Thailand Social Monitor on Youth: Development and the Next Generation

The 4th World Teachers’ Day in Thailand and 12th UNESCO-APEID International Conference

March 26, 2009, Bangkok
• Overview and Framework for Analysis
  • Growing Up Healthy
  • Learning for Work and Life
  • Moving from School to Work
• Youth Policy and Institutional Framework
Why Focus on Youth and Why Now?

• The next generation of workers, parents and leaders
• Critical transitional stage in life
• Involvement of multiple factors in their development

Three key transitions:
I. Growing up healthy
II. Learning for work and life
III. Moving from school to work

Diagnosis: what makes youth vulnerable

Three policy-Lenses approach:
1. Expanding opportunities
2. Enhancing capacity
3. Providing second chances
Thai youth tend to incur in *risky behaviors* that:

- Expose them to the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other STDs
- Increase their likelihood to engage in traffic accidents
- Introduce them to unhealthy lifestyles and lifelong habits that can have severe consequences later on
Growing Up Healthy

What make *youth* vulnerable?

**Cause of Death among Young Males Aged 15 – 29, 2004**

- Traffic accidents
- HIV/AIDS
- Suicides
- Homicide and violence
- Drownings
- Falls
- Ischaemic heart disease
- Nephritis & nephrosis
- Lower respiratory tract infections

**Cause of Death among Young Females Aged 15 - 29, 2004**

- Traffic accidents
- HIV/AIDS
- Suicides
- Stroke
- Drownings
- Leukaemias cancer
- Homicide and violence
- TB
- Nephritis & nephrosis
- Lower respiratory tract infections

Source: IHPP, 2004
Growing Up Healthy

What make youth vulnerable?

Age and Gender Distribution of New HIV Incidence, 2004

Source: Thai Working Group, 2004
Growing Up Healthy

What makes youth vulnerable?

Initiation of **Risky Behavior** in Thailand

Source: Ruangkanchanasetr and others, 2005
• Adequately providing services and means to practice healthy behaviors—e.g. family planning, provision of cheap condoms

• Taxing alcohol and tobacco, restrictions on tobacco and alcohol advertisement, establishment of tobacco-free zones

• Allowing the space for youth to connect with parents → reducing risky behaviors
Expanding school-based life-skills training programs, starting in elementary education

Using the media and peer-education programs to inform preferences and behavior

Promoting HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns reaching youth before they are sexually active
Growing Up Healthy

Helping youth deal with adverse consequences

- Second chance program to help young people minimize adverse consequences of poor health decisions
- Provision of services helping youth to overcome addictions
- Improving access to services for reproductive health and treatment of sexually transmitted infections
Learning for Work and Life

What make youth vulnerable?

- Post-basic education participation trends have been encouraging

Source: OEC 2006 and ONEC 1998

Source: OECD, 2005
Learning for Work and Life

What make youth vulnerable?

- But vocational education growth has remained flat, in spite of labor market demand

Gross Enrollment in Upper Secondary Education as Percentage of Age Group Population

Source: ONEC, 1994 – 2003 and OEC, 2004
Learning for Work and Life

What makes youth vulnerable?

• … while Higher Education participation continues to grow.

Tertiary Gross Enrollment Rate in OECD Countries, 2004

Source: EdStats, World Bank, 2007
Learning for Work and Life

What make youth vulnerable?

• Student achievement is worrisome. A high share of students' scores below minimum acceptable levels

Source: PISA, 2006
Demand-side constraints

• Direct education costs as a share of per capita household expenditure increase sharply at higher levels of education and limit access to secondary and tertiary schooling

• Opportunity costs deter poor households from sending children to school

• The gap between expenditure on secondary and tertiary education between rich and poor is widening
Supply-side constraints

• While secondary school seats have grown over time, there may still be room for expansion

• Principals report shortage/inadequacy of teachers and teachers consider themselves not adequately prepared in mathematics and science

• There is room for a more efficient and progressive utilization of public spending on education
Expanding youth opportunities for quality education

- Post-basic education should serve needs of young people as learners and future workers
- Vocational education should be promoted as a more competitive choice
- Strengthening education quality assurance mechanisms
- Life skills are important for youth development and their transition into adulthood
Improving capacity to make better education choices

• Tackling demand-side constraints
  – Increasing availability of financial resources
  – Student Loan Schemes
• Helping those who dropped out and the underprivileged to reintegrate

• Non-formal education represents a unique opportunity to provide young people out of formal system with skills for work and life

• Greater efforts are needed to provide second chances for disadvantaged young people – such as children with disabilities, non-Thai citizens
Moving from School to Work

What make youth vulnerable?

Thailand Youth Labor Force Participation Rate, 1985 - 2005

Unemployment Rates and Share of Youth Unemployed to the Total in Thailand, 2005

Source: ILO, 2006
Moving from School to Work

What makes youth vulnerable?

- Youth account for half of total unemployment in Thailand and a large share works in mid/low skilled sectors and occupations.
- Lack of adequate skills might be a barrier to entering the labor market.
- Lack of access to effective job search and employment services.
- Disadvantaged youth lack opportunities to work in the formal higher wage sectors.
Moving from School to Work

What makes youth vulnerable?

- Average wages for young Thai people are half those of adults and higher for females.

Monthly Wage Distribution According to Age Group, 2005

Source: LFS 4th quarter, 2005
Moving from School to Work

Expanding youth employment opportunities

• Need for an **effective strategy** for generating youth employment both at macro and sectoral levels – including the informal sector

• Explore possible **structural barriers** to youth employment
Improving capacity of youth

- Strengthening labor information systems to help the young labor force entrants find suitable jobs
- Development of adequate skills to meet labor market demand is critical
- Schools as bridges to the labor market and broader society, diversification of education options
- Facilitating transition to work through training: public-private partnerships
- Tackling financial constraints to youth entrepreneurship
Moving from School to Work

Providing second chances for the most vulnerable

• **Education and training** opportunities for those who started working too early, ended up in “dead-end” jobs, or were unable to find a job at all

• Improving their chances requires clearly defined targets, systemic **monitoring & evaluation** and political commitment
• No “one-size-fits-all” youth development policy

• Four important dimensions
  – *Which* priorities to focus
  – *How urgent* the country action should be
  – *Whom* to target
  – *Type* of intervention required
• Key areas of consideration include:

  – Levels of young people’s skills and capabilities
  – Stage of the demographic transition
  – Country income
  – Autonomy of youth in decision making
Since 1965 the national youth policy and supporting institutional framework in Thailand have undergone a number of changes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political changes</th>
<th>Changes on youth policy and institutional framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>National Youth Office (NYO) was first established under the Prime Minister (PM)’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>NYO was renamed and moved to Office of Youth Promotion (OYP) under the PM Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Military regimes were toppled by student demonstrations/revolution</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>OYP was upgraded to departmental status and became “National Youth Bureau (NYB)” under the PM Office</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>First National Youth Policy (1973-1977) was issued</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>NYB became Office of Youth Promotion (OYP) under the Ministry of Education (MOE)</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>Military rule being re-imposed after military coup and 1976 Constitution was promulgated</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>OYP was renamed the Commission of the Promotion and Development of Youth under the MOE.</td>
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<td>1977 (October)</td>
<td>The army staged another coup and appointed a new Prime Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977 (February)</td>
<td>Second National Youth Policy (1977-1979) was issued</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>New constitution was promulgated</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>The National Youth Promotion and Coordination Act B.E. 2521 (1978) was passed and the National Youth Commission (coordination body) and National Youth Bureau (secretariat) were established.</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>Third National Youth Policy (1979-1994) was issued</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>New constitution was promulgated</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Military staged a coup against a civilian government, a new government was democratically elected</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Fourth National Youth Policy (1994-2002) was issued</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Financial crisis and new constitution promulgated</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Prime Minister wins largest popular mandate in history</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>The Bureaucratic Reform Act B.E. 2545 instigated the largest reorganization of Thai Bureaucracy in 110 years</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Military staged a coup and put in place a transitional civilian government</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>The Children and Youth Development Act was approved.</td>
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• Strong commitment and vision is needed to further enhance youth development policies and interventions in Thailand
Particular efforts are needed in the following areas

– To provide **overarching coordination** and direction to all policies that directly and indirectly affect youth
– To avoid conceiving youth policy out of short-term political expediency but instead as a **long-term strategic instrument**
– To create a national **youth NGO platform** and institutionalize **informal and formal consultation mechanisms** between this platform and national youth policy stakeholders.