

Lifelong Learning Strategies and Practice in Latvia and Thailand

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Thailand

- Formerly known as **Siam** (Sayam), is a country located at the centre of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia.
- The country is a constitutional monarchy, headed by King Rama IX
- Official language: Thai
- Primary religion: Buddhism
- Capital city: Bangkok
- Population: Approx. 67 millions people
- An area of approx. 513,000 km² (198,000 sq mi),





Latvia

- located on the East coast of the Baltic sea;
- the central country of the Baltic States;
- the official language is Latvian;
- Riga is the capital of Latvia;
- Latvia's population in July, 2011 was 2,229,641 people;
- the territory of Latvia covers 64,589 km²;
- the official name of Latvia is the Republic of Latvia;
- the Republic of Latvia was founded on 18 November, 1918.

The Purpose

- The importance of lifelong learning has been recognized for many years and consequently many countries, disregarding their geographical location, differences in education systems and traditions, have adopted their lifelong learning policies to develop the lifelong learning system.
- The goal of the present comparative research is to study the comprehension of the term *lifelong learning* in one European country – Latvia and one Asian country – Thailand, analyze the policies introduced, and single out priorities and the main challenges in implementing of lifelong learning policy in the country.



Concept of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (I)

- **The importance of lifelong learning was recognized more than half a century ago as it has been reflected in all the National Policies and Development Plans since 1940.**
- **The concept of lifelong learning also formally existed in the National Education Plan in 1977.**
- **The National Education Act, 1999 proposed lifelong education as a principle of the whole education system of the country.**
- **Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion Act, 2008 proposes strategies for provision of non-formal and informal education to serve lifelong learning.**
- **The National Education Reform Plan, years 2009-2016 focused on lifelong learning for all.**

Concept of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (II)

Concept: lifelong education as “a combination of all kinds and all forms of education – formal education, non-formal education and informal education, with the aim for developing quality of life of people continuously throughout their lives”.

The terms *lifelong education* and *lifelong learning* are regarded as having similar meanings .

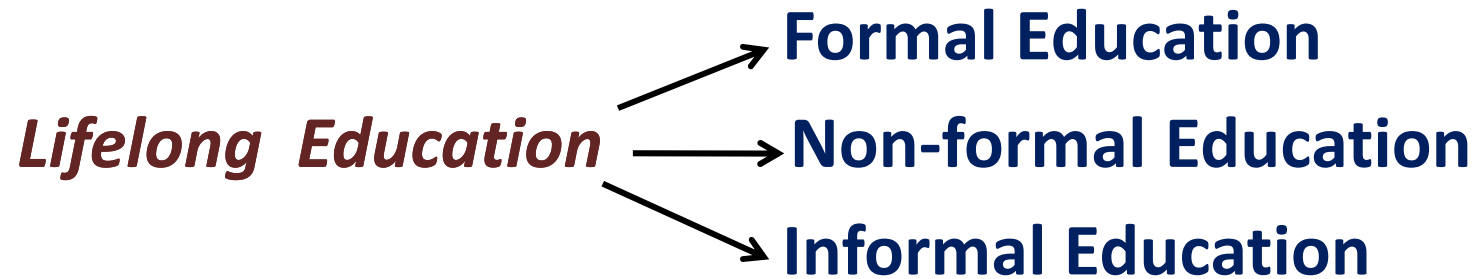
Concept of Lifelong Learning in Latvia

- The lifelong learning concept became topical after regaining its independence in 1991 and joining the EU in 2004.
- In 2006 the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for 2007-2013 and its implementation programme were adopted.
- *Lifelong learning is “an education process during the whole life of an individual that is based on changing needs to acquire education, skills, experience in order to increase or change their qualification in accordance with the demands of the labour market and their own interests and needs. Lifelong learning comprises non-formal learning and formal education, develops inborn abilities together with new competences”.*
- In the Strategy the term *learning* is translated into Latvian as *education*.

Summary on the Lifelong Learning Concept

- **The concept of lifelong learning in Thailand and Latvia is similar: lifelong learning is interpreted as learning life long and it comprises formal and non-formal education and informal learning.**
- **In both countries recently a shift towards associating lifelong learning with the process of learning not only formal education has been observed.**

Lifelong Learning in Thailand (I)



Formal Education

- The first school was established in 1889
- Formal education covers pre-school to doctoral study levels
- Office of Basic Education Commission: Primary and Secondary Education
- Office of Higher Education Commission: Tertiary Education



Lifelong Learning in Thailand (II)

Non-formal and Informal Education

Ministry level: Office of NFE and IFE Promotion

Regional level: 5 Regional NFE & IFE centres

Provincial level: 77 Provincial NFE & IFE centres

District level: District NFE & IFE centres across the country

Lifelong Learning in Thailand (III)

Non-formal education activities

1. Basic Education

- Literacy programmes
- Basic education at primary and lower and upper secondary levels.

2. Vocational training

Short-term and long-term vocational trainings in various occupational fields such silk weaving, mechanics, cooking, dress making, ceramics, mushroom growing, etc.

3. Provision of knowledge and information for quality of life improvement

- Health and hygiene, basic law, how to produce better crops, how to set up a village co-operative unit, drugs prevention programmes, etc.



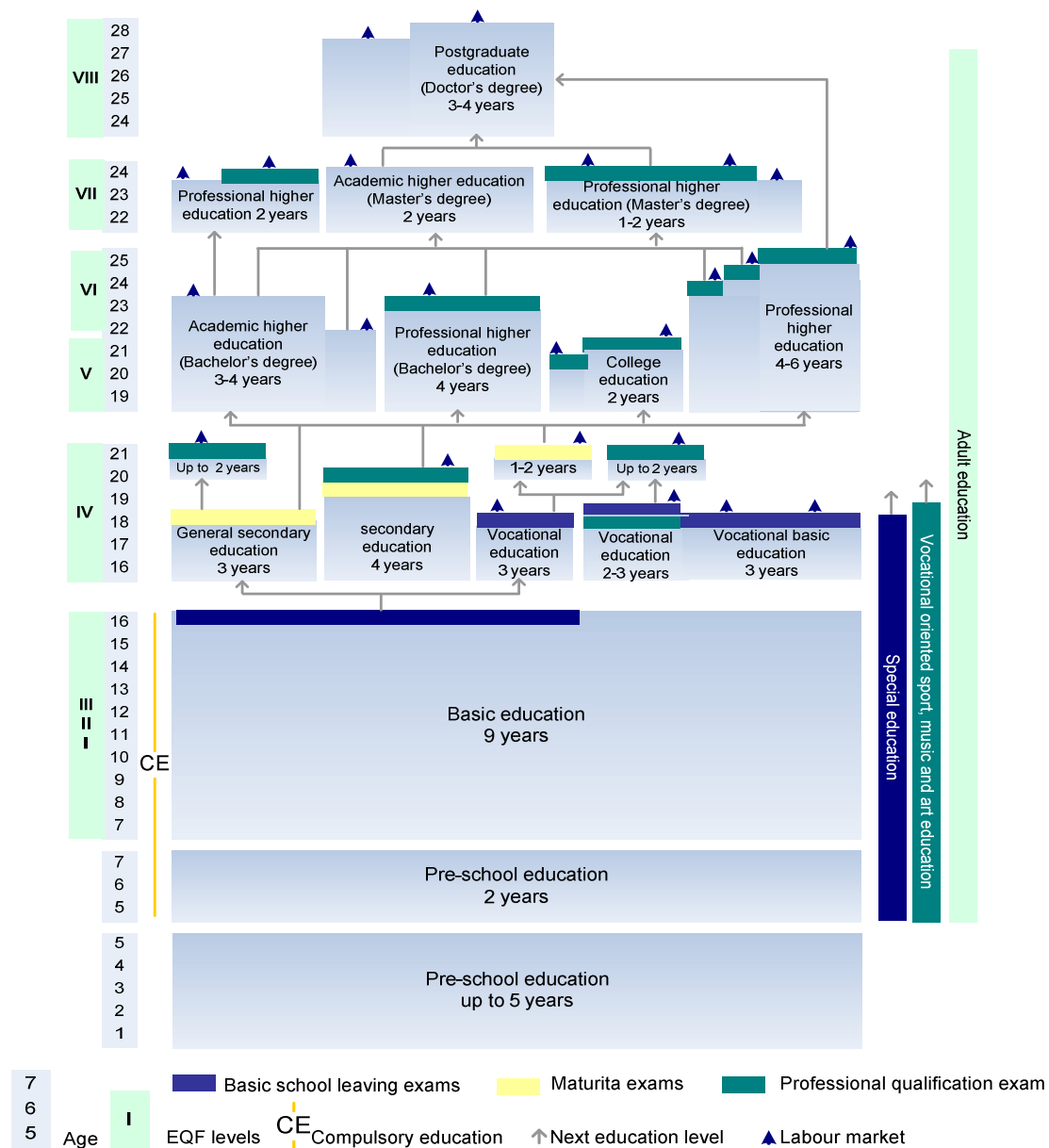
Lifelong Learning in Thailand (IV)

Informal education activities

- Providing knowledge & information through various media e.g. radio, television, local newspapers, local performance, CD, VCD, internet, etc.
- Different forms of learning resource centres: local libraries, museums , community learning centres, village news towers, local wisdom centres, etc.
- Learning from families, and practices as conducted through local tradition and cultural activities.



Lifelong Learning in Latvia (I)





Lifelong Learning in Latvia (II)





Lifelong Learning in Latvia (III)





Lifelong Learning in Latvia (IV)





Lifelong Learning in Latvia (V)

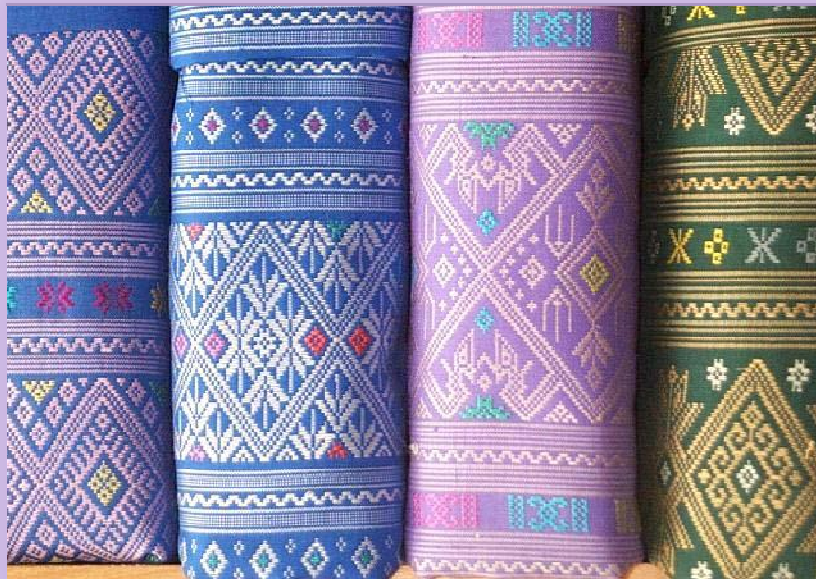
- The education system of Latvia is administered at 3 levels – national, municipal and institutional.
- The Parliament (*Saeima*), the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia are the main decision-making bodies on the national level.
- The leading state administration institution in the field of education policy is the Ministry of Education and Science (MES).
- MES collaborates with other ministries, 11 subordinated institutions, with < 30 international organizations and professional associations.
- 9 Advisory Boards have been formed at MES.
- To ensure cross-sectoral coordination of all education levels in lifelong learning coordination, it was decided to involve also the Advisory Board “Education for Everyone” in administering lifelong learning in Latvia.

Summary on Institutionalization system of LLL

- **Formal education of both countries comprises primary, secondary and tertiary education.**
- **Adult education, special needs education and vocational oriented sport, music and art education are also components of formal education system of Latvia.**
- **Both countries administer the education system on national and regional level.**
- **In Thailand the regional administration system is more developed than in Latvia, whereas in Latvia there are more institutions that cooperate with the MES of the country to implement the LLL Strategy on the national level.**
- **The difference also lies in the main groups of activities.**

National Policies of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (I)

- **Goal:** all Thai people are to receive quality lifelong learning.
- **Objectives:** the main objectives are to serve people with adequate basic and necessary knowledge and skills which can be used as a tool for enhancing their occupations and for improving their quality of lives.



National Policies of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (II)

Main strategies of lifelong learning in Thailand:

- 1. Facilitation and necessary support for learning will be made available so that learning can take place at all times and locations.**
- 2. The process of teaching and learning has to be flexible and has to meet the needs, interests and the diversity of the target groups.**
- 3. Development of quality teachers and lifelong learning personnel.**
- 4. Implementation of more up-to-date technologies for lifelong education.**
- 5. Decentralization of the authority of the Department at the Ministry level to provincial, district and sub-district levels.**





National Policies of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (III)

Main strategies of lifelong learning in Thailand:

- 6. Providing several types of learning infra-structure in order for everyone to have an access to learning activities conveniently and as complete as possible.**
- 7. Gathering educational resources from all sectors in the society and making full use of them for providing lifelong education to serve people and community throughout the country.**
- 8. Establishing a 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.**
- 9. Promoting and supporting lifelong learning networks.**



National Policies of LLL in Latvia (I)

- **The basic principles** of LLL are: shared responsibility, efficiency, synergy of field policies, availability, comprehension and equality of the society.
- **The long-term target** for LLL is “to ensure education throughout the whole life according to the interests of inhabitants, as well as their abilities and socially economic development needs of the particular region”.
- **The stress** is laid upon diminishing of differences in socio-economic development of regions and promoting society integration ensuring equality in providing a qualitative lifelong learning for everyone.
- **The target groups.** This is a step from a comprehension of providing equal education to everyone towards the comprehension of versatility of education in accordance with the various social groups.

National Policies of LLL in Latvia (II)

- **The benchmarks for the lifelong learning in the EU, also Latvia, by 2020** are as follows:
 - 1) at least 95% of children between the age of four and the age of starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education;
 - 2) the share of 15-year olds with insufficient abilities in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%;
 - 3) the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%;
 - 4) the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40%;
 - 5) on average at least 15% of adults (age group 25-64) should participate in lifelong learning.

Best Practice of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (I)

Community Learning Centre, Wat Chaimongkol:

A Learning Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Prakrue Jitwisuttiyarnkhun, the abbot, paid highest attention in providing and supporting lifelong learning in surrounding communities.



Best Practice of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (II)

Lifelong learning activities provided here are:

1. Formal education A school for novices, children and other disadvantaged individuals.



Best Practice of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (III)

Lifelong learning activities provided here are:

2. Non-formal education

2.1 Non-formal education as basic education.

2.2 Non-formal education for social skills development.

- Ordination of novices and junior monks as seeds for religious growth and development.

- Training for development of personal virtues and ethics for children and teenagers.

- Training for language development for entering the ASEAN Community.





Best Practice of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (IV)

2.3 Non-formal education for social development.

- Falling Rain Project
- The Project for Making of Buddhist Lent Candles
- Religious Activities Centre.



2.4 Non-formal education for career development for extra income.

- short courses on how to make soap, dish washing liquid, desserts, etc.

Best Practice of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (V)

3. Informal education

- Community White Radio Station



- Wat Library.
- Wat Exhibitions

Best Practice of Lifelong Learning in Thailand (VI)

Important factors leading to success of Wat Chaimongkok's operation

- 1) well-organized public participation;
- 2) ability to mobilize necessary resources;
- 3) determination to give full devotion to public development;
- 4) support from government and private sectors;
- 5) appropriate use of public relations;
- 6) continuous operation of programs;
- 7) networks of support;
- 8) necessary financial support.



Challenges of LLL in Latvia (I)

- One of the challenges that Latvia is facing at the moment in lifelong learning is how to decrease the level of early school leavers (aged 18-24) from education.
- In 2010 in Latvia 5.3% of basic school graduates did not continue their studies in secondary schools or vocational schools.
- Evening (shift) schools offer both general secondary education and vocationally oriented secondary education in evening groups, extramural groups, for people in custody and even in a form of e-learning.
- In 2011/2012 there were 25 evening (shift) schools in the country. The total number of learners at the beginning of the study year 2011/2012 constituted 12 002. The number of evening classes by day schools in 2011/2012 has reached 69.



Challenges of LLL in Latvia (II)

- The EU Social Fund project “Identification and Analysis of New Challenges and Solutions that Have Influence on Engagement and Reintegration of Adults (18-24 years) in Learning”.
- The goal of the evidence based collaborative comparative study is to work out the proposals based on evidence practice on how to increase the ratio of inhabitants (aged 18-24) with basic and secondary education and who are ready to learn, and what measures should be taken in order to attract adults (aged 18-24) to school to acquire basic and secondary education.
- The survey on employees’ and employers’ learning motivation was conducted from October 2011 to February 2012.
- From 105 employees who had responded, 35 belonged to the group 18-24. 9 had basic education or lower, 18 had incomplete secondary education.



Challenges of LLL in Latvia (III)

- The usefulness of 3R (94.28% of respondents), problem-solving skills (48.57%), the skill of learning-to-learn (48.57%).
- 37.14% of respondents have upgraded their knowledge before starting the current job.
- 42.86% of respondents responded having had special training at the enterprise when starting their work in it.
- Only 34.29% of respondents admitted that they had attended a training program provided by their employer during the last year.
- 34.29% of respondents admitted having acquired some education program not initiated by their employer. The most popular programs were: foreign languages, IT, obtaining of school certificate.



Challenges of LLL in Latvia (IV)

- The reasons for learning : receiving of certificate (7 respondents), improving work quality (4 respondents), upgrading knowledge (4 respondents), and receiving the document verifying formal education (3 respondents).
- The main obstacles for learning: the lack of time (10 times), too high costs for education (5 times), lack of information (4 times), too long period of learning (4 times) as the main barriers.
- 54.29% of respondents had education plans for the next year. A wish to obtain a certificate or a diploma was mentioned as the main reason for learning (10 respondents). The majority preferred learning at a private professional education centre (16 respondents). The respondents were motivated to learn for the following reasons: a wish to obtain a better post (9 respondents), a wish to get a higher salary (7 respondents), fear to lack behind the progress (5 respondents).



Challenges of LLL in Latvia (V)

- The education level had influenced respondents' answers. The difference was not found only in the following aspects: all respondents disregarding their education level similarly evaluated the significance of job-related knowledge and skills acquired at school and their usefulness for further work ($p=0.049$), regarding the respondents' opinion on the barriers for participating in lifelong learning ($p=0.046$, $p=0.028$), the main reasons for raising their qualification ($p=0.030$).
- One of the main reasons why people choose participating in lifelong learning is connected with their career and employment possibilities. This also coincides with the barriers and motivation to learn.
- LLL is considered as a tool for improving one's social and economical status in the society, and, as the survey shows, most respondents have expressed a wish to participate in it.

Conclusions

- Both, in Thailand and in Latvia the definition of Lifelong Education/Learning is quite similar to the definitions given by other countries.
- LLL means a continuous process. The essence of LLL is revealed in the fact that it is not possible to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary during one's life by graduating from the formal education institution once and hoping that the education acquired would be sufficient for living life long. Learning as an episodic event cannot ensure the life quality.
- LLL comprises educational, economic and social aims. In order to implement them in practice it is necessary to more deeply and thoroughly understand the problems and the advantages of the lifelong learning on an individual, group, organization, and society level and carry out coordinated activities in order to make a lifelong learning a reality.

Thank you for your attention!

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