

Chapter 2

Framework for Educational Development

Before the full implementation of the first *National Education Act* which will take at least three years, Thai education will still be provided in accordance with the *1992 National Scheme of Education* and the *Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001)* which reflect the principles and concepts of education as presented below.

2.1 The 1992 National Scheme of Education

The present *National Scheme of Education*, the long – range plan, has been promulgated since 1992 to direct the nation’s educational provision so as to render the education system efficiently responsive to emerging needs and rapid changes in Thai society. Principles and goals of education including the policy directives as well as guidelines and measures stated are summarized as follows :

Principles

Education under this *National Scheme of Education* is based on four fundamental principles :

1. The flourishing of individual wisdom, thinking, minds and morality is a necessary and essential goal.
2. Human beings must realize the importance of judicious utilization and conservation of natural resources.
3. An understanding of the language and culture of Thai society must be ascertained.
4. The proper balance between dependency and self-reliance is an essential basis for cooperation at individual, community and national levels.

Goals

Education is the process enabling human beings to develop their quality of life, lead a peaceful social life, and make a proper contribution to national development in accordance with contextual changes of the nation. As such, the goals of education emphasize balanced and harmonious development of the individual in four aspects : wisdom, spiritual, physical and social development.

Policy Directives

In order to achieve the stated principles and goals, the following policy directives are formulated:

1. To establish a system of learning networks.
2. To provide and promote prenatal care, rearing practices and education necessary for child development.
3. To promote readiness preparation for every child before entry to primary school.
4. To ensure a comprehensive, quality and convenient compulsory education service.
5. To designate secondary education as the basic education for all.

6. To reform teacher pre-service and in-service education.
7. To promote academic excellence in higher education.
8. To improve curriculum content and teaching-learning processes at all levels and types of education.
9. To enhance the capability of students and the population in using Thai language.
10. To promote extensive instruction of foreign languages.
11. To promote research and development activities.
12. To promote and support applications of modern technologies for the purpose of expanding educational services.
13. To promote and support the participation of family, community, other social institutions and mass media in the educational process.
14. To support models and methods of education that allow that the talented or gifted to develop their potential.
15. To support rapid and extensive expansion of educational services for the disadvantaged and the handicapped.
16. To promote education for ecclesiastical personnel and spiritual leaders.
17. To improve the educational administration system.
18. To promote the private sector's increased involvement in providing educational services at all levels.
19. To mobilize, allocate and utilize educational resources efficiently and equitably.

Guidelines and Measures

Education in Thailand is currently organized according to the stated policy directives through the following guidelines and measures :

Learning Network and Education for All

- Expand services for pre-school children.
- Expand basic education services in various forms.
Secondary education must be extensively provided for learners in all areas.
- Improve the admission system for primary and secondary education.
- Promote community learning processes.
- Employ various methods to promote and support the coordination of efforts and resources of educational agencies.
- Utilize communication and information technologies and mass media to provide knowledge for the people and the community.

Curriculum Content and Instructional Process

- Design the curriculum content to provide basic learning experiences for individual and social development.
- Integrate knowledge from studies, investigation and research into curriculum content and instructional processes.

- Emphasize the importance of the Thai language.
- Develop the content of science and technology.
- Enhance morality, proper attitudes and the behaviour of learners.
- Enhance scientific thinking and understanding, inquisitiveness, creativity, and the analytical and synthesis- making ability of learners.
- Promote vocational knowledge and skills of learners and thus produce quality manpower.
- Enhance flexibility in developing curriculum content and instructional processes.
- Encourage educational institutions to provide instruction in foreign languages.
- Promote an application of formal, non-formal, and informal modes of learning suitable to learners abilities.
- Promote cooperation in the family, educational, religious and other institutions including mass media in inculcating moral virtues and appropriate values.
- Develop counselling and guidance service systems.
- Develop systems of supervision, monitoring and evaluation in all educational institutions.
- Promote and allow transfer of credits and the accreditation of work experience.
- Provide certification of professional competency.

Teacher and Educational Personnel

- Improve the teacher student admission system and encourage able personnel in other professions to join the teaching profession.
- Improve the process of training, educating, and developing teachers and educational personnel.
- Promote the role of teachers as academic leaders and coordinators of community development.
- Ensure efficient deployment of teachers and educational personnel.
- Develop the teacher personnel administration system.
- Establish mechanisms for monitoring the quality standard and professional practices of teachers.

Administration and Management

- Entrust the central authority to the public. Authority concerning educational administration, planning and implementation are to be transferred from the central authority to provincial agencies and schools.
- Establish a provincial educational board.
- Strengthen systems and mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Promote the use of a non-grade system in certifying

individual's knowledge.

- Improve laws, regulations and rules to enhance coordination in resources utilization and cooperation among various organizations.

Educational Resources and Investment

- Direct educational agencies to coordinate their plans and operations concerning resource mobilization.
- Allocate budget for public education, giving priorities to the provision of compulsory education, basic education expansion, education for the disadvantaged, community learning, special education, quality improvement, and research and development.
- Encourage extensive role of private sector and community in educational provision.
- Call upon educational institutions to adjust educational tuition and fees to correspond with the private rate of return for each level, type and field of education.
- Promote or support business enterprises in providing education and vocational skill training.
- Promote local administration's revenue for use in organizing education.

Structure of Educational System

The educational system according to the *1992 National Scheme of Education* covers both education in a school-related system and from a way-of-life learning process.

A. Education in a school-related system is provided by educational institutions, characterized by a class/grading system, and the use of curriculum specified for the level and type of education so as to develop learners in accordance with curriculum objectives.

Level of Education Education in a school – related system is divided into 4 levels: pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education.

1. Pre-primary education is in the form of childcare and readiness development in physical, psychological, mental, emotional, personality, and social aspects of children between 3-5 years of age. It can be organized in the form of day-care centres.

2. Primary education, which is compulsory for children between 6-11 years old, requires 6 years of study.

3. Secondary education is divided into two parts: lower secondary education and upper secondary education. Each requires 3 years of study.

3.1 Lower secondary education aims to enable children around 12-14 years old to identify their needs and interests and to be aware of their aptitude both in general and vocational education; and to develop their ability for work and occupational practices relevant to their age.

3.2 Upper secondary education aims to enable learners who are about 15-17 years old to acquire the basis either for going further to higher education or for working and pursuing a career suitable for their aptitude.

4. Higher education is divided into 3 levels : lower than bachelor's degree level, bachelor's degree level, and graduate level.

4.1 Lower than bachelor's degree level aims to promote learners' knowledge and vocational skills at middle level.

4.2 Bachelor's degree level aims to promote learners' higher level of knowledge and skills in various disciplines.

4.3 Graduate level aims to promote learners' specialized knowledge and skills ; to strive for academic progress and excellence, especially in studies, research and development of knowledge and technology.

Type of Education The organization of education in a school-related system can be of various types depending on the *characteristics and needs of target groups* as follows :

1. Teacher education aims to train and develop prospective as well as practicing teachers to acquire morality, knowledge, ability and skills in teaching and motivating learners to learn.

2. Vocational education aims to enable learners to develop vocational knowledge and skills useful for working both as entrepreneurs and as paid workers. Vocational education in the formal school system is a development of occupational knowledge and skills relevant to each level of education from primary to higher levels. Vocational education in the non-formal system is short-course training in specific occupations for those needing to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

3. Special vocational education aims to enable learners to train and develop specific vocational skills and expertise such as dancing, music and sports. It may be provided in special institutes or incorporated in the general curricula.

4. Vocational education for specific purposes provides knowledge and skills in accordance with the specific needs of certain agencies, or characteristics and needs of specific groups. It must comply with the State's national policy directives.

5. Special education aims to enable the handicapped to undertake learning suitable for their condition and capability. It enables talented learners to develop their aptitude to the fullest potential. Special education can be provided in special institutes or in general educational institutions from pre- school to higher education levels.

6. Education for ecclesiastical personnel and spiritual leaders aims to enable monks, novices and spiritual leaders to assume leadership in wisdom, spiritual and moral development.

B. Education from a way-of-life learning process is self-learning from various sources of knowledge and environment related to way of life naturally existing or modified to enhance and facilitate learning. It is not only to complement formal education but also to correct any overdependence on formal education and to offer opportunities for lifelong learning.

2.2 The Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001)

Being challenged by the rapid changes in the world of advanced technologies, especially information technology, education in *Thailand* is required to play a more challenging and developmental role in preparing the Thai people to cope with globalization movements. Accordingly, the *Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001)*, the medium – range plan, has been introduced with the following objectives, policies and major programmes for educational development.

Objectives

- To expand an extensive and equal provision of basic education for all people ; and to extend basic education to secondary education level.
- To improve the equality of education and its relevance to the needs of individuals, communities and the nation, and to enable learners to achieve their full potential for self-development.
- To enhance Thai education in strengthening the national potential for self-reliance, and to contribute to national economic stabilization and the role of *Thailand* in the global economy.

Policies on Educational Development

- To accelerate an extensive and equal expansion and further extension of high-quality basic education services for all.
- To reform the teaching and learning system.
- To reform the teacher education system.
- To accelerate the production and development of middle-level skilled and higher-level skilled manpower.
- To reform education administration and management.

Major Programmes for Educational Development

The targets for educational development to guide the implementation have been grouped into 9 major programmes :

1. Promotion of Basic Education for All.
2. Improvement of Education Quality.
3. Development of the Teacher Education System and Process, and the Development of In-service Teacher Education.
4. Production and Development of manpower in the Areas of Science and Technology and Social Sciences.
5. Research and Development.
6. Improvement of Administration and Management.
7. Development of Higher Education.
8. Educational Resource Mobilization.

9. Development of an Educational Information System.

Thai education is currently provided on the basis of the 1992 National Scheme of Education and the Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001). The Eighth Plan, which is consistent with the National Scheme of Education, contains educational objectives and policies to be implemented by operational units during the period of the Plan. To ensure implementation according to the National Scheme of Education and the National Education Development Plan, the agencies concerned are required to formulate corresponding action plans. Mechanisms must also be established to direct, monitor and evaluate the provision of education on a continuous basis.

However, the economic crisis in Thailand since mid-1997 directly affected the implementation of the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan, the master plan for national development. It is accepted that the crisis has exposed serious weaknesses in the nation's economy, such as declining export competitiveness and the quality of the human resources required to advance the process of economic transformation. The Eighth Plan was therefore revised to enable it to better respond to the crisis through the introduction of three new guidelines aimed at : (1) minimising the effects arising from unemployment ; (2) assisting the underprivileged groups and those affected by the crisis through assistance measures in the areas of social welfare, education and health; and (3) preventing and alleviating social problems as well as promoting desirable social values.

The education sector, an integral part of the national and social planning system, has also experienced the impacts of the crisis. The government has, therefore, taken several measures to mitigate its impact on educational development. It is expected that the National Education Act promulgated in August 1999 would bring about changes and new initiatives in the management of education as it will be used as the framework and guidelines for educational development in Thailand in place of the 1992 National Scheme of Education.