

# *EDUCATION* in *Thailand 2004*



# **EDUCATION IN THAILAND 2004**



**Office of the Education Council  
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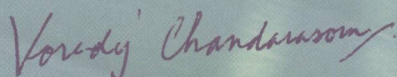


## PREFACE

The Office of the Education Council under the supervision of the Ministry of Education takes great pleasure in presenting a national report on educational development, **Education in Thailand 2004**.

This publication gives an overview of *Thailand* in terms of the government and administrative structure, the society and economy, the framework of education and the educational system. It also summarises the progress of related aspects of educational reform, ranging from educational administration and management to international cooperation and exchange for education. It is expected that the information provided in this report will foster a comprehensive understanding of educational development in *Thailand* and promote international cooperation and exchange in education.

The *Office of the Education Council* would like to extend appreciation to the advisors to this report for their valuable suggestions and comments. Our gratitude is also bestowed on concerned agencies for providing us with valuable information pertaining to their contributions to educational reform. To name a few, such agencies include the *Bureau of International Cooperation* under the *Office of the Permanent Secretary*, the *Office of the Basic Education Commission*, the *Office of the Vocational Education Commission* and the *Office of the Higher Education Commission*.



Prof. Voradej Chandarasorn, Ph.D.

Secretary - General

The Education Council



## Editorial

For 7 consecutive annual series, the report on Education in *Thailand* has reflected considerable progress in educational development in *Thailand*.

At an individual level, education provides us with necessary skills and gives us the opportunity to learn about other countries and people from different backgrounds. Education also allows us to maximise our potential and to pursue careers for which we are qualified. At a national level, education plays a critical role in developing human resources and increasing the capacity and international competitiveness of the country. To thrive in the globalised era which is characterised by tremendous breakthroughs, particularly in science and technology, it is imperative that all individuals have access to lifelong learning and be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge as required in a knowledge-based economy and society.

The first chapter of this publication provides the general background of *Thailand* in terms of government and administrative structure, society and economy and challenging roles of Thai education. The 1997 economic crisis that has affected Thai society adversely together with dazzling transformations that are transpiring throughout the world on an everyday basis in the era of globalisation have prompted an urgent need for *Thailand* to strengthen its human resource base. Taking into account such circumstances, there has been a growing demand for the reform of Thai education so that Thai people are not deterred from thriving in the knowledge-based economy and society.

The framework of education includes the *1997 Constitution* that has provided challenging guidelines for educational reform in several provisions, and the *1999 National Education Act* which serves as a master legislation on education in the country and has placed the holistic reform of education on *Thailand's* national agenda ever since. In addition, Chapter 2 also covers the *15-year National Education Plan* that was prepared by the OEC and authorised



for implementation by the *Council of Ministers* in 2002. The *National Education Plan* has served as the framework for formulating the development plans pertaining to basic education, vocational education, higher education as well as religion, art and culture.

The educational system that focuses on lifelong learning is described in Chapter 3. As one of the principles and ultimate goals of education in *Thailand*, lifelong learning is promoted through the transfer of learning outcomes and the validation of experience. In this regard, learners are allowed to transfer their learning outcomes between all types of education: formal, non-formal and informal education while workers are encouraged to have their experience validated.

An overview of the transition to a new system of Thai education along the lines stipulated by the *National Education Act* has been provided in 7 succeeding chapters.

Chapter 4 demonstrates that necessary measures have been stipulated to increase the overall efficiency in educational administration and management. Previously, there were 3 main agencies responsible for educational administration and management, namely the *Ministry of Education*, the *Ministry of University Affairs* (now known as the *Office of Higher Education Commission*) and the *Office of the National Education Commission* (now known as the *Office of the Education Council*). To materialise the holistic and extensive reform of education, these agencies have been merged into a single ministry. Apart from the streamlining of educational administration and management at a central level, action has been taken to decentralise authority from the central level to educational service areas, educational institutions and local administration organisations. It is also suggested in this chapter that additional measures be implemented to facilitate educational administration and management conducted by the private sector.

Another key factor to success in educational reform is the combination between effective mobilisation of resources and investment for education, allocation of budget and budget management. Contributions from public and private sources, together



with existing practice and new initiatives in budgetary allocations are described in Chapter 5.

Undoubtedly, educational reform can not succeed without the reform of learning, a key issue in educational reform that directly benefits all people and can be implemented without any required regulation. In this regard, reform of curricula, reform of the learning process and establishment and development of lifelong learning sources, play a vital role. In addition, Chapter 6 touches on the modification of the admission system that has been conducted, at both basic and higher education levels, to avoid too much emphasis on examinations that depend mainly on rote learning. New types of model schools including state-supervised schools, bilingual schools, schools for gifted students, Buddhism-oriented schools, model ICT schools and perfect schools are categorised in this chapter as innovative schools.

In Chapter 7, initiatives regarding educational standards and quality assurance have also been introduced to ensure improvement of educational standards and quality for all learners. Both internal quality assessment and external quality assurance have been implemented in increasing numbers of basic and higher educational institutions.

Chapter 8 of this publication illustrates the reform of teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel, the key actors in learning reform, in terms of training, development and promotion, professional standards control and personnel management.

The utilisation of technologies for education, in terms of the establishment of organisations, development of national policies and plans, development of infrastructure and networking system, development of materials and other technologies for education, and development of personnel and learners, is delineated in Chapter 9. If administered appropriately, technologies for education, in particular ICT and eLibrary, will not only bridge the digital divide and hence increase access to education for all but also improve the quality of teaching and learning. The utilisation of technologies for education will certainly play a vital role in transforming Thai society into a



knowledge-based society in which lifelong education for all is not just an option but a necessity.

In this era of globalisation, another major contributor to the success of educational reform is international cooperation and exchange for education. Several aspects involved in this issue have been illustrated in Chapter 10.

The overall achievements in terms of access to education, participation and progression as well as the outcomes of education and learning are illustrated in Chapter 11 in which several tables have been presented.

The future perspectives are summarised in Chapter 12. In this regard, crucial factors in education have been reviewed and future tasks, strategies and plans for educational reform have been elaborated.

It is expected that the new *Ministry of Education* will be moving, with increasing efficiency, towards the success of educational reform, with the aim to promote equity and quality in education as well as maximising benefits for learners. This in turn will lead to a better quality of life for Thai people and an increased competitiveness of the country. To conduct the radical but essential reforms introduced by the *1999 National Education Act*, a complete change in the mindset, behaviour and practice of those at all levels of educational management is imperative. Participation, cooperation and contribution from all stakeholders and parties as well as the general public are also required.

*Office of the Education Council*  
*July 2004*



## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACER	Australian Council of Educational Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APEID	Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development
AUN	ASEAN University Network
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMA	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
CBF	Thailand-Australia Capacity Building Facility
CRC	Commission on Religion and Culture
DFA	Department of Fine Arts
DLF	Distance Learning Foundation
DPE	Department of Physical Education
DRA	Department of Religious Affairs
HKIED	Hong Kong Institute of Education
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ISAT	International Schools Association of Thailand
KEDI	Korean Educational Development Institute
KMITNB	King Mongkut Institute of Technology North Bangkok
KU	Kasetsart University
MICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOL	Ministry of Labour
NECTEC	National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NFEC	Non-Formal Education Centre
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSTDA	National Science and Technology Development Agency
OBEC	Office of the Basic Education Commission
OCSC	Office of the Civil Service Commission
OEC	Office of Education Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECF	Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund
OER	Office of Educational Reform
OHEC	Office of the Higher Education Commission



ONESQA	Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
ONFEC	Office of Non-Formal Education Commission
OPEC	Office of the Private Education Commission
OVEC	Office of the Vocational Education Commission
RIHED	Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development
RIT	Rajamangala Institute of Technology
RTG	Royal Thai Government
RUs	Rajabhat Universities
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation
SOU	Sukothaithemmathirat Open University
SPAFA	Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts
TGIST	Thailand Graduate Institute of Science and Technology
Thai TESOL	Thais Teaching English as a Second Language Association
TROPMED	Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine and Public Health
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UTCC	University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce



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# Chapter 1

## General Background



The general background of education in *Thailand* presented in this chapter includes the following: 1) government and administrative structure 2) society and economy, and 3) changing roles of Thai education.

### 1.1 Government and Administrative Structure

The provisions relating to constitutional government and monarchy laid down in the 1932 *Constitution* specified three basic concepts regarding the governmental structure of *Thailand*. Firstly, the Monarch is regarded as Head of State, Head of the Armed Forces and Upholder of the Buddhist Religion and all other religions. Secondly, a bicameral *National Assembly*, which is comprised of *Members of Parliament* and *Members of Senate*, administers the legislative branch. Thirdly, the Prime Minister as head of the government and chief executive oversees the executive branch covering the *Council of Ministers* which is responsible for the administration of 19 ministries and the *Office of the Prime Minister*.

The democratic system in *Thailand* has recently undergone refinement to promote and encourage public participation in economic, social and political development plans. Section 76 of the 1997 *Constitution* reflects the rights of the people in political



participation and also the right to voice public opinion on major problems.

Resulting from the *Constitution* were various independent organisations such as the Office of the Constitutional Court and the Administrative Court, aimed at inducing balance, transparency and accountability within the political and administrative system of *Thailand*.

Under Section 89 of the *Constitution*, the *National Economic and Social Council (NESOC)* was established to give advice and recommendations to the *Council of Ministers* on economic and social problems. Before plans, including the national economic and social development plan can be adopted, opinions must be obtained from the *National Economic and Social Council*. The *Council* has 100 members, 40 of whom are representatives of all country areas; another 40 members are representatives of occupations and enterprises; and 20 members represent different fields of knowledge.

Excluding *Bangkok Metropolis*, the country has 75 other provinces, each of which is administered by an appointed governor and is sub-divided into districts, sub-districts or tambons (groups of villages) and villages. Only the *Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)*, which is divided into 50 districts, is administered by an elected governor.

Figure 1.1 presents the new organisation of the Royal Thai Government after the reform of the bureaucratic system in 2002. Six new ministries were established as follows: 1) *Ministry of Energy*; 2) *Ministry of Tourism and Sports*; 3) *Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment*; 4) *Ministry of Information and Communications Technology*; 5) *Ministry of Social Development and Human Security*; and 6) *Ministry of Culture*.

As for the *Ministry of Education*, three departments that used to be under its supervision before bureaucratic reform are now under the supervision of the newly established ministries. The *Department of Physical Education* is now under the supervision of the *Ministry of Tourism and Sports*. The *Office of the National Culture Commission* became the *Ministry of Culture*. At present, religious affairs are under the auspices of two agencies consisting of the *Department of Religious Affairs*, an agency under the aegis of the