of school before completion. There are also 160,000 children living in remote areas of the country who seek opportunities for quality education.

While significant resources have been allocated to educational development, the report of Thailand's Mid-Decade Assessment of Education for All for 2000-2005 noted the disparity between rural and urban schools and the lack of conformity of standards and in the management of education. In response, emphasis was placed on expanding and ensuring equitable opportunities for education throughout the country through: increased access to resources and services; access to financial support; opportunities for skill training; and opportunities for lifelong learning. Government and private education units as well as private and development agencies have been encouraged to offer a variety of learning services and a five-year strategic plan for education of disadvantaged (2012-2016) has been formulated to ensure effective implementation.

The challenge for Thai education is to increase that figure to 9.7 years by 2016 by enlisting various agencies to undertake projects and activities that provide quality education, such as those included in a strategic plan for improving education administration in highlands and border areas during 2015-2018; through the improvement of small schools; through implementing teacher reform; and through offering alternative education approaches in the formal school system. Such proposals offer opportunities to more effectively develop the country's human resources.

Goal 3 Learning Opportunities and Life Skills Acquisition for Youth and Adults

The Thailand Mid-Decade Assessment of Education for All between 2000 and 2005 emphasized the importance of strengthening life skills education for learners at all levels and for the general population in four areas: sanitation; personal safety and safety of property; natural resources and the environment; and ethical and moral values and desired character attributes. Actions taken in this area have resulted in an increase in participation in programs every year. Nonetheless, the societal changes that have taken place during this decade and the impacts to be encountered as a result of the country's entry into the ASEAN Economic Community require that the country urgently prepare its manpower in skills that meet the demands of the economy and aid in adapting to the needs of 21st Century life. To act upon this requirement and to ensure that children and young people are prepared to respond to current and future circumstances, four areas of education in life skills were integrated into the core components of the Basic Education Curriculum of 2008: awareness of self worth and respect for others; decision-making and problem solving; handling one's emotions and dealing with stress; and inter-personal relationships

The education system is also strengthening vocational education as a tool for developing knowledge as a basis for occupations through increasing the proportion of vocational stream students over general stream students to a ratio of 60:40 by the year 2016, and to strive for excellence in craftsmanship. Non-formal education facilities at the *tambon* level are being improved to serve as community centers of learning, skill development and livelihood improvement.

Bringing about harmony and fellowship among the people is a further obligation which the Ministry of Education is fulfilling through projects aimed at creating understanding, unity,

¹⁷ Education Statistics, Office of Basic Education Commission, Year 2013

and concord as well as through including in history and civics courses a love of country, religion, and the monarchy, and pride in being Thai.

Goal 4: Raising the level of Literacy

Thailand has, for some time, set and implemented policies to increase the level of literacy in the population for application in daily life. Thailand's Mid-Decade Assessment of Education for All during 2000-2005 reported that, although the ratio of literacy among the Thai people had increased significantly, 4% to 5% of the population were still unable to read or write. In 2013, more than three million people, mostly minority ethnic groups or Thais of other cultural groups, remained unable to read and write Thai. The challenge is to assist these Thais in accessing opportunities for education and in strengthening literacy in every social group, particularly those Thais living in the northern highlands and in the Muslim communities of the southern border provinces.

In this effort, more than one hundred thousand people are taught literacy skills each year, and more than forty thousand village libraries have been established. In 2014 a campaign has been inaugurated to "Stamp Out Illiteracy" and a 'Literacy Curriculum' has been drafted which specifies the development of skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing a minimum of 800 words commonly used in daily life, using the consonants, vowels and tone marks of Thai. Basic numeracy is also included in the curriculum.

Surveys are being undertaken to determine basic data on literacy and on the needs for educational activities and learning programs, as well as assessments of literacy levels among the working-age population from 15 to 59 years to seek means of ensuring that all can read, write, and do basic calculations.

Goal 5 Ensuring Gender Equality in Education

The right to at least twelve years of basic education is guaranteed by the state to both males and females equally at no charge, and has strengthened the access to education by both genders and has required education establishments to use curriculum and instructional materials consistent with the needs and capabilities of the learners, taking into consideration their individual differences, and the differences between males and females. Facilities are to be provided for learners without discriminating between males and females.

In 2013, the Cabinet approved a draft resolution, Strategies for Development of the Potential of Young Women in Education Establishments, to be implemented during 2014-2016 to ensure that young women's potential is developed from kindergarten through higher education, and as a guideline for agencies, both public and private, that are involved with women's development.

The Ministry of Education is also revising textbooks in the basic education curriculum to include the roles of men and women in various areas and to strengthen acceptance of and improve attitudes toward gender equality. These revisions are being undertaken with the participation and cooperation of representatives of the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

Goal 6: Improving the Quality of Education

Constant efforts are being made to improve the quality of education in Thailand. However, while the country report of the Mid-Term Assessment of Education for All during 2000-2005 reported progress in the expansion of opportunity and access to education in the formal, non-formal, informal systems as well as in opportunities for lifelong learning, the acquisition of life skills, improvement in the quality of life, and learner achievement as measured by national assessments remained unsatisfactory.

In addition, the Office of National Education Quality Assessment reported that during 2006-2008, learner achievement was still poor, particularly in the core subjects of Thai Language, English Language, mathematics, science and social studies, and that lesson plans did not correspond to the local context. Urgent efforts have been initiated to reform the entire

system to ensure integration and effective administration to produce learners who can think, analyze, solve problems, and learn independently; educational establishments of every level and type are being improved and brought up to standard. Smaller schools are being assisted by stronger schools to increase quality of education services, and improved teaching-learning of science, mathematics, and technology is being emphasised. The efforts have borne fruit, as evidenced by the 2012 results of the PISA assessment, which indicate improvement in learner achievement in these subjects. The policy to raise learner achievement in all schools has spurred relevant agencies to continually focus on quality improvement. Results as shown on national tests of basic education curriculum content have shown improvement in learner achievement, with the average scores during 2008 through 2013 ranging from 75.93 to 86.

Information and communications technology is being introduced to assist in raising the quality of teaching-learning, through 'smart classrooms', and a National Qualifications Framework is serving as a tool in developing human resources at an international standard.

Much effort is still required to raise the standards of quality of learners, teachers, instructors, and education personnel, along with education establishments throughout the country, in rural as well as urban locales. Producing high-quality individuals, and improving the skills of the workforce to meet the needs of the country's development and competitiveness is a priority requirement of education, and will require joint efforts of all sectors of society

Recommendations:

As Thailand joins regional and global societies, it will become necessary to improve its competitiveness and to develop the capabilities, skills, and expertise of its people to ensure that they can comfortably adapt to current and future conditions. In this effort, administration of education must respond to the post 2016-goal designated by UNESCO, *to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030*. Seven measures are proposed to fulfil this goal:

- increase the number of children receiving education and care during their early years to prepare them for learning at the primary level;
- ensure that all young people complete at least ten years of a quality compulsory basic education;
- increase the level of literacy and numeracy skills and capabilities among young people and adults;
- ensure that skills, abilities, and knowledge of young people are consistent with manpower needs;
- strengthen achievement, knowledge, and skills of all learners, along with values and attitudes consistent with being members of the global society;
- procure quality teachers; and
- increase the state budget for education.

Thailand has prepared itself for developing its people at all ages to participate in lifelong learning on a continual basis through its long term national education plan, which is also aimed at increasing knowledge, capabilities, and skills; at instilling appropriate ethical values and social conduct along with discipline and patriotism; and a rejection of dishonesty and corruption. An increased variety of opportunities are being offered in higher education, particularly in fields where shortages exist. Standards for measurement and assessment are being modernized and strengthened, and monitoring and evaluation tools and key performance indicators are being utilised to improve quality and standards of education. Oversight of education is being undertaken by the public and the private sector to garner their participation in the improvement of education and the development of a quality society.