

officials including administrators and teachers in municipal schools and officials in the *Division of Education* in each municipality.

2. Education System and Learning Process

Educational provision is currently based on the principle of lifelong learning with 3 types of education : formal, non-formal, and informal. In this chapter, educational systems and learning processes will be presented in terms of the organization of formal education and the promotion of lifelong learning.

2.1 Organization of Formal Education

According to the National Education Act 1999, formal education is divided into 2 levels : basic education and higher education.

1. Basic Education

Basic education comprises pre-primary education, primary education, and secondary education.

A. Pre-primary Education

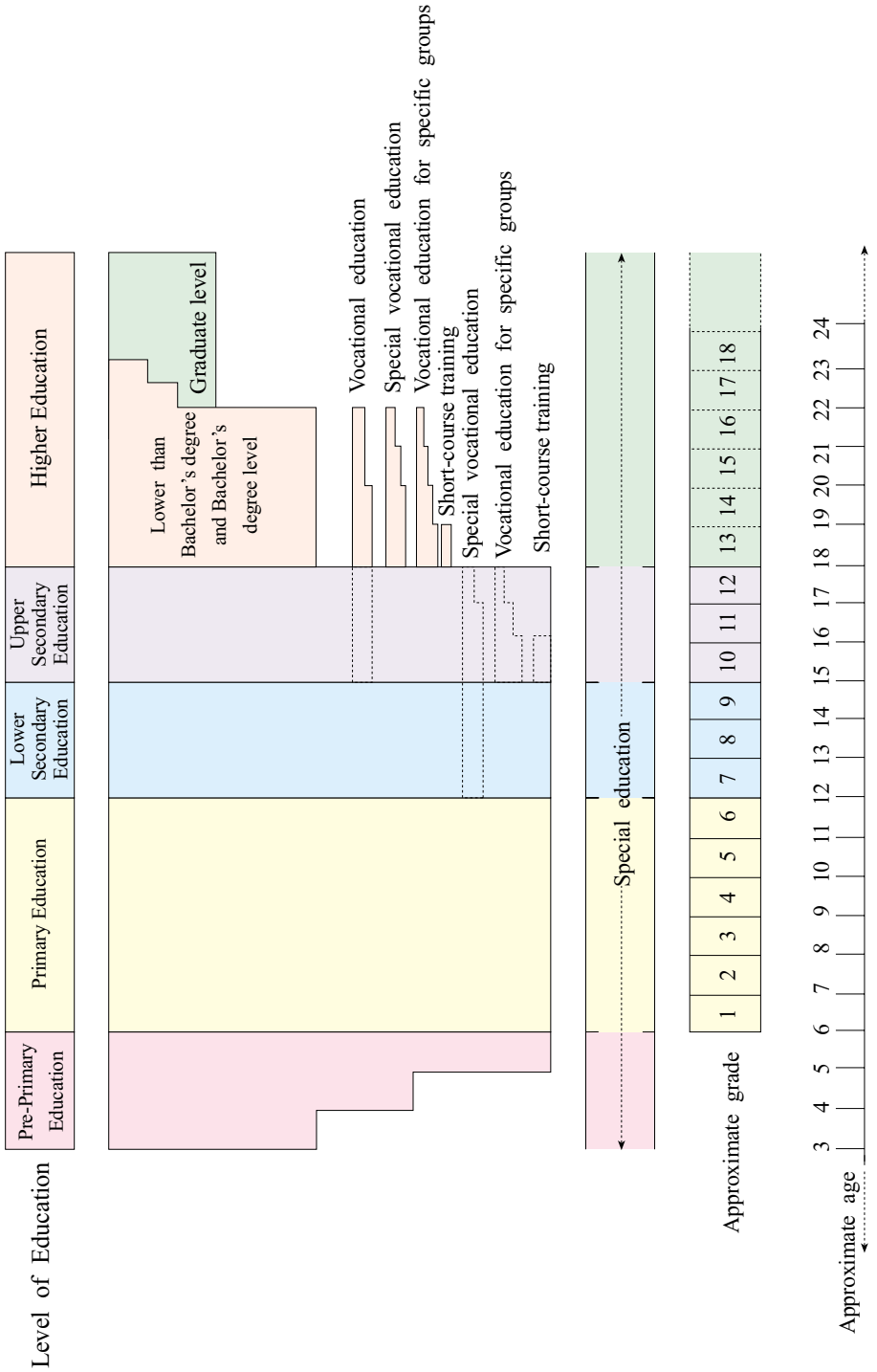
Pre-primary education is organized by various agencies, both public and private, for 3-5 year old children. The courses offered can be classified into 3 types : child development centres, kindergartens and pre-school classes. Normally, the provision of learning experience is organized for the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children through everyday activities.

B. Primary Education

Six-year primary education, which is now compulsory, is provided to 6-11 year old children. Public primary schools are mainly organized by the *MOE* through the *Office of the National*



Figure 6 Organization of the Present School System



Primary Education Commission (ONPEC) for nearly 80 percent of the total of primary school age students. In addition, approximately 12 percent of the total enrolment at this level of education are in private schools. Under the *MOI*, the *Bureau of Local Education Administration* and the *BMA* look after municipal schools while the *Border Patrol Police* under the *National Police Office* organize primary schools in remote rural areas. A number of demonstration schools are also organized in various universities and *Rajabhat Institutes (RIs)*.

The primary school curriculum is made up of 5 learning experience groupings as follows:

1) Basic Skills Group, comprising Thai language and mathematics as the tool subjects.

2) Life Experiences, dealing with the process of solving social and daily life problems with an emphasis on scientific process skills for better living.

3) Character Development, dealing with activities necessary for developing desirable habits, values, attitudes and behaviour, which will lead to a desirable character.

4) Work-Oriented Experiences, dealing with general practical work experiences and basic knowledge for career preparation.

5) Special Experience, dealing with activities based on learners' interests provided for those in grades 5-6 only. Each school can organize learning activities according to learners' needs and interests.

C. Secondary Education

● Lower Secondary Education

Education at lower secondary level which requires 3 years of study is mainly provided by the *DGE*, *ONPEC* and private schools. There are also demonstration schools of various universities and *RIs* which are outside the control of the *MOE*. These schools, however, follow the national standard curriculum. Primary schools under the *ONPEC* and *MOI* have also



offered lower secondary classes in accordance with government policy on the expansion of educational opportunities.

● Upper Secondary Education

The three-year upper secondary schooling system is divided into two parallel tracks : general or academic, and vocational tracks. General upper secondary education is provided by the *DGE*, demonstration schools of the *RIs* and universities, and private schools. That of the vocational stream is organized by the *DOVE*, *DFA*, *RIT* and *King Monkut's Institute of Technology North Bangkok*.

The structure of lower and upper secondary school curricula includes 4 components :

1) Core subjects : basic subjects that correspond to life and society in general and must be taken by all students. All of these subjects are prepared by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, MOE*.

2) Prescribed elective subjects : basic subjects which are different according to local conditions and needs. The local authorities are given an opportunity to choose subjects offered according to the number of credits, or either to prepare subjects offered by themselves in addition to those prescribed by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development*.

3) Free elective subjects : subjects that are open for learners to choose according to their interests, aptitudes and needs.

Students can choose either the subjects prepared by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development* or those created by the local authorities.

4) Activities : All schools are required to organize three types of activities for learners : those organized in accordance with the regulations of the *MOE*; guidance, remedial teaching or



academic development activities ; and independent activities of learners.

D. Higher Education

Higher education is mainly under the responsibility of the *MOE* and the *MUA*. In addition, other ministries and agencies also provide education at this level for their specific needs. It is offered at two levels :

1) Lower - Than - Degree or Diploma Level

Higher education at lower - than - degree or diploma level is mainly offered by colleges and institutes under the *MOE* i.e. *Rajabhat Institutes, Rajamangala Institute of Technology*, public and private vocational colleges, as well as colleges of physical education, dramatic arts and fine arts. The majority of courses offered are related to vocational and teacher education which require 2 years of study.

2) Degree Level

The majority of teaching and learning at degree level is provided by the *MUA* and *MOE*. The study programmes require 2 years of study for students who have completed diploma courses, and 4-6 years of study for those finishing upper secondary education or equivalent courses. The first professional qualification is a bachelor's degree obtained after four years of study. In the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, graphic arts, and pharmacy, five years of study are required for a bachelor's degree. The fields of medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science require six years of study. In some of these professions, additional study is required before professional qualifications allowing the candidate to practise in his or her field are awarded.

Advanced studies of at least one but generally two years, combined with a thesis, lead to the award of



a master's degree. A doctorate is awarded in some fields and requires an additional three years of study following a master's degree.

An advanced diploma or certificate may be obtained after one or two years of course work. It is designed for students who already possess a degree or professional qualification.

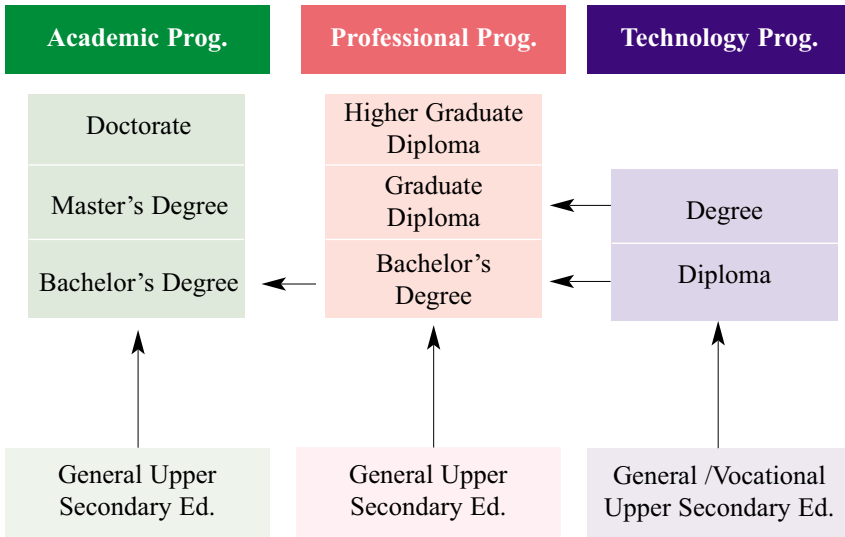
The provision of higher education can be classified into 3 programmes :

1) Academic Programme is organized for general secondary education graduates to further their studies at bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate levels focusing on the production of middle and higher academics and researchers e.g. the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Liberal Arts programmes in various universities.

2) Professional Programme which emphasizes the creation of specialists, is provided to general secondary school graduates to study at bachelor's degree level. The study at higher- than-bachelor's degree level in this programme is the specialized Graduate Diploma in different areas such as Medical Science, Health Science, Public Health Science, etc.

3) Technology Programme is organized for both general and vocational secondary school graduates to study at diploma or bachelor's degree level, aiming at producing technicians or professional technicians and technologists.



Figure 7 Programmes of Study in Higher Education

Source : *ONEC, Guidelines for Higher Education Reform in Accordance with the 1999 National Education Act, February 2000.*

In addition, special types of educational services are also provided at both basic and higher education levels :

1) Special and Welfare Education

Education for persons with special needs is mainly provided by the *DGE* and *ONPEC*. Other agencies providing special education services include *DNFE*, *DOVE*, some demonstration schools, hospitals, Department of Public Welfare, municipal schools, and private foundations.

Currently, special education is provided for children who are hearing-impaired, mentally retarded, visually-impaired, physically-impaired, and health-impaired. Other groups of children who need special education services are specific learning-disabled, autistic, emotionally/behaviorally disordered, as well as gifted and talented children.



The teaching and learning of special education is organized in both special and inclusive schools. Two types of curricula are used : 1) special curricula offered in special schools such as the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind ; 2) regular curricula used in inclusive schools which may be adjusted to meet special needs of children.

Welfare education is provided for those who are socially and culturally disadvantaged. Students are not only provided with free education, but also accommodation, food, clothing, equipment, textbooks and other necessities. They are given special vocational training relevant to the locality of a particular school for future employment.

2) Special Vocational Education

● Sports Schools

Currently, there are six sports schools offering special training for students who have sporting skills. Admission is provided to students with capabilities in sports from all over the country who are given full financial support from the government until they finish school.

● Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts Colleges

The Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts Colleges offer secondary education courses at 2 levels, each of which requires 3 years of study: 1) Lower Dramatic Arts Certificate equivalent to lower secondary education, and 2) Intermediate Dramatic Arts Certificate and Intermediate Fine Arts Certificate equivalent to upper secondary education.

3) Education for Ecclesiastics

General education is also provided to novices and monks in General Ecclesiastic Schools in various Buddhist temples. They are offered lower and upper secondary education curricula equivalent to those provided by the *DGE*. Apart from general subjects,

the courses include learning units related to religious practice, the Buddha's doctrine, and Pali language. There are also two Buddhist universities in Bangkok with various campuses in the regions offering courses at undergraduate and graduate levels.



4) Education for Specific Purposes

Education is also organized by various agencies to meet their specific needs. For the production of professional soldiers and police, for example, a specific curriculum is offered in the Preparatory School for the Armed Forces Academies requiring 2 years of study after graduation from the fourth year of secondary school. Apart from this, other ministries and non-governmental agencies also provide education at both diploma and degree levels.

2.2 Promotion of Lifelong Learning

In addition to formal education, non-formal and informal education are also provided to promote lifelong learning.

A. Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education services are provided by both public and private bodies to those outside the school system i.e. early childhood population, school-age population who have missed formal schooling and over-school-age population :

1) Provision of Non-Formal Education for Pre-School Children :

- Provision of educational services to 2 - 6 year - old children or from birth to 6 years.
- Early childhood development in the centres established by local communities for children aged 3-6 years.

- Child development outside early childhood development centres.
- Child development of the private sector organized by the Council of Early Childhood and Youth Development Organizations consisting of 50 member organizations.

2) *Provision of Fundamental Education for Literacy*

This type of educational service is provided to promote literacy for adults aged 14 years and over who are still illiterate. Non-formal activities to eradicate illiteracy are currently organized by the *DNFE* as follows :

- *The Literacy Campaign*, with volunteer teachers and volunteer village tutors, has continued to promote the eradication of illiteracy among the adult population.

- *Functional Literacy Programme*, organized for illiterate adults, emphasizes an integration of literacy and problem solving skills for the improvement of quality of life.

- *The Promotion of Thai Language Usage* for Thai Muslims in 5 southern border provinces.

- *Hill Areas Education*, aiming to provide educational services to promote literacy among the hilltribes by using non-formal education volunteer teachers.

3) *Provision of General Non-Formal Education*

This type of educational service, provided as continuing education programmes for those having no chance to study in formal



education from primary to higher levels, is normally organized in public schools or official premises, factories or other organizations. Learners are awarded the same qualifications as those in the formal school system. The learning process is organized in 3 types : classroom learning, distance education and self-learning.

4) Vocational Non-Formal Education

- *The Training Course for Vocational Certificate*

This programme is designed for primary school graduates who have no chance to study at higher level. It is organized by the *DNFE* to provide educational opportunities to target populations in rural areas through training in vocational skills and quality of life promotion leading to a certificate equivalent to general lower secondary school.

- *Short-Course Vocational Training*

Short - term vocational courses are provided in many areas such as Industrial Technology, Business and Commerce, Agriculture, and Arts and Crafts for 200 - 300 hours. Pre-employment training for the unemployed and upgrading training for skilled workers who need additional knowledge and skills are provided by various agencies, both public and private, including NGOs.

- *Interest Group Programme*

The *DNFE* organizes teaching and learning activities according to individual needs and interests of the general public. Those having the same interest can form a group of 5 - 15 persons and receive training of not more than 30 hours.

- *Non-Formal Programme for Certificate in Vocational Education*

Non-formal education activities leading to the Certificate in Vocational Education are provided through distance learning to lower secondary school graduates, both the unemployed and those working in public organizations and private enterprises. This programme requires at least 3 years of study, except when there is a transfer of academic performance or experience.





5) *Quality of Life Improvement Activities*

Training activities concerning quality of life improvement are provided to the general public by *DNFE* and other agencies responsible for education services, welfare, and public services.

B. Informal Education

Informal educational activities are available for self-learning through various sources of knowledge and the environment as follows :

1) Informal education programmes provided by all types of libraries, museums, as well as science and technology centres, etc.

2) Informal education programmes of community learning networks i.e. community learning centres, village reading centres, sub-district health offices, sub-district agricultural offices, as well as natural learning sources in each community.

3) Learning from local wisdom which includes culture and the body of knowledge in each community.

4) Learning from local media which plays an important role in passing on knowledge and social values through several kinds of performances.

5) Informal education programmes provided by mass media i.e. radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.

6) Learning from families which are learning sources from birth of all people.

It can be said that all ministries have been involved in providing educational activities to promote lifelong learning. Their roles can be summarized as follows :



Ministry	Activities
1. Office of the Prime Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizes educational activities for youth and women for the promotion of arts and culture and national identity as well as consumer protection and narcotics control.
2. Ministry of Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides academic and professional programmes for enlisted men and service families.
3. Ministry of Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides academic and professional programmes for local leaders; sub-district and village headmen, community leaders, public health officers, underprivileged children both in the cities and remote areas, and prisoners.
4. Ministry of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides academic and professional programmes for voluntary health officers in villages as well as organizing various activities to promote quality of life development and provides information to the people.
5. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizes activities to provide academic and professional programmes relating to agricultural, forestry and fishery development for young farmers, farmers and fishermen.

Ministry	Activities
6. Ministry of Industry	● Organizes activities promoting the industrial sector and provides learning opportunities for workers and the general public both in academic and professional programmes.
7. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	● Organizes activities for skills development in rural areas, assessment of skills, child and youth welfare, rehabilitation of the disabled, community services, hilltribe welfare, work safety, etc.
8. Ministry of Transport and Communication	● Organizes educational activities promoting traffic safety and provides knowledge for drivers as well as hostesses for public transport.
9. Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment	● Provides knowledge relating to the use of toxic chemicals, pollution control, technology transfer, environmental quality promotion, art environmental training and research, and public relations promotion.
10. Ministry of Commerce	● Organizes educational activities relating to internal commercial affairs to increase the income of people in rural areas as well as business promotion and development.

Ministry	Activities
11. Ministry of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides academic and professional programmes including information and knowledge concerning Juvenile and Family Court affairs, as well as organize activities for criminal control.
12. Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizes activities promoting educational opportunities for Thai residents overseas.
13. Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides knowledge relating to giving credit to farmers in order to increase their productivity and income as well as passing on new agricultural technologies.
14. Ministry of University Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides educational services, both academic and professional programmes, including quality of life promotion to the people and communities.
15. Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides children, youth, women and the general public with academic and professional programmes.