Country Analysis
Education

Thailand

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Index

1. General educational situation

1.1 Educational history

In the early days of Thai history, education primarily revolved around two institutions, one religious and the other royal. Buddhist monks gave basic education to boys in classes set within the compounds of monasteries, while children of the royal household and from families of the nobility were educated in order to serve in the court and govern in the provinces. The mass of society was made up of farmers, who saw little need for literacy. Village history, lore, and local philosophy were transmitted orally.

During the reign of King Rama V (1863-1910 A.D.) there was increased recognition of the need for educated people to staff the growing bureaucracy. As a result, the Thai education system was modernized and made more accessible to the general public. This began with the 1898 Education Proclamation, which was strongly influenced by the British system and in which two educational paths were stipulated: the academic and the vocational.

The first formal comprehensive education plan was introduced in 1932. This plan highlighted four years of elementary education and eight years of secondary schooling. This system was further refined in 1936, when five levels of education were featured; preprimary or kindergarten, primary, secondary, pre-university, and higher education. The educational plan of 1951 was noteworthy in that it facilitated special and adult education.

As part of the emphasis on national development since 1960, a major goal of the educational system has been to harmonize and comply with economic and political plans. The government faced the challenge of widespread illiteracy, as well as the massive task of training young men and women for the dynamic development process in the shortest time possible. Recently, it has had to modify instruction to include the specialized skills required by industries such as computer science and environmental engineering, together with new branches of medicine.

The most recent changes were brought about by the educational plan of 1977, which called for six years of compulsory primary schooling, three years of lower secondary education for those who plan to enter special occupations and three years of upper secondary education for those who wish or enter higher education or a university. This system was launched in May 1978, beginning with the first grade at both the primary and secondary levels, and continued until the cycle of six grades at both levels was fully implemented in 1983.

1.2 Formal education

The Thai formal education system is divided into two levels: basic education and higher education. Basic education is the education provided for twelve years before higher education. After two to three years in nursery school or kindergarten, students typically spend six years in primary education followed by three years at the lower secondary level and three years at the upper secondary level. Students usually complete primary and secondary education by the age of 18.

The state provides basic education for the duration of twelve years. Such education, provided on a nationwide basis, is of good quality and free of charge.

The current system of formal education consists of four levels of education: one or two years of pre-school education; six years of compulsory primary education; six

years of secondary education: three years at the lower secondary level and three years at the upper secondary level and higher education.

Basic education gives emphasis on morality, the learning process, and integration of knowledge and skills about social study, science and technology, religion, culture, art, mathematics, and languages. Basic education institutions, under the control of the Basic Education Commission, prescribe curricula relating to needs of the community and the wider society.

Compulsory education in Thailand is for nine years, requiring children aged seven to enroll in basic education institutions until the age of 16, with the exception of those who have already completed three-year lower secondary education.

Higher education is provided in universities, technical institutes, vocational colleges, or specialized training institutions (i.e. nursing colleges, cadet schools, Buddhist universities). It is divided into two levels: non-degree level and degree level. Students seeking higher education may continue their education to either non degree level or degree level.

Overview of the education system:
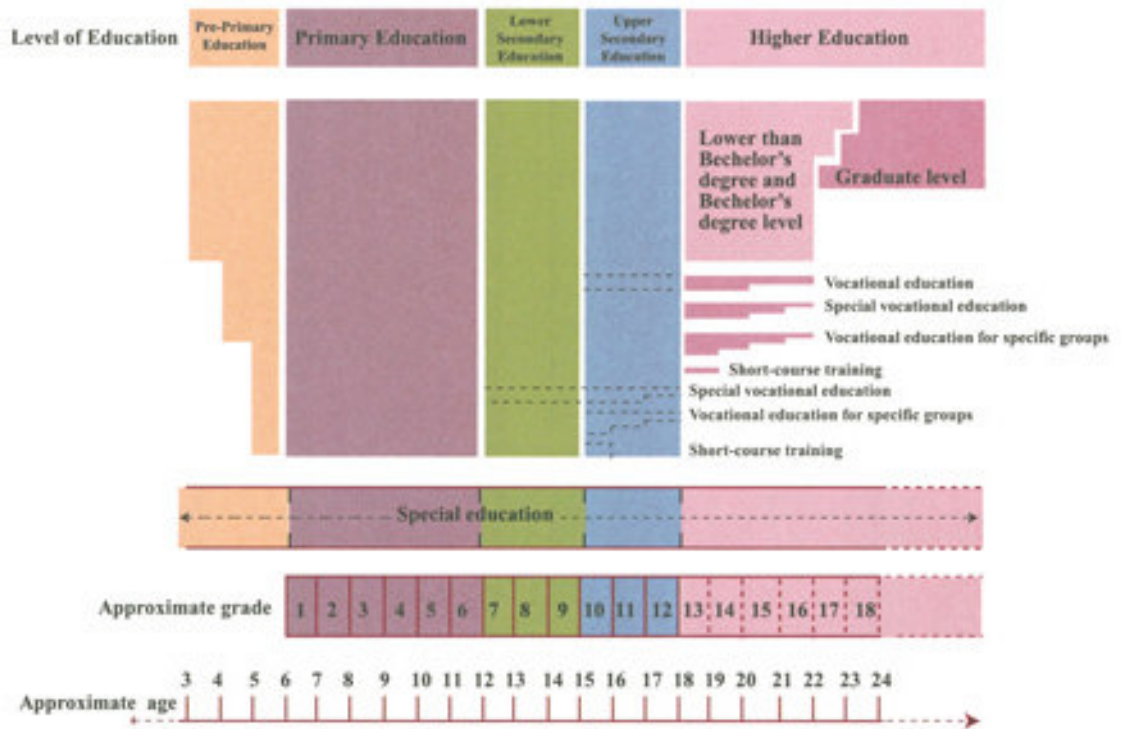
1.3 Government education policy

In lieu of the 1997 Constitution and the 1999 Education Act, the Government is determined to launch educational reforms with the aim of developing Thailand into a knowledge-based society, which is a pre-requisite for becoming a knowledge-based economy. The reforms will provide the Thai public with equal access to life-long education and training, enabling them to acquire knowledge and capital to generate income and to eventually pull the country out of the economic and social crisis. Towards this end, the Government will abide by the principle that "Education Builds the Nation, Empowers the Individual and Generates Employment" as follows:

1) Accelerate efforts to establish an educational system and network that is of high quality and truly beneficial to the general public.

2) Emphasize quality, efficiency and justice in the management of public education of all categories and at all levels.
3) Develop an education technology system and information network to increase and disperse the opportunities for education for all Thais in both urban and rural areas.
4) Establish community colleges, particularly in provinces where institutions of higher education are still needed.
5) Promote and encourage all parties concerned to assume collective responsibilities in managing education and training. The Government will assume the responsibility of establishing the system and policies, providing quality controls, mobilizing resources, and ensuring the preparedness of local government organizations, the private sector, and family networks. The Government is also committed to providing public education to the disabled, the handicapped and the under-privileged.
6) Promote the role of Thailand as an educational hub for the neighboring countries.
7) Promote the integration of education, religion, culture and sports into the educational and training curriculum offered to children and youth.
8) Reform the learning process through the "learner-centered approach", self-education and life-long education by emphasizing the power of creativity, encouraging a love for reading, and providing sufficient community-based libraries, learning centers and educational mediums for public use.
9) Ensure that "teaching" becomes a dignified, highly respected and trusted profession. Develop high-quality teachers and educators who live up to basic ethical requirements.
10) Improve the educational curriculum to ensure that children and youth are disciplined, hard working and competent.
11) Provide the opportunity for those who have completed compulsory education (grade 9) and basic education (grade 12), together with the unemployed and the elderly, to be able to undergo vocational training in at least one profession, supporting them to become self-employed.
12) Reform and improve the quality of vocational training, upgrading the curriculum of vocational schools so that they can confer bachelor's degrees. Such reforms are undertaken in light of the increasing demand for vocational training in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Vocational education should also encourage on-the-job training by students.

The National Education Plan (2002-2016)

As mandated by *Section 33* of the *1999 National Education Act,* a 15-year *National Education Plan* was prepared by *ONEC* in place of the former *National Scheme of Education.* Authorised for subsequent implementation by the *Council of Ministers* on June 17, 2002, the *National Education Plan* focuses on the integration of all aspects of the quality of life. It emphasises human-centred development and an integrated and holistic scheme of education, religion, art and culture. In this regard, Thai people shall attain full development in terms of physical and spiritual health, intellect, morality and integrity as well as a desirable way of life that focuses on living in harmony with other people.

For more information on the National Education Plan visit:
http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/10-15.pdf

1.4 Education providers

The biggest provider of education in Thailand is the government. In higher education 42% of students are enrolled in private higher education institutions. Of students

attending elementary and secondary education 13% is enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools.

Local administration organizations, individuals, families, community organizations, private organizations, professional bodies, religious institutions, enterprises and other social institutions can also provide basic education under guidance of the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission.

1.5 The quality of education

Chapter 6 of the *1999 National Education Act* introduced a new system of educational quality assurance to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels.

Quality Assurance System

In order to meet the requirements of the Act, an educational quality assurance system has been designed and implemented. It consists of both internal and external quality assurance.

Internal quality assurance is regarded as part of institutional administration which must be a continuous process. Educational institutions are required to prepare annual reports that will be submitted to parent organisations, the agencies concerned and be made available to the public for the purpose of improving educational quality and standards and providing a basis for external quality assurance.

External quality assurance is the responsibility of the *Office of Education Standards and Evaluation (OESE),* a public organisation which was established in November 2000. All educational institutions are required to receive external quality evaluation at least once every five years. The evaluation results must be submitted to the relevant agencies and made available to the general public.

For the introduction of an effective quality assurance system, two major tasks which need to be accomplished are: 1) the development of a quality assurance system; and 2) the development of educational standards at national level.

In accordance with the *National Education Act,* the Secretariat of the *Education Council, Office of the Basic Education Commission, Office of the Higher Education Commission* and *Office of the Vocational Education Commission* are responsible for proposing national educational standards, basic education standards, higher education standards and vocational education standards respectively. So far, all agencies concerned have made some progress in the development of relevant educational standards. For example, learning standards for basic education has been formulated in response to the 2001 basic education curriculum. In addition, the *Committee for Development of the Evaluation System of Higher Education Quality* has appointed a Sub-Committee to develop and set national standards for higher education.

<u>Basic Education Quality Assurance</u>

Internal Quality Assurance

A system of internal quality assurance at basic education level has been developed. So far, the ministerial regulations of the system, criteria and methods for internal quality assurance have been approved by the *Council of Ministers* and are under the consideration of the *Council of State.* Before the proclamation of the ministerial regulations, however, an announcement concerning the system, criteria and methods for internal quality assurance has been issued by the *MOE* as implementation guidelines for basic and early childhood education institutions since November 2001. For actual implementation, internal quality assurance in the institutions has been promoted through 5 activities: 1) production of documents, media and equipment; 2)

personnel development; 3) conducting pilot projects; 4) evaluation of educational quality; and 5) provision of financial support.

In addition, educational standards for internal quality assurance in basic education institutions formulated by their parent organisations have been implemented and improved continuously in accordance with the Act.

External Quality Assurance

The educational standards for external evaluation at basic education level were approved by the *Council of Ministers* in January 2000. The standards to be used for the first round of evaluation, which are composed of 14 standards and 53 indicators, can be categorised into 3 groups as follows: 1) *Standards of Learners,* consisting of 7 standards with 22 indicators, aim at physical, spiritual, intellectual and social development; 2) *Standards of Process,* consisting of 3 standards with 21 indicators, focus on administrative and teaching-learning processes; and 3) *Standards of Inputs* specify the characteristics or readiness of administrators, teachers and the curriculum. They are composed of 4 standards, with 10 indicators.

The system, framework and methods of evaluation for basic education external quality assurance have already been developed by the *OESE.* They are composed of 7 main guidelines: (1) Meaning, principles objectives significance and scope of evaluation; (2) Meaning, qualifications, ethics, staff management and duties of external evaluators; (3) Stages of evaluation; (4) Guidelines for data collection and inspection; (5) Guidelines for data analysis and evaluation of educational standards; (6) Guidelines for evaluation report writing; and (7) Educational standards for external quality assurance at basic education levels. At present, sufficient numbers of external evaluators have been selected and trained for the first round of external evaluation.

Higher Education Quality Assurance

The *OESE* is responsible for the evaluation of educational quality at higher education level in accordance with the indicators, criteria and approaches that have been developed. The evaluation aims at encouraging quality development of higher education based on the standards set by the *Committee for Development of the Evaluation System of Higher Education Quality,* in line with the missions and varieties of higher education institutions.

Internal Quality Assurance

At higher education level, 9 aspects of quality factors for internal quality assurance have been announced for higher education institutions. They include philosophy, mission, objectives and implementation plan; teaching-learning provision; student development activities; research; academic services to the community; preservation of arts and culture; administration and management; finance and budgeting; and higher education quality assurance systems and mechanisms. It should be noted that university autonomy and academic freedom have been emphasised, meaning that universities are free to choose their own higher education quality assurance systems as deemed most appropriate to their conditions and requirements. They are, however, requested to ensure that their systems cover the dimensions of higher education provision.

The internal quality assurance system consists of quality control, quality audit and quality assessment. In 2001, training programmes for internal auditors inspecting universities and institutions were supported. A training curriculum for auditors was developed while training programmes for trainers were held, allowing 12 core universities nationwide, both public and private, to start training auditors for their respective universities and institutions of higher learning within or near their provinces.

In relation to internal assessment, a working group has been established to set up a broad framework and guidance directions for universities and institutions. At the same time, the flow of communication has been enhanced to allow all involved to

learn of one another's development so that proper actions can be taken accordingly. An e-group for the internal auditors has been set up for such purposes as well. At present, ministerial regulations of criteria and methods for internal quality assurance have been drafted and are under consideration by the *Council of State.* However, the ministerial announcement on the system, criteria and methods for internal quality assurance at higher education levels was issued in July 2002. All higher education institutions have been undergoing continuous development and implementation of quality assurance systems.

External Quality Assurance

External quality evaluation will be conducted through the initial inspection of annual reports as well as other reports resulting from internal quality assurance of universities or higher education institutions. The external evaluators certified by the *OESE* will review documentary evidence and data as well as visit the higher education institutions in accordance with the evaluation process. This will lead to the certification of quality and standards of higher education institutions based on the standards and performance indicators developed by the Committee.

A guidebook for external quality assurance was developed by the *OESE* comprising of 4 aspects: 1) goals, principles and objectives of evaluation; 2) relations between the *OESE,* agencies concerned and higher education institutions in evaluation; 3) external evaluators and evaluation process; and 4) evaluation standards and indicators.

Educational standards for the first round of external quality assurance developed by *OESE* have already been introduced. They comprise 8 standards and 28 indicators at degree level and 8 standards and 30 indicators at lower-than-degree level.

In addition, external evaluators have been selected and approved for evaluation of institutions at both degree and lower-than-degree levels.

1.6 Religion within education

Religious instruction is required in public schools at both the primary, (grades one through six, and secondary, grades seven through twelve , education levels. The Ministry of Education has formulated a course called "Social, Religion, and Culture Studies," which students in each grade study for one to two hours each week. The course contains information about all of the recognized religions in the country. Students who wish to pursue in-depth studies of other religions or of their belief may study at the religious schools and can transfer credits to the public school. Schools, working in conjunction with their local school administrative board, are authorized to arrange additional religious studies courses. The Supreme Sangha Council and the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand have created special curriculums for Buddhist and Islamic studies.

There are a variety of Islamic education opportunities for children. Tadika is an after-school religious course for children in grades one through six, which is under the supervision of the RAD and generally takes place in a mosque. There are currently 1,612 registered Islamic Religious and Moral Education centers teaching Tadika, with approximately 173 thousand students and more than 4 thousand teachers. For secondary school children, the Ministry of Education allows two separate curricula for private Islamic studies schools. The first type teaches only Islamic religious courses. As of April 2006, there were 92 schools nationwide with 5,684 students and 423 teachers using this curriculum. The government registers but does not certify these schools, and students from these schools cannot continue to any higher education within the country. The number of this type of school was in decline as students opted to attend schools that afford alternatives for higher education. The second curriculum

teaches both Islamic religious courses and traditional state education coursework. Approximately 132 schools nationwide with 100,684 students use this curriculum. The Government recognizes these private schools, and graduating students can continue to higher education within the country. A third type of Islamic education available, mostly in the southern part of the country, is traditional pondok schools. During the period covered by this report, there were 372 registered pondok schools primarily in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces. Previously, these religious schools were not required to register with the Government and received no Government oversight or funding. The registration effort began in April 2004 following an attack on a military post and arms depot in Narathiwat in January 2004. Government investigations into that incident led the authorities to pursue suspects associated with pondok schools. The total number of pondoks is still unknown. Sources believed that there could be as many as one thousand.

1.7 Teacher education

Teacher education in Thailand is being reformed. The reform of teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel may be divided into 4 key areas : training of teachers; development and promotion of teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel; professional standards control; and personnel management.

Training of teachers

As stipulated in the *National Education Act,* the training of teachers will be developed so that teaching will be further enhanced and become a highly respected profession. In order to achieve such a goal, the training of teachers has been reformed in 2 main respects: reform of the teacher training system and reform of teacher educational institutions.

Reform of Teacher Training System

A curriculum for the training of new teachers has been proposed following the meeting between the *Minister of Education* and the *Council of Deans for Faculties of Education;* it was decided that teacher education courses should be extended from 4 to 5 years, instead of 6 years as proposed by the *Office of Education Reform (OER).* According to the new training system, 4 years will be dedicated to coursework while the rest of the time will be devoted to teaching practice.

It has also been proposed that scholarships be made available and that teaching jobs be secured for 2,500 students selected to study in these curricula in order to lure back qualified students into the teaching profession. At present, the *Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council* under the supervision of the *MOE* has been preparing a national plan and policies in relation to the training of teachers in line with the new curriculum.

Reform of Teacher Education Institutions

Three reform plans proposed by the *OER* have been implemented by the *MOE* as follows:

1) *Enhancing the quality of faculty staff:* the conceptual framework has been developed for enhancing the faculty staff in teacher education institutions to meet the standards required through participative action research in schools, training courses and scholarships for studies in master's degree and Ph.D.
2) A*ccelerating the creation of new knowledge in teacher education and new products used for educational provision:* Faculty staff are encouraged to undertake school-based participative research in the Learning-Reform Schools Project. In addition, a centre for research and development of learning efficiency is going to be established in each of the 56 teacher educational institutions.

3) *Reforming the administrative structure and quality assurance in teacher education institutions:* Three projects have been undertaken to design the administrative structure, establish a quality assurance system for teacher training, and conduct school-based research and development to enhance the teaching profession.

Development and promotion

The development and promotion of teachers, faculty staffs and educational personnel has been undertaken as follows:

Establishment of an Independent Organisation

The Drafted Act to establish the Institute for Development and Promotion of Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel was prepared by the *OER* and is now under consideration by responsible agencies. In addition, two funds are going to be established under the supervision of this Institute. These are: (1) Fund for Development of Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel; and (2) Fund for Promotion of Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel enabling them to initiate, innovate and obtain the achievement of quality on a continuous basis.

Personnel Development

To enable the development and promotion of teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel, the *OER* has designed 2 special projects which have been applied by the *MOE* as follows:

1) The first project focuses on the preparation of teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel for educational reform. Under this project, 3 separate sets of training materials have been designed for administrators, teachers and community leaders respectively. Between 1999 and mid-year of 2002, 96.2 percent of personnel or 487,296 out of 506,671 personnel have been trained. As for the 19,375 personnel who had not yet been trained, the *MOE* planned to organise training for them in 2002.

2) The second project focuses on strengthening the professional standards of teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel. For this project, 2 separate sets of curricula have been implemented as follows: The first set of curricula emphasises the whole-school reform. The target groups for training cover administrators as well as teachers in 40,000 schools of all levels. The second set of curricula is comprised of 14 courses. The target groups for training cover 500,000 teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel. Among these, 28,289 teachers and educational administrators were trained between 2000-2002. It is expected that the first round of training will be completed by 2006. As considered appropriate and necessary, the second and third rounds of training will be implemented in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

One of the 14 courses, the "Development of In-service Teachers and Educational Personnel", which is aimed in particular at the 65,000 teachers and educational administrators who do not hold a bachelor degree, has been implemented by the *Teachers Council of Thailand* with the cooperation of *RIs, Ramkhumhang University* and *Sukhothaithammathirat University (SOU).* In this curriculum, teachers and educational administrators will be categorised into 3 groups according to their experience and academic research papers. Those in a group with more outstanding experience and better academic research papers will take a fewer courses than their peers. All groups will be given an intensive 5-day training course in relation to professional standards and ethics. After graduation, they will be eligible to hold professional licenses.

Professional control

Regarding professional standards control, responsible agencies have performed activities in 2 main areas: institutional development and the development of professional standards and ethics.

Establishment of a Professional Organisation

According to the proposed reforms of the *OER*, a *Council of Teachers and Educational Personnel* will be established to be responsible for setting professional standards; issuing and revocation of professional licenses as well as monitoring observation of professional standards and ethics. However, it has been decided by the House of Representatives that there will be two organisations under the supervision of the *MOE:*

1) The Teachers Council will be reorganised to take on the responsibilities of the proposed *"Council of Teachers and Educational Personnel"* as mentioned above.
2) *The Office for Welfare and Security Promotion of Teachers and Educational Personnel* will be established to take charge of the promotion of welfare and security of teachers and educational personnel, under the supervision of a committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Education.

Development of Professional Standards and Ethics

During the transitional period, the *Teachers Council of Thailand* has implemented following activities:

1) Set up 3 features of professional standards and ethics especially for teachers as follows: academic background and professional experience; professional standards; and professional ethics.
2) Formulate 5 implementation plans in which different issues in relation to the professional were implemented standards and ethics for teachers as well as educational personnel as follows: developing and raising professional standards; professional control; accreditation of Teacher Education Institutions; accreditation of professional expertise; and development of professional organisations.

<u>Personnel management</u>

To reform the personnel management of teachers, faculty staffs and educational personnel, 3 laws have been drafted as follows: 1) The Drafted Act on Administrative Procedures for Teachers and Educational Personnel; 2) The Drafted Act on Administrative Procedures for Civil Servants in Higher Education Institutions; and 3) The Drafted Act on Administrative Procedures for Civil Servants.

According to the Drafted Act on Administrative Procedures for Teachers and Educational Personnel, the personnel management system has been organised into 3 levels as follows: 1) The Commission for Teachers and Educational Personnel responsible for personnel management at a central level; 2) The Sub-Commission for Teachers and Educational Personnel in Educational Service Areas responsible for personnel management in educational service areas; and 3) The Educational Institutions Committee responsible for personnel management in each educational institution. The objective of such systematisation is to decentralise power in personnel administration and management.

At present, special salary scales for teachers and educational personnel are under consideration. In addition, several issues in relation to personnel administration and management have been improved by responsible agencies. These include setting up the framework, namely the "Academic Rank Classification" which specifies the academic status of teachers and educational personnel as a criterion to compensate them with appropriate remuneration and benefits.

With regard to the *Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC),* its administrative system of personnel management will go through a tremendous change. Personnel in state universities will be affected the most; their status will be shifted from civil servants to employees and the privileges attached to civil servants may be lost. To reduce the effect of the transformation, the *OHEC* allows each state university to have its University Council set up its own rules and regulations for personnel administration and management.
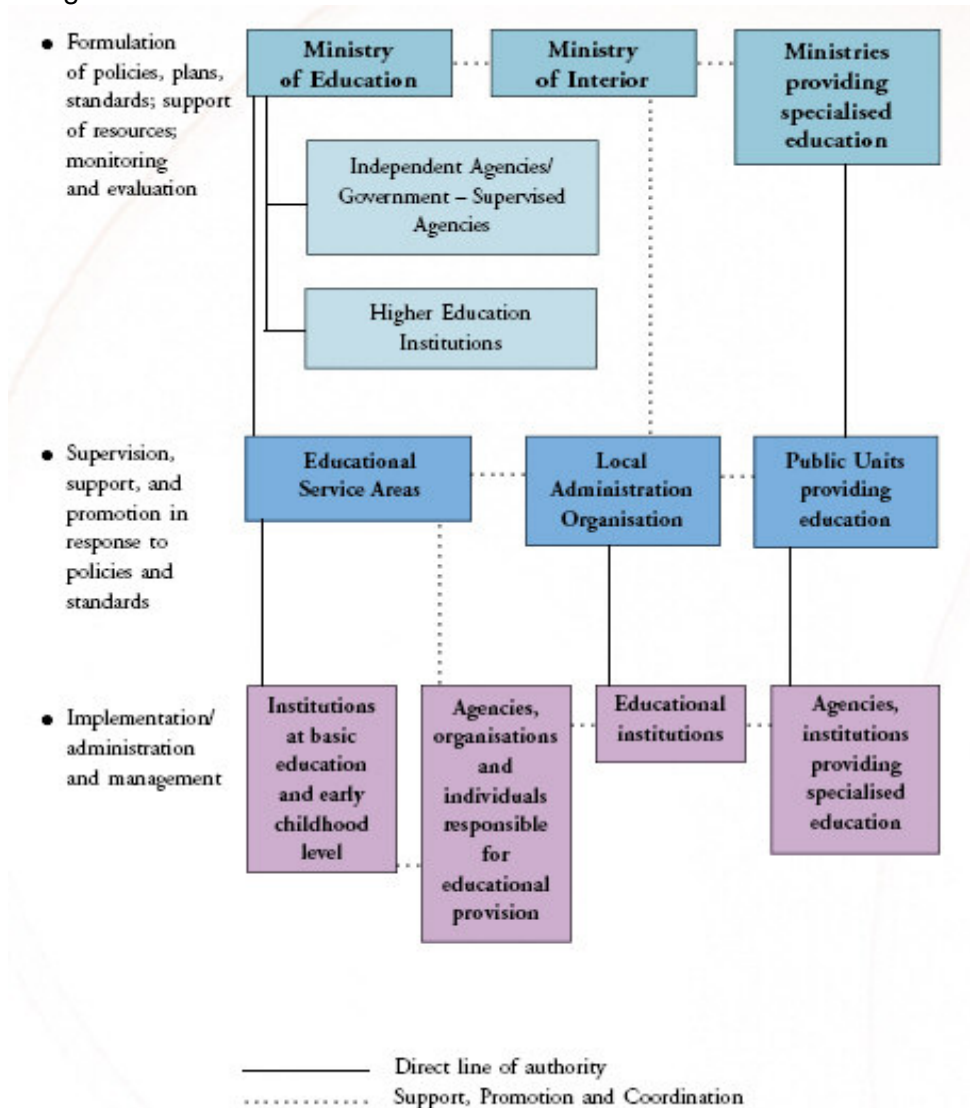
1.8 Educational administration and management

In accordance with the 1999 National Education Act and the Bureaucratic Reform Bill, the agencies with the main responsibility for educational provision, namely the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University Affairs and the Office of the National Education Commission, have been reorganised into a single Ministry, the Ministry of Education (MOE).

However, local education administration is still under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior (MOI). In addition, other ministries also take charge of the management of education in specialised fields or for specific purposes (Figure 4.1).

To better suit the needs of the education system, the educational administration and management is going through a reform. The reform is based on the principle of unity in policy and diversity in implementation as well as decentralisation of authority to educational service areas, educational institutions and local administration organisations.

Accordingly, educational administration and management in Thailand can be categorised as follows:

Education in *Thailand* is administered and managed by the government at three levels: central level, educational service areas and educational institutions at all levels of education.
For more information on these different levels visit:
http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/27-40.pdf

1.9 Conclusions

Thailand has a well build school system in which there are is much attention for school quality, good teacher education and the accessibility of education. Religious freedom is also important in Thailand and this is reflected in the education system with much freedom for religious school and religious education in all schools.

2. Primary education

2.1 School attendance

At primary level, increasing numbers of 6-11 years old children participate in school education. The enrolment rates of primary school children have been higher than 100 percent as a result of repetition rates as well as under-age and over-age population of students.

Statistics on pre-primary and primary education:

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
Data				
Percentage of female students. Pre-primary	49	49	49	49
Percentage of female students. Primary	48	48	48	48
Pupils of the official school age. Pre-primary. Female	…	…	…	1,108,541
Pupils of the official school age. Pre-primary. Male	…	…	…	1,154,494
Pupils of the official school age. Pre-primary. Total	…	…	…	2,263,035
Pupils of the official school age. Primary. Female	…	…	...	2,585,503
Pupils of the official school age. Primary. Male	…	…	…	2,773,258
Pupils of the official school age. Primary. Total	…	…	…	5,358,761
Enrolment in pre-primary. Public. All programs. Total	2,133,300	2,103,269	2,043,976	1,948,850
Enrolment in pre-primary. Public and private. All programs. Female	1,341,364	1,362,941	1,320,135	1,206,618
Enrolment in pre-primary. Public and private. All programs. Total	2,742,511	2,774,799	2,712,047	2,462,356
Enrolment in primary. Public. All programs. Total	5,156,595	5,137,004	5,030,262	4,870,487
Enrolment in primary. Public and private. All programs. Female	2,898,425	2,929,545	2,876,432	2,828,782
Enrolment in primary. Public and private. All programs. Total	5,997,390	6,054,517	5,974,615	5,843,512
Enrolment in primary. Grade 1. Total	…	1,100,065	988,441	896,942
Enrolment in primary. Grade 2. Total	…	1,022,634	1,021,007	963,476
Enrolment in primary. Grade 3. Total	…	912,614	1,009,562	1,014,755
Enrolment in primary. Grade 4. Total	…	1,011,942	985,145	1,005,083
Enrolment in primary. Grade 5. Total	…	1,017,411	989,629	982,020
Enrolment in primary. Grade 6. Total	…	989,851	980,831	981,235
Gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary. Female	90	92	89	82
Gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary. Male	91	92	91	83
Gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary. Total	91	92	90	82
Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Female	94	96	95	94
Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Male	98	100	100	98
Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Total	96	98	97	96
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Pre-primary	0.98	0.99	0.97	0.99
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Primary	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.96
School life expectancy (years). Primary to secondary. Female	9.4	9.7	9.9	10.0
School life expectancy (years). Primary to secondary. Male	9.7	9.8	10.1	10.0

School life expectancy (years). Primary to secondary. Total	9.5	9.8	10.0	10.0
Rate of primary school age children out of school. Female	…	…	…	9
Rate of primary school age children out of school. Male	…	…	…	5
Rate of primary school age children out of school. Total	…	…	…	7
Percentage of private enrolment. Pre-primary	22	…	…	21
Percentage of private enrolment. Primary	14	15	16	17
Teaching staff in pre-primary. Female	…	…	…	77,029
Teaching staff in pre-primary. Total	…	…	…	98,764
Teaching staff in primary. Female	181,945	…	…	186,476
Teaching staff in primary. Total	314,186	…	…	312,632
Pupil-teacher ratio. Pre-primary	…	…	…	25
Pupil-teacher ratio. Primary	19	…	…	19

For the latest statistics visit:
http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0

2.2 School accessibility

12-year free basic education, covering 6 years of primary education and 6 years of secondary education, was granted to students throughout the country for the first time in the history of Thai education in October 2002.

As a part of 12-year free basic education, 9-year compulsory education in Thailand covers 6 years of primary education and 3 years of secondary education. In February 2002, the MOE issued the ministerial regulation indicating the criteria and methods of calculating children's age for compulsory education. The Compulsory Education Act which has been effective since 1 January 2003 requires that all children aged 7-16 be enrolled in basic education institutions except for those who have already completed grade 9.

School fees are not charged by the public schools in Thailand, however there are other costs that schools can charge such as: school user fees, uniforms and book fees. Private schools do charge school fees, these fees can vary greatly.

2.3 Forms of primary education

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education is neither required nor guaranteed by the government for all students. With the rapid growth of the Thai economy, though, the high level of female participation in the labor force, and intense competition for entry to quality primary schools, the demand for preschool education has grown steadily. In 1995, approximately 73.7 percent of the three to five age group was enrolled in preschools, but by 1999 this percent had risen to an impressive 96.9 percent. The Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001) calls for all preschool children to have access to at least one year of a school readiness program before 2001 and that no less than 90 percent of children aged three to five will have access to preprimary education in the year 2001. Reflecting the importance of this level of education, a special National Institute for Early Childhood Education (NECE) was established.

There are three basic types of preprimary education: Child development centers; Preschool classes offered by private schools, and public schools; and Formal kindergarten education offered by private and public schools.

Primary education

The primary school curriculum is for six years. For each school year, there are 40 weeks of instruction with 25 hours per week resulting in a total of 1,000 hours of instruction per year. The curriculum is focused on five key competency areas rather than specific individual courses. The five areas are: Basic skills group (Thai language and mathematics); Life experiences; Character development; Work-oriented experiences; and Special experiences (grades 5 and 6 only).

Most students study at this level in public schools (88 percent). Though primary education is compulsory, it is still not universally attained as there are significant numbers of children from the ages of 6 through 11 not in primary school. These are children primarily in remote rural areas or urban slums.

2.4 Curriculum

Basic Education Curriculum

In accordance with *Section 27* of the *National Education Act,* the *Basic Education Commission* is in charge of prescribing the core curriculum for basic education while basic education institutions are responsible for prescribing curricular substance. The basic education curriculum has, therefore, been prepared at two levels: national and institutional.

At National Level

The purposes of the *2002 Core Curriculum for Basic Education* as stipulated in *Section 27* of the *National Education Act* are to preserve Thai identity; good citizenship; a desirable way of life; livelihood; as well as for further education. Five groups of knowledge and skills as specified in *Section 23* of the *National Education Act* have been included in the *Core Curriculum.* They are classified into 8 groups of subjects: Thai Language; Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; Religion and Culture; Health Education and Physical Education; Art; Career and Technology-Related Education; and Foreign Languages.

In 2002, the *Core Curriculum* was put on a trial basis. Beginning in 2003, all schools with students in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 were required to implement *2002 Core Curriculum* for Basic Education. The *Core Curriculum* will be fully implemented as per the timeframe shown in the table below:

Table 6.1 Timeframe for the Implementation of the Core Curriculum

Year	Grades
2003	1, 4, 7, 10
2004	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11
2005	1-12

To implement the *2002 Core Curriculum,* a nationwide training programme for various levels of administrators, supervisors, teachers and personnel in related departments has been organised. It is expected that these trainees will guide the schools under their supervision in making preparation for implementing the *2002 Core Curriculum.* Approximately, 3,144 personnel from *DCID,* 40,038 personnel from *DGE,* 15,051 personnel from *ONPEC,* and 4,906 personnel from *OPEC* have been trained in this regard.

At Institutional Level

As stipulated in *Section 27* of the *National Education Act,* educational institutions are required to develop a curricular substance relating to the needs of the community and

society, local wisdom and attributes of desirable members of the family, community, society and nation.

As proposed by the sub-committees under the Committee on Academic Quality Development appointed by the *MOE,* the approximate proportions of core curriculum and curricular substance developed by educational institutions will be 70:30. Such proportion will be flexibly applied in compliance with the nature of each subject.

So as to assist educational institutions in developing curricular substance, 825 personnel from Rajabhat Institutes, *MUA* and *NGOs* acted as mentors for 2,182 schools in which the curricular substance of each educational institution was prepared, the *Core Curriculum* was tested, the new teaching-learning process and methods of tests and assessment were introduced, and 4,400 trainees were trained to develop training kits and materials.

2.5 Government input

The proclamation of the new constitution in 1997 has made a dramatic change in education. Section 43 of the Constitution stipulates that: A person shall enjoy an equal right to obtain 12 years of basic education at the minimum, with quality and free of charge. In addition, the 1999 National Education Act has stirred up educational reform as a whole, providing the government sector with the impetus to strengthen its action in every aspect to be in accord with the objectives of the constitution and the National Education Act.

Future Policies

According to the Constitution and the National Education Act, the government has set future policies to achieve the goals of education for all as follows;

1) *Strengthen the provision of the 12-year basic education by the State*
   Under the framework of the provision of 12-year basic education; both in the general and vocational education, the government has to provide early childhood care services to pre-primary children. Compulsory education will be extended from 6 to 9 years. The disable and disadvantaged will be provided with a privilege to access to the 12-year basic education where appropriate to their special needs. The government will encourage individuals families, communities, and other agencies to provide basic education appropriately with a government subsidy. In addition, any institution will be encouraged to provide education in any form, namely formal, non-formal, and informal and enhance continuing education with systematic transfer of credits.

2) *Orientation to Meeting Learning Needs*
   The policy aims at enhancing skills development to improve a better quality of life and occupation through lifelong education. It also upgrades the education level of the labour force to at least lower education and eliminate illiteracy.

3) *Establishment of Educational Quality Assurance*
   The government will establish educational quality assurance both internal and external. An Office of Educational Standard and Quality Assessment will be set up to assess external quality and report to the public.

4) *Reform of Educational Administration and Management*
   The reform in this aspect aims to restructuring the existing administration and management system to enable efficiency and effectiveness of education. Downsizing and decentralization are encouraged while local educational authorities will be able to provide their education according to their needs.

5) *Reforming of System and Process and the Enhancement of Teaching Profession and Teachers Development*

Funds for the development of teachers and education personnel, will be set up as an independent organization to enhance teaching profession in basic education. Teaching license system will also be initiated while law on salaries and remuneration and other benefits will be enhanced.

6) *Encouragement of the Participation of Private Sector*
   The private sector will be encourage to be independent on administration and management under the government's supervision, and monitoring. The government shall provide appropriate financial support, tax reduction or exemption, and provision of benefits to private institutions.

7) *Reform of Learning Process*
   The government will organize activities to support learning from actual experiences by practicing. The promotion of the action plans and the establishment of lifelong learning centres in various forms will be encouraged. The participation of family and social institutions in the formulation of process of learning within the community will also be enhanced.

8) *Reform of Curriculum*
   The reform will be in a diversity of forms to meet the requirement, age and students' potential. The emphasis will not only be on knowledge and skills in mathematics, science and technology, but also the pride of Thai identity. History, the origin of Thai society and the democracy under constitutional monarchy is stressed.

9) *Reform of Resources Allocation*
   This aspect of reform will be based on equality, justice and accountability, and mobilization of resources by the state and local educational authorities with attractive incentives, such as provision of financial assistance, and tax reduction or exemption.

10) *Promotion and Supporting of the Production*
    The promotion of materials production include various forms in formal, non-formal, and informal.

Supportive Factors and Limitations in the Provision of Basic Education
The government tasks on education for all require full efforts and cooperation from all parties to assure the achievement of basic education. The path to the achievement include supportive factors and limitations follows:

Supportive Factors

1) *Concrete Strategies and Measures*
   The Office of the National Education Commission and the Ministry of Education have set up and proposed 11 strategies and measures for the provision of basic education for approval from the Cabinet. The clear guidelines of operation and the political support will provide more opportunity to success.

2) *Budget*
   Basic education is provided free-of-charge, therefore, that the government has to allocate a large portion of the budget for the provision of basic education. The initial estimate of budget during 2000-2003 will be as high as of 100,000 million baht a year. Recognizing the significance of basic education, the Cabinet finally approved the amount of budget as proposed by the Office of the National Education Commission and the Ministry of Education

3) *Provision of rights to the family, institutions and local administration organization*
   The provision of rights to families and institutions/organizations to organize appropriate basic education on their own with government's subsidy will assure a full coverage of basic education.

4) *Participation of private sector*
   The encouragement of the private sector to have more participation in providing basic education to lessen the burden of the government, with government's

subsidy and incentives will provide the public with more options and high enrollment rate., government's financial support, tax reduction or tax exemption, other privileges and freedom in the administration and management of education by the private sector itself, constitute to the incentives that draw the private sector to participate in the management of basic education.

5) *Non-formal source of knowledge*
   The change in the process from teacher-center approach to learner-center approach requires more non-formal sources of knowledge. These sources can help the learners to know more about themselves and the world, make them feel involved and realize the problems within the community. The learners may then be able to apply their knowledge to develop their own community.
   Another benefit of non-formal sources of knowledge is that it will enhance educational institutions to set up local curriculum to meet the demands of the community and enhance the relationship between the learners and their community.

6) *Teachers and education personnel*
   Teachers and education personnel is crucial factor in the provision of basic education. Education with such a nationwide coverage will certainly increase the number of the students. More teachers in secondary education are therefore needed. Such need will not necessarily present an obstacle in the management of basic education since the number of teachers in primary classes is being reduced due to the decreasing number of students at such level of education. This is the result of effective family planning policy. The reduction of primary school students has made the teacher-student ratio in primary schools lower than the standard. The standard for this ratio is 1:25 but in reality it is only 1:20. Therefore, the surplus number of primary school teachers can be shifted to teach in secondary education classes after proper training and skills upgrading that make them suitable to teach classes in secondary education level.

7) *Free Education*
   With free education provided, more students will enroll in the school. More students will enroll in upper secondary level, particularly those facing economic problem can earn a living from part-time work because they are already in labour age.

8) *Transfer of Credits*
   Transfer of credits will enable the increase in the enrollment in formal education. This new system will enhance the students to find out by themselves what he needs to know in accordance with their preferences and interest. If the students would like to drop their education for some time, they may return to continue their education later to enable the decrease of the waste of education.

9) *Provision of Education to Those without House Registration*
   The Ministry of Education has set up guidelines for the enrollment into school for children without registration. These children will also be awarded a certificate of education. This policy increases access to education for this group.

Limitations and Prevention

1) *Economic Status*
   Although the Cabinet has approved an allocation of the budget for the provision of basic education, the present economic status of obstructs wider access to education. Resources mobilization from several agencies therefore is encouraged. It does not only lessen the burden of government budget but also restructure the educational finance management. The number of students' enrollment has reduced therefore the budget allocated to education provision at this level has accordingly decreased and is shifted to the provision of secondary

education. Furthermore, downsizing is encouraged in terms of cutting the positions of those retired.

2) *Duplication of Services*
   The participation of several agencies and organizations in the provision of basic education to enhance a wider coverage has sometimes created duplication of services in the same areas, particularly in urban areas. The duplication causes waste in educational finance. The government should encourage all agencies to discuss and plan together to avoid duplication. Therefore, the budget allocated will then be appropriately clear and proportional to maximize the effectiveness in the administration.

3) *Lack of Information and Data for Planning*
   Another limitation of the provision of basic education is lack of database and information to assist in planning. Systematic collection and compilation of data in Thailand still lacks behind. Since it is undertaken on individual basis, with no coordination among relevant agencies, particularly the data on the handicapped and those without resident registration. It is suggested that networking of database among relevant agencies be created to assure that the provision of basic education for all will effectively meet basic learning needs.

2.6 Special needs education

According to Section 10 of the *1999 National Education Act,* persons with special needs will have the right and opportunity to receive basic education which will be specially provided.

So far, the provision of education for the disabled and the disadvantaged has expanded at a steady pace while the provision of education for the gifted still requires significant attention.

To support the provision of education for the disabled and the disadvantaged, the *MOE* has announced ministerial regulations indicating criteria and procedures for providing facilities, media, services and other forms of educational aid as well as ministerial regulations indicating criteria and procedures for allocating educational budget for the disabled.

The number of disabled children having access to basic education sharply rose from 87,475 in 1999 to 141,673 in 2001. However, it was found that only 22 percent of the disabled were able to participate in basic education.

Number of Disabled Children Enrolled in Basic Education Institutions, Academic Years 1999-2001:

Level of education	1999	2000	2001
Pre-primary	2,101	22,896	16,710
Primary	11,103	107,880	114,183
Lower Secondary	2,986	10,966	9,860
Upper Secondary	1,641	713	920
Total	**87,475**	**142,455**	**141,673**

With greater efforts being made by different agencies to provide basic education to economically and socially disadvantaged children, higher numbers of these target groups have had access to all levels of basic education, particularly at lower secondary level. The total enrolment of disadvantaged students rose from 1.4 million in 1999 to 2 million in 2001.

Number of Disadvantaged Children Enrolled in Basic Education Institutions, Academic Years 1999-2001:

Level of education	1999	2000	2001
Pre-primary	223,825	378,540	564,761

Primary	182,631	181,168	239,889
Lower Secondary	632,571	735,009	1,005,744
Upper Secondary	613,785	670,464	657,169
Total	**1,441,812**	**1,594,307**	**2,040,886**

2.7 Conclusions

The enrolment rates for primary education are not bad compared with other underdeveloped countries. Thailand has a policy to make 12 years of basic quality education free and accessible to all. In order to accomplish this the country will need to do more to reach those children that do not have access yet because of a disability, or geographical or social circumstances.

3. Secondary education

3.1 School attendance
Enrolment rates in lower secondary education decreased from 83.4 percent in 1999 to 82.2 percent in 2002. However, the percentage of primary school graduates increased from 102.3 in 1999 to 104.8 in 2002.
At upper secondary level, the transition rate faced a decline from 87.1 percent in 1997 to 80.2 percent in 2001. However, it rose to 88.2 percent in 2002 , with 53.5 percent in the general stream and 34.7 percent in the vocational stream.
Statistics on secondary education:

Years Data	2003	2004	2005	2006
Percentage of female students. Total secondary. General programs	51	52	52	52
Percentage of female students. Total secondary. Technical/vocational programs	41	45	44	45
Percentage of female students. Total secondary. All programs	49	51	51	51
Pupils of the official school age. Secondary. Female	…	…	…	2,107,949
Pupils of the official school age. Secondary. Male	…	…	…	2,012,232
Pupils of the official school age. Secondary. Total	…	…	…	4,120,181
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 1. Total	…	909,200	992,897	955,565
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 2. Total	…	851,160	927,671	936,012
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 3. Total	…	793,053	832,569	869,642
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 4. Total	…	371,794	…	422,852
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 5. Total	…	364,293	…	340,968
Enrolment in secondary. Grade 6. Total	…	346,325	…	301,653
Enrolment in lower secondary. Public. All programs. Total	2,219,882	2,373,100	2,472,522	2,448,048
Enrolment in lower secondary. Public and private. All programs. Female	1,211,775	1,273,838	1,361,002	1,363,503
Enrolment in lower secondary. Public and private. All programs. Total	2,437,024	2,553,413	2,753,173	2,761,219
Enrolment in total secondary. Public. General programs. Total	3,242,138	3,403,027	3,473,166	3,406,650
Enrolment in total secondary. Public. Technical/vocational programs. Total	418,557	407,609	452,772	443,912
Enrolment in total secondary. Public. All programs. Total	3,660,695	3,810,636	3,925,938	3,850,562
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. General programs. Female	1,793,042	1,884,968	1,987,074	1,984,843
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. General programs. Total	3,539,608	3,635,825	3,847,463	3,826,601
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. Technical/vocational programs. Female	239,562	280,304	302,199	316,207
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. Technical/vocational programs. Total	588,624	617,555	685,710	703,428
Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. All programs. Female	2,032,604	2,165,272	2,289,273	2,301,050

Enrolment in total secondary. Public and private. All programs. Total	4,128,232	4,253,380	4,533,173	4,530,029
Gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs. Female	76	80	86	87
Gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs. Male	75	79	86	87
Gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs. Total	75	79	86	87
Gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs. Female	51	55	58	59
Gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs. Male	53	49	52	51
Gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs. Total	52	52	55	55
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs. Female	63	67	72	72
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs. Male	64	64	69	69
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs. Total	63	66	70	71
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Lower secondary. All programs	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.00
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Upper secondary. All programs	0.96	1.12	1.11	1.15
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. All programs	0.99	1.05	1.04	1.05
Percentage of private enrolment. Lower secondary. General programs	9	7	10	11
Percentage of private enrolment. Upper secondary. General programs	7	5	9	10
Percentage of private enrolment. Upper secondary. Technical/vocational programs	29	34	34	37
Percentage of private enrolment. Secondary	11	10	13	15
Teaching staff in lower secondary. Female	58,276	…	…	60,624
Teaching staff in lower secondary. Total	104,097	…	…	109,430
Teaching staff in upper secondary. Female	33,325	…	…	46,652
Teaching staff in upper secondary. Total	67,940	…	…	88,857
Teaching staff in secondary. Female	91,601	…	…	107,276
Teaching staff in secondary. Total	172,037	…	…	198,287
Pupil-teacher ratio. Lower secondary	23	…	…	25
Pupil-teacher ratio. Upper secondary	25	…	…	20
Pupil-teacher ratio. Secondary	24	…	…	23

For the latest statistics visit:
http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0

3.2 School accessibility

12-year free basic education, covering 6 years of primary education and 6 years of secondary education, was granted to students throughout the country for the first time in the history of Thai education in October 2002.
As a part of 12-year free basic education, 9-year compulsory education in Thailand covers 6 years of primary education and 3 years of secondary education. In February 2002, the MOE issued the ministerial regulation indicating the criteria and methods of

calculating children's age for compulsory education. The Compulsory Education Act which has been effective since 1 January 2003 requires that all children aged 7-16 be enrolled in basic education institutions except for those who have already completed grade 9.
School fees are charged by the public schools in Thailand but the amount varies per school, there are also other costs that schools can charge such as: school user fees, uniforms and book fees. Private schools do charge school fees, these fees can vary greatly.

3.3 Forms of secondary education

Secondary education is divided into three years of lower secondary and three years of upper secondary education. To expand educational opportunities in remote rural areas, the Office of the National Primary Education Commission (ONPEC) has established extensive lower secondary programs around the country. Also, inspired by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, the Ministry of Education has established a Sema Life Development Project to provide special scholarships for secondary education to rural girls vulnerable to potential exploitation by the commercial sex industry.
Upper secondary education is divided into two basic tracks: general academic and vocational. Of those in upper secondary, 57 percent take the general academic track and 43 percent the vocational. In both lower and upper secondary, students study for a total of 1,400 hours per year. The curriculum of both lower and upper secondary have four basic elements; Core subjects such as Thai, mathematics, science, and English which must be taken by all students; Prescribed elective subjects which differ according to local conditions and needs (the special needs of schools in Islamic areas of the south); Free elective subjects depending on the interests of learners; and Activities.

3.4 Curriculum

The curriculum for secondary education follows that of primary education because primary and secondary education in Thailand both belong to basic education. So for more information on the curriculum see "2.4 Curriculum".

3.5 Government input

Because primary and secondary education in Thailand both belong to basic education they follow the same legislation and reform policies. So for more information on the government input see "2.5 Government input".

3.6 Conclusions

The enrolment rates for secondary education are lower then that of primary education. The reason is the very low enrolment rate for upper secondary education. The cause for the low enrolment rate might be doe to the fact that upper secondary education is not part of the legislation that gives everyone the right to 12 years of quality, free education.

4. Higher education and university

4.1 School attendance

With respect to enrollment at the higher education level, in 1999, approximately 25.7 percent of the 18 to 21 age group were enrolled, leaving roughly 3,300,000 of this age group not participating in any institution of higher education. Despite Thailand's major economic crisis, higher education enrollments actually increased 19.8 percent between 1998 and 1999. There were two major reasons for this. First, the Thai government introduced a major loan program to assist students to help meet the costs of both upper secondary and college level education. Second, with the economic crisis and related higher unemployment levels, the opportunity cost of pursuing higher education certainly declined.

Statistics on tertiary educaton:

Years Data	2003	2004	2005	2006
Percentage of female students. Tertiary ISCED 5A	54	54	53	52
Percentage of female students. Tertiary ISCED 5B	47	50	47	48
Percentage of female students. Tertiary ISCED 6	58	62	51	54
Percentage of female students. Total tertiary	53	54	52	51
Enrolment in 5A tertiary. Total	1,783,299	1,860,149	1,984,082	1,934,200
Enrolment in 5B tertiary. Total	415,979	383,580	366,975	392,910
Enrolment in 6 tertiary. Total	6,303	7,724	8,070	11,462
Enrolment in total tertiary.	2,205,851	2,251,453	2,359,127	2,338,572
Gross enrolment ratio. ISCED 5 and 6. Female	43	44	45	44
Gross enrolment ratio. ISCED 5 and 6. Male	53	49	52	51
Gross enrolment ratio. ISCED 5 and 6. Total	52	52	55	55
Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio. Tertiary	1.14	1.17	1.11	1.06
School life expectancy (years). Tertiary. Female	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.2
School life expectancy (years). Tertiary. Male	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.1
School life expectancy (years). Tertiary. Total	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.1
Total graduates in all programs. Tertiary. Female	258,705	241,732	…	…
Total graduates in all programs. Tertiary. Total	507,092	481,895	…	…
Teaching staff in total tertiary. Female	31,084	…	…	36,236
Teaching staff in total tertiary. Total	65,548	…	…	70,405

For the latest statistics visit:
http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0

4.2 School accessibility

Admission

Admission to an institution of higher education requires the Certificate of Secondary Education (*Matayom* VI). Most public universities also require applicants to take the Joint Higher Education Entrance Examination (JHEEE), which is held each year in April and administered by the MUA. Students who have successfully completed the Certificate of Vocational Education are also eligible to take the JHEEE.

Applicants are required to complete up to seven sections on the exam depending on the desired faculty. Science faculties for instance require mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and English. Social Sciences faculties require social studies, Thai, English, other foreign languages and mathematics.

Students may apply to as many as five faculties at one or more universities of their choice.

The JHEE is a highly competitive exam. Only about 30 percent of those who take the examination succeed in securing a place at a public university. In April 1994, 134,654 students took the JHEEE. Out of that number 22,000 were admitted to public universities and 17,000 were admitted to private universities.

Some institutions hold their own entrance exams while the country's two open universities, Ramkhamhaeng Univerity and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, do not require applicants to take and entrance exam.

Private institutions have their own admissions process, which includes a joint entrance examination similar to the JHEEE.

Student loan

As there has been rapid expansion of education in spite of scarce resources, particularly at secondary and higher levels, school fees needed to be increased. The student loan program has been initiated since 1996 to provide educational opportunities for students from low-income families to study at secondary and under-graduate levels.

4.3 Forms of higher education

Higher education is provided in universities, technical institutes, vocational colleges, or specialized training institutions (i.e. nursing colleges, cadet school and Buddhist universities). It is divided into two levels: non-degree level and degree level. Students seeking higher education may continue their education to either non-degree level or degree level.

Non-degree level or associate degree level is mainly offered by colleges and institutes, public and private vocational colleges, as well as colleges of physical education, dramatic arts and fine arts. The majority of courses offered are associated with vocational and teacher education and require two years of study.

A Bachelor's degree normally requires four years of college-level course work. Some degree programs including architecture, painting, sculpture, graphic arts and pharmacy require five years of study, while medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science require six years of study. Undergraduate studies leading to a Bachelor's degree are generally divided into two phases: a set of general course requirements in a broad range of subjects and a concentrated (or major) program of study in one or more subjects.

Applicants to Bachelor's degree programs in public universities are normally required to face an entrance examination and an interview. The Ministry of Education plans to introduce a new system in 2006 called Central University Admissions System (CUAS) to replace the existing entrance examination. The new system will select students based on both their academic performance during the three-year study in upper

secondary level and their scores from Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET), and Advanced National Educational Test (A-NET) during the last semester of the upper secondary level.

Graduate education includes programs of study leading to graduate diploma, Master's, or Doctoral degree. A Master's degree requires at least two years of study beyond the Bachelor's degree. A Doctoral degree usually requires three years of intensive research and knowledge acquisition beyond the Master's degree.

Admission requirements for graduate programs vary depending on the nature of the program and university admission policies. Some universities require a standardized test, such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and, for business and management, the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).

Most institutions operate using either a semester or quarter academic calendar. The semester system consists of two sessions called semesters, each lasting at least 15 weeks. The quarter system consist of three sessions called quarters, each lasting at least 12 weeks. An academic year is usually from June to March that usually equates to two semesters or three quarters. Both systems might have a six-week session in the summer during April and May.

4.4 Curriculum

Higher education curricula have been developed by each higher education institution under the condition that the curricula were commensurate with specified structures and standards. In reforming higher education curricula, several actions were taken as follows:

1) A project that includes a cooperative education system in higher education has been initiated. The objectives of the project are to enhance students' working skills through direct experience; to lessen unemployment; and to update the curricula in line with the recommendations of entrepreneurs. In this system, third- and fourth-year students will actually work in offices and factories that have joined the project. After working as temporary employees for at least 16 weeks, students will gain on-the-job experience and 3 credits.

2) The framework of recommendations was proposed to enhance the diversity of higher education curricula in the following fields: nursing science; agro-industry; accounting; biotechnology; science (physics, chemistry, arithmetic and biology); hotel management (including service industry and tourism); and English.

3) Both state and private universities are supported in providing international curricula which offer study programmes that use English as the medium of instruction. In 2002, 425 international curricula were offered by both state and private universities in *Thailand.*

4) Curricula in the fields of science and technology as well as social sciences were developed by the *Rajamangala Institutes of Technology (RIT).* There were altogether 262 subjects at various levels (certificate, diploma and degree). The objectives of these newly developed curricula are to develop students' critical thinking and skills as well as to provide them with authentic experiences.

5) Seven curricula were developed by *Rajabhat Institutes (Ris)* including: the training of teachers for basic education (6-years curricula/bachelor's degree); education (diploma); education administration (diploma); teaching (master's degree); education administration (master's degree); the training of educational personnel (bachelor's and master's degrees); and the development of in-service teachers and administrators (bachelor's degree).

4.5 **Management**

The Commission for Higher Education is responsible for proposing policies, development plans and standards for higher education in line with the National Scheme for education, religion, art and culture; mobilization of resources; monitoring; inspection; and evaluation of the provision of higher education, taking into consideration academic freedom and excellence of degree level institutions in accord with the laws on the establishment of such institutions and other relevant laws.

4.6 **Government input**

Public higher education institutions receive government subsidies to support the institutions financially. Higher education gets 14.2% of the national budget for education.

For more information on government legislation see 1.3 Government education policy.

4.7 **Conclusions**

The enrolment ratio is quite high for tertiary education in Thailand, compared to other developing countries. Of course Thailand also has issues with providing higher education for everyone. Higher education needs the tuition fees for to keep the quality up.

5. Informal education and literacy

5.1 Non formal education

Non-formal education, including adult education, introduced in Thailand in 1940 in an attempt to provide education for those who miss schooling opportunities, is an indispensable component of the present educational system that complements the formal system of education. Educational programs offered emphasize basic education, news and information literacy (level 1-4) and vocational skills training which are available throughout the country.

There are over 500 public libraries throughout the country, most of which offer mobile services to people in rural areas. Practical reading materials are also available at over 30,000 village reading centers formed by village committees.

There are at least 38 national museums for public reference and interest.

The Non-formal Education Department established Thaicom Distance Education Centre in October 1993 to plan and manage the satellite distance education project. The experimental period of this project is from 1994-1998. The centre coordinates with agencies concerned from both the public and private sectors in the management of televised distance education through satellite broadcast and the development of such multi-media, as texts or self-learning manuals, learning kits, television/radio programs, video/cassette tapes.

Special training services are also provided for disadvantaged groups in urban and rural areas, new labor market entrants, the unemployed, and certain categories of people such as ex-convicts, homeless, and sexually-exploited who require skills to earn their living and make them active contributors to society.

For more information on non formal education in Thailand visit:
http://www.irfol.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/nonformaledthailand.pdf

5.2 Literacy

The National Literacy Agency of Thailand is divided into several divisions:

- The Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education
  Non-Formal Education Development Division
  The responsibilities of this Division concern the development of non-formal education curricula, textbooks and materials, specification of criteria, quality and standard of non-formal education, overseeing and controlling testing and evaluation system in non-formal education, as well as cooperating with other organizations concerned and performing other duties as assigned.
- Operations Promotion Division
  This Division is assigned to be responsible for promoting, supporting and developing non-formal education provision, NFE networks, NFE standard and effectiveness, as well as coordinating and supporting the implementation of other organizations concerned and performing other duties to be assigned.
- Centre for Educational Technology
  CET is responsible for development of educational technology media for promoting and supporting formal, non-formal and informal education, dissemination and promotion of utilization of those media, giving services on educational technology, as well as cooperating with concerned organizations and performing other duties as assigned.

- Supervisory Unit
  The functions of the Supervisory Unit concern the promotion and support of development of non-formal education quality, cooperating with other organizations concerned and conducting other missions to be assigned.

The structure of the agency can be found in the image below.

Organization of the Department of Non-formal Education
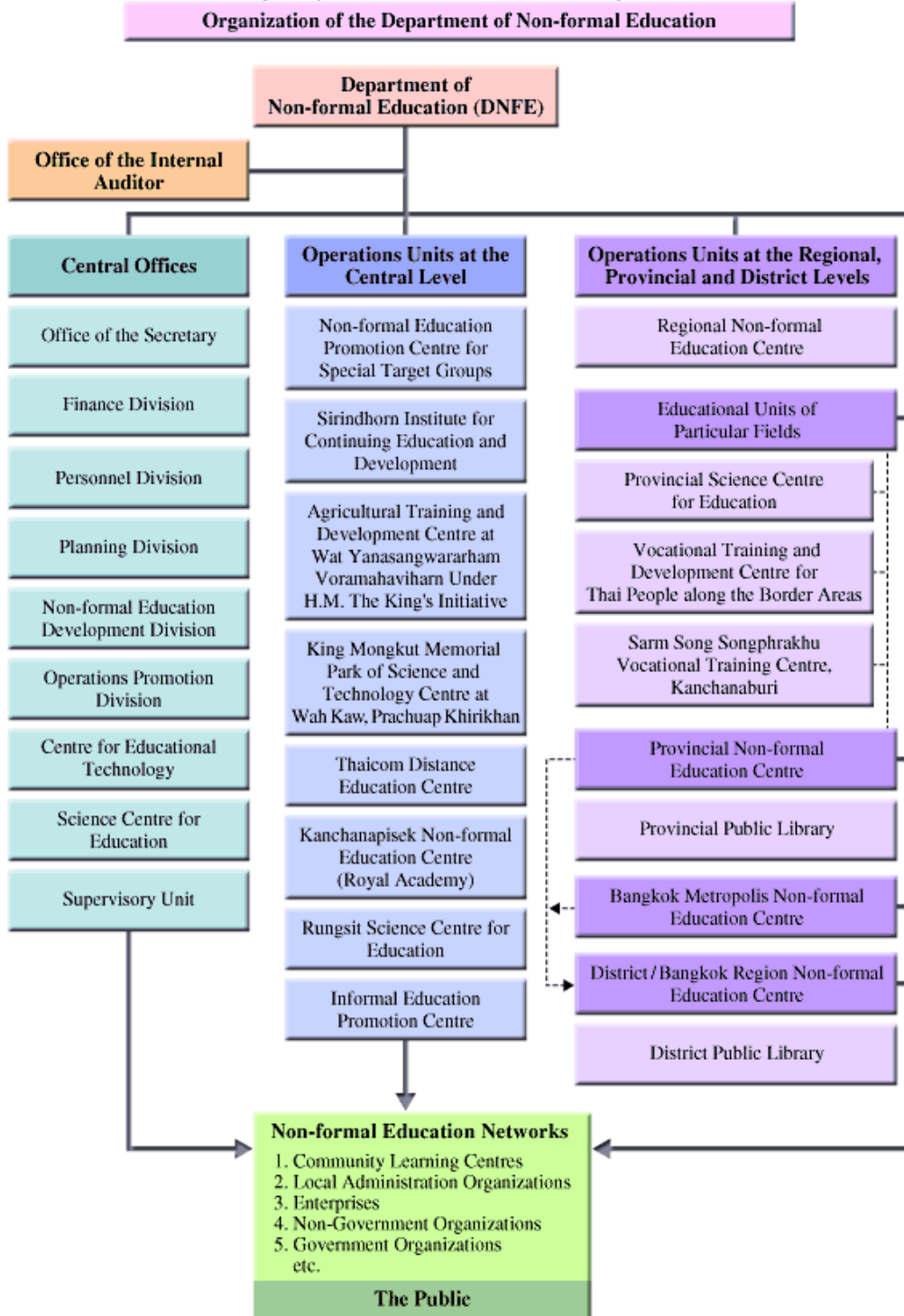
Numbers

Number of NGOs working in the field of literacy: there are more than 135 NGOs working in the field of literacy. These agencies have undertaken several projects to

enable about 10% of the out-of-school youth, particularly the disadvantaged to gain access to the formal education system.
Number of literacy classes in most recent year: 19,113 people in classes, 264,868 in distance education and 5,579 in self-study.
Number of classroom hours designated to achieve basic literacy: 200 hours.

National policies and strategies

- National Policies on Literacy / Non-formal Education in Latest Policy Document on Education:
  The promotion of literacy has been given high priority as part of basic education. The government has therefore set up a policy for an extensive coverage of basic education in diverse forms and methodologies to meet the demands of specific target groups in order to promote and maintain the literacy rate.
- Current Literacy / Non-formal Education Objectives /Strategies:
  To expand educational services in order to promote literacy for all males and females aged 14-50, by the year 2001.

Literacy statistics

Adult Literacy Rate 2000-2004, Male, %	95
Adult Literacy Rate 2000-2004, Female, %	91
Adult Literacy Rate 2000-2004, Total, %	93
Youth Literacy Rate 2000-2004, Male, %	98
Youth Literacy Rate 2000-2004, Female, %	98
Youth Literacy Rate 2000-2004, Total, %	98

Adult Literacy Rate: The percent of people over the age of 15 who are literate. Data taken over a 5 year period.
Youth Literacy Rate: The percent of people between the ages of 15 and 25 who are literate. Data taken over a 5 year period.

5.3 Conclusions

Non formal education in Thailand is well organized and this can be seen in the statistics for literacy. Thailand tries to complement the formal education system as best as possible with the non-formal system to educate those that would otherwise get no education at all.

6. Sources

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1.2 Formal education	http://www.gfme.org/global_guide/pdf/245-250%20Thailand.pdf http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/16-26.pdf
1.3 Government education policy	http://www.mfa.go.th/web/17.php
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1.5 The quality of education	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/68-74.pdf
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1.7 Teacher education	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/75-81.pdf
1.8 Educational administration and management	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/27-40.pdf
2.1 School attendance	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/115-128.pdf http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0
2.2 School accessibility	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/115-128.pdf http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/library/OPI/Documents/MediaTrainingEFA_VietNam/Annex_C_ThaiParticipants_EFA_Thailand.doc
2.3 Forms of primary education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1527/Thailand-PREPRIMARY-PRIMARY-EDUCATION.html
2.4 Curriculum	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/58-67.pdf
2.5 Government input	http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/thailand/rapport_3.html
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3.1 School attendance	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/115-128.pdf http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0
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	cipants_EFA_Thailand.doc
3.3 Forms of secondary education	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1528/Thailand-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html
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4.2 School accessibility	http://www.wes.org/ewenr/05mar/practical.htm http://www.onec.go.th/onec_pub/edu1998/pdf/chapter5.pdf
4.3 Forms of higher education	http://www.gfme.org/global_guide/pdf/245-250%20Thailand.pdf
4.4 Curriculum	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/58-67.pdf
4.5 Management	http://www.gfme.org/global_guide/pdf/245-250%20Thailand.pdf
4.6 Government input	http://www.onec.go.th/publication/education03/41-57.pdf
5.1 Non formal education	http ://sunsite.au.ac.th/thailand/education/edu_thai/nonformal.html
5.2 Literacy	http://www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/policy/tha/index.htm http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/skills-ap/skills/thailand_literacy.htm