

Lifelong Learning in Thailand

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Review of Lifelong learning

Necessity of Lifelong Learning

- Lifelong education or lifelong learning is a tool for developing quality of life of people.
- Only formal education during school age period is not enough.
- People need knowledge, skills and up to date information to help them face and adjust themselves properly to the rapidly changes of social and environment
- Nowadays, in the rapidly changing and complicated society, education is even more necessary

a. Conceptual evolution of Lifelong learning

In Thailand, the importance of lifelong education or lifelong learning has been recognized many years ago.

The National Education Plan, 1977, concept of lifelong education was officially introduced

The National Education Act, 1999 proposed lifelong education as a principle of organizing the whole education system of the country.

a. Conceptual Evolution of Lifelong Learning

In the old days : informal learning

1884: the first school

- Formal Education**

1940: the Division of Adult Education

- Non-formal Education**

- Informal Education**

1977: The National Education Plan
Objective: education should be lifelong learning process

1999 : The National Education Act 1999
- Lifelong education philosophy
- Lifelong education is a principle in providing all kinds of education for Thai people

b. Definition of Lifelong Education/Lifelong Learning in Thailand.

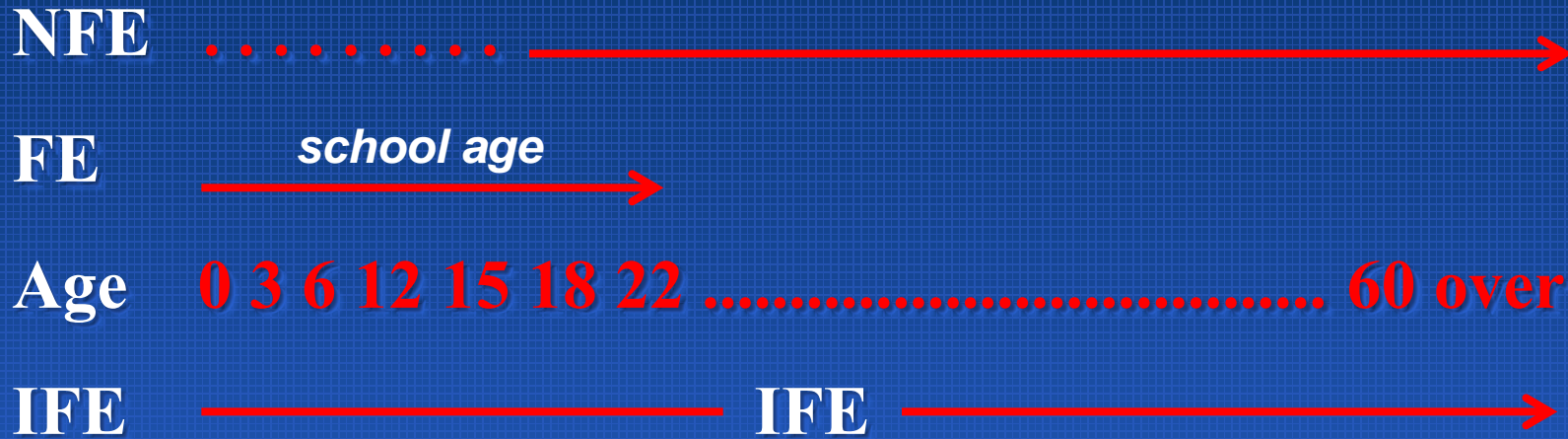
According to the National Education Act, year 1999, lifelong education is defined as:

“Lifelong education is the combination of all kinds and all forms of education, formal education, non-formal education and informal education, which will enable people develop quality of life continuously throughout their lives.”

Combination of Lifelong Education

- **Formal Education**
- **Non – formal Education**
- **Informal Education**

Education and period of life



FE : Formal Education

NFE : Non-formal Education

IFE : In-formal Education

The Word Lifelong Education or Lifelong Learning

In Thailand, the terms “lifelong education” and “lifelong learning” are regarded as having similar meanings.

The word “lifelong education” is normally used when we look at education organizers or providers of education. This is under the understanding that education needs certain forms of provision and services.

The word “lifelong learning” is often used when we look at the learners, those who are to gain benefits from educational activities. The core of this concept is the belief that learning is started by the learners or occurs within the learners themselves.

c. System of Lifelong Learning

Formal Education

1. Early childhood Education
2. Primary Education
3. Secondary Education
4. Higher Education

Non-formal Education

1. Basic Education
 - Literacy Program
 - Basic education equivalent to primary and secondary education
2. Vocational skills training
3. Knowledge for quality of life improvement

Informal Education

- Village reading centres
- Community learning centres
- Village news towers
- Local libraries
- Knowledge and information to different kinds of media (radio, TV, local media, Internet, etc.)

2. Development of LLL Strategies

a. Political Context

1871: Formal Education (the first school)

1898: the first National Education Plan

1940: Adult Education Division

1977: National Education Plan (concept of lifelong education was first introduced)

1999: National Education Act (propose LL as a principle of organizing the whole education system)

The National Education Act, 1999 (amendments 2002) covers 9 sections:

- 1) objectives and principle of organizing education
- 2) right and role of people in education
- 3) education system (formal education, non-formal education and informal education)
- 4) guidelines for organizing education
- 5) administration and management system
- 6) quality assurance and standard of education
- 7) teachers and education personnel
- 8) resources and investment for education
- 9) technology for education

2008: the Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion Act

- provides direction and guidelines on how to efficiently provide non-formal and informal education to allow Thai people to gain benefits from lifelong learning process.
- emphasis on decentralizing administration authority from the department level to local levels,
- promotes creating and supporting partnership networks, and encouraging participation from people in each community.

2009: The Proposals for the Second Decade of Education Reform (2009-2018)

vision:

All Thai people able to access high-quality lifelong learning.

Objectives:

- 1) Developing quality and standard of education and learning of Thai people: development of learners, educational institutions, learning sources and environment, curriculum and contents, and teachers and education personnel .
- 2) Increasing education and learning opportunities to all Thai people for universal access to high quality education and learning.
- 3) Strengthening participation of all segments of society in administrating and organizing education.

2009: The Reformed National Education Plan (2009 -2016)

Objectives:

- 1) development of people's quality of lives : extending educational opportunities to all throughout their lives, especially the disadvantaged group, the poor, the disabled and those who live in remote areas.
- 2) developing Thai society to be virtual and ethical society, local wisdom society and learning society.
- 3) promotion participation of all sectors in society and gathering and sharing resources for organizing and supporting education for all.

b. Content of the LLL Strategies

Goals, principles and objectives of lifelong learning in Thailand

According to the National Education Act, 1999 (amendments, 2002); the Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion Act, 2008; the Proposals for the second decade of education reform (2009-2018) and the Reformed National Education Plan (2009-2016), the goal, principles and objectives of lifelong learning in Thailand can be concluded as follows:

Goals of lifelong learning

The main goal of lifelong education/learning is to ensure that people in all walks of life have equal opportunity to obtain lifelong education.

The system has been designed so that it is flexible, practical, rich in quality and matches the needs, diversity and background of the target groups.

The educational system is then expected to enable people to learn and develop their quality of lives continuously throughout their lives.

Principles of lifelong learning

- 1) Providing equal opportunity of quality lifelong education/learning to all people
- 2) Serving learning needs and requirements of individuals and communities
- 3) Continuously developing quality and standard of lifelong education/learning
- 4) Encouraging and supporting every sector of the society to participate and create networks so that they may take part in organizing lifelong education
- 5) Promoting the establishment of various kinds of learning resources in each community

Objectives of lifelong learning

The Thai government is to provide quality lifelong education for all with the following objectives:

1) **The target groups are to obtain basic and necessary knowledge and skills** which can be used as a tool for enhancing their occupations, doing the search by themselves which would enable them to gain more knowledge throughout their lives. Moreover, by actively participating in these educational activities, the target groups are expected to possess good attitude towards lifelong learning.

2) The target groups are to have ability to learn and develop themselves so that they can be regarded as quality citizens. They should have appropriate reading and learning habits and be in line for internationalization. These people will be provided with knowledge and skills that relate to their interests and are also necessary for quality of life enhancement. They will be prepared to properly adjust themselves with the present society, a society that requires well-rounded, knowledgeable and lifelong learning people.

3) People in each community are to obtain knowledge that relate to their society, environment, economy, politics and technology. Provision of such knowledge is expected to help them develop their community so that it becomes a learning and sustainable developed society.

3. Implementation of the strategies

a. Governance system

1. Formal Education

- Basic education(primary to secondary edu.)

Office of Basic Education Commission, Local Administration organizations, and Office of Private Education Commission

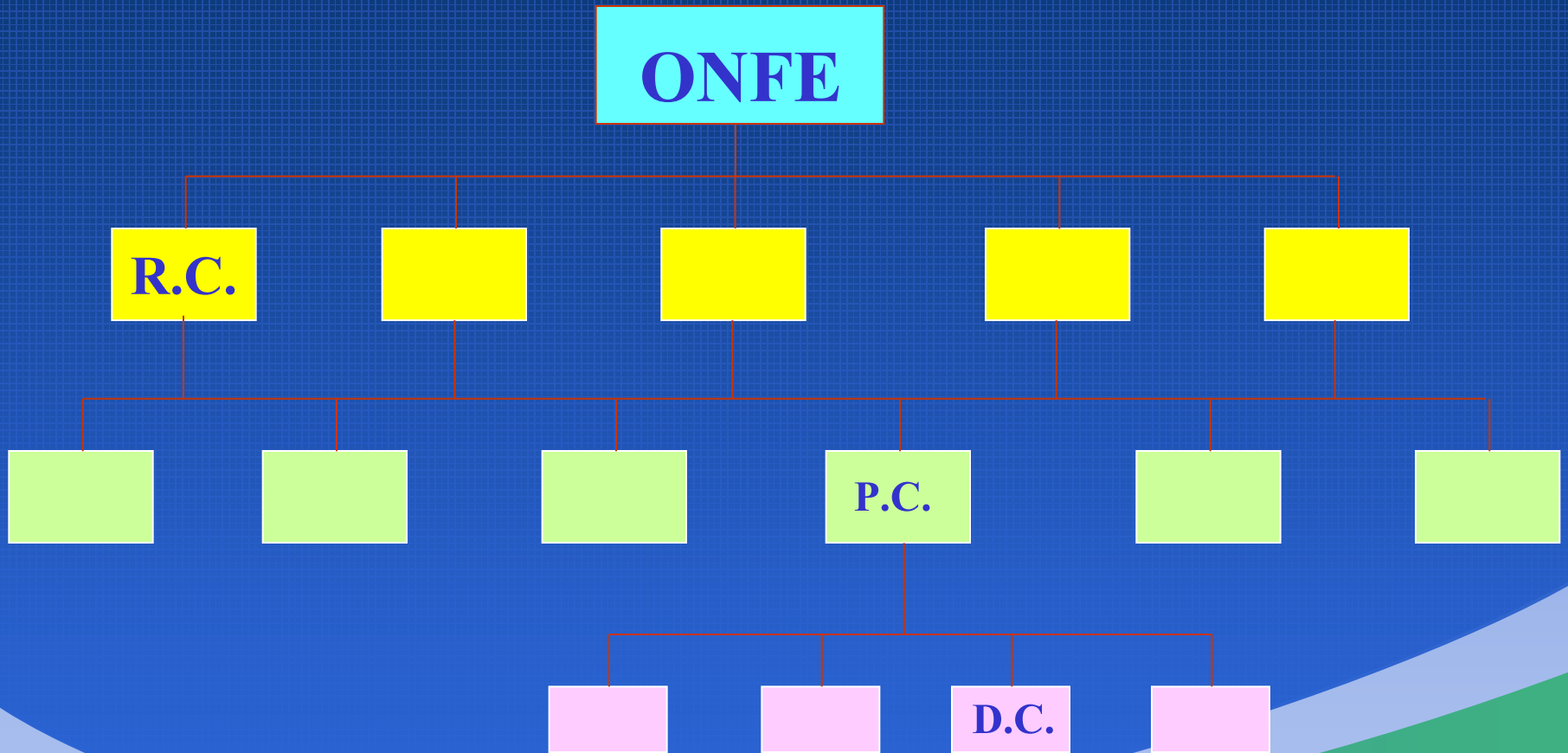
- Vocational Education

Office of Vocational Education Commission

- Higher Education

Office of Higher Education Commission

Organization Structure



b. Participation

Percentage of students per population at each group

Level of education	Percentage of students per population in that age group
Pre-school student (3-5 yrs)	74.17
Elementary students (6-12 y)	100
Lower secondary students (13-14 yrs)	94.05
Upper secondary students (15-17 yrs)	70.29
Higher education students (18-22 yrs)	60.04

participation rate in non-formal education in 2008

Type/ Level of education	2008
Total	6,135,803
1. Literacy Promotion	81,429
2. NFE General education	2,251,371
	3,803,003
3. Vocational training	914,831
	546,551
4. Ed. For life skill dev.	
5. Ed. For social dev.	

4. Reflection and identification

a. Reflection on the gap between development and implementation

Formal Education

(1).Problem of educational opportunities

(2).Difference in quality of educational institutions in rural areas and big cities.

(3).Low level of academic achievement.

(4). Vocational education, a large number of the graduates lacked necessary knowledge/skills.

(5) Higher education, a number of graduates from the Humanities and Social Studies fields hard to get jobs.

Non-formal and Informal education

- (1).Lack of opportunity to access to education.**
- (2). Problem about quality of the educational services**
- (3). Low education level of the work force.**
- (4).Lack of continuously education and training for work-force in the labour market.**
- (5).participation from other sectors rather low**
- (6).Participation of local people still low.**
- (8). Inadequate learning sources.**
- (9). Inadequate resources for administration of Non-Formaland Informal Education agencies.**

b. Proposed strategies for promoting lifelong learning in Thailand

To reach the designed goal and objectives “quality lifelong learning for all”, the government has paid various efforts:

- supporting each responsible department provide
- encouraging all sectors in the society
- learning from best practices in other countries
- seeking ideas and suggestions from experts
- encouraging related research

The author has reviewed related education acts, policies and plans. The 10 experts in the field were interviewed. Then all data were synthesized to propose strategy for promoting lifelong learning.

Proposed strategies for promoting lifelong learning in Thailand

1) Promoting knowledge and understanding and creating the right attitudes about lifelong learning.

Promoting knowledge and understanding and creating the right attitudes about lifelong learning to all, both the target groups and the lifelong education organizers across the country.

2) Assigning lifelong learning coordinating agency at every administration level from national to local level.

- **Forming up Lifelong Education Committee** at every level, which composes of the representative of every group of people and related agencies, to provide advises and support for policy implementation.

3. Developing lifelong learning promotion plan at every administration level, from national to local level.

- from national to sub-district level
- cover short term and long term plans

The responsible agencies of each type of education, formal education providers and non-formal and informal education providers, in each area should understand the whole plan and see the scope of their responsibility in joining to make the plan successful.

4. Identifying ,knowing and getting to the target groups.

In each community, the target groups should be identified and classified. Then, they should be reached by various methods. Their needs should be searched and prioritized in order to provide suitable learning activities for them.

5. Providing several types of learning infra-structure in order for everyone to have access to learning activities conveniently and entirely.

6. Encouraging participation from all sectors or creating and promoting lifelong learning partnership networks for continuous co-operation and development.

The lifelong learning partnership networks may include:- individuals, family, community, local wisdom, local organization, private organization, professional organization, religious organization, workplaces, government organization, and other organizations in the society. They can organize or take part in organizing or supporting lifelong education.

7. Strengthening cooperation among partnership networks.

The partnership networks will be supported by advise and suggestions in providing lifelong learning activities and also finances, facilities and other kinds of needed resources.

8. Providing information and guidance services and establishing guidance networks which can be reached by people anywhere and at anytime.

For various reasons, most of the target groups have to be away from education activities for extended periods of time. They, therefore, do not know why, what, where and how to come back to receive education again. For this reason, appropriate information and guidance for these people is very important. The services should be provided through various channels including face-to-face meetings. The guidance services should be linked as networks.

9. Promoting lifelong learning in each family.

Since the family is regarded as the first school for people, therefore, the responsible agency should train the parents in each family to be the lifelong learners and lifelong educators. They then can be good examples and in a position to provide lifelong education for the members of their own families.

10. Publicizing lifelong education activities available to all target groups via various media/Channels.

media/channels: village news tower, local newspapers, village meetings, local radio, local television, village announcements, etc.

11. Promoting every community to be learning community.

The educators of the sub-district lifelong education centre in each sub-district should promote and encourage village committee and people in each village to develop their own village to become learning community.

Learning community development process covers the following steps:-

- 1) setting up of lifelong education committee
- 2) developing lifelong education plan
- 3) identifying stake-holders for the purpose of organizing activities
- 4) organizing lifelong education activities
- 5) conducting follow-up activities
- 6) publicizing the results and sharing gained knowledge
- 7) applying obtained knowledge and experiences to improve quality of life of people in the community
- 8) continuously improving and organizing activities and sharing experiences to the network.

12. Developing and making full use of different kinds of media and technology to support lifelong education so that all the target groups can be reached.

13. Identifying methods for gathering finance from various sources and allocating budget to support the lifelong education providers, the network and lifelong education receivers, especially the disadvantaged groups.

14. Making full use of existing educational resources for providing lifelong education to serve people in each community throughout the country.

15. Developing educators and personnel of lifelong education organizations/providers so that they can be regarded as professional performers.

16. Supporting the expansion and development of various kinds of lifelong learning resource centres across the country in order to provide more channels for all people to access learning opportunities. They include local learning centre, village information centre, community learning centre, public parks, local wisdom centre, learning centre in the work place, etc.

17. Developing quality and standard system for knowledge and experiences transfer and accreditation between and among all forms of education: formal, non-formal and informal education as well as educational level equivalency accreditation. Moreover, **the credit bank system** should be implemented.

18. Establishing Sub-district Lifelong Education Centre in each sub-district across the country to provide various kinds of lifelong learning activities and services to all target groups.

19. Promoting and supporting research, evaluation, innovation, and initiation in the field of lifelong education in order to obtain and expand knowledge and experiences in this field.

Conclusion

This proposed strategies will be the guideline for the government and concerned agencies to provide, promote and support lifelong education activities. Various sectors in the country such as government institutions, non-government agencies, educational institutions, local organizations, religious circles, and local wisdom in each community will be encouraged more to take part in providing and supporting lifelong education through out the country. With such genuine collaborations and strong efforts from all sectors and network, particularly the support from local communities at every area, the author believes that the designed goal and objectives of lifelong education will undoubtedly be achieved