

# Teacher Education and the Role of the Teachers' Council of Thailand

by the Teacher's Council of Thailand

"Quality Teachers leads to Quality Education". The Ministry of Education Thailand recognizes that quality of teacher is an instrumental factor in pursuing quality of education in Thailand. Currently, Thailand has approximately five hundred thousand teachers. Each year there are approximately fifty thousand student teachers (pre-service teacher) graduate from the one hundred and fifty Teacher Education Institutions and universities in Thailand. To ensure the quality of teachers, the Teachers' Council of Thailand (TCT) was set up in 1945 to oversee the teaching profession in Thailand. At the beginning, the Teachers' Council of Thailand had 3 major functions: 1) oversee teacher's license, standards of teachers and teachers' ethics, 2) serve as a Printing House and 3) manage teachers' welfare. Until the restructuring of the TCT in 2003 which divided the TCT into 3 organizations according to its function. All of the three organizations are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Thailand

At present, the Teachers' council of Thailand has four main objectives. 1) issue teachers' license, 2) set up standards for Thai teachers, approving teacher education curriculum of the Teacher Education Institutes based on the Thai teachers' standard, 3) oversee the teachers' ethic and 4) promote and recognize professional practices of teachers.

The Government of Thailand recently launched the new, Thailand strategic plan. In this new plan, Goal #3 emphasizes on developing and strengthening capacity of Thai citizen in cognitive, mental, physical and environmental development. The Ministry of Education, Thailand inherits the plan and spells out the 2017-2036 Educational Goals that gear toward quality of life of Thai citizen. The quality of life that involves sufficiency economy theory and the changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To achieve the goals, teachers play an important role in the development of students who will become quality and compatible Thai citizen. In this regard, the Teacher's council of Thailand (TCT), strives its policies, plans and activities to address to ensure the quality of Thai teachers to attain the above mentioned goal.

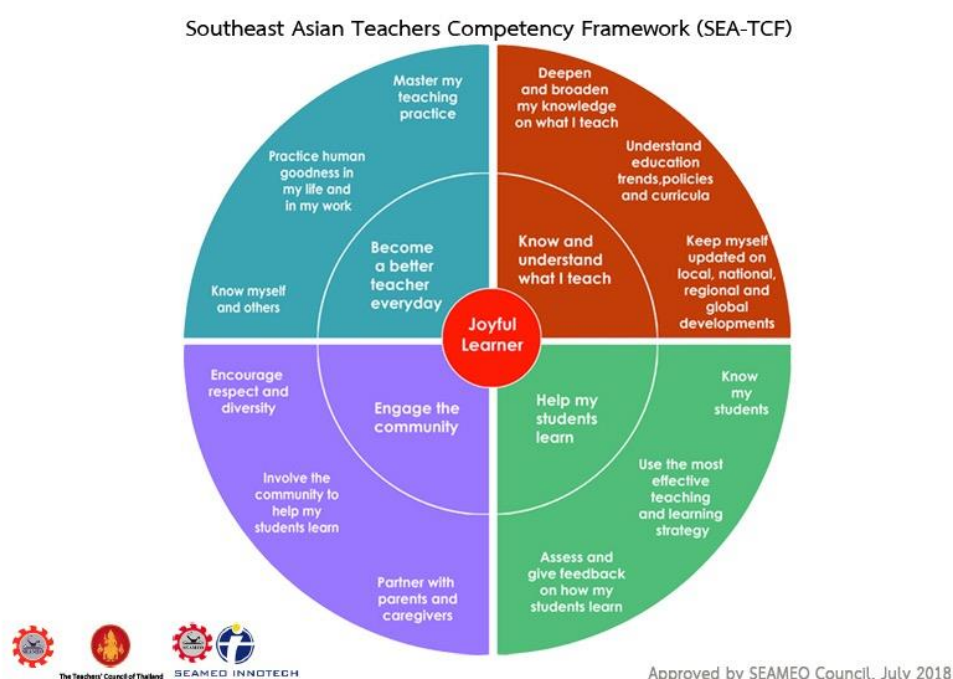
The Teacher's Council of Thailand realizes that the change of today's educational landscape such as ASEAN Community, global citizenship, and new technologies/digital platform affect teachers. These new educational landscape indicates that teachers require more and new skill sets, so that they will be able to help their students prepare for the future. With these in mind, the Teacher's Council of Thailand implements its policies, programmes and activities toward Teacher Education of pre-service and in-service teachers as follows:

1. **Took Part in the Development of the Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework (SEA-TCF):** The Teachers' Council of Thailand partners with SEAMEO Secretariat, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) and 11 Ministries of Education in Southeast Asia to develop the Southeast Asia Teacher Competency Framework (SEA-TCF) in March 2017. The SEA-TCF is a set of common skills, knowledge, behaviors, and attributes which Southeast

Asian teachers need to have. The SEA-TCF was approved by the Council of Southeast Asia Ministers of Education in July 2018. Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Thailand have used the SEA-TCF with their National Teachers Standards.

The Teacher's Council of Thailand believes that there is a need for regionally-appropriate standards which Southeast Asia teachers can use as guidelines for teacher education and teacher professional development. In addition, the SEA-TCF can also be used to enhance teacher exchange and teacher mobility within the Southeast Asian region.

The four component of the SEA-TCF are 1) know and understand what to teach 2) help my students learn 3) engage the community and 4) become a better teacher every day. These four components are developed with students at the centre as joyful learner.



The publication can be download from  
<http://www.ksp.or.th/ksp2018/2019/01/2720/>.

2. **Set the Thai National Teachers Standards for Teacher Education Curriculum:** Setting Thai National Teachers Standards is one of the objectives of the TCT. The Professional Standard Committee was set up to develop the Thai Teachers Standards. Throughout the years, the Thai Teachers Standards is used by Teacher Education Institutions (TEI) to develop Teacher Education Curriculum. The Professional Standard Committee adjust the Thai National Teachers Standards periodically. In November 2018, the Professional Standard Committee of the Teacher's Council of Thailand revises the Thai National Teachers Standards which formerly had eleven components to four components to align with the SEA-TCF. This

is to ensure the relevancy to the need of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and the global practice. The three new components of Thai National Teachers Standards which are in line with SEA-TCF are 1) Knowledge & Pedagogy 2) Practice 3) Professional ethics.

The standard serves as a guideline of Teacher Education Curriculum in Teacher Education Institutions and Universities that offer teacher education degree. Prior to opening any teacher education programs, Teacher Education Institutes have to submit their teacher education curriculum to the Teachers' Council of Thailand to get approval. The Bureau of Teacher Standard of the TCT is responsible for ensuring that the teacher education curriculum have the criteria that meet the Thai National Teachers Standards. The student teachers who graduate from the approved Teacher Education programs will automatically receive a teacher license. For in-service teachers, the Teacher's Council of Thailand is in the process of working together with relevant Offices to use the Thai National Teachers Standards and the SEA-TCF for continued professional development and promotion. With the unique SEA-TCF and the new Thai National Competency Standard, Thai teachers can leverage their capacity to fit national, regional and global needs. In turn, these teachers can be the driving force of quality education in Thailand.

3. **Set Examples and Cultivate Global Mindset in Teachers:** The Teachers' Council of Thailand collaborates with Teacher Associations in Malaysia, the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) and Brunei Malay Teachers' Association (BMTA), implemented **Teachers Exchange programs** in 2018. The cooperation is implemented under the ASEAN Council of Teacher (ACT) + 1 (South Korea) Network. The goals of the program are to broaden the world view of teachers, help them develop a better understanding of other ASEAN countries, and improve their teaching pedagogy. The program give opportunity for teachers to be in the context of schools in other countries and teach. Through the experiences, the teachers can gain skills such as problem solving, cooperation and analytical.

During the program, teachers have to teach in the other partner country for two weeks. The program started with the participating partners agree on the subjects and grade level of teachers. Once it is agreed, schools and teachers are selected. The program is on cost sharing basis. The host school and/or teachers will cover the cost of accommodation, meals and transportation of the visiting teachers. While the visiting teachers will cover his/her own airfare. Each week, the activities are plan in advance starting with observe the classroom, assist in teaching, teach and reflect at the end. Based on the feedback of teachers who took part in the program, it is a very useful program and an eye-opening experience for them. Their view and teaching pedagogy have changed because of the experiences in teaching with students in other countries. The teachers said that the experiences make them aware of the teaching methods and select the most effective pedagogy. They also learn new teaching techniques and understand the culture of other countries including school system.

Moreover, the Teachers' Council of Thailand promotes the practice through Annual Forum and Conferences that the TCT organize to set examples for other teachers

and other teacher associations. The TCT believe that teacher education is a life-long learning process, teachers can learn from sharing experiences with others.

4. **Establish the Teacher Professional Development Institute (TPDI) for In-Service Teacher Education:** In June 2017, Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, the Minister of Education, Thailand issued a policy of “Teacher Coupon” for in-service teachers in Thailand. It is a policy for teacher professional development/education which involves several offices of the Ministry of education such as Office of Basic Education and the Teacher Professional Development Institute (TPDI) of the Teacher’s Council of Thailand. The Teacher Coupon Policy states that every Thai teacher is entitled to enroll in a training course for continuing professional development, valued 10,000 baht which is equivalent to approximately US \$312 per year. The Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education Thailand is the key implementer and provides budget for this policy. Since the launch, more Offices at the Ministry of Education such as Office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) has joined.

The Teacher Professional Development Institute (TPDI) which is an institution under the supervision of the Teachers’ Council of Thailand plays a role as a quality assurance body that approves the training courses. The process begins with a training agency or university submit the courses to the TPDI for approval. The TPDI set the criteria for screening based on pedagogy, content and knowledge (PCK). The approved courses will then be sent to OBEC who will select the courses that OBEC wish to improve the teachers’ skill and knowledge. The selected courses are posted online via OBEC website for teachers to enroll in each semester. However, teachers have to select the courses that are relevant to their subjects teaching with the approval from their school directors/principals. Since the policy has been announced in June 2017, the TPDI had approved 1,837 courses (regular courses 1801, 38 online courses) and 291,747 teachers have enrolled in the courses. There are 283,864 teachers enroll in regular courses which offered face to face while 7,883 teachers take part in the online courses. (information as of 1 November 2018 by TPDI)

Monitoring and evaluation process has also been conducted by OBEC for continuing improvement of the process and courses. The feedback received from the teachers are that they view the policy as a very good policy which enable them to improve themselves. Some constraints are with limited courses for selection and the region/areas that the courses are offered. OBEC, OVEC and TPDI are closely working together to improve the implementation process to effective deliver this policy to fully benefit teacher continuing professional development/education in Thailand.

5. **Encourage and Promote Teacher Education through Professional Learning Communities (PLC):** One of the Teacher’s Council of Thailand’s mandate is to promote and enhance network of professional practices. The TCT encourages continuing professional development among teachers through an approach called, Professional Learning Community (PLC). The PLC is a collaborative method for teachers to work together to help each other solve classroom problems and help

students learn. It can be in a format of peer-coaching, mentor, groups or network that share common teaching practices.

The Teacher's Council of Thailand activities that promote PLC are such as 1) providing funds to teachers, school inspectors, school heads and Teacher Education Institutes to develop PLC networks/clusters; 2) supporting Teacher Education Institutes to develop contents for PLC online for student teachers; 3) create platform for sharing best practices and 4) documenting the practices in the format of PLC guidelines development.

Currently, there are 144 PLC organizations network receive funding from the Teacher's Council of Thailand and 28 PLC university network. These network not only serve as mentor or coach for other teachers but also assist the TCT to monitor and evaluate the implementation of PLC among the teachers and network.

#### **6. Recognize and Promote National and Regional Best Teacher Professional Practices:**

The Teacher's Council of Thailand plays a key role in promoting professional best practices through Awards. The awards are such as Award for Subject Teachers, Award for Teachers with Good Ethics, and Princess Maha Chakri Award (PMCA). These awards are set up to recognize outstanding teachers and their excellent work. The awards are given annually at the Thailand Teachers Day, 16 January.

The most prestigious award which the Teacher's Council of Thailand involved, is the Princess Maha Chakri Award (PMCA). The TCT is the Committee member and part of the Secretariat team. The award is established to commemorate HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration in 2015. The PMCA is given to best teachers from 11 countries in Southeast Asia (ASEAN and Timor Leste) who change the students' lives. It is a well-recognized award given once every two years by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Ministries of Education of 11 Southeast Asian Countries select their best teachers to receive the award. After the award is given, the Teacher's Council of Thailand works closely with the PMCA Foundation to promote and scale up the practices of these awardee teachers.

The TCT encourage and enhance Teacher Education through documenting best practices of these awardees teachers. The publications are disseminated to Teacher Education Institutes, library and teachers to serve as useful resources for teacher education in Thailand. The Teacher's Council of Thailand also organizes annual Educational Symposium to be a platform to showcase these Awardees of best practices.

#### **7. Establish Networks to Enhance Teacher Education through Partnership both at the National and International Level:**

The Teacher's Council of Thailand believes that partnership is one of the important strategies to strengthen Teacher Education in Thailand. The TCT works with both local and international partners to implement policies and activities for Teacher Education and Professional Development. The local partners are such as Teacher Education Institutes, Teachers Associations, British Embassy, Bangkok and private sectors in Thailand. The international partners are

such as UNESCO, SEAMEO Secretariat and SEAMEO INNOTECH (GURO 21 Online Training course), National Institute for School Teachers and Staff Development, Japan, and ASEAN Councils of Teachers +1 (ASEAN+1). The activities that the TCT work with our partners are such as co-organizing training courses, study visits, workshops, Forum, and Conferences.

“Quality Teachers lead to Quality Education.” The Teacher’s Council of Thailand have been working very hard to be one of the key institutions that support quality teacher education programs to ensure quality teachers for Thailand.