

Chapter 6

International Cooperation in Education

Thailand has been enriched through experience gained from cooperation with other countries for many decades. Apart from cooperation at the bilateral level, *Thailand* has benefited greatly from the interactions and interchanges through active participation in many international and regional organizations and associations in the fields of education, science and culture, as well as other related areas.

6.1 Thailand and International/Regional Organizations in Education

Thailand has cooperated with various international and regional organizations in order to enhance educational development in a more innovative way to keep pace with the advancement of technology. Various projects have been launched with cooperation from renowned international organizations agencies and units such as *UNESCO*, *UNDP*, *USAID*, *ASEAN*, *UNICEF*, the *World Bank*, *International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)*, *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)*, *International Bureau of Education (IBE)*, *International Community Education Association (ICEA)*, *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)*, *Asia- Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)*, the *British Council*, and the *Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)*. The cooperation between *Thailand* and some organizations is presented below.

A. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Thailand has been a member of *UNESCO* since January 1, 1949. The *Thai National Commission for UNESCO* has been established since 1950 by a resolution of the *Council of Ministers*, having the *Minister of Education* as its chairman and with its permanent secretariat attached to the *External Relations Division* of the *Office of the Permanent Secretary, MOE*.

UNESCO, *UNICEF*, *UNDP* and the *World Bank* jointly organized the World conference on Education for All at Jomtien, Chonburi, *Thailand* in March 1990. For the end of the decade following the World Declaration on Education for All : Meeting Basic Learning Needs adopted at the World Conference on Education for All, *UNESCO* has invited its Member States and agencies involved to participate in the Education for All Year 2000 Assessment (EFA 2000) to be convened in Brazil.

The EFA 2000 Assessment aims to enable the participating countries to follow up and monitor the progress of EFA, to identify priorities and promising strategies for overcoming obstacles and accelerating progress, and to revise the national plans of action accordingly. For the *Royal Thai Government*, the *MOE* has carried out the following activities :

- Establishment of a national EFA assessment group and a technical sub-group as well as designation of a national assessment coordinator.
- Arrangement of in-country workshops for the national assessment group. A preliminary draft of the national EFA assessment report for discussion at sub-regional

workshops was prepared by the *MOE*. Workshops at the regional level to evaluate the provision of Education for All in other provinces of *Thailand* were also organized.

- The EFA secretarial group, a technical group, used the nine goals of Education for All in *Thailand* and the 18 core EFA indicators set by *UNESCO* as the framework for assessing the progress of the EFA 2000 programme in *Thailand*. The draft of the national report underlining both quantitative and qualitative achievement was completed in May 1999.

B. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)

Thailand has cooperated with *IEA* since the 1970s with the *ONEC* as the participating centre representing at the *IEA* General Assembly. Through different research institutions, *Thailand* has participated in various important international research projects, e.g. the *First and Second Science Studies*, *English Study*, *Second International Mathematics Study*, *Classroom Environment Study*, *Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)*, *Written Composition*, and *Pre-primary Project*.

In 1998, *Thailand* finished the report of the Phase 2 Study of the *IEA* Pre-primary Project undertaken by the School of Educational Studies, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. The School of Educational Studies will continue to participate in the last phase of the Project.

At present, *Thailand* is participating in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study-Repeat (*TIMSS-R*) through the *Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST)* which is the national research centre responsible for managing the conduct of this research in *Thailand*. The activities undertaken by the *IPST* in 1999 were as follows :

- 1) Translating and running a trial of test items for students and questionnaires for administrators and teaching staff,
- 2) Organizing an examination of 5,431 students from 150 schools and having 450 administrators, teaching staff and the people involved complete the questionnaires,
- 3) Marking the test items and answer sheets,
- 4) Finishing the data entry to be delivered to *IEA* in July 1999.
- 5) Making an analysis of the data from questionnaires before making a conclusion for dissemination.

C. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Thailand has been the coordinator of the *Education Forum (EdFor)* for the *Human Resource Development Working Group of APEC* since 1994. It has participated in such major activities as the *University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP)*, *School Education Statistics in the Asia-Pacific Region*, *Improving the Understanding of Cultures in APEC*, and *APEC Study Centres*.

In May 1999, *Thailand's* initiative to implement the *APEC*-wide project on “*APEC Youth Networking : Youth Preparation for the APEC Society in the Next Millennium*” has been supported and endorsed for central funding by the 20th *APEC HRD Working Group Meeting*. This project aims to establish *APEC Youth* core group, prepare their readiness for the world of trade liberalization and facilitation and promote their contribution to the *APEC* society.

During their presentation, *Thai APEC* kids highlighted the outcome of the project as well as the follow-up activities, namely the construction of a Thai language homepage and the directory of e-mail addresses and the development of English language web site. The presentation captured the meeting's attention and appreciation for the excellent work of youth.

D. The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

AIT originated in 1959 to help meet the growing need for advanced engineering education in Asia. In November 1967, under its present name of the *Asian Institute of Technology*, the Institute became an autonomous international institution empowered to award degrees and diplomas. Presently *AIT* offers advanced education in engineering, science, planning and management through a range of activities at levels and intensities from doctoral research to short – term training.

AIT offers academic programmes leading to the award of master or doctoral degrees, the diploma or certificates; research work by students, faculty, and professional staff; outreach activities in partnership with private and public sector institutions; and special programmes, conferences, seminars, and short courses.

Completion of the doctoral degree programme normally takes ten or eleven terms (three years or so), the master's degree five terms, and the diploma two or three terms. A certificate programme normally lasts one term.

The Institute is supported by donor governments, international agencies, foundations, business organizations and individuals, Asian and non – Asian. This support acknowledges *AIT*' s successful academic endeavour, an endeavour recognized in several international awards, including, in its thirtieth anniversary year, 1989, the Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding, and in 1995, the Asian Institute of Management Award for Development Management.

AIT has received continuing support from the *Royal Thai Government (RTG)* since the inception of the Institute. The Sixth Five-Year Cooperation Programme amounting to 386.9 million Baht came to an end in October 1999. The Seventh Financial Support Programme for FY 2000-2004 requesting 615.2 million Baht has been presented for consideration of the *RTG* through the *ONEC*. The cooperation programme comprises the following components:

1. Regular Subsidies in Cash :

1.1 Scholarships

1) *His Majesty the King's Scholarships* are full scholarships for master's degree programmes granted to qualified candidates from *Thailand* and other *Asian* countries. Up to 1999, the total number of *H.M.King's scholarships* master's awardees is 328.

2) *H.M. Queen Sirikit's Scholarships* are provided to qualified students interested in the environment and related fields in the School of Environment, Resources, and Development. Up to 1999, 45 scholars have benefited from this.

3) The *RTG-HRD Scholarship* programme functions in addition to the above programmes.

1.2 Operating Budget

The budget covers *AIT* operational support, including the regular maintenance of existing facilities and equipment, updating of library materials, and an allocation for an *AIT* staff member to act as a coordinator between *RTG* and *AIT*.

2. Contribution in Kind :

The *Royal Thai Government* has granted a special privilege of tax and duty reimbursements to the Institute in accordance with the resolution of the *Council of Ministers* passed on 7 May 1968.

The *Secretary-General of the NEC* represents the *Royal Thai Government* for the implementation of the cooperation programme.

E. Thailand ASEAN Sub-Committee on Education (ASCOE)

Thailand ASEAN Sub-Committee on Education (ASCOE) has been established under the umbrella of the *ASEAN Committee on Social Development (COSD)*. *ASCOE*, which is composed of representatives from the *Ministries of Education* and agencies concerned of the *ASEAN* member countries, takes the responsibility of enhancing a fruitful collaboration on education as well as for formulating, examining and recommending to the *COSD*, objectives and strategies on collaborative programmes in the field of education. The major agencies involved in the *Thailand ASEAN Sub-Committee on Education* are the *MOE*, the *MUA* and the *ONEC*.

F. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)

SEAMEO is an international intergovernmental organization established in November 1965. The purpose of the organization is to promote cooperation among the Southeast Asian nations through education, science and culture in order to further respect for justice, for the rule of law and the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are the birthright of the peoples of the world (*SEAMEO Charter*, Article 1).

SEAMEO's vision is to become a dynamic, self-reliant, strategic-policy driven and internationally-recognized organization for strengthening regional understanding and cooperation in education, science and culture for a better quality of life. Its mission is to enhance regional understanding and cooperation and unity of purpose among Member Countries and achieve a better quality of life through : the establishment of network and partnerships; provision of an intellectual forum for policy-makers and experts; and the development of Regional Centres of Excellence for the promotion of sustainable human resource development.

SEAMEO has ten Member Countries in Southeast Asia, namely, *Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam*; and also has six Associate Member Countries, namely, *Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand*. In addition, *SEAMEO* has one Affiliate Member, the International Council of Open and Distance Education (*ICDE*).

The Organization is governed by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council which is the policy-making body comprising of the Ministers of Education of the Member Countries. The Council meets once a year to give direction to the Organization and define its objectives.

Prior to the *SEAMEO* Council Conference, the High Officials from the Ministries of Education also meet once a year to endorse directions, programmes and activities for the

Council's approval. In *Thailand*, the High Officials are represented by the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Permanent Secretary as well as officials from the Office of External Relations Division.

The *SEAMEO* Secretariat located in Bangkok, *Thailand* serves as the executive arm of the Council and the Headquarters of the Organization as well. It is hosted by the Government of Thailand. The Secretariat holds office at Darakarn Building 920 Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok 10110, Thailand. (Tel – 662- 3910144. Fax 3812587. Email : Secretariat@seameo.org)

SEAMEO has 14 specialist institutions scattered throughout the region and closely linked to the educational environment of the country which hosts them. Each Centre has its own Governing Board with a representative from each Member Country. The fourteen regional centres are as follows:

1. *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (*SEAMEO* BIOTROP)
2. *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (*SEAMEO* INNOTECH)
3. *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Science and Mathematics Education (*SEAMEO* RECSAM)
4. *SEAMEO* Regional Language Centre (*SEAMEO* RELC)
5. *SEAMEO* Regional Training Centre (*SEAMEO* RETRAC)
6. *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Higher Education (*SEAMEO* RIHED)
7. *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture
8. *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (*SEAMEO* SPAFA)
9. *SEAMEO* TROPMED Regional Centre for Community Nutrition (*SEAMEO* TROPMED/Indonesia)
10. *SEAMEO* TROPMED Regional Centre for Microbiology, parasitology and Entomology (*SEAMEO* TROPMED/Malaysia)
11. *SEAMEO* TROPMED Regional Centre for Public Health (*SEAMEO* TROPMED/Philippines)
12. *SEAMEO* TROPMED Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine (*SEAMEO* TROPMED/Thailand)

Aside from the *SEAMEO* Secretariat, the Government of Thailand hosts three *SEAMEO* Regional Centres : a) *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Higher Education (*SEAMEO* RIHED); *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (*SEAMEO* SPAFA) ; and the *SEAMEO* Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine (*SEAMEO* TROPMED) including the TROPMED Central Office. *Thailand* underwrites the Centres' Operational Budget, capital and annually recurring cost.

G. ASEAN University Network (AUN)

The *ASEAN University Network* which is under the supervision of *ASEAN* is composed of seventeen leading universities in *ASEAN* Member countries. It aims to strengthen *ASEAN* awareness and cooperation through the promotion of the exchange of students, faculty members and resources among the participating universities. From 1997-1999 the *Thai Permanent Secretary for University Affairs* has been *Chairman of the AUN Board of Trustees* and the *MUA* is hosting the temporary office of the *AUN* Secretariat.

The permanent office of *AUN* will be set up in the year 2000 at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, *Thailand*, with support from the *Royal Thai Government*. The *RTG* will also provide an annual operational fund amounting to US\$ 180,000 for the period from 2000-2005 to ensure the smooth starting up and implementation of *AUN*.

Major *AUN* programmes and activities are : Student and Faculty Exchange Programme; scholarships for studies at *ASEAN* universities; information networking among *ASEAN* universities; collaborative research; *ASEAN* Studies Programme; and projects with dialogue partners.

6.2 International Cooperation and Exchange

A. MOE Student Exchange Programmes

To encourage understanding of other cultures through first-hand experience, the *MOE* promotes student exchange programmes in cooperation with many foreign governments and international agencies. The major programmes include Rotary, AFS and Thailand Fellowships, Scholarships and Junior Scholarships.

Thailand Fellowships, Scholarships and Junior Scholarships within the UNESCO Programme

Fourteen scholarships have been granted annually by the Thai government, through the *Thai National Commission for UNESCO*, to students from foreign countries since 1952. The scholarships are divided into 3 categories as follow :

1. Fellowship : six fellowships are given to those who wish to undertake research work at Thai universities/educational institutes. Candidates must hold at least a Bachelor's Degree except when the research is in fine arts, in which case candidates must have a recommendation from a recognized art institute.

2. Scholarship : four scholarships are granted to those who wish to undertake studies at undergraduate level

3. Junior Scholarship : four junior scholarships are given to those who wish to undertake studies in *Thailand* at post-secondary level.

The *MOE* also promotes exchange of students' art works, through international painting and art competitions, organized by many organizations in other countries.

B. MUA International and Exchange Programmes

- **Student / Faculty Exchange Programme**

The *MUA* has encouraged its higher education institutions to exchange their students and staff with countries in different regions of the world, for example, *Australia*, *Belgium*, *Canada* and the *United States of America*. The programme will lead to the strengthening of academic standards and the improvement of human resources with widened vision and international competence.

- **Thai University Administrators Shadowing (TUAS) Programme**

It is designed for university administrators from Thai universities to join other universities abroad in order to gain academic experiences in foreign environments. Countries cooperating with the *MUA* under this project are *England* and *Australia*.

C. Foreign Loans for Educational Development

To support the process of educational development, the *Government* has obtained foreign loans and credits and technical assistance for infrastructure development and other purposes since 1960. These loans and credits have been provided by various sources such as the *World Bank*, the *Asian Development Bank (ADB)*, *Overseas Economic Cooperative Fund (OECF)*, and the *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)*. In addition, technical assistance grant aid has been received from a number of countries, including the *Federal Republic of Germany*, *Canada*, *Australia* and *Japan*.

The *ONEC* is responsible for making recommendations to the *Council of Ministers* on whether to approve the loan projects for educational development. The *Education Loan Committee* has been appointed by the *Council of Ministers* to review the proposed loan projects before submitting to the *Council of Ministers* for approval, and to evaluate the implementation of those projects. The *Committee* is chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the *National Education Commission* with the Secretary-General of *ONEC* as secretary of the *Committee*.

D. Regional and International Conferences

In November 1998, the *Fourth UNESCO-ACEID International Conference* on “Secondary Education and Youth at the Crossroads” was held in Bangkok. It was organized by *UNESCO-ACEID* in collaboration with the *ONEC of Thailand*, *UNICEF(EAPRO)*, and the *Save the Children Fund (U.K.) (SEAPRO)*. The objective of the conference was to undertake an indepth study into what education needs to become to empower young people for adolescence and adulthood into the 21st century.

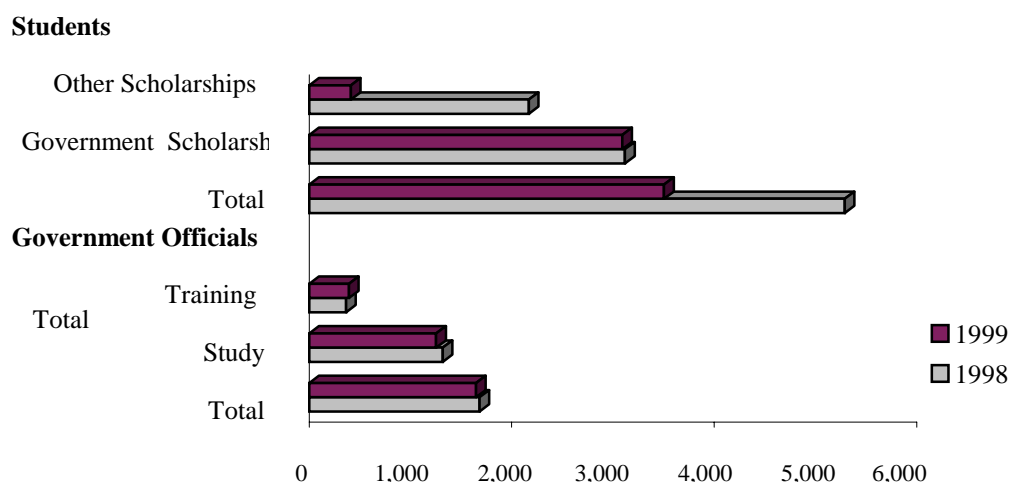
The *Fifth UNESCO-ACEID International Conference* on “Reforming Learning, Curriculum and Pedagogy : Innovative Visions for the New Century” is scheduled to be held in *Thailand* from 13-16 December 1999. It will be organized by *UNESCO-ACEID* in collaboration with the *ONEC*, with the *Hong Kong Institute of Education* and *Education Victoria, Australia* as sponsors. The purpose of this Conference is to undertake an indepth analysis into what reformation is required in learning, curriculum and pedagogy in all sectors of education, at all levels and in particular branches of knowledge to promote a learning, outcomes-based educational future. Such a study will involve networking and exchanging ideas on major innovations and best practices being undertaken and contemplated, especially in this region.

E. Overseas Studies and Training

In *Thailand*, both students and government officials enjoy the good opportunity of obtaining overseas studies and training. Some of them go to study abroad at their own expense while others receive scholarships from various sources. Secondary school and university graduates with outstanding academic records are granted the King’s and government scholarships to finance their studies overseas. On the completion of the programmes, the scholarships require the grantees to serve at designated institutions for at least a certain period of time.

However, the current economic crisis has an impact on the number of students and government officials going for study and training overseas under the supervision of the *Office of the Civil Service Commission*. The number of students decreased from 5,288 in 1998 to 3,504 in 1999 or about 33.7 percent. The decrease was very high in other scholarships at 80.9 percent due to the abolition of the *Office of Education Affairs* in many foreign countries. With respect to the government officials going for study and training overseas in 1999, there was a decrease from 1998 at 2 percent (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Number of Students under the Office of the Civil Service Commission and Government Officials Studying Abroad as of 30 June 1998 and 1999



As of 31 March 1999, there were 3,223 government scholarship students still studying abroad, of which 54.4 percent were in doctorate degree programmes, 30.1 percent were in master's degree programmes, and 14.9 percent were in undergraduate programmes. The majority of all the students (80.7 percent) were studying in the fields of science and technology (Table 6.1).

About 53.8 percent of government officials going for overseas studies in 1998 under the supervision of the *Office of the Civil Service Commission*, both at their own expenses and by receiving scholarships were in doctorate degree programmes and 39.7 percent were in master's degree programmes. The majority of them (68.1 percent) were in the fields of science and technology while the rest were in social sciences (Table 6.2).

Table 6.1 Number and Percentage of Government Scholarship Grantees Studying Abroad as of 31 March 1999

	Total		Ph.D.		AB		Master's Degree		Bachelor's Degree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Science & Technology	2,717	84.3	1,563	89.1	18	100.0	783	80.7	353	73.4
Social Sciences	506	15.7	191	10.9	-	-	187	19.3	128	26.6
Total (%)	3,223 (100.0)	100.0	1,754 (54.4)	100.0	13 (0.6)	100.0	1,170 (30.1)	100.0	481 (14.9)	100.0

Note AB = AMERICAN BOARD

Source : Office of the Civil Service Commission

Table 6.2 Number and Percentage of Government Officials Going for Study and Training Overseas as of 31 March 1999

	Total		Ph.D.		AB		PD		Master's Degree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Science & Technology	857	68.1	481	71.0	18	100.0	25	39.7	333	66.6
Social Sciences	401	31.9	196	29.0	-	-	38	60.3	167	33.4
Total (%)	1,258 (100.0)	100.0	677 (53.8)	100.0	18 (1.4)	100.0	63 (5.0)	100.0	500 (39.7)	100.0

Note AB = AMERICAN BOARD
PD = Postgraduate Diploma

Source : Office of the Civil Service Commission

The Royal Golden Jubilee Ph. D. Programme

In order to compensate for the decreasing number of scholarships for overseas studies as a result of the economic crisis, the *Thailand* research Fund, in cooperation with the *MUA* and the *National Science and Technology Development Agency*, has initiated the Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Programme to mark the 50th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne. The Programme aims to produce 5,000 Ph.D. graduates of international standards in the next 15 years. Grants are awarded to Ph.D. advisers with a good research record and having co-advisors or collaborators in recognized universities abroad. Support for students to gain foreign research experience is also provided. Students are required to apply for doctorate study and scholarships as research assistant to the advisers granted fellowships from the Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Programme. Scholarships include salaries, research expenses, and travel costs to do part of research in co-sponsoring institutions in foreign countries. Up to 30 September 1999, 226 and 113 scholarships have been granted for the year 1998 and 1999 from a total of 262 and 210 respectively. For the year 2000, the Ph.D. advisers have approved a total of 250 fellowships.

F. International Schools and Programmes in Thailand

1) International Schools

An international school provides education for students without any restriction or limitation on nationality, religion and form of government. It adopts an international curriculum and media from which students from various countries can participate. English is used as the medium of instruction.

For the establishment of international schools or colleges, their policies, rules, regulations, and standards are stipulated by the *MOE* in accordance with the Cabinet's resolution. Some of the important regulations and standards are as follows:

- **Curriculum** : The applicant has to propose the curriculum for the *MOE's* consideration and approval. Thai culture and language must be a compulsory course for all levels of education.

- **Headmaster and teacher** : They have to possess the following qualifications:

Headmaster:

- Thai nationality with at least B.A. degree.
- At least 3 years of teaching experiences.
- Other qualifications as stipulated in the Private Schools Act of 1982 and the *MOE's* regulations.

Teacher:

- Thai nationality possessing the qualifications as stipulated in the *Private Schools Act of 1982* and the *MOE's* regulations.
- Exception of Thai language at Primary school Grade VI is granted for foreign teachers.

Students :

Foreign and Thai students are admitted. The number of Thai students must not exceed 50 percent of the total enrolment.

Some of the main education systems being offered at international schools in *Thailand* are :

- The American School System
- Advanced Placement Programme (AP)
- The British National Curriculum
- The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)
- The International Baccalaureate (IB)

In 1998, there are 42 international schools and colleges in *Thailand* of which 24 are in Bangkok and the rest are in other provinces. The proportion of foreign and Thai student in 1997 was 60 : 40 and foreign and Thai teachers was 81: 19.

2) International Programmes

At present, both Thai public and private universities offer altogether 356 international programmes using English as the medium of instruction both at undergraduate and graduate levels, i.e. 122 undergraduate programmes in 70 areas of study in 24 universities; 176 master's degree programmes in 112 areas of study in 21 universities; and 58 doctoral degree programmes in 32 areas of study in 12 universities. Foreign and Thai students can take courses for credits from such programmes.

G. Education for Thai Residents Overseas

The provision of education for Thai residents overseas has been initiated by the *Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University*, since 1984 in the *U.S.A.* at the Thai Temple in Los Angeles. The policy on the provision of education, religion and culture for Thai children and youth overseas was approved by the *Council of Ministers* in December 1993. The *Department of Non-Formal Education* has been authorized to organize supplementary schools and summer schools primarily in countries that are ready and have a large number of

Thai children such as the *U.S.A.*, *Australia* and *France*. In addition, officials from public agencies and state enterprises are allowed to teach in those schools. With regard to the operating budget, the *MOE* has to submit the detailed plan together with the budget expenditure to the *Council of Ministers* for approval.

In 1998, there were 8 Thai temples in the *U.S.A.* with 503 students and one in *Australia* with 91 students enrolled in non-formal education courses at primary and secondary levels. The teaching and learning process follows the Thai Language and Culture Programme for Thai Students Overseas prepared by the *Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University*, in cooperation with the *DNFE*. The curriculum is open and flexible, focusing on the development of language skills for students using Thai as a second language, knowledge about *Thailand* and Thai culture. Special activities are also organized according to the interests of students and important events of *Thailand*.

Thailand has played an active role in international cooperation and exchange in education to keep up with changes in the world community. Major activities include an inter-governmental programme, foreign loans for educational development, overseas studies and training, and regional and international conferences. In addition, international schools and colleges in *Thailand* as well as education for Thai residents overseas have been promoted.