

4. International Cooperation in Education

Cooperation with international and regional organizations as well as other countries has greatly contributed to the development of education in Thailand.

4.1 Thailand and International/Regional Organizations in Education

Thailand has cooperated with various international and regional organizations, some of which are presented below.

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

Thailand has been a member of *UNESCO* since 1949, with the headquarters of *UNESCO PROAP* situated in Bangkok. A year later, the Thai National Commission for *UNESCO* was established. It was in *Thailand* where the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) was organized by *UNESCO* and related agencies in March 1990 and the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA): Meeting Basic Learning Needs was adopted.

Along with other 182 countries, the *Royal Thai Government (RTG)* has incorporated the *EFA* policy in its National Education Plan. In so doing, the *RTG* committed itself to attainment of the following goals: (a) opportunity expansion and an upgrade of basic education; (b) improvement of the quality of educational management; (c) creation of learning networks; and (d) mobilization of all partners concerned.

The World Education Forum (WEF) was organized in Dakar,



Senegal between 26-28 April, 2000 to assess the goals of the EFA Declaration. There were six regional conferences preceding the WEF. One of the conferences was organized in Bangkok between 17 - 20 January 2000 for member countries in Asia and the Pacific. About 400 participants from 41 countries who joined the event had made a new pledge to the *WEF* relating to the extension of the EFA efforts for another 15 years.

Another example of RTG's cooperation with *UNESCO* can be seen from its commitment to the World Declaration on Higher Education adopted in 1998. In the following year, *MUA* organized the meeting to set up the ten-year framework (1999-2009) according to the Declaration.

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 represented at the *IEA* General Assembly. Through different research institutions, *Thailand* has participated in various important international research projects.

In October 2000, the 41st *IEA* General Assembly was hosted by *Thailand*, with collaboration between *ONEC* and the Educational Science Faculty of Chiangmai University. About 80 participants participated in the event which emphasized an update in information on *IEA* projects such as the Second Information and Technology in Education Study - Phase II (SITES-M2).

C. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Thailand has been the coordinator of the Education Network (ED Net) 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* and *Improving the Understanding of Cultures in APEC*. At present, there are two centres under the *APEC* umbrella located in Bangkok namely the *APEC Study Centre* which is attached to *Thammasat University* and the *APEC Centre for Technology Foresight* which is hosted by *Thailand's National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)*.



In the year 2000, *Thailand* strengthened its role in sustainable human resource development by implementing a project namely *APEC Youth Networking: Youth Preparation for the APEC Society in the Next Millennium*. With part funding from *APEC*, the *MOU* organized the project which aimed at preparing participants for the new millennium in which trade and investment will be liberalized. Approximately 150 youths from 14 *APEC* member countries participated in the project.

D. The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

The Asian Institute of Technology, an international institution offering advanced education in engineering, science, planning and management, has received continuing support from the *Royal Thai Government (RTG)* since the inception of the Institute. 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 May 2000, the total number of *H.M. King's scholarships* master's awardees was 362.

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 January 2000, 54 scholars have benefited from this.

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

1.2 Supportive Budget for Operations

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

The *RTG* has granted a special privilege of tax and duty reimbursements to the Institute since 1968; however, starting from the Fiscal Year 2001, the *RTG* financial support in the form of income tax reimbursement is abrogated, and is now classified as supportive budget for operation.

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)

The *SEAMEO* is governed by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council with its Secretariat located in Bangkok serving as the executive arm of the Council and the Headquarters of the Organization. Scattered throughout the region and closely linked to the educational environment of the host country are *SEAMEO* specialist institutions on the following areas: (1) Tropical Biology; (2) Educational Innovation and Technology; (3) Science and Mathematics Education; (4) Language; (5) Training; (6) Higher Education; (7) Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture; (8) Archaeology and Fine Arts; (9) Community Nutrition; (10) Microbiology, Parasitology and Entomology; (11) Public Health; (12) Tropical Medicine; (13) Learning; (14) Vocational and Technical Education and Training; and (15) History and Tradition.



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.

The permanent office of *AUN* is at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. The annual contribution from the *Royal Thai Government* amounts to US\$ 180,000 for the period from 2000-2005.

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.

4.2 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 Programmes

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: (1) Fellowships for candidates holding Bachelor's Degree except when the research is in fine arts (2) Scholarships for undergraduate level (3) Junior Scholarships for 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 Cooperation and Exchange Programmes

● Cooperation with the Greater-Mekong Subregion (GMS)

In order to strengthen *Thailand's* relationship with its neighbouring countries in the *GMS*, the *MUA* has regularly organized, in those countries, seminars and exhibitions relating to higher education in Thailand. Apart from this, the *MUA* has also supported exchange programmes between *Thailand* and the *GMS*. In the first phase, scholarships were granted to 144 teachers and students; half of which were Thai.

● 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. 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. Under this programme, Canada, France and the United Kingdom send “mentors” to Thailand to jointly plan Shadowing activities with “mentees” preceding the latter’s departure for their programme in respective countries.

C. Regional and International Conferences

The International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Standards, Mechanisms and Mutual Recognition was organized by the *MUA*, *UNESCO PROAP* and *SEAMEO RIHED* in collaboration with various concerned agencies between 8-10 November, 2000 in Bangkok. The purpose of the Conference is, among other things, to explore and promote the cooperation in improving quality



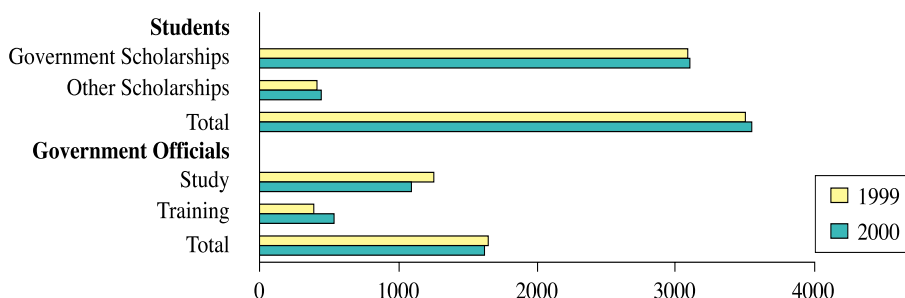
assurance at regional as well as international levels.

Between 12-15 December 2000, *UNESCO-ACEID* in collaboration with the *ONEC of Thailand*, the *Hong Kong Institute of Education* and the *Center for Learning and Teaching Styles*, the *Philippines* is organizing the *Sixth UNESCO-ACEID International Conference on Education* “Information Technologies in Educational Innovation for Development: Interfacing Global and Indigenous Knowledge” in Bangkok. The purpose of this Conference is to undertake an in-depth analysis into the role of information technologies in educational innovation for development which focuses on the interfacing of global and indigenous knowledge as well as its implications to the content of education and teacher education and its profound impact on learning and teaching in almost all countries in the Asia - Pacific region.

D. Overseas Studies and Training

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 increased from 3,504 in 1999 to 3,552 in 2000 or only about 1.4 percent. With respect to government officials going for study and training overseas in 2000, there was a decrease from 1999 at 1 percent (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Number of Students under the Office of the Civil Service Commission and Government Officials Studying Abroad as of 30 June 1999 and 2000



Source : Office of the Civil Service Commission.

As of 31 March 2000, there were 3,132 government scholarship students still studying abroad, among whom 65.1 percent were in doctorate degree programmes, 19.9 percent were in master's degree programmes, and 14.4 percent were in undergraduate programmes. The majority of all the students (83.6 percent) were studying in the fields of science and technology.



About 54.6 percent of government officials going overseas to study in 1999 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 39.2 percent were in master's degree programmes. The majority of them (68.2 percent) were in the fields of science and technology while the rest were in social sciences.

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 standard 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. Students who wish to receive the fellowships are required to apply for doctorate study and scholarships as research assistants to the advisers. 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.

The Collaborative Ph.D. Programmes Among Thai and Foreign Universities:

So far, the *MUA* has initiated 44 courses under the programmes, of which the fellowships offer some parts of the study in *Thailand*.

F. International Schools and Programmes in Thailand

1) International Schools

The policies, rules, regulations, and standards for the establishment of international schools or colleges, are stipulated by the *MOE* in accordance with the Cabinet's resolution.

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), and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

In 1999, there were 46 international schools and colleges in Thailand of which 26 were in Bangkok and the rest in other provinces. The proportion of foreign and Thai students in 1999 was 70 : 30 and foreign and Thai teachers was 85: 15.

2) International Programmes

At present, both Thai public and private universities offer, altogether, 387 international programmes using English as the medium of instruction both at undergraduate and graduate levels, i.e. 128

undergraduate programmes in 70 areas of study in 26 universities; 190 master's degree programmes in 112 areas of study in 26 universities; and 69 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 *DNFE* 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.



In 1999, there were 8 Thai temples in the *U.S.A.* with 474 students and one in Australia with 100 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.

By August 19, 2002, the Thai education system will be fully under the operation of the new Ministry of Education, Religion and Culture in accordance with the National Education Act 1999. However, during this transitional period, all agencies concerned have put all of their efforts in providing educational services to the Thai people and at the same time have fully worked towards the comprehensive reform of education.



A seminar on “The Learning of Nations” held in Bangkok by ONEC in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank Institute.