

## Reflections on Two Decades of the Thai Educational Reforms

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## Thailand's Educational Reforms

### **Education for Life and Society as basis for 1977 National Education Scheme**

- Expanding access/new programs introduced
- New democratic climate
- Focus on relevance, equity, lifelong learning, participation
- Reunification of primary ed.in MOE
- New national curriculum with focus on local contents
- Est. of NFE Department

## Thailand's Educational Reform

### **1999 The First National Education Act**

- New Constitution
- Concerns for quality/ global competitiveness
- Efforts to secure continuity of ed.policies
- Separate reform office outside MOE
- 12 year free education
- New basic education curriculum with core contents

## Thailand's Educational Reform

- **Professionalism of teachers**
- **Support of IT for education**
- **Recognition of the rights to organize education by families, communities, private sectors**
- **Internal and external quality assurance system**
- **New MOE structure**

## Thailand's Educational Reforms

- **2008 Commission on Second Decade of Educational Reform**
- **Dissatisfactions with 1<sup>st</sup> reform esp. MOE**
- **Demand for quality/diversity/efficiency**
- **Demand for decentralization/new partners in education/involvement of civil society**
- **Focus on innovations and quality improvement**

## Impacts on Education Provisions

### **From Exclusive to Inclusive Education**

- **Increased access esp. at upper secondary and higher education**
- **Expansions of facilities**
- **12 year free education extended to preschool and loans for university**
- **Special supports for disadvantaged groups**
- **Shift to standard based curriculum**
- **National testing to validate school based assessments/ Comparison with International Test**

## Impacts on Educational Provision

### Challenges

- Drop-outs/low levels of achievements/ substandard schools
- Increasing number of small schools
- Free education (not necessary for some, not enough for others)
- Calls for supports for alternative education , more diversified curriculum , transfer of credits and quality assessment , new approaches to university selection system

## Impacts on Educational Provisions

### Decentralization

- Increasing dissatisfaction with inability to improve quality, inefficiency and continual policy changes
- Gradual shift from efforts to strengthen, to restructure, and to downsize MOE
- Calls for decentralization to local service areas, to schools, to local governments, to civil society

## Impacts on Educational Provision

### Issues

- **New roles of MOE and the networks.**
- **How to harness the potentials of the increasingly strong pressure groups: teachers, local governments, various committee members, members of alternative education groups, and the civil society**
- **New Budgeting system**
- **Parallel agency outside MOE in charge of innovations**

## Impacts on Educational Provision

### Non-formal and Informal Education

- **Expansion from literacy programs, to equivalency education to lifelong learning for all.**
- **Expansion of target groups from illiterates to disadvantaged groups to people of all ages.**
- **Organizational shift from independent operational unit to policy and coordinating unit**

## Impacts on Educational Provision

### Issues

- **How to reach wider target groups who are in most needs;**
- **Call for different but equivalent curriculum**
- **System for transfer of credits and experience**
- **Reaching a balance among the roles of government / ngo's / community / private sector / mass media**

## Reflections on Reform Process

- **Educational reform as a journey with evolving roadmaps.**
- **Legal decrees help but not enough.**
- **Political will not political gain.**
- **Research based and knowledge based not blueprint of set solutions**
- **Balance between internal and external forces for reform.**
- **Balance between empowerment and compliance to set plans**
- **Phasing of comprehensive reform.**
- **Communicating vs overselling reform**

## Reflections on Reform Process

### **Key Principles Transformation**

- **Education is not schooling.**
- **Education is not confined to children.**
- **Education cannot serve short-term political gains.**
- **Education must be multi-discipline.**
- **Education is the responsibility of all .**
- **Education cannot be monopolized by MOE**