

**The Status of Training and Employment Policies and Practices for  
People with Disabilities in Thailand**

**DRAFT**

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## **Part One: Country Overview**

### **1.1 Introduction**

For most of its history, Thailand was an absolute monarchy changing to a constitutional monarchy following a coup in 1932. Thailand was ruled by a series of military governments interspersed with brief periods of democracy from 1932 until the 1992 elections. Since the elections, Thailand has been a functioning democracy with constitutional changes of government. Unlike many other developing countries, including its bordering neighbors, Thailand has never been colonized by a foreign power.

Thailand, a medium human development country, ranks 70 in the 2002 UNDP Human Development Report and has a Human Development Index of 0.762. Other indicators include a life expectancy of 70.2 years, adult literacy rate of 95.5 per cent, combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio of 60 per cent and per capita GDP in PPP terms of US\$ 6,402.

### **1.2 Geography**

Thailand covers an area of approximately 514,000 square kilometers (198,000 square miles), bordered by Myanmar to the north and west, Laos to the north and east, Cambodia to the east and southeast, and Malaysia to the south (ESCAP, 1999, p. 289). Thailand's location also allows it to play an influential role in Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. The country is divided into four distinct regions, the mountainous North, the fertile Central Plain, the semi arid Northeast plateau (Isan) and the peninsular humid South. Economically, socially and culturally distinct, each of these regions maintains an identity based on long established customs and traditions as well as their own dialects and languages. The capital city of Bangkok, located in the central region near the mouth of the Chao Phraya River, is the primary focus of industry, manufacturing, mass communications and government.

Major influences on Thailand's climate are its location in the tropical monsoon zone of mainland Southeast Asia and certain topographic features that affect the distribution of precipitation (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2002). Beginning in May, the warm, humid air masses of the southwest monsoon flow northeastward over the region from the Indian Ocean, depositing great quantities of precipitation; rainfall reaches a maximum in September.

### **1.3 Population**

Thailand's population has increased rapidly in the 20th century, especially between 1950 and 1970, when the Government supported such growth. Since then, official policies and private family-planning programs have slowed this growth dramatically, making the country a model for other nations seeking to reduce their high growth rates (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2002). Projections indicate that Thailand's fertility rate will probably approach or even fall below the replacement level in some parts of the country in the near future. In anticipation of this occurrence, the issues of population, aging and labour shortages have arisen in arguments

advocating the pro-growth approach of policy adjustments (Kittiprapas and Intaravitak, 2000, p. 35).

As of 2002, Thailand's total population is 62.9 million with 30.9 million males and 31.4 million females (Mahidol Population Gazette, 2002). Of the total population 42.3 million are rural inhabitants while 19.3 million are found in urban areas such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Hat Yai (Mahidol Population Gazette, 2002).

**Table 1.1: Population by age group (%)**

	1990	2000
0-14 years	29.2	24.4
15-59 years	63.4	66.1
60 years and over	7.4	9.5

Source: National Statistical Office <[www.nso.go.th](http://www.nso.go.th)>

Thailand's annual growth rate is 3.2 per cent (ESCAP Population Data Sheet, 2001). Life expectancy is 71 years of age for males and 76 years of age for females (ESCAP Population Data Sheet, 2001). Male literacy based on 1995 estimates is 96 per cent for males and 92 per cent for females (ESCAP Statistics, 2002).

Buddhism is professed by the vast majority of Thailand's population (95 per cent) and is considered the national religion. Muslims, at 4 per cent of the population, constitute a sizable minority and live mostly in the south. Most of the country's small Christian community lives in the central region. Hindus also are concentrated in the central region, chiefly around Bangkok. Although several of the hill tribes have converted to Buddhism or Christianity, most remain animists (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2002).

#### **1.4 Government and general development plans**

Thailand is governed by a constitutional monarchy with His Royal Highness The King of Thailand as Head of State. The year 2000 saw the continuing implementation of the new (1997) Constitution, which mandates the formation of various institutions that increase citizen participation, enhance transparency, empower local communities and improve public sector governance. As of January 2001, the new Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra replaced the longest serving Prime Minister, Chuan Leekpai. Thaksin's party, Thai Rak Thailand, won sufficient seats countrywide to avoid the past necessity of forming a coalition government. The new Government did however seek out one other party just to increase its overall hold on power. In any case, with no coalition partner to appease, it may be easier to push through Thai Rak Thai's political agenda. While efforts are being made to move toward a more decentralized government, in actuality the vast majority of economic and legislative decisions for the Kingdom of Thailand continue to be made in Bangkok.

Regarding the Judiciary, all judges in the country's courts are professionals, appointed without political consideration; they are bolstered by a system of judge trainees (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2002). There are four basic codes in Thai law: the Civil and Commercial Code; the Civil Procedure Code; the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code (Thai Legal Service.com, 2002). Thailand also has specific codes that deal with specific areas of law, for example the Labour Code and the Revenue Code. There are also Acts of

Parliament, decrees, and ministerial regulations and notifications. These are all recognized sources of law. Judicial precedent is also a source of law, but it is of persuasive, not binding authority code (Thai Legal Service.com, 2002).

Administratively, Thailand is divided into Central, Provincial and Local Administration levels. As of October 2002, there are 19 Ministries under the Central Administration located in Bangkok. Each of these Ministries is divided into classifications of "Departments", "Divisions" and "Sections". For example, the Special Education programs are governed as part of the Department of General Education as a Division. The Provisional Administration is responsible for governing the 76 provinces. New ministries created include the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

The Local Administration is involved in the affairs of the municipality, the urban and rural districts within the province and the smallest division being the individual village administration. Currently, the position of "village headman", which is a formal and informal post is being eliminated nationwide. However this does not mean that the "village headman" will no longer exist; at an informal level they are likely to continue to have some status in rural areas around the country. The process of voting for a "village headman" in a village will continue, however all power held by the position in the future will be informal.

Building on the Eighth National Economic and Social Development plan, the Ninth National Economic and Social Development plan articulates Thailand's development priorities for 2002-2006. A number of programmes have been launched to support job creation, income maintenance, social security and community initiatives. Progress has been made in financial and corporate sector restructuring. The Government's economic policy has a stipulation to accelerate the development and revival of the Country's financial institutions system to enable it to support economic recovery and development.

The Government has accordingly responded by institutionalizing economic decentralization. The new social policy places emphasis on public health system reform, drug prevention and suppression, building family institutions, and supporting the underprivileged. The reform of the public sector institutions, aimed at providing social safety nets (in terms of enhanced opportunities for health care, education etc.) to the general public, is one of the priorities of the Government.

The Eighth National Economic and Social Development plan was completed in 2001. During the year 2000 the Royal Thai Government (RTG) began finalizing the Ninth National Economic and Social Development plan. The plan articulates Thailand's development priorities for 2002-2006. The successes and failures of the Eighth plan and the political and socio-economic developments since 1997 are shaping the direction of the plan.

The plan is a deepening of, rather than a departure from, the goals expressed in the Eighth plan and encapsulates a people-centric vision of development for Thailand, which complements the measures introduced to strengthen the economic and social foundations for long-term sustainable growth. The main goals of the Ninth Plan are:

- Poverty Alleviation
- Recovery with Sustainability and Stability
- Good Governance

- **Strengthening Development Foundations**

A central pillar of the plan is good governance and the formulation strategy of the plan also reflects the importance of good governance and political reform. These issues are of equal concern to the Thai people as social and economic issues. Viewed crucially as an essential building block to sustainable development, the Ninth plan emphasizes the growing significance of the role of civil society in the decision making process. Participatory planning approaches were widely applied during the formulation of the plan.

## **1.5 Economy**

Based traditionally on agricultural exports, the Thai economy was transformed into one of the most diverse economies in Southeast Asia in the 25 years to 1998 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002). By the 1970s the active promotion of foreign investment had already created an industrial sector based on import substitution. In the 1980s an export-oriented manufacturing sector, based on labour-intensive items such as textiles and garments, began to develop. After 1990 the fastest growth was in higher-technology goods such as computer accessories and motor vehicle parts (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002).

In the 1990s pegging the baht to a strengthening US dollar eroded the competitiveness of low-cost goods, and import-dependent high-technology products were unable to fill the gap (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002). The ever-widening current-account deficit and dependence on short-term capital inflows to finance paved the way for the currency turmoil of 1997-98 and the subsequent Asian financial crisis.

As export earnings fell and capital was withdrawn, Bank of Thailand (BOT, the central bank) data revealed that GDP contracted by 1.4 per cent in 1997 and a massive 10.8 per cent in 1998, compared with an average growth rate of 8.5 per cent in 1990-96. After the crisis struck in mid-1997, consensus gathered around the need for prioritizing structural reform. As of April 2002, The Economist Intelligence Unit raised its forecast for real GDP growth in 2002 from 2 per cent to 2.7 per cent. In 2003 export growth and some recovery in private investment demand will lead to GDP growth of 2.5 per cent (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002). Inflation will remain subdued throughout the forecast period owing to currency stability and considerable spare capacity in the labour and product markets. Also, the trade and current accounts will remain in surplus in 2002-03. (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002).

According to the national poverty line in 1998, 12.4 per cent of the population was considered poor. (<http://www.adb.org/Statistics/Poverty/THA.asp>)

## **1.6 Labour markets**

As of 2002, there are 41.4 million persons making up the labour force age group (15- 59 years of age) (Mahidol Population Gazette, 2002). Of that number 43 per cent are women (World Bank Genderstats, 1999). Unemployment was 2.4 per cent in 2000 and underemployment was 3.8 per cent of the labour force. (KILM Report). Labour force by age group is presented in table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Employed persons by age group (in thousands)**

Age Group	Population
Total	34,262.4
15-19	1,650.7
20-24	3,969.6
25-29	4,923.4
30-34	4,818.8
35-39	4,524.7
40-44	3,935.6
45-49	3,714.5
50-54	2,722.5
55-59	1,840.7
60-64	1,138.3
65 and over	1,023.7

Source: Report of the Labor Force Survey:  
National Statistical Office <[www.nso.go.th](http://www.nso.go.th)>

During Thailand's economic crisis in the late 1990's, the labour market changed from a "tight" to a "surplus" structure. In the first year of the crisis (1997), employment fell by close to 3 percent, unemployment rates shot up from 2 per cent to 5 per cent and real wage rates fell by over 7 per cent. During this period also, labour force rates fell by about 1.3 per cent suggesting workers became discouraged and stopped looking for work (ILO Country Development Partnership for Social Protection Concept notes, 2000).

During the same period, Underemployment (rate based on workers who work less than 30 hours a week) also increased from 5.5 per cent to 10.1 per cent (Kittiprapas and Intaravitak, 2000, p. 32). The underemployment rate is more sensitive to changes than the unemployment rate mainly due to the wet and dry season weather cycle. Planting such as rice absorbs labor at the start of the rainy season. During the dry season unemployment and underemployment increases, as agricultural jobs become scarce (Seasonally inactive labor force March to June 1,184.8 million (Report of the Labour Force Survey: 2001 National Statistical Office).

In terms of employment structure, Thailand is an agrarian society with over 50 per cent of all employed persons in agriculture. Thailand's National Statistical Office (NSO) Labour Force Survey for 2001 provides the following numbers of employed persons by occupation for the whole country.

**Table 1.3: Employed persons by occupation (2000)**

Occupation	Total Employed
Farmers and fishermen	14 998 200
Craftsmen and production process workers	5 666 200
Sales workers	4 492 500
Professional technical and related workers	2 044 700
Service, sports and recreation workers	1 493 300
Workers in transport and communication	1 182 900
Clerical workers	1 122 800
Administrative, executive and managerial workers	915 200
Workers not classifiable by occupation.	4 400
Total workers	31 920 600

The NSO survey also produced average wages (monthly income) of employed persons by industry for the country as follows:

**Table 1.4: Average monthly income per sector**

Sector	Average Monthly Income (baht)
Agriculture	3 021 baht
Mining	5 626 baht
Manufacturing	6 052 baht
Construction	5 175 baht
Electricity and sanitary services	12 889 baht
Commerce	8 429 baht
Transport	11 348 baht
Services	8 755 baht

Note: Current exchange rate is 41 baht to one US dollar (National Statistical Office, 2001)

The formal sector (regulated wage employment) in Thailand did not reduce the number of employees until the second year of the crisis (Kittiprapas and Intaravitak, 2000, p. 32). The time lag in formal sector employment reduction is due to Thailand's seasonal changes that impact employment in rural areas. Informal employment (self-employed and unpaid family workers) increased during the crisis while 50.7 per cent of the workers were in this sector in 1996 the year before the baht fell sharply. By 1999 this proportion increased to 54 per cent (ILO Country Development Partnership for Social Protection Concept notes 2000). The contrasting adjustments of the formal/informal sectors in the first and second year of the crisis reveal that the economic impacts in the first and second years were of different magnitude and complexity. Therefore, there was an adjustment lag for formal and informal employment absorption once the crisis hit (Kittiprapas and Intaravitak 2000 p. 35). Table 1.5 shows the levels of employment in various sectors of the formal and informal economy:

**Table 1.5: Employed persons by work status for Third Quarter 2002**

Work Status	Total (in thousands)
Total	34,262.4
Employers	1,092.1
Government employees	2,672.7
Private employees	11,039.0
Own-account workers	10,681.9
Unpaid family workers	8,760.4
Member of producers' cooperatives	16.5

Source: Report of the Labor Force Survey:  
National Statistical Office <[www.nso.go.th](http://www.nso.go.th)>

As for the issue of labour shortages, previous studies suggest that such shortages are brought about more by Thailand's rapidly growing economy and lagging education than by demographic change. Moreover, previous research also shows that the mean desired family size of married couples is still about two children. This suggests that the fertility rate is unlikely to fall below the replacement level unless there is a substantial change in the country's social and cultural context (Kittiprapas and Intaravitak, 2000, p. 35).

## Part Two: People with Disabilities—Definitions, Data and Situation

### 2.1 Definitions of disability

According to the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act B.E.2537 (1994), a disabled person means "a person with physical, intellectual or psychological impairment as categorized and prescribed in the Ministerial Regulations."<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2 Disability classification systems

Ministerial Regulation No. 2 (B.E. 2537)<sup>2</sup> of July 1994 establishes the classification system of Thailand:

Types of disability are classified as follows:

- (1) Impairment of seeing (visually disabled)
- (2) Impairment of hearing or communication (hearing impaired)
- (3) Impairment of physical or locomotion (physically disabled)
- (4) Impairment of mentality or behaviour (intellectually disabled)
- (5) Impairment of intellectual or learning ability (psychologically disabled)

Impairment in terms of sight means (a) an individual whose better eye, after using regular eye glasses, is able to see less 6/18 or 20/70 downward until unable to see any light, or (b) an individual who has a visual field of less than 30.

Impairment in terms of hearing or communication means: (a) an individual with hearing frequency of 500, 1000 or 2000 Hertz in a better ear under the average audibility as follows: (1) over 40 decibels up to the point of not hearing at all for a child of not older than 7 years of age (2) over 55 decibels up to the point of not hearing at all for a general person , or (b) an individual with abnormality or malfunctioning of the hearing system to comprehend or use verbal language to communicate with others.

Impairment in terms of physical functioning or locomotion means: (a) a person with obvious abnormality or malfunctioning of the physical condition which makes her/him unable to perform daily routine activities, or (b) a person who has lost her/his ability to move hands, arms, legs, or body as a result of amputation, paralysis or weakness, rheumatic disease, arthritis or chronic pain including other chronic illness caused by body system dysfunction inhibiting her/him to perform daily routine activities or maintain a living like an ordinary person.

Impairment in terms of mentality or behavioral condition means an individual with psychological abnormality or malfunctioning of certain parts of the brain

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<sup>1</sup> Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act, p.

<sup>2</sup> B.E. means "Buddha Era" which Thailand uses on official documents

associated with perception, emotion and thought which causes inability for her/him to control behaviour necessary for self-care or living with others.

Impairment in terms of intellectual or learning ability means a person with abnormality or malfunctioning of the brain or intelligence level which causes inability of the person to learn through a regular educational system.

All types of disabled persons with abnormality or malfunctioning have the right to receive benefits pursuant to the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons B.E. 2534 only after the person has completed regular treatment but the abnormal conditions remain unchanged.

Medical professionals from government and state enterprise hospitals and others as announced by the Ministry of Public Health are entitled to diagnose impairment status and issue an official document to confirm the impairment condition using the form as attached herewith.

### **2.3 Sources of disability information and statistics**

The major sources of disability information in Thailand are:

- Survey of Household Health and Welfare done by National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister 1991
- Household Survey of Thai Public Health Research Institute, National Public Health Foundation, Ministry of Public Health 1996
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Questionnaire 1999
- Committee for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, under the Department of Public Welfare, maintains a registry of people with disabilities who apply for services 2002

According to the *Plan of Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities (2002-2006)* the discrepancy between the 1991 Survey and the 1996 survey has caused planning problems. Other numbers/estimates place the country's disabled population around 5,722,200 persons (Metts 2000).

*Survey of Household Health and Welfare done by National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister 1991*

The National Statistical Officer in the Office of the Prime Minister conducted a survey of the disabled population in 1991, and the results were published in the Report of the Health and Welfare Survey. In 1991 the number of disabled people in Thailand was given as 1,057,000 people from a total population of 57,046,410. A sample of the survey is shown in table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Number of Persons with disabilities by age group (in thousands of persons)**

	Population of Disabled Persons	Percentage of Disabled Persons	Total Population	Percentage of Total Population
10 or below	103.3	9.4	13 754.5	24.1
10-19	190.1	17.3	11 140.3	19.5
20-29	218.6	19.8	11 371.1	19.9
30-39	158.0	14.3	8 320.1	14.6
40-49	107.1	9.7	5 209.8	9.1
50-59	104.0	9.4	3 729.4	6.5
60 or over	220.2	20.0	3 521.2	6.2
total	1 101.3	100.0	57 046.41	100.0

Source: Report of the Health and Welfare Survey 1991, National Statistical Office, cited in JICA, 2000, p.10.

**Table 2.2: Regional Percentages and Totals, the Survey of Health and Welfare 1991**

Area	Number of People with Disabilities (100%)	Physically disabled	Visually disabled	Hearing impaired	Intellectually disabled	Psychologically disabled	Others
	Total Number in thousands (men/women)	463.1	118.2	223.1	160.2	62.4	70.9
Bangkok metro	100%	59.1%	4.2%	7.5%	7.3%	9.7%	12.3%
	48.3 (26.1/22.2)	29.3	2.1	3.7	3.6	4.8	6.1
Central	100%	51.3%	9.2%	13.5%	16.1%	3.6%	6.4%
	205.7 (128.7/77.0)	109.3	19.7	28.7	34.3	7.6	13.6
Northern	100%	40.4%	13.1%	26.1%	12.1%	2.7%	5.5%
	232.1 (146.4/85.7)	103.5	33.5	67.0	31.1	7.0	14.2
North-eastern	100%	36.3%	11.5%	22.0%	16.4%	8.3%	5.6%
	386.7 (210.9/175.8)	148.6	46.9	89.9	67.0	33.8	23.1
Southern	100%	42.8%	9.5%	19.9%	14.3%	5.4%	8.2%
	151.3 (84.5/66.8)	72.4	16.0	33.7	24.2	9.1	13.9

Source: NSO 1991 Census. Notes: (1) Numbers are given in thousands. (2) Central area excludes Bangkok metropolis. (3) Number of provinces in each area is; 25 in central (excluding Bangkok metropolis), 17 in northern, 19 in northeastern, and 14 in southern area. (5) Ratio of men and women in each type of disability is not available.

The 1991 survey (see table 2.2) used two classifications for disability; one was a medical condition and the other as a social one. The first classified disability for medical treatment and rehabilitation purposes and the second classification perceived disability as physical and physiological abnormalities that may be a burden for society. In terms of distribution the 1991 survey showed that the region with the highest instance of disability was the northeast (Isan) with about 38.6 per cent, followed by the north with 23.5 per cent. The 1991 survey also notes that these two regions are considered to be the poorest in the country, pointing toward a direct correlation between poverty and disability. It should also be noted that these two regions are also the most populated, with Isan (the northeast) having a total population of just over nineteen million people based on the 1991 survey.

Of the various types of disability, the survey ranked the following, starting with the "most common": limb disability at 19.6 per cent; hearing impairment at 13.2 per cent; intellectual disability at 10 percent; speech impairment at 5.4 per cent; visual impairment at 1.9 per cent. The 1991 survey also determined that most people with disabilities were aged sixty and above, followed by teenagers and adolescents. Somehow the survey was able to find many more people over sixty who were disabled and very few under that age. Furthermore, the majority of teenagers and adolescents became disabled due to "traffic accidents". Increasing traffic injuries are a growing trend throughout the region.

It is likely that the 1991 survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Health and the National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister was limited in how it located people with disabilities, and the numbers for the most part were based on people being admitted to hospitals. That may explain why so many people over the age of sixty were counted and why auto accidents are seen as the most common cause of disability for teenagers and adolescents. In Thailand, the 1991 survey reported that of the group of disabled persons from 0 to 24 years, 25.2 per cent of the total number of disabled at all ages were reported as living within a municipal area, while 39.3 per cent were reported as living within a non-municipal area.

*Household Survey of Thai Public Health Research Institute, National Public Health Foundation, Ministry of Public Health 1996*

The 1996 Ministry of Public Health Survey concluded that there were 4,825,663 persons with disabilities or 8.1 per cent of the population. They found that 1.4 million persons with disabilities were in the labour force. Further findings include:

**Table 2.3 Ministry of Public Health Survey 1996**

Type of Disability	Persons with Disabilities	Per cent of total
Physical Disabilities	2 745 813	56.9%
Visual Disabilities	955 485	19.8%
Hearing or communication disabilities	299 192	6.2%
Intellectual or learning disabilities	477 742	9.9%
Mental Health or Behaviour Disabilities	226 807	4.7%
Others	120 624	2.5%
Total	4 825 663	100%

*Data collected by the Department of Social Welfare Registry of people with disabilities who apply for services*

The Department of Social Welfare registers disabled persons seeking services. As of June 2002, there were 322,038 people registered in the entire country. These statistics are shown in detail in table 2.6.

*Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Questionnaire*

In 1999, JICA, the government development agency of Japan, conducted an evaluation of programs in Thailand that they have supported including a broad-based case study of the situation of persons with disabilities. As part of this work, a questionnaire on the subject of aims and goals of persons with disabilities was also conducted—including 680 persons with disabilities to include their viewpoints. A total of 133 effective responses were obtained—the effective response ratio was 20 per cent. The study was conducted with the cooperation of Council of Disabled People of Thailand (DPI-Thailand). Most respondents were aged from 20-40 years and 50 per cent had high school or higher levels of education, 20 per cent had graduated from college. These statistics are even higher than educational levels for Thailand as a whole—therefore this is an unrepresentative sampling of persons with disabilities in terms of education and opportunity. Respondents were evenly split between rural and urban areas at about 50 per cent each. Type of disability of respondents was close to national averages: 60 per cent had physical disabilities, 20 per cent visual disabilities and another 20 per cent had a hearing disability.

As seen in table 2.4, most persons with disabilities surveyed desired to be self-employed (39.1 per cent), while the next ranking was employee of ordinary company (18.0 per cent). A job in a workplace with a dormitory was of interest to 29 persons (21.8 per cent.) Only one person responded that they had no plans to work (0.8 per cent)

**Table 2.4 Type of occupation desired by persons with disabilities**

	<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Self-employment	52	39.1
Employee of ordinary company	24	18.0
Workshop for disabled persons	21	15.8
Temporary job, part-time job, a side-job suited for the disability you have	13	9.8
Workplace that is understanding toward the disability you have	1	0.8
Workplace provided with dormitory	29	21.8
Have no plan to work	1	0.8
No answer	5	3.8

Source : JICA questionnaire 2000, page. 13

The JICA survey also asked the question “What is the most important issue to you right now?” Table 2.5 shows responses, the most common related to income, employment and other sources of support.

**Table 2.5: Important Issues to Persons with Disabilities**

	<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Issues related to income, finances	33	24.8
Issues related to lack of support to disabled persons	32	24.1
Issues related to work	21	15.8
None	10	7.5
Issues related to living	9	6.8
Issues related to studies	3	2.3
Other (human relationships)	13	9.8
No answer	21	15.8
Total	142	106.8

Source : JICA questionnaire 2000, page. 14

**Table 2.6: Registration Statistics by Types of Disabilities, Gender, and Regions  
1 November 1994 – 30 July 31, 2002**

Region	Type of Disabilities																					Total		
	Vision			Hearing			Physical			Mental			IQ			Multiple disabilities			Unknown					
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Bangkok	1,146	764	<b>1,910</b>	2,415	2,112	<b>4,527</b>	5,987	2,951	<b>8,938</b>	344	129	<b>473</b>	1,479	894	<b>2,373</b>	1,134	693	<b>1,827</b>	39	26	<b>65</b>	12,544	7,569	<b>20,113</b>
Central and Eastern	3,149	2,709	<b>5,858</b>	5,130	4,344	<b>9,474</b>	24,890	12,905	<b>37,795</b>	1,061	684	<b>1,745</b>	5,511	4,609	<b>10,120</b>	4,391	3,149	<b>7,540</b>	376	230	<b>606</b>	44,508	28,630	<b>73,138</b>
Northern	4,032	3,431	<b>7,463</b>	5,470	4,450	<b>9,920</b>	21,832	12,435	<b>34,267</b>	960	589	<b>1,549</b>	5,382	4,483	<b>9,865</b>	4,374	3,172	<b>7,546</b>	727	458	<b>1,185</b>	42,777	29,018	<b>71,795</b>
Northeastern	8,231	7,914	<b>16,145</b>	8,795	7,522	<b>16,317</b>	36,922	20,531	<b>57,453</b>	1,621	1,182	<b>2,803</b>	8,945	7,583	<b>16,528</b>	5,645	4,130	<b>9,775</b>	1,588	1,168	<b>2,756</b>	71,747	50,030	<b>121,777</b>
Southern	1,988	1,498	<b>3,486</b>	3,945	3,320	<b>7,265</b>	12,384	6,193	<b>18,577</b>	530	371	<b>901</b>	3,242	2,802	<b>6,044</b>	2,432	1,830	<b>4,262</b>	266	187	<b>453</b>	24,787	16,201	<b>40,988</b>
	<b>18,546</b>	<b>16,316</b>	<b>34,862</b>	<b>25,755</b>	<b>21,748</b>	<b>47,503</b>	<b>102,015</b>	<b>55,015</b>	<b>157,030</b>	<b>4,516</b>	<b>2,955</b>	<b>7,471</b>	<b>24,559</b>	<b>20,371</b>	<b>44,930</b>	<b>17,976</b>	<b>12,974</b>	<b>30,950</b>	<b>2,996</b>	<b>2,069</b>	<b>5,065</b>	<b>196,363</b>	<b>131,448</b>	<b>327,811</b>

Source: Division of Central Registration of People with Disabilities, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for People with Disabilities, Department of Public Welfare

## **2.4 On-the-job injuries**

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Annual Report 2000, the current rate of work-related injury is 32.32 per one thousand persons.

## **2.5 Environmental factors affecting full participation**

People with disabilities registered with the DPW may be eligible to receive assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, sticks or prosthesis free of charge from the Ministry of Public Health, DPW. In 2000, the DPW distributed assistive devices to 1,942 people with disabilities, which were worth over 7 million baht.

Ministerial Regulation No. 4 on Accessibility 1999 prescribes the characteristics of buildings, sites, vehicles or other public services requiring installment of equipment to directly facilitate persons with disabilities. However, compliance has been spotty and affordable public transportation continues to be a major barrier commuting to and from work. Bangkok's BTS electric train system does have some stations with access but they are few and far between. Also, cost of using the system is considered expense for both disabled and non-disabled commuters alike. All these barriers have been further compounded by Thailand's economic downturn. With budgets reduced, the government has to focus its limited resources. The lack of wheelchair lifts at Bangkok's BMT train stations was blamed on lack of funds.

For the blind, Braille blocks are in place on most sidewalks but with mixed results. The blind can use the public bus system but it is extremely dangerous as many buses do not pull up to a bus stop to pick up passengers, this leaves everyone to negotiate one or more lanes of traffic before reaching the sidewalk. Also, Braille is rarely found in public areas to assist the blind. The Government does provide sign language interpreters for the deaf but at a cost of 1000 baht a day far out of reach of everyone. In rural areas, some government agencies are currently constructing access features for persons with disabilities. Police stations in provinces such as Sa kaeo have completed their accessible environments as well as some provincial government buildings. Other regions such as the provincial center of Phrae in the north have made more and more public buildings accessible thanks in part to awareness programmes sponsored by one of the local NGOs.

In August 1999, the Thai sign language was announced as the national sign language for people with hearing impairments. Hearing people can also choose to learn sign language at various institutes to communicate with persons with hearing impairments and a sign language dictionary has been compiled. Some television programs include sign language interpretations.

The JICA survey (mentioned in section 2.3 above) included questions about difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities when they are outside of their homes. Many stated difficulties getting on the bus (41.4 per cent), other stated they had difficulties walking along the road (28.6 per cent) and others thought transportation expenses were high (27.1 per cent).

**Table 2.8: Difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities when they are out**

	<b>Number of persons</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Have no one to take care of me	18	13.5
Have difficulty in walking along the road	38	28.6
Have difficulty in getting on the bus	55	41.4
Have difficulty in reading information displayed on the bus	12	9.0
High transportation expenses	36	27.1
Feel uneasy about the gaze of other people	31	23.3
So crowded with people I come near to bumping them	2	1.5
Other	31	23.3
No answer	8	6.0

Source: JICA Report (2000) p. 13.

## **2.6 Social factors affecting full participation**

Orthodox Buddhism, the state religion of Thailand, concludes that a person has a blessed fate or an ill fate determined by “his deeds in his previous lifetime.” Many people in rural areas still believe that disabilities have been caused by evil deeds in a past life. Feelings of shame cause people to hide members of their family who may be disabled. Since Orthodox Buddhism also urges people to “strive for virtue” in this life to lead a better life in the future, many persons make charitable contributions to temples, and Buddhist monks but also to organizations working to benefit persons with disabilities, orphans and elderly persons.<sup>3</sup>

## **2.7 Disabled Persons’ Organizations**

Thailand has hundreds of disabled persons organizations found in all provinces ranging from self-help groups to those involved in employment and training.

Disabled Peoples International (DPI), an umbrella organization found worldwide, has a regional office in Thailand. DPI is operated by and for persons with disabilities providing advocacy on a spectrum of disability issues. Provincially, Disabled persons organizations are found in rural and urban areas. Many organizations serve as a collective voice to advocate disability issues in the local community and provide services such as helping procure assistive devices in rural areas.

The following is a sample of some disabled peoples organizations found in Thailand:

- Disabled Persons International, Thailand
  - o Association of the Physically Handicapped of Thailand
  - o Thailand Association of the Blind
  - o National Association of the Deaf of Thailand
  - o Association of the Retarded of Thailand
- Nonthaburi Association for the Disabled
- Prapadang Disabled Persons Association Prapadang, Samut Prakarn
- Council of Disabled People of Phuket
- Central Deaf Club

Two of these provide vocational training as noted in section 4.5.

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<sup>3</sup> JICA (2000), p. 9.

## Part Three: Legislation, Policies and Institutional Structures

### 3.1 International policies adopted

On 16 June 1993, Thailand adopted ESCAP Resolution 48/3 in July 1993, which proclaimed the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1992-2002. Thailand has yet to ratify the International Labour Organization's Convention 159, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention.

### 3.2 National legislation

In the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand of 1997, Section 30 states that all persons are equal before the law and shall enjoy equal rights and that all discrimination based on physical or health condition is prohibited. Chapter III, Section 55 states "the disabled or handicapped shall have the right to receive public conveniences and other aids from the State, as provided by law. Section 80 stipulates that the State shall ensure a good quality of life for persons with disabilities and improve upon their ability to depend upon themselves for health protection and quality of life. The Constitution eliminates all restrictions barring persons with disabilities from exercising their rights and removes previous prohibitions against voting and running for Office.<sup>4</sup>

The Rehabilitation Act of Disabled Persons forms the major legislative and policy framework related to people with disabilities in Thailand. Drafting of the Act started in 1979 and it was finally passed in 1991. Since 1991, the Government has issued many regulations and policies to implement the Act. These are noted in table 3.2. Other laws that deal directly with the rights, and employment and training of people with disabilities and related issues are in table 3.1.

#### *The Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act*

The rationale for the promulgation of the Act are, in brief; to acknowledge that although disabled persons are part of the nation's national resources, their disabilities often hamper their living, occupation and participation in social activities, employment and having the opportunity to lead their lives equal to that of non-disabled persons (Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act 1991).

The major provisions of the Act are the following:

- Establishment of the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons under the Department of Public Welfare, describing its members and noting its power and duties, which include to:
  - o Propose and recommend policies and plans for Cabinet approval
  - o Support and promote the development of concerned government and non-governmental organizations, through financial and technical assistance

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<sup>4</sup> Constitution of Kingdom of Thailand, 1997.

- o Prepare projects to assist, develop and rehabilitation disabled persons
  - o Establish rules, regulations and ordinances related to the Act and “within the purview of assistance, development and rehabilitation” to compliance.
- Authorization of the Department of Public Welfare with the powers and duties to:
- o Coordinate and cooperate with Government and NGO bodies
  - o Collect and retrieve information related to disabled persons, including compiling and conducting research
  - o Establish rehabilitation programs
  - o Arrange for training of personnel
  - o Promote occupations and find employment for rehabilitated disabled persons
  - o Act as a center for technical dissemination and awareness raising
  - o Implement, monitor and follow up on policies and programs
  - o Comply with resolutions of the Committee.
- Registration of disabled persons who wish to apply for services at Provincial Public Welfare Offices related to assistance, development and rehabilitation, specifically with regard to:
- o Medical rehabilitation including receiving financial assistance for aids, appliances and medical care
  - o Education, which can be provided through special schools or through mainstreaming in ordinary schools
  - o Advice and consultation relating to vocational training.

Establishment of the *Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons* to provide support to disabled persons.

Authorization for the Minister to establish regulations prescribing:

- o Accessibility requirements for built environments
- o A quota system to require that private employers “to employ disabled persons at the ratio prescribed” and to hire a certain percentage of disabled workers
- o That employers “may apply to contribute to the Fund” instead of employing disabled persons, according to ministerial regulations.
- o Incentives to employers or owners of private companies, such as deducting “double the expenses” related to equipment purchases that facilitate employment of disabled persons, such as deducting double the expense from profits for tax purposes or entitlement to deductions for wages of disabled workers.

The Government plans to enact a “Disability Employment Institute for People with Disabilities Act” in 2003.

**Table 3.1: Significant Additional Legislation on the Education, Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities**

	Description
National Education Act, 1999	This act protects the rights of persons with disabilities to education in accordance with their Constitutional rights. People with disabilities are entitled to early intervention services, educational materials and facilities, and government-supported home schooling. All children receive 12 years of basic schooling free of charge. Educational materials are being produced to meet the needs of target groups.
Occupational Training Promotion Act of 1994	Establishes occupational training among active workers to enable them to enter the skilled labour market as well as improve productivity of the workforce. It calls for cooperation between employers and vocational institutes to provide students with on the job training. Ministry of Labour is responsible for implementation.
Vocational Training Promotion Act 1996	Entitles registered private enterprises to a 50 per cent tax reduction of training expenses as well as other incentives to encourage training. Established the Vocational Training Committee, a tripartite group to establish skill standards.
Workers Compensation Act 1979	Provides protection for employees disabled at work so that they receive compensation for medical expenses, prosthetic devices and equipment, and physical and mental rehabilitation. In addition, under this Act, the Social Security Office provides special occupational rehabilitation at the Industrial Rehabilitation Centre in Bangpooon, Pathum Thani Province. The act also promotes the issue of better safety and health at work places.
Social Security Act 1990	The Social Security Act covers employees in enterprises in the private sector with 10 or more workers. Insured members are granted certain benefits (health care, rehabilitation services, income replacement, etc.) in cases of illness, disability, maternity, old age and death. Chapter 8, pertaining to unemployment benefits, is not yet in force. Physical, mental and occupational rehabilitation expenses are covered by invalidity benefits. Social Security services include 500 baht (US\$12) a month cost-of living for registered persons with disabilities as a subsistence allowance
Labour Protection Act 1998	This act covers all aspects of labour protection including employment issues, rules on basic pay, holiday pay and overtime, remuneration including minimum wages, welfare, occupational safety and health, suspension from work, severance pay. The Employees Welfare Fund is also established, which assists families of deceased workers, employees who resign or other cases. The Fund will be used in companies with more than 10 employees where no Provident Fund has been established. There are no provisions relating specifically to persons with disabilities in the Labour Protection Act.
Provident Fund Act 1987	This voluntary fund was established to provide legal and regulatory framework for employer-sponsored retirement savings plans for the employees of large enterprises of the private sector in the years preceding the establishment of the Social Security Act. Employees contribute between 3 and 15 per cent of wages and employers between equal or higher contributions up to a maximum of 15 per cent. There are no disability-specific guidelines in the Provident Fund Act.
Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion Act, February 2000	Establishes a Board of SMSE development under of the Office of SMSE that oversees a fund for SMSE development and establishes a plan for SMSE development.

### *Laws Discriminating Against People with Disabilities*

In Thailand there are nearly 40 laws that prevent people with disabilities from applying for jobs as teachers, police, prosecutors, judges, and staff of electricity, water and railway and communications authorities (Bangkok Post, 2002). The Ministry of Justice disqualified two lawyers who are physically disabled due to polio, citing Article 26 (10) of the Justice Personnel law which prohibits persons deemed incompetent or with physical or mental disabilities from taking the exam to become judicial officials. Although Article 30 of the Constitution of Thailand prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities on the basis of their physical condition, nearly forty laws still block people with disabilities from applying for jobs as teachers, police, prosecutors, judges, and staff of electricity, water and railway and communications authorities. The Ministry of Justice case went to the Constitutional Court at the end of April 2002 and was upheld. (Bangkok Post, 2002). The U.S. embassy in Bangkok is funding an NGO project to investigate discriminatory laws more fully.

### 3.3 Disability policies and regulations

#### *National Plan*

The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) is based on the concept of sufficiency economy that stresses the “middle path” and a balanced strategy to “reduce the vulnerability of the nation to shocks and excesses that may arise given globalization.” It looks at medium term sustainable national development that is “people-centered,” balanced and puts a priority on good governance. It defines the goal of a “strong and balanced society” as one based on quality, knowledge and learning, and unity and caring.

The major objectives, each with targets, are to:

1. Promote economic stability and sustainability, with targets related to GDP growth, job creation (230,000 jobs per year) and other economic indicators.
2. Establish a strong national development foundation (including human resource development, education and health systems reforms, and setting up social protection systems, etc.), with targets related to quality of life.
3. Establish good governance at all levels of Thai society.
4. Reduce poverty and empower the Thai people, with a target to reduce absolute poverty to less than 12 per cent of the total population by 2006.

#### *National Plan for People with Disabilities*

The *Draft Plan of Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities (2002-2006)* (unapproved translation) is consistent with the Ninth Plan and is awaiting Cabinet approval. The plan articulates how to improve the quality of life for disabled people with specific strategies and targets related to the medical, educational, employment and social aspects of life as well as for improving systems and management.

The following overall goals are of most significance to employment and education for persons with disabilities:

- Persons with disabilities should be rehabilitated and developed in health, educational, vocational and social aspects up to their full potential in accordance with their needs.
- Government agencies and NGOs for people with disabilities should operate their work efficiently by networking through organizations of disabled persons.
- Increase the percentage of people with disabilities who have access to an education by 5 per cent per year.
- Increase the percentage of people with disabilities who are employed by 5 per cent per year.

Part Four of the plan includes strategies to improve quality of life of persons with disabilities by “enhancing their potential to be self-reliant, to live happily in society, and to participate in country development”. Strategies are included in each of the following areas: promotion of awareness and constructive attitudes; rights and duties; development of persons with disabilities; research and development; accessibility of information, communication, technology, services and environment; strengthening organizations of persons with disabilities; full participation of persons with disabilities, their families and communities and

integrated management. Strategies on translating the plan into action, including collaborative mechanisms, budgeting support, monitoring and evaluation and responsible agencies, are outlined in Part Five.

Specific guidelines and measures include the aim to eradicate illiteracy among persons with disabilities and to develop life-long learning education programs. This will include:

1. Encouraging development of education programmes for persons with disabilities of all types and levels of disability, in special and integrated schools, in formal and non-formal educational programmes, in the public and private sector, on a broad base, and up to standard and continual basis. This is conducted by developing appropriate individualized educational programmes that reflect individual needs and can foster self-reliance.
2. Providing educational counseling services that are appropriate to individual lifestyles to handicapped students and their parents.
3. Adjust curricula and learning processes to be flexible and appropriate to each type and each level of disability.
4. Support initial rehabilitative services together with educational facilities and assistances to People with Disabilities and their families in an efficient, broad-based and continual basis.
5. Subsidize educational programmes in private schools for persons with disabilities to be equal to those of public schools.
6. Create educational networks and the transfer system in various types among various levels of educational institutions in the public and private sectors so that persons with disabilities can attain highest level of education in accordance with their potentials.
7. Establish an educational fund for persons with disabilities.
8. Improve quality of teachers and increase qualified teachers and educational personnel for persons with disabilities, as well as provide incentives for them to work for persons with disabilities.

Guides and measures related to vocational training are as follows:

1. Adjust basic educational curricula, both in formal and non-formal educational programmes, provide skills and expertise in selected occupations, and give emphasis on vocational background for persons with disabilities to understand and decide their suitable occupation.
2. Develop vocational assessment for persons with disabilities and prepare them for appropriate employment for each type of disability.
3. Upgrade capacity of vocational teachers and personnel, as well as carry out measures to enhance their career path.
4. Develop vocational curricula and learning process in accordance with each type of disability, place emphasis on vocational skills, integrity, ethics and appropriate lifestyles, and allow transferring of educational credits among institutions at all levels.
5. Provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to gain access to all public vocational training centres, including those of the private sector, and encourage business firms to provide on-the-job training for persons with disabilities especially those of intellectual, mental, and behavioural disabilities.
6. Establish an employment and placement system with vocational capability assessment services, job placement services, the monitoring and evaluation that cover all categories of persons with disabilities, in conjunction with promoting employment opportunities for

persons with disabilities by using public and private networks, as well as the funding for NGOs.

7. Support facility provision including equipment, tools, media, and technology that are necessary for job training and working and appropriate to individual's needs.
8. Increase benefits to private firms that employ persons with disabilities and encourage provision of appropriate working environment for persons with disabilities including accommodations near the workplace.
9. Set a quota of government and state enterprise employment to be reserved for persons with disabilities to be at least equal to those of private firms.
10. Provide vocational training, including knowledge about skill development, product development, market promotion, business management, and sources of funds to persons with disabilities who want to be self-employed with participation of their families, communities and the society.
11. Encourage the formation of self-employment between persons with disabilities and with community groups.
12. Provide protective services for persons with disabilities to obtain fair welfare, income, and safety in work.
13. Exempt from taxes and duties when importing goods and equipment used by persons with disabilities for earning their living coupled with an adjustment of accounting to modernize the tax-exempt method.
14. Prescribe social measures to penalize private firms, government agencies, and state enterprises that do not employ persons with disabilities, as well as provide monitoring and evaluation measures for this course.
15. Enact a "Disability Employment Institute for Persons with Disabilities Act" within the year 2003.

Various agencies and organizations, who participated in formulation of these action plans included the following: disabled persons organizations; community organizations; local administrative organization; mass media; disability related organizations; other institutions and relevant networks and political parties.

*Plan for Employment Promotion and Development for People with Disabilities and Identification of 2002 as the Year of Employment Promotion for People with Disabilities*

The Subcommittee on Employment Promotion for People with Disabilities (see section 3.5), which consists of agencies such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, and organization of people with disabilities, developed a Plan for Employment Promotion and Development for People with Disabilities (2002-2006). Input from this plan contributed to the overall Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities (2002-2006). Six working groups, identified in 3.5, will develop action plans and measures related to implementing the plan. These working groups include various ministries and private sector representatives including organizations of and for disabled persons, employers, the media and others.

On 9 October 2001, the Cabinet approved 2002 as the year to promote employment promotion of people with disabilities. Through this initiative, many government agencies and the private sector are cooperating to expand vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Its implementation guidelines for the year include:

1. Encourage communities, disabled persons organization networks and NGOs at the provincial level to provide the vocational training for persons with disabilities with the aims of providing vocational rehabilitation for rural persons with disabilities to have work and secure income. It should be systematically coordinated and covered every province.
2. Conduct a campaign to encourage the Government to be a source of employment for persons with disabilities.
3. Establish a centre for rehabilitation to provide the preparatory courses to be taught before vocational training and a centre for rehabilitative evaluation to assess working capacity.
4. Conduct a campaign for private firms to hire more persons with disabilities and provide them with secure work.
5. Set a database on demand for disability labour and number of persons with disabilities who want to work in order to match the demand and supply properly and efficiently.
6. Conduct research about the self-employment for persons with disabilities, encourage people to be self-employed and form occupational groups.
7. Organize vocational contests for persons with disabilities in order to stimulate the awareness of public about the potential of those people, provide opportunities for them to increase participate in vocational activities and select some of them to compete in the International Abilympics.
8. Utilize mass media to disseminate information about the year of employment promotion for People with Disabilities 2002 for creating a proper attitude towards persons with disabilities, families, communities and the society. All persons with disabilities should have a chance to have vocational rehabilitation.

### *Government Policies and Regulations*

Table 3.2 describes some of the regulations and policies currently in place to implement the Targets for Action related to the Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, the Draft Plan of Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities (2002-2006) and the legislation in noted in Section 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Regulations and Policies related to implementing legislation**

Regulation or statement	Relation to Law	Content
Ministerial Regulation No. 1 B.E. 2537 (1994) on the Employment of Disabled Persons and the Contribution to the Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons	Section 17 of the Rehabilitation Persons Act stipulated private companies are to hire disabled persons.	Purpose is to establish a ratio of disabled employees to be hired by private companies and the rate of payment which must be paid by employers or owners of the companies to the Rehabilitation Fund for Disabled Persons (See note)
Ministerial Regulation No. 2 B.E. 2537 (1994) on the Designation of Type and Criteria of Disabled Persons	Section 4 of the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act stipulated that persons with disabilities means a person with physical, intellectual or mental abnormality or malfunctioning.	To designate type and criteria of persons with disabilities. The types are classified as those with impairments in terms of : hearing or communication, physical or locomotion, mentality or behaviour, intellectual or learning ability. Criteria are defined.
Ministerial Regulation No. 3 B.E. 2537 (1994) on Provision of Medical Rehabilitation Service and Expenses for Nursing Care and Equipment	Section 15 of the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act stipulates that registered under Section 14 may receive medical care.	To establish medical rehabilitation service and expenses for nursing care and equipment. The purpose is to readjust physical, intellectual or emotional condition or improve existing condition of disabled persons.
Ministerial Regulations on Accessibility for People with Disabilities, December 1999	Related to Section 17 of the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act given the minister the right to prescribe the characteristics of buildings, etc.	Includes provisions of welfare protection, social service including improving living conditions, equality and eradicating any barriers which deprive disabled persons from access to the facilities in building, sites, vehicles and public services.

Cabinet Resolution 12 July 1994 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for People with Disabilities	Relates to Section 15 (2) of the RDP Act which makes provisions for mainstreaming	This Cabinet resolution declared that all vocational training institutions must accept students with disabilities (ESCAP, 1999, p. 292).
Cabinet Resolution 8 April 1997  Employment opportunities for People with Disabilities in State and Parastatal	Section 17 of RDP Act which only specified “employers” and not the state	Encourages employment opportunities for People with Disabilities in State and Parastatal Organizations but does not include a quota.
Cabinet Resolution 10 March 1998  Accessibility Resolution	Section 17 of the RDP Act and the prior Ministerial regulation	A 1998 cabinet resolution directed state agencies to modify facilities for disabled access, but most government agencies have not done so. The 1999 regulation that makes compliance mandatory has not been enforced.
Cabinet Resolution 10 November 1998  Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities	Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act	To further strengthen the Rehabilitation Act, including provisions on the right to receive vocational rehabilitation, vocational training and employment services.

Note: The quota scheme requires that employers with more than 200 employees must hire at least one disabled person, and for employers with more than 200 employees, they must hire one additional disabled person for every 100 additional employees. The Government has a responsibility to define the kind of work disabled persons can do and for sending candidates for jobs opening filed by companies covered by the act. If companies fail to hire suitable candidates or otherwise prefer not to do so, they must make a financial allocation to the Rehabilitation Fund based on half the minimum wage. However, there are no provisions for punishment if companies both fail to hire and elect not to pay the prescribed fine.

There are no regulations on staff training for vocational rehabilitation

### 3.4 Evaluation and review of policies

Thailand has several levels of evaluating policy. For example, with regard to the quota system, it keeps regular data to evaluate its impact with regard to number of job orders, people placed, levies collected, etc. (see table 5.1). Similarly, data is kept with regard to use of the Rehabilitation Fund, outcomes of those who participate in training programs, etc. Section Five also gives the data regarding the Rehabilitation Fund (see section 5.3).

With regard to the *Draft Plan of Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities* some significant and measure targets related to increases in the numbers of disabled persons who access training and education (5 per cent each) have been noted. The plan includes a specific process for evaluation that involves developing a database of development indicators for people with disabilities linked to other agencies, encourage other agencies participating in the plan to set up indicators, and evaluation of the plan at the midpoint and endpoint. The Plan calls for using and outside evaluator. The overall responsible Ministry is Labour and Social Welfare but other Ministries will be involved.

The Draft Plan also included an assessment or evaluation of the plan for 1997-2001. However specific gender or Ministry targets for joint action by all Ministries were not established. The new plans will “encourage” such efforts.

People with disabilities have been involved in policy development and implementation levels, but not in the evaluation process. Since the system described in the new plan calls for those involved in planning and development to also be involved in the evaluation process, this situation should change in the future.

### **3.5 Institutional structures**

Country welfare services for persons with disabilities began in 1941 with a residential home for persons with disabilities in Samut Prakarn. People with extensive disabilities who were released from hospitals resided here for longer-term care to meet basic needs for food, clothing, medical care and accommodation. In 1968, under the supervision of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the first government-sponsored vocational rehabilitation centre for persons with disabilities was set up in Samut Prakarn. The centre provided vocational training in various fields. Pak Kred sheltered workshop was set up soon thereafter. (ESCAP, 1999, p. 291) Redemptorist Vocational Centre in Pattaya has been providing training opportunities for persons with disabilities since 1984.

#### *Overview*

The Department of Public Welfare, established in 1940 is in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has primary responsibility for implementing national social welfare policies and for providing for people in need. The Department works in partnership with the private sector (civil society), modifying regulations to comply with people's rights as outlined in the 1997 Constitution. It operates 75 provincial welfare offices, 169 district welfare offices, and various facilities for specific groups, including homes, shelters, training institutes and others. One of its major activities outlined in its last Annual Report (2000), was "providing vocational training and upgrading quality of life of disadvantaged young women and people with disabilities as well as promoting income generation."

It operates provincial and district public welfare offices in order to reach out to those in need throughout the country. The Social Security Division, Welfare Assistance Divisions and most importantly, the Office of the Committee on Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons are within its Central Administration.

As of October 2002, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is renamed the Ministry of Labour. Some departments from the former Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, including the Department of Public Welfare responsible for many issues pertaining to disability and employment, were moved to the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

#### *Office of the Committee for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (OCRDP)*

As noted in Section 3.2, the Office was established under the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act with authority to assist, develop and rehabilitation persons with disabilities. Its specific roles and powers have already been specified. Its main objective of OCRDP is to enable persons with disabilities to have access to four areas of rehabilitation: medical rehabilitation, educational rehabilitation, social rehabilitation and vocational rehabilitation. It provides social welfare as well as vocational training and employment services and registers, through its provincial offices, people with disabilities who need a variety of services.

The Committee, formerly chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, includes the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, Defense, Ministry of Universities, Department of the Budget, Department of Medical Services, Department of Public Welfare, Department of General Education, and an additional six members, two of whom must be

people with disabilities, participate. The Employers Confederation of Thailand is a member as well.

The OCRDP has the following subdivisions:

- Rehabilitation Committee Secretariat
- Registration of Disabled Persons
- Welfare of Disabled Persons
- Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons
- Legal Affairs
- Project and Planning
- General Administration

Six subcommittees inform the Committee and develop specific plans and activities to implement the policies and strategic plan developed by the committee.

**Table 3.3: Subcommittees of the Office of the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons**

<b>Name of Sub-Committee</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Current Activities</b>
Vocational Training, Development, Rehabilitation	Director General of Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour	Facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in mainstream training programs, ensure proper equipment and assistive devices and training techniques. On the central and regional levels, have encouraged people with disabilities to form occupation self-help groups and training. Such groups have been organized in 30 provinces for 600 people with disabilities.
Employment Service Systems for People with Disabilities	Director of Employment Services Department	Review and select firms that are models for hiring people with disabilities and identify organizations that provide employment support services. Manage an awards ceremony each year as part of the Internal Day for People with Disabilities where the Prime Minister participates.
Promotion of People with Disabilities in Self-employment	Director General of Department of Public Welfare	Provide advisory services, small business management information, marketing, product development and other assistance to those borrowing money from the Rehabilitation Fund. Establish a data centre for self-employment promotion and service access.
Research, Medical and Technological Development for People with Disabilities	Director General of Department of Public Welfare	Set up a data base and develop technology to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities. Conduct research on job safety for people with disabilities in both private firms and self-employment.
Legal Issues on Employment	Director General of Department of Public Welfare	Identify laws that present legal obstacles to the inclusion of people in certain types of jobs. Identify measures and incentives to encourage employers to hire more people with disabilities.
Public Relations	Permanent Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare	Use the mass media to promote the Year of Employment Promotion; organize awareness activities, programs, articles, symbols, slogans and sports events on TV.

Additionally, there are 18 organizations under its supervision, including specific vocational rehabilitation centers. These centers and other services offered by the DSW and the OCRDP are described elsewhere.

#### *Provincial and District Committees*

In 1999 the OCRDP set up Provincial Committees for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in every province. These committees are required to have four disabled persons as members to promote disability issues related to achieving national, regional and international objectives.

**Table 3.4: Summary of other Government Ministries and Departments Concerned with People with Disabilities**

<b>Ministry or Department</b>	<b>Roles and Activities</b>
<b>Ministry of Labour</b>	See departments listed below and refer to Department of Public Welfare and the Office of the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Table 3.3 above.
Department of Skills Development	It is charged not only with developing the labour force through its skill development institutes but accelerating manpower planning to correspond to the Master Plan of Industrial restructuring, developing skill development information systems, proving incentives and improving legal measure to encourage the private sector to engage in skill development and increasing cooperation in skill development at national and international levels.
Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (DLPW)	DLPW is mandated to cover safety, health and welfare of workers includes 17 divisions dealing with OSH related issues, the National Institute for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (NICE) and its 17 regional centres, and 75 provincial labour protection and welfare offices and 19 offices in Bangkok. The Workmen's Compensation Fund, managed by the Social Security Office (SSO) mentioned in Section 3.3, seeks to compensate employees who are injured, sick or disabled as a result of work-related activities.
Social Security Office	Manages the Workers Compensation Fund which seeks to compensate employees who are injured, sick or disabled as a result of work related activities. Includes Industrial Rehabilitation Centre Division that runs rehabilitation centres.
<b>Ministry of Social Development and Human Security</b>	Includes Department of Public Welfare responsible for registering people with disabilities as well as certain services outlined above.
<b>Ministry of Education</b>	See Departments listed below.
Education for the Disabled Division	This division covers programs for children with disabilities in special and inclusive schools.
Department of Vocational Education	Provides formal vocational and technical education at secondary and post-secondary levels.
Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE)	DNFE programs include child-development programs for pre-school children as well as programs on literacy, functional literacy. Promotion of Thai language usage and hills areas education. DNFE also provides non-formal vocational training courses and other quality of life improving courses.
<b>Ministry of Finance, Customs Department</b>	Provides exemption from customs duty of imported assistive devices and other imported item used by people with disabilities or for their rehabilitation
<b>Ministry of Public Health</b>	Responsible for medical care and physical rehabilitation
Department of Mental Health	Operates Bureau of Mental Health, Rajanakou Mental Retardation Hospital, Institute of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, and 13 psychiatric hospitals.

### 3.6 Other implementing organizations

#### NGOs

The Government works actively with NGOs and national and international organizations in implementing policies and providing services. NGOs of and for disabled persons serve on the Committee and subcommittees to coordinate services and establish policy. Additionally, the Government provides funds to NGOs for the delivery of services. The Government continues to take a proactive approach in expanding and improving its services by working with NGOs. However, specific information is lacking about the number of NGOs that are providing training and employment services to people with disabilities.

A directory of NGOs specifies that 62 work to provide services for people with disabilities. In key informant interviews with NGO operators and government officials, only 10-12 organizations were noted to provide employment and training services and many of these are in Bangkok and the immediate area.

#### *Other Government Agencies*

The ORCDP and DPW fund a variety of projects with government agencies and NGOs that relate to people with disabilities as well. Table 3.5 illustrates the amount of funding for such projects. The amount that actually goes to training and employment services is not known.

**Table 3.5 Expenditure for Project Grants (Government and NGOs)**

Year	NGOs (deal with People with Disabilities)		Organization Grantees				Total	
			Private		Public			
	#	Baht	#	Baht	#	Baht	#	Baht
1995	2	202,000	-	-	-	-	2	202,000
1997	16	636,700	-	-	5	1,363,300	21	2,000,000
1998	14	1,975,850	5	172,500	10	663,100	29	2,811,450
1999	22	3,666,690	14	1,002,560	15	1,112,100	51	5,781,350
2000	51	6,423,650	6	638,400	9	997,500	66	8,059,550

### *International Organizations*

The Government collaborates and works cooperatively with international organizations and other governments. For example, in 2001, Thailand applied for and was awarded the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Disability Award from making noteworthy progress toward the goal of full participation of citizens with disabilities as encouraged by the United National World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. The DSW works with the International Labour Office and UNESCAP in developing policies and implementing programs. The Department and the FAO set up a demonstration program in one province for the purpose of training people with disabilities in mushroom cultivation. Of most significance however it the cooperation of the Thai Government with the Government of Japan to establish the Asia Pacific Center for Persons with Disabilities, which will be an information, research and technology development center for people in Asia and Pacific Region.

There is not cooperation between the Government and trade unions or workers' organizations in policy and plans for people with disabilities. However, the Employers Confederation of Thailand participates on the subcommittee Employment Service Systems for People with Disabilities and is working collaboratively to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities. See section six for more information.

## Part Four: Education, Vocational Training, Self-employment and Employment Services for People with Disabilities

### 4.1 Education system

Education reform is a significant piece of the national agenda as it is the foundation to restructuring the economy and society and is essential to the preparation of individuals to become productive members of a knowledge-based society. Education spending in Thailand is equivalent to 22 per cent of the national budget in 2002 or 4.0 per cent of GDP.<sup>5</sup> The 1997 constitution stipulates that all Thai citizens will have an equal right to obtain 12 years of basic, quality education free of charge (Ministry of Education, 2001). In addition, the 1999 National Education Act now provides the Government the impetus to strengthen its action in every aspect to be in accord with the objectives of the constitution. Educational provision will be based on three principles: (1) lifelong education for all, (2) participation by all segments of society; and (3) continuous development of bodies of knowledge and the learning process. As a fundamental right, The National Education Act states that 12 years of basic education will be provided to all and “especially to persons with special educational needs.” Compulsory education covers the first 9 years of schooling and it is free of charge. The Ministry of Education provides special assistance to needy families and has projects for pre-elementary and college students; educational loans; and school lunch and milk programs.

Primary education begins at about age six and lasts for six years/grades. Lower secondary education goes from age 12 to 15 approximately and grades seven to nine. Upper secondary begins at grade 10 and ends at grade 11, or from ages 15 to 18. Higher education starts at age 18 and can go to age 24 or more. Higher education can include academic or vocational training tracts that may have begun in upper secondary school. Special vocational education is part of the vocational program for special education students.

**Table 4.1: Student enrollment in formal education**

Level	1999	2002
Pre-primary	2 779.7	2 857.0
Primary	5 953.0	6 056.0
Secondary	4 097.8	4 144.0
Lower Secondary	2 372.4	2 436.0
Upper Secondary	1 725.4	1 708.0
General	1 037.0	1 118.0
Vocational	668.4	590.0
Higher	1 006.5	1 118.8
Total	13 837.0	14 175.8

Source: Education in Thailand 2001/2002 p. 105

Note: 2002 is projected from 1999 numbers. Higher education does not include students from open universities.

<sup>5</sup> Education in Thailand 2001/2002 p. 106

**Table 4.2: Educational Level by gender(1998)**

Educational Level	1998	
	Female	Male
Pre-elementary	48.9	51
Elementary	48.5	52
Lower secondary	50.6	49
Upper secondary	56.5	44

Source: Busakorn (2002), p. 24

**Table 4.3: Retention rates**

Educational Level	1999	2002
Primary	83.2	87.5
Lower Secondary	88.2	92.3
Upper Secondary	75.4	80.8
General	84.3	87.0
Vocational	65.6	69.6

Source: Education in Thailand 2001/2002 p. 106.

## **4.2 Educational opportunities for people with disabilities**

As part of its awareness and planning efforts, the Royal Thai Government proclaimed 1999 as the “Year of Education for Persons with Disabilities.” The National Education Act of the same year included provisions protecting the rights of people with disabilities to special education. The Ministry of Education and its Special Education Division are assigned the growing task of education for persons with disabilities.

Special education is organized into both special and inclusive schools. Two types of curricular are used. Special curricula have been developed and are used at the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind. Regular curriculums are used in inclusive schools which may be adjusted to meet the needs of students. Welfare education is provided to socially and culturally disadvantaged students and vocational training relevant to where they live.

According to the Ministry of Education report 2001/2002, the following efforts are also under way:

- Establishing an information center for planning the provision of services for the disabled. Preparation has also been made to establish a centre for distribution of equipment and media for special education.
- Establishing 13 regional centres and 63 provincial centres for special education
- Providing support for the Education Centres for the Disabled in cooperation with the Parents Network as well as providing readiness preparation for inclusive schooling for children at the Centres and at home.

Table 4.4 shows the enrollment rate of students with disabilities throughout the system.

**Table 4.4: Enrollment rates of children under the Offices of National Primary Education Commission, Ministry of Education (2002)**

Education Level	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Intellectual Impairment	Physical and Health Impairment	Learning Disability	Speech and Language Disorder	Children with Autism	Behavioural Disorder	Multiple Disorder	Total
Before School	667	408	1870	1794	2894	2067	454	1162	1034	12350
Primary School	7046	2918	15804	7946	37947	5099	1974	4347	5344	88425
High School	1011	316	891	1002	3011	453	59	560	207	7510
Total	8724	3642	18565	10742	43852	7619	2487	6069	6585	108285

Special education is provided for children with all types of disabilities: hearing impairment, mental retardation, visual impairments, physical impairments and health impairments. Children with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders are also included. Special schools in Thailand are often boarding schools and some hospitals include instruction for children with disabilities in chronic conditions (ESCAP, 1999, p. 293). Table 4.5 shows a list of the quantity of schools and children in the special education system.

**Table 4.5: Numbers of schools and vocational training centers for students with disabilities (1999)**

Organization	Number of schools/centres	Number of students with disabilities
<b>Department of General Education</b>		
Special Schools	41	16 387
Social Welfare Schools: Integrated Education	18	685
Secondary Schools: Integrated Education	807	3 611
Regional Special Education Centres	5	761
Special Education; Hospital Bound Students and children with intellectual disabilities	11	No number listed
<b>Office of National Primary Education Commission</b>		
Elementary Schools: Integrated Education	4221	69 644
<b>Rajabhat Institutes Council</b>		
Special Education Centres	6	475
<b>Office of the Private Education Commission</b>		
Special Schools	10	3568
Regular Schools: Integrated Education	216	No number listed
Non-Formal Education	2	No number listed
<b>Department of Vocational Education</b>		
Vocational College: Integrated Education (total of the following)		1854
Certificate Program		1 150
Higher Certificate Program		477
Short courses		277
<b>Rajamangala Institute of Technology</b>		275
<b>Department of Non-Formal Education</b>		
Non-Formal Education Centres	76	15 370
<b>Department of Physical Education</b>		
College of Physical Education		10
<b>Fine Arts Department</b>		
College of Dramatic Arts		8
<b>Office of Education in Bangkok</b>		
Elementary Education Integrated		1 529
<b>Home for Children with Disabilities: Department of Public Welfare</b>		
Home for Children with Disabilities: Special Education and Rehabilitation Centres		380
<b>Municipal Education Office (Ministry of Interior)</b>		
Regular Schools: Integrated Education		827
<b>Total</b>		117 238

Source: Educational Development Plan for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Education 2000-2006

The Ministry of Education, after the declaration of 1999 as the “Year of Education for People with Disabilities” increased spending by 300 million baht (US\$ 7.5 million), found that the total number of students with disabilities countrywide increased about 135 per cent to 110,327 from 46, 888 the previous year (Bangkok Post, 2001). See table 4.6, below, which shows these figures.

The chart below shows the levels of students with disability by education level:

**Table 4.6: Children with disabilities in the education system 1999**

Educational level	School Age Population of children with disabilities	Number of actual students with disabilities	Percent
Pre-primary	165 880	6 094	3.67
Primary	337 688	38 274	11.33
Secondary	173 888	1 763	1.01
Pre-university	178 776	758	0.42
Total	856 232	46 888	5.48

Source: Bureau of Management Survey 1999, cited in Bangkok Post 2001

### *Vocational Education*

Vocational education begins at the primary level to start the career preparation process. Work-oriented and vocational education is offered as electives, compulsory and free electives courses in both lower and upper secondary schools. Students may end up in the vocational stream in upper secondary school which leads to a certificate of vocational education. At the post-secondary level they can receive a diploma or the higher certificate of vocational education. At the university level, degrees are offered.

Other special vocational education opportunities include sports schools (10) which offer special training for students who have a particular sports ability. Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts Colleges offer secondary education courses that result in two types of certificates, each requiring three years of study.

### *Higher Education*

In 1998, Ratchasuda College of Mahidol University was set up. The College offers Certificates, Bachelors and Masters degree programs in disability related issues and has a special program for the deaf. To date it has graduated 18 masters students, some with degree in rehabilitation counseling (one course is offered in vocational rehabilitation, counseling and job placement) and others in access technology. Of those 18, 4 were wheelchair users, one had low vision, one was hearing impaired and two were blind. Currently 58 deaf and hearing-impaired undergraduates are enrolled with majors declared in one of seven subject areas. Many deaf students have already received certificates (22 of the 38 certificate level graduates). The College also trains sign language instructors.

## **4.3 Mainstream vocational training system**

Thailand recognizes the importance of training and vocational education. The responsibilities are spread over several ministries and there is an impressive network of training institutions with the highest levels of Government involved in the planning and implementation of the

system. However, it is not always effectively coordinated and links between training and employment realities can be weak.<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the principle institutional structure for providing vocational training in Thailand, has signed cooperative agreements with eight other ministries, the Tourism Authority and private sector organizations to rectify this situation.

Of most significance to this paper are the mainstream vocational training programs operated by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) through the following institutional vehicles:

- The Department of Technical Vocational Education (Ministry of Education)
- Department of Non-Formal Education (Ministry of Education)
- The Department of Skill Development (MOSLW)
- The Department of Public Welfare (MOLSW)

Additional training is provided through:

- Workplace training
- Private Institutes

*The Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE) and Department of Non-Formal Education (Ministry of Education)*

The department has a network of institutions throughout the country. It offers certificates in Vocational Education, Diplomas in Technical Education, Diplomas in Vocational Education and a Higher Diploma in Technical Education. Through its Dual Vocational Training Project (donor funded) it is introducing apprenticeship training along with classroom-based approaches. Follow-up tracer summaries are carried out on all students six months after training completion.

Table 4.7 depicts the course participation of women and men in technical and vocational courses offered by the DTVE.

**Table 4.7: Participation in courses in technical and vocational education in 1997**

Training Area	Females (Percent)	Males (Percent)	Total
Industrial Mechanics	4.2	95.8	288,716
Arts and Crafts	49.1	50.9	11 543
Home Economics	96.2	3.8	26 972
Commerce	89.9	10.1	171 192
Agriculture	28.5	71.5	32 896
Total	39.0	61.0	531 319

Source: Department of Vocational Education, Ministry of Education

These tables illustrate traditional gender lines for participation with men having much higher rates of enrollment in industrial mechanics and agriculture and women tending to take courses in home economics and commerce.

The tracer study of graduates from academic year 1995 illustrates the employment status of graduates from the formal program and found that many graduates tended to go on for further

<sup>6</sup> ILO, Decent Work, 2000

study. Of 68,626 graduates (all levels) who responded to the survey (total graduates that year were 92,398), 67 per cent went on for further study, 28 per cent were employed and 4 per cent were unemployed. Less than 3 per cent were self-employed.

The Department of Non-Formal offers a variety of adult training programs at the community level. One of its major programs is adult equivalency general education programme at the primary, lower and upper secondary levels. In 1998 approximately 60,000 people participated.

Some of the problems in the technical and vocational education delivery system include limited vocational guidance, counseling and job placement services, lack of coordination with other systems and providers, a high rejection rate (50 percent) of applicants, and low academic and skill levels of entrants to the system.<sup>7</sup>

### *Department of Skills Development*

The main focus of training for the DSD is to prepare them for or enhance their participation in the labour force. Established in 1993 the DSD operates a national network of vocational training institutions that includes 43 skill development agencies. These include:

- One Central Institute for Skill Development
- 11 Regional Institutes for Skill Development
- 31 Provincial Centers for Skill Development.

DSD plans to establish a Provincial Center in every province. It targets economically disadvantaged groups, particularly adults and young adults that are out of the formal school system, school drop-outs, low paid workers and other low income groups. Its vocational training services are divided into three categories as noted in table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Types of training offered by Department of Skill Development**

<b>Training Program</b>	<b>Description</b>
Pre-Employment	Provide centre based training in for new entrants (age 15-30) to the labour market in specific skill areas that results in a Certificate of Skill Development. Practical training lasts from 2-10 months followed up by enterprise based training for 1 to 4 months depending on the course. Also provide pre-employment training in communities to targeted groups such as laid-off workers, prisons, youth, etc. that are 2-4 months long to provide basic skills and proficiency to acquire new or supplementary occupations.
Skill-Upgrading	Short term training courses in various skill areas for those already in the labour force to include employment and laid-off workers aged 15 or over. Courses range from 18 to 60 hours for those who already have basic skills in vocational area.
Self-employment	Provide business development skills for those who already possess the necessary basic technical skills that will form the foundation of the business. Teach small business management, business ethics, law, accounting, budgeting and market planning. Training last from 2 weeks to 60 hours.

Department of Skill Development also:

- Encourages enterprises to engage in training through the provisions of tax incentives, financial incentive to establish skill testing and low interest loans to establish or expand training programs in fields that are in demand.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> ILO, 2000

<sup>8</sup> I7.LO, 2002, page 34.

- Administers the Skill Development Fund and provides loans to eligible applicants
- Defines skill standards through the tripartite (government, employers and trade unions) Vocational Training Promotion Committee. (Thailand uses a three grading system with Grade 1 the lowest and Grade 3 the highest)
- Provides skill standards testing
- Encourages cooperation between training institutes and private enterprise to facilitate on the job training and internships for hand on experience
- Through the Institute for Training Personnel Development and Skill Development provides training to upgrade trainers, especially with regard to use of new process, equipment and technology.
- Works with other government agencies and the private sector to build the capacity of trainers and personnel.

In the year 2000, 43,514 individuals received pre-employment services; 112,357 received skill upgrades, and 29, 196 underwent skill testing. (Source: Department of Skill Development as reported in ILO, 2002). While statistics show that the DSD provides vocational training to increasing numbers of women and men over the past several years, the lower participation rates of women (about 25 per cent of total trainees in 2000), especially in pre-employment training, is particularly concerning. This type of training is focused on developing the capacity of new labour market entrants. (In skills upgrades, women composed about 40 per cent of the total numbers trained.)<sup>9</sup> Table 4.9 illustrates the categories of courses, enrollment and graduates for males and females.

**Table 4.9: Output of Skill Development Training Courses, Fiscal Year 1999**

Training Course	Enrolment		Graduate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total for all	139 448	92 493	122 636	85 853
<b>Pre-Employment Inside Training</b>				
1. Machine Work Shop	738	13	392	5
2. Welding and Sheet Metal	1768	6	1 359	12
3. Automotive	8 403	26	5 350	25
4. Construction	1 310	14	948	23
5. Drawing	158	30	165	29
6. Electrical	3 337	28	2 050	39
7. Electronic	2 047	1 286	1 207	975
8. Industrial Arts	129	2 239	130	1 815
9. Business and Service	6	65	10	66
<b>Pre-Employment Outside Training</b>				
1. Machine Work Shop	-	-	9	-
2. Welding and Sheet Metal	4 274	2	4 642	9
3. Automotive	7 367	25	7 022	22
4. Construction	14 172	745	13 543	12 882
5. Drawing	62	25	83	25
6. Electrical	8 168	166	8 102	229
7. Electronic	519	58	496	48
8. Industrial Arts	815	13 452	772	13 759
9. Business and Service	931	1 090	814	989
<b>Upgrade Training Courses</b>				
1. Machine Work Shop	1 351	37	1 116	34
2. Welding and Sheet Metal	6 312	30	5 939	16
3. Automotive	13 137	561	10 876	427
4. Construction	8 194	738	7 493	621
5. Drawing	1 496	297	1 257	210
6. Electrical	7 901	218	6 691	197
7. Electronic	24 176	29 800	20 906	26 361
8. Industrial Arts	4 629	21 593	4 318	20 310
9. Business and Service	18 048	19 949	17 607	18 946

<sup>9</sup> ILO, 2002

Source: Adapted from the Department of Skill Development, *Skill Development Statistic, Fiscal Year 1999*, pages 39-55. (Note: No explanation was given for the missing data denoted by “-” in the chart)

Finally, the most recent data demonstrates the participation rates by gender, disability and child status (see table 4.10).

**Table 4.10: Number of vocational trainees in DSD standard vocational training programmes during October 1999-August 2000**

Program	All	%	Male	%	Female	%	Disabled	%	Children	%
Pre-Employment	43 514	100	32581	75	10933	25	125	0.029	896	0.02
Skill Upgrading	112 357	100	58 421	52	53 936	48	137	0.12	-	-
Standards Testing	29 196	100	25 144	86	4 052	14	-	-	-	-
Total	185 067	100	116 146	63	68 921	37	262	0.001	896	0.005

Source: Department of Skill Development in ILO, 2002, page 45 (Note: No explanation was given for the missing data denoted by “-” in the chart)

### *Department of Public Welfare*

The main focus of training for the DPW is to increase the vocational skill development and income generation as part of its social welfare and development program. The Department of Public Welfare delivers training through:

- One vocational training center for children
- Seven regional welfare and vocational training centers for women
- Eight vocational training centers for people with disabilities (described in the following section)
- Hill tribe welfare and development centers
- Mobile units that provide community based training.

Center based training courses include sewing, industrial sewing, barbering, hairdressing, beauty salon, electronics and plumbing. More recently courses such as computer, hotel services, office administration and child and elderly care have been added. Center based courses tend to last for six months, with shorter courses available for 10-30 days. Community based training, delivered by mobile units are designed to reflect local labour markets and skill demands. Courses tend to last for four months and trainees receive a family assistance grant and daily stipend and meal allowance.<sup>10</sup>

In 2000, 7,154 women and men were trained in the seven Department of Public Welfare Vocational Training Institutions, which are dispersed throughout the country, in all regions.

The ILO conducted an in-depth action study of a select number of graduates to determine the gender dimension of these programs. The following is some specific data about the subgroup studied.

<sup>10</sup> ILO, June 2002

**Table 4.11: Training courses of graduates**

Training Course	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Air-condition repair	1	1.9	2	6.5	3	3.6
Bamboo weaving	3	5.8	-	-	3	3.6
Barber	1	1.9	1	3.2	2	2.4
Batik making	2	3.8	1	3.2	3	3.6
Beautician	5	9.6	-	-	5	6.0
Beautician and hair dressing	4	7.7	-	-	4	4.8
Brick-making	-	-	7	22.6	7	8.4
Care-taking	6	11.5	-	-	6	7.2
Car Repairing	-	-	3	9.7	-	3.6
Cloth weaving	2	3.8	-	-	2	2.4
Comforter-making	1	1.9	-	-	1	1.2
Commercial cooking	4	7.7	-	-	4	4.8
Computer technician	-	-	4	12.9	4	4.8
Computer data entry	3	5.8	-	-	3	3.6
Dressmaking	5	9.6	-	-	5	6.0
Hotel services	4	7.7	2	6.5	6	7.2
Industrial Sewing	9	17.3	-	-	9	10.8
Motorcycle Repairing	-	-	9	29.0	9	10.8
Restaurant services	1	1.9	1	3.2	2	2.4
Thai cooking	1	1.9	-	-	1	1.2
Welding	-	-	1	3.2	1	1.2
Total	52	100.0	31	100.0	83	100.0

Source: Suriyasarn (2002) p. 92

The working hours by graduates of the above centers are shown in table 4.12. Most graduates work above 30 hours per week including 74.2 per cent of males and 62.7 per cent of females.

**Table 4.12: Reported paid working hours of graduates by gender**

Workload	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-15 hours/week	4	7.7	-	-	4	4.8
16-29 hrs/wk	9	17.3	4	12.9	13	15.7
>30 hrs/wk	29	55.8	23	74.2	52	62.7
No answer	10	19.2	4	12.9	14	16.8
Total	52	100.0	31	100.0	83	100.0

Source: Suriyasarn (2002) p. 94

Just over 50 per cent of graduates of both genders were hired labour or employees upon graduation (see table 4.13).

**Table 4.13: Type of work of graduates by gender**

Type of Work	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hired labour or employee	26	50.0	16	51.6	42	50.6
Family farming or self-employed	11	21.2	7	22.6	18	21.7
Hired labour and family farming or self-employed	9	17.3	7	22.6	16	19.3
No answer	6	11.5	1	3.2	7	8.4
Total	52	100.0	31	100.0	83	100.0

Source: Suriyasarn (2002) p. 94

### *Private Institutions*

In 1998 private institutions collectively had a total of 740,542 students. Of those, over 40 per cent of women and 37 per cent of men engaged in computer training. Language training was the second most common course participation rate, with 44 per cent of woman and 53 per cent of men enrolled in private institutions taking these courses. Typing (at 10 per cent and 5.2 per cent respectively) was next, with technical, tourism and hotel and beauty and dressmaking receiving less than 5 per cent participation rates.<sup>11</sup> Not placement or disability data is available.

### *Work-based Training*

A 1999 study based on 1997 data from the Thai Industrial and Competitiveness Survey indicated that 88 per cent of firm surveyed provide some form of training to their employee, 82 per cent give informal training to new employees and 58 per cent provide formal training.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, large firms are more likely than small to provide training. As noted, the DSD through tax and other incentives allowed under the Vocational Training Promotion Act and the Department of Vocational Education through its Dual Vocational Training Project are trying to stimulate and improve work-based initiatives.

## **4.4 Mainstream vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities**

### *Department of Skills Development*

As noted in section 3, vocational training institutions must accept people with disabilities as required by a Cabinet resolution in 1994. Further, the Draft Plan of the Quality of Life Development of People with Disabilities also has numerous provisions and plans related to access to vocational training and mainstreaming efforts. Efforts are underway to encourage integration of people with disabilities into mainstream training program with the Department of Skills Development (DSD), however currently, only a small percentage are involved. While Department official welcome people with disabilities, the individuals must be able to manage without special accommodations or supports to participate.<sup>13</sup> The Women and Child Skill Development Division was organized within the Department of Skill Development to promote skill development among vulnerable groups, especially women, children and people with disabilities. Its responsibilities include the following:

- Function as the information center for skill development for women, children and the disabled.
- Support skill development networks for women, children and the disabled in the private and public sectors and coordinate with concerned agencies.
- Develop appropriate policies and programme design for skill development for women, children and the disabled.

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<sup>11</sup> ILO, 2002

<sup>12</sup> Zeufack as report in ILO, 2000

<sup>13</sup> Discussions with DSD and DPW staff

During this year (2002) the Department is targeting six schools for enhanced integration. They are gradually adapting buildings for physical accessibility as the budget allows and provide staff training in disability awareness as part of the in-service training program.<sup>14</sup>

As noted in table 4.10 (see section 4.3), the participation rates of people with disabilities in DSD courses in 1999 was 0.001 and 0.003 per cent, depending on the type of training. Integration is reported difficult because most of the training centers are not accessible to people with physical disabilities<sup>15</sup> and generally, the perception of the many people is that males use DSD courses, woman and disabled people are more likely to use DPW courses.<sup>16</sup> However, a 1998 ADB loan designed to increase the participation rate of women in DSD programmes noted that some centers added accessibility features to new dormitory construction.

Table 4.14 illustrates the number of disabled persons in the various training courses.

**Table 4.14: Participation rates of people with disabilities in department of skill development vocational training programs**

Date	Types of Facilities	Number Enrolled	Number of Skills Training Areas
1995	8 Institutes	65	14
1996	11 Institutes + 5 Centres	231	20
1997	8 Institutes + 8 Centres	230	29
1998	10 Institutes + 8 Centres	338	30
1999	10 Institutes + 19 Centres	213	30
2000	12 Institutes + 30 Centres	301	41
2001	8 Institutes + 36 Centres	118	33

Table 4.15 shows the number of people with disabilities included in mainstream centers.

**Table 4.15: DSD Training programs services accessed by disabled persons in dsd facilities**

Training Area	2000	2001	Training Area	2000	2001
Pre-Employment			Computer business	1	1
Air conditioning repair	2	6	Picture frame	2	
Color TV repair	9	4	Glass-Aluminium		1
Radio/Tape recorder repair	10	1	Small mechanic repair		1
TV-Radio repair	16	1	Computer techniques		1
Electronics	9	13	Industrial electric		1
Computer skills	2		Mason		1
Computer repair	1	1	Automotive repair		1
Electrician	1		Industrial welding		1
Electric appliances repair	1	2	Skill Upgrading		
Electric lining	2	2	Office computer	12	
Computer data-processing	2	10	Color TV repair	5	
Window 95 programme	1		Wreath & Funeral flowers	11	
Refrigerator & air conditioning	2	1	Color TV trouble shooting	1	
Electric welding	3	6	Micro computer programmes	1	
Motorcycle repair	45	18	Women dressmaking	1	
Mechanic	5	2	Computer processing	1	
Agri-mechanic repair	2		Computer business	49	
Metal welding	1		Training skills	19	
Dressmaking	?	7	Earth flower making	12	
Embroidery-sewing	2		Thai embroidery	1	

<sup>14</sup> Phone conversation with DSD official Ms. Puntrik Smith

<sup>15</sup> Meeting with Khun Sunee

<sup>16</sup> Discussion with researcher, Suriyasarn, August 2002

Training Area	2000	2001	Training Area	2000	2001
Industrial sewing	17	6	Industrial sewing	1	
Aluminium work	1	2	Industrial arts	1	
Wood furniture	3		Motorcycle repair		1
Ceramic painting	1		Benzene engine repair		1
Leather work	2		Computer repair		1
Furniture	1	1	TV + Radio repair		21
Metal polishing	1		Window 95		2
Ceramics		1	Foot massage		1
Painting	1	1	Special Skills Training		
Construction	3		Training skills	22	
Industrial sewing/dressmaking	1				

In addition, the DSD links with some of the NGOs and organizations of disabled persons to provide training individually tailored to their needs. These are described in the following section.

#### *Department of Public Welfare*

DPW courses for women offer financial assistance for assistive devices for people with disabilities.<sup>17</sup> However, there is no data available with regard to the involvement of disabled persons in these courses.

#### **4.5 Segregated vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities**

Segregated vocational training are run by the following:

- Ministry of Education and Special School Options already described
- 8 vocational training programs of the Department of Public Welfare which provide training in 17 courses
- NGOs that provide vocational training
- Industrial Rehabilitation Center operated by the Social Security Office

#### *Department of Public Welfare*

The Department of Public Welfare operates eight residential vocational training centers and provides 17 training courses. People with disabilities apply through provincial welfare offices. Some initial assessment is done to determine if the students are appropriate for training. It involves basic literacy, a physical assessment (by medical staff), paper and pencil tests and basic ability test through situational analysis (e.g. trying out basic parts of a job or training program.)<sup>18</sup> Overall, about 800-1000 people are trained each year. Of these only about 60 per cent graduate and about 70 per cent of those find jobs with about 30 per cent working in enterprises and about 40 per cent engaged in some form of self-employment. More detailed data is in Table 4.16.

<sup>17</sup> ILO, 2002

<sup>18</sup> Meeting Khun Sunee, head of the Office of the Committee of Rehabilitation, Social Workers and others at the Praphadang Center.

**Table 4.16 Employment record for program completers, 1998-2000**

Year	Open Employment	Self Employment	Sheltered Employment	Other	Further Education	Unemployed	Total
1998	174	242	19	22	84	43	584
1999	159	278	19	18	51	12	537
2000	159	232	41	15	80	91	618

Source: Department of Public Welfare

Tables 4.17, 4.18, and 4.19 illustrate the causes of disability, age, and level of education for participants at all the facilities. Table 4.17 describes the course offerings at each Center and the number of trainees and completers for each. Table 4.21 provides the employment outcomes for participants

**Table 4.17: Causes of people's disabilities at all centers**

Causes of Disabilities	Male	Female	Total
By birth	145	75	220
By illness	130	49	179
By accident	260	25	285
Unknown	20	12	32
Others – Assault	3	-	3
- Landmine	1	-	1
- Snake bites	-	1	1
Total	559	162	721

**Table 4.18: People's ages at all centers**

Age	Male	Female	Total
Under 20 years	104	40	144
Between 20 – 30 years	318	78	396
Between 31 – 40 years	120	35	155
Over 40 years	20	6	26
Total	562	159	721

**Table 4.19: Education level of people at all centers**

Level of education	Male	Female	Total
None	59	47	106
Literate	9	8	17
Primary	269	60	329
Junior high school	144	26	170
High school	65	12	77
Vocational	16	2	18
University	3	1	4
Total	565	156	721

The curriculum used is that provided by the education department. Trainers are required to be graduates of the occupation area in which they train. For example, the computer teacher at Phrapradaeng is a graduate of the Redemptorist Training Center's computer program however according to DPW staff, trainers need skill upgrades.

Follow-up is provided at the Centers. One of the model centers, for example, at Phrapradaeng, follow-up is provided at the first, third and sixth month through as questionnaire and when possible a personal visit. Career counseling and guidance is also provided.

In addition to vocational training, DPW cooperates with the Ministry of Education's Non-Formal Education Department to arrange non-formal courses, such as adult education at the primary and secondary levels. As a result, many participants receive mainstream academic certificates in addition to their vocational certificates. Short courses are also offered in special areas of interest (e.g. arts and crafts) or for special disability groups (e.g., massage training for the blind).

Some of the Centers are experimenting with different models and approaches. For example, many of the training centers include on the job training. One Center (Chaing Mai) has a program to help students set up business. They operate a storefront as a training site and provide business development training, and access to loans through the Rehabilitation Fund. Follow-up indicated that students were not succeeding in their businesses. The school personnel concluded that students lacked the confidence to start a business alone, so they assisted students to pair up or start businesses in small groups. To date, three successful businesses have resulted. The Center will continue to work on the model. Another successful and unique program, which has received considerable international attention is the DPW collaboration with the FAO to develop mushroom training for self-employment.

In 1998, the ILO conducted a comprehensive study of vocational training of disabled persons in Thailand. At that time, some of the following issues were raised:

- People with intellectual disabilities were neglected and women tended to be underrepresented.
- Courses tended to be selected by the central authorities and only in rare incidences were reflective of local market opportunities.
- A lack of standard curriculum exists so there was no consistency between courses at different facilities even though they had the same name.
- DPW certificates were awarded but they are not tied to national standards.
- Staff were inadequately trained.
- A regional disparity existed with training opportunities limited in certain areas. The northeast, which has the lowest rates of disability prevalence was served by three of seven centers and other regions were only served by one.

**Table 4.20: Number of trainees, graduates and occupational areas of study in 2001**

Skill	Phrapradaeng Vocational Rehabilitation Centre		Khon Kaen Vocational Rehabilitation		Baan Thong Poon-Phaopanat Vocational Rehabilitation Centre		Yard Fon Vocational Rehabilitation Centre		Southern Vocational Rehabilitation Centre		Social Welfare Services Centre		Northeastern Vocational Rehabilitation Centre		Nong Khai Vocational Rehabilitation Centre		Total	
	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G
TV-Radio repair	27	21	51	37	34	29	48	34	24	19	25	15			19	16	228	171
Dress making	25	18			15	12	17	17	8	7	10	7			18	10	93	71
Leather work	28	13									9	5	19	18	19	12	75	48
Electric & refrigeration	10	10	21	16	22	16											53	42
Computer	22	17	18	16			34	23									74	56
Men haircut			25	20													25	20
Motorcycle/small engine repair			38	28							22	13	31	15	16	11	107	67
Women Beautification/hair styling					22	18			19	19	10	8			9	4	60	49
Arts and Crafts							46	23									46	23
Folk crafts									13	13							13	13
Micro computer use											14	7					14	7
Industrial sewing machine use											6	2					6	2
Metal welding & Metal screen													20	14			20	14
Thai classic massaging	11	7									12	2	16	11	14	13	53	33
Typist											4	4					4	4
Craft (Nongkhai)															4	2	4	2
Mushroom farming													46	34			46	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>656</b>

**Table 4.21: Employment outcomes**

No	Centre	Skill	Occupation		More education	No occupation	Others	
			Enterprise-based	Self-employed			More training	Other occup.
1	Prapradaeng (86 graduates)	Radio-TV repair	9	10	1	1	-	-
		Dressmaking	8	2	-	4	4	-
		Electric+Refridg.	2	4	2	2	-	-
		Leather work	6	4	-	3	-	-
		Computer	8	1	3	5	-	-
		Traditional massage	3	3	-	1	-	-
2	Khon Kaen (117 graduates)	1. Radio-TV repair	6	27	3	1	-	-
		2. Motorcycle + Small engine repair	3	25	-	-	-	-
		3. Barber	2	18	-	-	-	-
		4. Electric+Refridg.	1	11	4	-	-	-
		5. Computer	1	13	2	-	-	-
3	Thongpooonpaonpanus (75 graduates)	1. Radio-TV repair	1	1	-	23	3	1
		2. Dressmaking	-	-	1	9	2	-
		3. Beauty salon	-	5	-	8	5	-
		4. Electric+Refridg.	-	-	-	16	-	-
4	Yard Fon (97 graduates)	1. Radio-TV repair	8	7	-	3	12	4
		2. Computer	3	2	4	8	3	3
		3. Dressmaking	2	1	1	3	2	8
		4. Crafts	4	-	1	3	4	11
5	Southern (58 graduates)	Radio-TV repair	-	6	10	-	-	3
		Dressmaking	-	4	-	-	-	3
		Beauty salon/barber	1	15	1	-	-	2
			-	7	1	-	-	5
6	Social Welfare (63 graduates)	Radio-TV repair	11	3	1	-	-	-
		Dressmaking	4	3	-	-	-	-
		Leathe4r work	4	1	-	-	-	-
		Motorcycle/small Engine	13	-	-	-	-	-
		Beauty salon	3	3	2	-	-	-
		Typist	-	2	2	-	-	-
		Micro computer	1	4	2	-	-	-
		Industrial sewing	2	-	-	-	-	-
		Traditional massage	-	2	-	-	-	-
		7	Rehab. Centre (92 graduates)	Leather work	-	2	2	7
Metal welding	2			2	1	6	-	3
Motorcycle/small engine repair	-			1	-	6	-	8
Traditional massage	1			2	1	6	-	1
Mushroom growing	-			34	-	-	-	-
8	Nongkhai (68 graduates)	Radio-TV repair	-	6	2	6	2	-
		Motorcycle/small engine repair	-	4	-	7	-	-
		Dressmaking	4	1	1	4	-	-
		Leather work	-	-	-	12	-	-
		Craft (basketry)	-	-	-	2	-	-
		Beauty salon	-	1	-	3	-	-
		Traditional massage	-	5	-	6	2	-
Total	= 656	113	242	48	155	39	59	

While this situation has no changed considerably on many of these counts, the OCRDP, the DPW and the Plan of Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities reflect action steps to upgrade the system and implement a plan to mainstream people with mild disabilities into mainstream programs. The DPW is targeting the Phrapradaeng Vocational Rehabilitation facility to improve its assessment process and begin to refer students to appropriate mainstream vocational training programs, while reserving the Centers for those with the most severely disabled. These Centers will

provide both provide vocational training in the future, to the most extensively disabled, and the skills less disabled students may need to integrate into mainstream settings.

At the same time, all centers and the system will be targeted for curriculum upgrades, improved evaluation, better follow-up and job placement services and increased trainer skills and staff capacity.

In order to address the needs of those in rural areas, the Government is encouraging the development of occupational self-help groups, which will identify an areas of occupation interest and the DPW mainstream training program, will assist in delivering training to the groups. Mobile vans/training units bring training to local communities. So far more than 600 people (30 groups of 30 each) have been served.

### *Industrial Rehabilitation Centre*

In addition, the Social Security Office in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare operates a vocational training centre for persons who became disabled by labour accidents. The centre is located in Pathumthani province just north of Bangkok. The Vocational Training Centre under the Office of Social Security, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare provides training in typing and computers, motorcycle repair, electrical appliance repair, dressmaking, welding and woodcrafts. In 1999 it served a total of 155 new trainees; 124 were males and 31 were females. Most feel between the ages of 20-29. Two hundred and three were carried over from previous year (s).

In 1999, 259 rehabilitants participated in work preparation courses: machine work, metal work, woodworking, assembly work, clerical, handicrafts and bicycle repair. In the same year, 145 participated in more formal vocational training courses in: machine tools, sheet metal and painting, welding, furniture, workcraft, clerical work, typing, light printing, electronics, home electric repair, refrigeration and air conditioning, dressmaking, and industrial sewing. Of those served in 1999, 157 completed their rehabilitation. One hundred and three returned to their former employers; nine went to work for new employers; 45 become self-employed.

### *Non-governmental Organizations*

An undetermined number of NGOs provide vocational training to people with disabilities but there is not centralized information source for what these organizations are doing, who they are serving or specific outcomes. Estimates by government sources and some of the NGOs contacted suggested that the figure is between 10-12 organizations.

One of the most well known and successful organizations is the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled. The organization has a one hundred per cent placement rate from its programs, however it keeps students until they are able to find employment. The School began in 1997 and Table 4.23 illustrates the data for graduates from inception until June 2002. The school currently offers courses in the following areas:

1. Electronics (repair electronic equipments, computers, TVs, VCR etc.)
2. Software Operators
3. Programmers
4. E - Commerce
5. Computer and Business Management (teaching in English)

Non-formal training and remedial skills are also taught to assist students in all aspects of independent living and academics. The schools employment services are noted elsewhere.

The Disability Development Promotion, an NGO, has collaborated with the Department of Skills Development (DS) to offer training in computer graphics. NGOs working with the deaf and blind have set up similar programs with DSD whereby the Department will provide a trainer and curricula and the NGO provides the support services such as interpreter and needed supports. For example, they have set up computer graphics for physically disabled persons, general computer courses for deaf students with one organization and blind with another. Additional DSD courses include courses in commerce and trading (street vending) for deaf individuals and food processing at the food institute.<sup>19</sup>

Key informants suggested the training for people with intellectual impairments and for those with mental illness is limited. The Rajanokou Hospital, which serves individuals with intellectual impairments has initiated some training and job coaching. The Department of Mental Health and one of the hospitals provides some job coaching and internal pre-employment training. Section 5.2 describes these programs in more detail.

Table 4.22. lists other NGOs that offer training services or are sheltered workshops. The list is based on two key informant interviews and most of the NGOs are in and around Bangkok. It is likely that other NGOs are serving other parts of the country, at least new some of the larger cities.

**Table 4.22: NGOs involved in training or employment services (except Redemptorist)**

Name of Facility/NGO	Major Activities	Disability Group Served
Centre for Employment Promotion and Development of Disabled Persons	Sheltered workshop, use recycled cloth to make handicrafts, sewing	Physically, intellectually impaired, deaf
Promotion and Development of Disabled Persons Foundation	Computer training	Physically disabled
Vocational Training Centre, Sai Jai Thai Foundation	Sheltered workshop in leather craft and silk	Disabled soldiers
Thai Association for the Blind	Not currently doing training, used to provide massage training	Blind
Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind	Vocational training to include massage, animal husbandry, basic and living skills	Blind
Vocational Training Centre for Blind Women, Sampharn Nakornphatom	Massage, crocheting and knitting, handicrafts, flower arranging	Blind women
Employment Centre of the Blind This agency and the prior to are all operated by the Foundation for the Blind	Sheltered workshop in furniture making	Blind
Caufield Foundation for the Blind	Vocational training in massage and fortune telling	Blind
Employment Promotion for the Blind Foundation	Vocational Training in massage and telephone operation	Blind
Panyarkarn Vocational Training Foundation for the Mentally Retarded	Daily living and basic skills. Had a sheltered workshop at one point	Intellectually impaired
Vocational Training Institute for the Deaf, National Association of the Deaf	Vocational training	Deaf

<sup>19</sup> Phone interview with DSD official, Khun Puntrik Smith

**Table 4.23: Redemptorist Graduates**

Statistics of graduates		Electronics			Programmers			Computer Business			Computer Graphics			E-Commerce			In-Formal Educ.			TOTAL		
		M	F	TTL	M	F	TTL	M	F	TTL	M	F	TTL	M	F	TTL	M	F	TTL	M	F	TTL
1.	Polio	197	4	201	82	19	101	30	45	75	7	14	21	5	4	9	1	4	5	322	90	412
2.	Parapregia	57	0	57	17	1	18	6	1	7	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	83	3	86
3.	Leg Amputee	138	2	140	37	5	42	13	10	23	10	8	18	8	3	11	2	2	4	208	30	238
4.	Arm Amputee	33	0	33	33	2	35	15	5	20	13	4	17	5	1	6	2	2	4	101	14	115
5.	Multiple disabilities	39	0	39	13	5	18	5	4	9	5	3	8	5	2	7	4	0	4	71	14	85
6.	CP	2	0	2	3	1	4	2	1	3	1	1	2							8	3	11
7.	Misc.	4	0	4	5	0	5	3	0	3										12	0	12
8.	Unidentified (no records)	280	3	283	11	3	14	2	6	8										293	12	305
TOTAL		750	9	759	201	36	237	76	72	148	37	31	68	24	10	34	10	8	18	1098	166	1264

#### 4.6 Self-help and peer vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

DPW has cooperated with Association of the Blind of Thailand and Disabled Peoples Club to provide short-term Thai massage, gem cutting and handicrafts etc. to disabled groups in the region. Courses are 140 days in length and 2 688 people in 30 provinces were trained in 2000.

#### 4.7 Mainstream employment services

The employment services are operated by Department of Employment. Offices are operated in nine Bangkok office and in 75 provinces, for a total network of 84 offices. Typically each office has about three officers to serve job seeker and employers looking for suitable employees Basic employment services include:

- Providing a free labour exchange
- Employment counseling and career guidance
- Job placement services
- Special services including mobile job placement units and job expos

The same department is responsible for labour market information, maintaining national standard and occupational and industrial classifications, formulating employment policy, etc.

The effectiveness of employment services, as determined by internal reviews and donor funded studies, have shown them to be “somewhat effective” but that they have been “inadequate” in meeting labour market needs. The limited evidence suggest that only 10 to 20 per cent of job seekers actually use the services. The placement to applicant ratio has declined from 75 per cent in mid-1990s to just above 50 per cent towards the late 1990s. This is attributed to the economic crisis but also to job seeker and employer dissatisfaction with the services. In many areas services are often targeted to the poor and unskilled workers, while private services found the more skilled.<sup>20</sup>

Many special projects related to unemployment alleviation are currently funded under the Department of Education to address the needs of laid off and other workers affected by the Asian financial crisis. These are described under section 4.14

**Table 4.24: Performance ratios, public employment sector 1995-1998**

Region	Placement as share of applicants (%)		
	1995	1997	1998
Bangkok and surrounding	88	79	63
Central	54	51	43
North	53	54	49
Northeast	65	68	46
South	67	57	39
Thailand	73	67	53

According to the Ministry’s 2000 Annual Report, 218,980 of 592,843 job seekers found work through the employment service centers. Since private employment agencies are highly

<sup>20</sup> ILO, Country Development Partnership Note for Social Protection.

regulated and therefore play a marginal role with regard to overall employment services in Thailand.

#### **4.8 Mainstream employment-services opportunities for people with disabilities**

According to a 1999 report, no employment specialists have special training in working with people with disabilities or assisting employers in integrating people with disabilities in the work place, although this is part of their duties.<sup>21</sup> The Department of Public Welfare department wants to work collaboratively with the Department of Employment to include people with disabilities in the mainstream system. While the DPW maintains job listing of employers covered under the quota system, it relies on the mainstream employment services offices to address other needs of job seekers.

According to the 1999 assessment of the situation:

...It is impossible to make any kind of useful assessment of about the existing employment services for disabled job people other than to say that they appear to be at nothing more than token levels relative to overall needs...there is an almost complete lack of meaningful statistical data. About all that can be said is that the DPW places somewhere around 500 job seeker per year on average; and that the Employment Service, in each year from 1994 to 1999, placed 535, 250, 464, 356, 315 and 382 respectively.<sup>22</sup>

In one community (Pattaya), the Department of Employment is working with the special employment service operated by Redemptorist Training Center. Because of the strict private placement agency laws, it is difficult for NGOs to operate independently. This collaboration makes it possible for the Redemptorist Center to operate as an employment service and the Department shares job leads. The Department also works collaboratively with the Association of the deaf to place deaf individuals.

The Department does serve people with disabilities and has recently set up a special section to meet their needs. Data is also kept on the numbers and types of people with disabilities and this data has been requested.

#### **4.9 Special employment and employment-support services for people with disabilities**

The Department of Public Welfare operates a special employment office for people with disabilities at the national level, in Bangkok. Three people staff this office and receive job leads from the companies who submit them in accord with the quota scheme. The office then refers qualified candidates based on its registry.

On the provincial level officers are required to carry out this function. However, they work with both disabled and non-disabled individuals who are covered by the DPW programs. The

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<sup>21</sup> ILO East Asia Multidisciplinary Team (EASMAT), *Promotion of Employment Services for People with Disabilities in Thailand: Draft Plan of Action*, Bangkok, November 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, page 2

DPW would like to transfer this function to the mainstream employment services.<sup>23</sup> Currently, however, the DSW official interviews and assesses the readiness of the person with a disability who registers for services. If they are not considered job ready, he or she may be sent to one of the disability specific or mainstream vocational training programs. If job ready, the DPW officer will try to match them to job listings sent in by employers covered by and participating in the quota system.

The data related to career guidance and job placement services for 2000 is depicted in Table 4.25

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<sup>23</sup> Convernstions with Khun Sunee

**Table 4.25: DPW employment and career guidance related services, 2000 annual report**

Service	Number
Job orders secured (450 Enterprises)	1,050 job orders
Applied for job placement services	1,043 people
Career guidance	453 people
Number placed	582
Follow-up counselling	41 times

Furthermore, the Department of Employment reports these application and placement statistics (see table 4.26).

**Table 4:26: Job placement for people with disabilities by department of employment**

Applicants			Placements		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
416	231	185	128	58	70

As noted, the Redemptorist Vocational Training Center provides job placement services for its graduates, and since December 1999 started its job placement service for anyone with a disability who seeks services. The service includes some assessment and career guidance as well. Additionally, the Center operates career camps for people with disabilities, which are two-day workshops for about 60-80 people each. In the past year, five camps have been offered.

The 10-12 NGOs that provide some type of vocational services also conduct job placement activities on an informal basis but specific information is lacking because not centralized source exists. The Deaf Association and Foundation for the Blind are most active in this regard.

The Department of Mental Health operates 16 hospitals in Thailand. Four of them currently operate "Friend Shops", which are stores that sell good produced by patients and also serve as a work training ground for those interested in becoming store clerks or learning customer service skills. Eventually all hospitals will have such shops. One hospital has also added a coffee shop to serve as a vocational training center within the hospital. The hospitals are also starting to develop a car washing crew modeled after the Supported Employment programme activities of the New Life Psychiatric Center in Hong Kong. These are some initial efforts geared to providing some work experience within the hospital setting. One of the hospitals (see Part Five) has also developed a relationship with an area employer to transition patients from the hospital to work and community life. While these efforts only reach a small number of those with mental illness, the Department of Mental Health hopes to continue efforts in this direction. No placement data is available.<sup>24</sup>

Hospital (Rajanakou) for those with intellectual impairments has a small Employment of Retarded Persons Project see page 5 of Nov. 1999 EASTMAT report

Sritanya Hospital (1,500 patients) provides some employment and job placement services for its employees. It has an interesting relationship with an company that produces elastic products. Hospital patients begin working at the company while they are still hospitalized.

<sup>24</sup> Meeting with Khun Suchada of the Department of Mental Health

With staff monitoring, they gradually fully transition to independent life, which may begin with a group home situation (privately arranged) or staying at the company residences, until they are fully acclimated. Hospital staff work with the employer to facilitate the transition of the individual from the hospital to independent living. While the arrangement only serves a small number of individuals (currently only five) but the program is an interesting model that has been in operation for a few years and shows promise of expansion.

#### **4.10 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation**

The Royal Thai Government is a supporter of self-employment and the development of micro (1-4 employees), small (5-19 workers) and medium (20-99 workers) enterprises, however Thailand lacks a formal policy in this area.<sup>25</sup> As in many countries, micro enterprises are seen as a strategy for poverty alleviation and income generation and are within a welfare context rather than a job creation context and this appears to be the case in Thailand,<sup>26</sup> but perhaps with good cause. Job creation strategies are an important development approach and a reaction to the Asian financial crisis.

The Ninth plan specifically identified the need to increase mainstream self-employment opportunities as a reaction to the crisis and to realize the goal of reducing poverty. :”Emphasis should be placed on the development of community enterprises by promoting the establishment of revolving funds to finances businesses. Micro-credit projects need to be expanded to alleviate liquidity problems in many local economies.”

Some of the self-employment initiatives in response to the crisis are noted in section 4.13 related to poverty alleviation and rural development initiatives. Since Thailand is largely an agrarian economy, many of the self-employment efforts are delivered through rural development initiatives.

Training for entrepreneurship and self-employment however, are not well developed and linkage between Ministries providing such services, except the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is lacking.<sup>27</sup> In the course of doing this research, little information was found on training and services for micro and small enterprises. Although the DSD offers such training as noted in the section of vocational training. It seems that since people with disabilities have access to Rehabilitation Fund for loans, key informants and materials related to disability did not focus on other options.

#### **4.11 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation for people with disabilities**

Theoretically, people with disabilities should have access to self-employment and income generations programs that exist but little information was found on this topic and it requires additional research.

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<sup>25</sup> ILO/UNDP, *Micro and Small Enterprises in Thailand*

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> ILO, August, 2000

#### **4.12 Self-employment and income-generation support services for people with disabilities**

The DPW provides loans to people with disabilities who want to become self-employed or expand an existing business. A maximum 20,000 baht, interest free loan with a maximum five-year repayment period is available. This is provided through the Rehabilitation Fund. However, no formal business development services or training are offered. As noted in the section on vocational training for people with disabilities, some of the centers provide business development training but no set curricula or service policies exist. The need for this is noted in the Draft Plan and has been identified by DPW officials.

The Rehabilitation Fund is described in more detail in section 5.3.

#### **4.13 Poverty alleviation**

The main focus of the ninth plan is to reduce poverty through growth of targeted economic sectors that the poor rely on and growth that provides employment opportunities and promotes income. Specifically, the Ninth Plan states that “more standardized products and services with special (local) identities should be encouraged, through dissemination of production processing information to local communities. Efficiency in marketing and distributing products from local to regional, national and international markets should be promoted.”

Related to this and to address the needs of those living in the rural areas, Thailand has initiated the One Tambon (Sbu-District)-One Product scheme to capitalize on the creativity and innovations of grassroots communities. Each tambon is asked to identify a unique product, tourist attraction or service and to concentrate on this effort. The Government is taking steps to support the cottage and village based industries that support these products through marketing, product design and development, etc.

As noted in Part One, Thailand was realizing steady economic growth and poverty reduction when the Asian economic crisis resulted in a major economic slowdown and unemployment. Some the measures introduced by the Government to alleviate poverty through employment and training measures include the following:

- *Thais help Thais Measure*: this measure aims at reducing the cost of living of people who have suffered from the economic crisis. This includes organizing consumer fairs and setting up low interest rate loans for self-employed persons.
- *Rural Employment Creation*: this measure aims at creating temporary jobs for unemployed and laid-off workers. Labour-intensive projects have been created to enable them to earn an acceptable level of income.
- *Illegal migrant workers*: this measure aims at deporting illegal workers to their country of origin and replacing them with Thai workers.
- *Promotion of Overseas employment of Thai workers*: this measure aims at expanding overseas employment opportunities for Thai workers.
- *Promotion of Industrial Employment*: this measure aims at maintaining current employment in the industrial sector. Activities include facilitating the establishment or expansion of existing industrial businesses and services, improving the matching process, upgrading workers’ skills and retraining.

- *New Theory of Agriculture Measure*: this measure aims at encouraging laid-off workers to work in self-sustainable forms of agriculture, which is a new concept in agriculture and one created by His Majesty the King.
- *New Graduate Information Centre*- this measure aims at creating an information centre on employment opportunities and higher education or training services for graduate students.
- *Community Job Creation of Bangkok Metropolitan Area (BMA)* (initiated in 1999): this measure aims at creating jobs for the unemployed in the Bangkok area, such as providing areas for community product fairs, providing training programmes for the self-employed and hiring local people for community development projects.
- *Temporary Job Creation by Government Agencies*: this measure aims at recruiting unemployed workers with middle and higher levels of education to work for the Government.

(Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Annual Report 1999, pp. 54-56 cited in Suriyasarn, 2002)

These programs have not been individually researched to determine their impact on people with disabilities or any special measures to include disabled persons. However, there was not any data available with regard to the impact of these programs on people with disabilities in the references cited or during the key informant interviews that were held.

#### **4.14 Staff training for vocational rehabilitation**

Although there are no special regulations regarding vocational rehabilitation staff and training, Thailand's Ratchasuda's College offers a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. See section 5.2 for a description. Eight of the 18 graduates are people with disabilities.

Some agencies provide training on an in-service basis. For example, the Dept. of Mental Health trained its social workers and related staff in supported employment and have engaged in study tours to upgrade skills. They are initiating supported employment programs as a result.

In spite of the efforts which exist, the Draft Plan also identifies the need to upgrade capacities and skills of personnel working with people with disabilities.

#### **4.15 Barriers and gaps**

It is difficult to adequately address the gaps in services due to a lack of information. In some situations Thailand has significant information at its disposal, but it relates to the participation rates of individuals rather than more information about needs. Enough descriptive information exist to determine that Thailand has made some exceptional advances in providing services and is actively working toward mainstreaming. With that said, the data suggests that:

- Vocational training services not sufficient to meet needs, especially in certain rural areas and geographic sections of the country
- The participation of women in all the training programs cited, mainstream and for the disabled, except those specific to their needs, is low and the issue does not seem to be addressed
- Lack of information about the scope of services provided by NGOs and members of civil society
- Efforts at mainstreaming hampered by architectural barriers and lack of support services and staff training and awareness
- Lack of trainer capacity in DPW facilities
- Lack of disability awareness among other DSD training programs
- Lack of business development services that include training in entrepreneurship, business development services and follow-up
- Coordination efforts among government ministries and between NGOs and the Government needs improvement
- Service gaps especially in vocational and employment services for persons with intellectual impairments and those with mental illness; availability of service for other groups is not clear
- Lack of integrated self-employment services system for the general population as well as people with disabilities.

## Part Five: Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities

### 5.1 Open employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Theoretically, most jobs are open to people with disabilities, although as noted in Section 3, some discriminatory legislation is still on the books and has recently received considerable public scrutiny.

In addition to the special constraints people with disabilities face in accessing jobs, they also face the same challenges in finding employment as the general population. The Asian financial crisis had a real impact on the number of job seekers and the available job vacancies to meet those needs. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Annual Report 2000:

The domestic employment statistics during 1996-2000 show that the situation of unemployment really happened... There was an increased trend of 295,023 people looking for a job and using the service in 1999 from 174,841 in 1997. The upward trend is still continuing, while the amount of job vacancies provided by workplaces is falling. The number of job vacancies was 571,678 in 1997 and then decreased to 407,135 in 1999. In 2000 (January-September), there were 332,317 vacancies, 199,740 job applicants, 95,607 of which were accepted for jobs (or 47.87 per cent of all job applicants or 28.77 per cent of the vacancies.) The main cause of this is the difference between workplaces' needs and the job applicants' qualifications in terms of education, age and work experience.<sup>28</sup>

Certainly, based on the evidence that people with disabilities are less likely to be qualified, their opportunity to effectively compete with other job seekers or fill job openings are limited. In fact, over the three-year period from 1996 to 1998, employers covered by the Rehabilitation Act offered more than 9,000 job vacancies each year, specifically for job seekers with disabilities, for which neither the DPW nor the DOE Employment Service could find qualified applicants.<sup>29</sup> The data suggests that even though job opportunities decreased and competition for jobs increased, skill deficits limited the access of people with disabilities to job opportunities.

Currently there is no countrywide data on the total number of disabled persons in the labour market, either as employees or as self-employed. The Public Welfare Department reported that, between 1997 and 1999, about 5500 people with disabilities were employed, while 12,500 people received loans of 20,000 Baht. The figures for graduates of DPW and other training programs were noted in Section 4, however these constitute a small percentage of disabled persons.

In 1996, 1.4 million with disabilities were reported employed according to the Ministry of Public Health survey.

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<sup>28</sup> MOLSW, 2000 Annual Report, page 6

<sup>29</sup> EASMTAT, 1999

The quota system and employer incentives noted in Section 3 are the major incentives for employment promotion in the formal open labour market. Employer participation in the quota scheme however is on the decline. In 1997, 54 per cent of companies complied. In 2001, only 30 per cent complied.<sup>30</sup> The OCRDP, which administers the law attributes this decline to the fact that the quota is not enforced and employers are not actively fined. The law contains no enforcement provisions. The OCRDP subcommittee dealing with the law and employment is studying the possibility of recommending the law to insert provisions for noncompliance.<sup>31</sup>

As evidenced from table 5.1, the number of non-complying employers has risen from 45 per cent of those obligated by the law to 70 per cent in 2001.

**Table 5.1: Employers nationwide covered by the quota system**

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	#	Persons	#	Persons	#	Persons	#	Persons	#	Persons
Enterprises w/ more than 200 employees	5,415	15,063	5,675	16,111	5,133	11,555	5,301	10,602	5,082	10,164
Inform DPW + Employ People with Disabilities	408	815	398	958	202	370	168	224	39	45
Inform DPW but no employment	1,026	9,322	1,076	9,748	266	1,450	282	1,266	176	761
Inform that already employ People with Disabilities	737	1,811	428	1,063	412	992	1,083	1,543	667	1,490
Contribute to the fund	470	1,342	521	1,086	530	1,165	572	1,231	524	1,240
	34.93 Baht million		34.45 Baht million		34.49 Baht million		36.39 Baht million		35.47 Baht million	
Inform w/ less than 200 employees	314	-	268	-	197	-	149	-	115	-
Non-complying (no announcement, no contribution)	2,461	5,698	2,985	12,855	3,526	8,052	3,047	6,091	3,561	6,950
Complying	2,955 (54%)		2,691 (47%)		1,607 (31.3%)		2,254 (43%)		1,521 (30%)	
Non-complying	2,460 (45%)		2,985 (52%)		3,526 (68.7%)		3,047 (57%)		3,561 (70%)	

According to requests made to the Department of Social Welfare, employers most frequently request candidates to fill the following positions:

- Computer operator
- Telephone operator
- General administrative clerk
- Production worker
- Sewing machine operator
- Accountant and bookkeeper
- Cleaner
- General workers
- Bar code sticker<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Verbal report from Khun Sunee

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Although a fine is supposed to be paid, there is no punish for failure to pay the fine.

<sup>32</sup> Information provided by the Department of Social Welfare, July 2002

Of those individuals tracked by the Department, people with disabilities tend to be employed in the following jobs.

**Table 5.2: Types of jobs secured by people with disabilities** <sup>33</sup>

Physical Disabilities	Hearing or Communication Disabilities	Visual Disabilities	Intellectual or Learning Disabilities
Industrial Sewing Machine Operator Computer Operators General Administrative Workers Telephone Operators Production Worker General Worker	Cleaner Computer operators and general administrative workers Industrial sewing machine operator Packing worker General Worker Production Worker	Telephone Operator Traditional Masseur/masseuse	Elevator Operators Wood box maker Printer worker

**Table 5.3: Types of occupations by disability group as of December 2000**

Occupation	Visual	Hearing	Physical	Behaviour	Intellectual	Total
Trade	906	363	5170	19	61	6519
Agriculture	524	448	5214	28	183	6397
Skilled Worker	236	160	2778	3	5	3182
Total	1666	971	13162	50	249	16098

The quota system as a major vehicle for promoting jobs must be considered against the realities of the enterprise sector. The quota system applies to companies with more than 200 employees. Yet, according to data from the National Statistical Office, 75 per cent of Thailand's industrial sector in 1996 was made up of enterprises employing one to four employees. When larger enterprises are cumulatively considered, it has been found that 97 per cent of Thailand's enterprises employ less than 50 workers.<sup>34</sup> Business establishments (trade, services and hotel/restaurant establishments) show a similar trend. This suggests that even if large employers were responding to the quota system, this policy only addresses promoting employment opportunities for people with disabilities within a small sector of the possible labour force base. No data is kept on the number of people with disabilities who work for the Government or in parastatal organizations.

## 5.2 Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in protected work environments

The only sheltered workshop operated by the Government is the Occupational Development Center for People with Disabilities, which has operated since 1983 as a model of real enterprise. It employs graduates of training centers who are skilled in dressmaking but are not ready for open or self-employment. In 2000, 49 individuals worked at the Center.

No centralized data is available with regard to sheltered employment and the Government does not monitor them. However, based on key informant interviews, they appear to be few in number. Again, however the lack of information about activities in the NGO sector with regard to vocational rehabilitation issues makes any substantive analysis possible.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> ILO EASMAT, *Micro and small enterprises: Giants in employment and development*, Bangkok, June 2000, page 5.

Table 4.23 provides some information about sheltered or production workshops for people with disabilities.

### **5.3 Self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities**

It is most likely that in Thailand, as in other countries, many people with disabilities work in the informal sector, where unfortunately, they are less likely to have the protections of formal employment and many working in the informal sector would be consider self-employed, or as agricultural workers, homeworkers, or are involved in microenterprises. A National Statistical Office survey of the information sector in 1996 indicates that millions of people work in this sector and it is a major contributor to socio-economic objectives. According to an ILO report, employment generated by the informal sector in manufacturing, trade and service sectors is approximately 3.5 times greater than that generated by the formal sector.<sup>35</sup> Further, it is estimated that trading is the most important.

However, as noted in section 5.1 no reliable data exists to identify the employment or self-employment status of people with disabilities. Nevertheless, it is likely that most people with disabilities work are self-employed or in the informal sector as home or agricultural workers.

The Rehabilitation Fund is available for individuals with disabilities who want to start their own businesses. According to the Plan of Quality of Life Development, 12 per cent of those registered for services with the Department of Public Welfare have borrowed money from the fund. Of those 72 per cent have repaid the loan, resulting in a 58 per cent monetary reimbursement. However, no support or advisory service are provided with the loan and there is no continuous evaluation of those who receive loans.<sup>36</sup> The plan recognizes the need for this as do the subcommittees of the OCRPD and the government officials dealing with disabilities contacted during this study.

Clearly, as the JICA study noted, most people with disabilities want to be self-employed, there are more work opportunities, most graduates of DPW courses designed for people with disabilities become self-employed as compared to those who work in enterprises, and the Government is looking to the micro-enterprise sector as a poverty-alleviation strategy. Finally, the availability of the Rehabilitation Fund as a revolving loan fund adds another dimension to encouraging self-employment and suggesting that it is estimated that most disabled people who are employed are employed in this sector.

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 illustrate the loans made over the years from the Rehabilitation Fund and the Repayment Rates.

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<sup>35</sup> EASMAT, 2000

<sup>36</sup> Plan of Quality of Life Development for People with Disabilities (2002-2006), Unofficial translation.

**Table 5.4: Approved loans from the Rehabilitation Fund**

Year	Bangkok		Provinces		Total	
	Loans	Value (Baht)	Loans	Value (Baht)	Loans	Value (Baht)
1995	43	742,660	-	-	43	742,660
1996	242	4,686,100	946	17,976,230	1,183	22,662,330
1997	445	9,423,500	2,422	47,979,600	2,867	57,403,100
1998	304	6,370,000	2,607	51,053,450	2,911	57,423,450
1999	315	6,296,000	3,137	59,546,405	3,452	65,842,405
2000	302	6,114,500	4,721	90,681,660	5,023	96,796,160
2001	265	5,417,000	4,269	83,619,900	4,534	89,036,900
2002	169	3,605,000	3,013	59,113,175	3,182	62,718,175
Total	2085	42,654,760	21,115	409,970,420	23,200	452,625,180

**Table 5.5: Loan repayment to the Rehabilitation Fund**

Year	Bangkok	Provinces	Total
1995	15,300	-	15,300
1996	868,650	1,183,398	2,052,048
1997	2,835,650	7,235,670	10,071,320
1998	3,941,360	15,467,910	19,409,270
1999	4,139,000	20,220,430	24,359,430
2000	4,513,100	27,635,107	32,148,207
2001	4,284,615	29,721,751	34,006,366
2002	2,238,135	17,403,940	19,642,075
Total	22,835,810	118,868,206	141,704,016

Balance as of 30 April 2002 = 100,944,719.07 Million Baht  
 Deposit in the Bank = 77,721,324.88 “

#### **5.4 Other segregated or protected employment opportunities for people with disabilities**

The National Lottery Office in the Ministry of Finance manages the sale of lottery tickets in Thailand, which can be a lucrative job since retailers get a percentage of each ticket sold. Under the current program, a percentage of jobs are set aside for sale by disabled individuals and war veterans. The program is controversial and political since other disability groups would like access to the jobs

#### **5.5 Barriers and gaps**

Barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities include:

- Overall labour market competition, skill mismatching
- Lack of job opportunities caused by the Asian financial crisis
- Discriminatory legislation
- Negative employer attitudes
- Lack of education, skill development and qualifications among people with disabilities
- Lack of information about work adjustments and job accommodations
- Lack of employer development services

- Lack of employment support services, although some providers in Thailand serving individuals with mental illness and intellectual impairment are beginning to employ techniques such as supported employment programs
- Lack of reliable data upon which to make valid conclusion and adequate plans about current employment status of people with disabilities
- Reliance on the quota system as a major employment policy when many jobs are within smaller businesses not covered by the quota system
- Lack of enforcement of the quota system
- Lack of follow-up services to determine the effectiveness of self-employment
- Lack of business development services to ensure success and assist people with disabilities grow their businesses.

## **Part Six: Employment-promotion Activities Involving Social Partners**

### **6.1 Government or NGO employment-promotion activities directed at employers**

As noted, the Government serves a brokering role to assist employers find disabled workers matched to their job needs, however due to staffing limitations these staff are not able to make employer visits or perform more than the brokerage role. The Government produced a booklet on job suitable for people with disabilities for employers.

In order to promote hiring further, the Government allows for tax incentives for hiring or making adjustments, as noted in Section 3. Further, since 1997, the Prime Minister, presents awards to employers who have demonstrated openness to hiring disabled workers.

Recently, the ILO produced AbilityAsia, with the cooperation of some Thai employers. A regionally focused video. AbilityAsia is designed to encourage employers to hire workers with disabilities. A similar video, AbilityThailand, focuses exclusively on Thai employers and workers and it was produced with the assistance of the DSW, local organizations of and for disabled persons and national employers and the ECOT. The video is currently being disseminated to employers and NGOs throughout the country for use as part of employer awareness raising activities.

NGOs, such as the Redemptorist Training Center has a promotional service via its job placement programme, which provides more active placement services. The organization is actively involved with one of the major employers associations and is actively engaged in employer development activities. Its placement officers visit job sites to determine employer needs.

### **6.2 Government or NGO employment-promotion activities directed at trade unions or workers' organizations**

There are no active programs to work directly with trade unions or workers organizations.

### **6.3 Employer, trade union or workers' organization employment-promotion activities**

The Employment Confederation of Thailand (ECOT), a leading employers' organization in Thailand, participates on the Thai government sub-committee for employment promotion. The committee created an information network matching employers and persons with disabilities who are seeking jobs.

ECOT is taking an active role to encourage its members to hire people with disabilities. ECOT, in collaboration with an NGO, Redemptorist Foundation, organized a seminar on "Employment and Disabled Persons" in November 2001 which provided training to 50

representatives form business. As a result of the seminar, ECOT pledged to serve as an information and resource center to disabled job seekers and member employers.

## Part Seven: Summary and Future Directions

### 7.1 Looking back over the past decade 1993-2002

Thailand has made some remarkable progress with regard to the targets. Ministerial regulations and actions to implement the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act and the formation of the National Committee for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities and in establishing provincial committees. Some of the achievements with regard to accessibility, awareness, education and other target areas will certainly have an influence on advances in employment and training. Table 7.1 identifies some of the progress with regard to the employment and training targets.

**Table 7.1: Targets for action related to employment and training**

Decade target		Comments
[1]	To make accessible mainstream training programmes and to revise entry requirements and eligibility criteria where necessary, so that people with disabilities can participate in them, with due attention to gender equity and the participation of disabled persons from low-income and poor families.	The government is beginning work toward making mainstream programs accessible; gender equity remains an issue as does reaching the poorest of the poor who are in remote rural areas.
2	To develop and strengthen curricula and support services (for example, physically accessible training sites and equipment, Braille text, sign language interpreters and trainers' aides) to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in all pre-vocational and vocational training and apprenticeship programmes leading to gainful employment and self-employment in rural and urban areas.	The technology unit in the Ministry of Education is charged with helping to make accommodations in the schools for students with disabilities. Some support services are available in government-sponsored schools for the poor and people with disabilities, as well as in NGO schools operated for people with some types of disabilities. The DSD provides some individually designed training in collaboration with special schools and NGOs that provide training. While there are some programs in rural areas, many programs are concentrated in Bangkok or certain parts of the country. Funds are available in DSW schools for aids. DSD schools however are not making accommodations or support services available.
3	To set national targets for the placement and promotion of the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors and to formulate a government policy to promote the achievement of these targets (such as through a mandatory quota scheme, employer incentives, focused awareness-raising campaigns targeted at employers and employees, and technical support to employers).	There are no specific targets other than the quota scheme, which is not enforceable.
4	To establish a collaborative body, including representatives of the public and private sectors, disabled people's organizations and other NGOs, to compile, on an ongoing basis, information on new employment and self-employment opportunities in the formal and informal sectors, as well as to provide training in skills relevant to these opportunities and discontinue training in skills that are obsolete.	These structures exist through the subcommittees of the OCRPD and they appear to be quite active.
5	To establish and fulfil annual training and job placement targets that are gender-equitable for people with disabilities, for joint action by all ministries (for example, those responsible for employment, human	No such targets exist.

	resources development, rural development), government development programmes, as well as employers' and workers' organizations and organizations of people with disabilities.	
6	To provide appropriate training and employment opportunities for people with extensive disabilities and those who require a supportive environment (through, for example, the establishment of production centres, the provision of support services and assistive devices for self-employment and supported employment and, where necessary, arrangement of accommodation).	Thailand is beginning to provide such services through supported employment, some production centres and self-employment schemes.
7	To introduce measures to ensure the equitable participation of persons with disabilities in all rural and urban schemes for poverty alleviation, income-generation in the formal and informal sectors, and the promotion of self-employment.	While the government has measures in place to provide loans directly to entrepreneurs with disabilities, there is not evidence of measures or policies to assure equitable participation in other employment and training and poverty alleviation measures other than the overall disability-rights legislation and the accompanying Cabinet resolution.
8	To introduce and undertake effective implementation of a national scheme for entrepreneurial skills development (including identification of business opportunities, development of a business plan, management and bookkeeping skills); support services to marketing and production; and access to interest-free or low-interest loans.	No such national business development plan exists although a national loan program is available.
9	To identify disabled people in order to place them in jobs or to assist them in self-employment in rural and urban areas, through appropriate public and private agencies (including employment placement services) and NGOs.	The DPW and other government and NGOs identify people with disabilities. They are registered for services accordingly through the DPW.
10	To use funds to promote training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities (for example, through adaptation of the environment, provision of support services and assistive devices) to benefit people with extensive disabilities as well.	The government provides funds to NGOs and is working to adjust its vocational training facilities to make them more responsive to the needs of those with extensive disabilities. Those with mild disabilities will eventually be integrated into mainstream centres.
11	To protect the rights of disabled workers in all laws, policies and collective agreements relating to employment (including provisions on recruitment, promotion, dismissal and retrenchment).	While some global rights legislation exists, discriminatory legislation is still on the books in Thailand.
12	To identify and commission appropriate institutions to carry out research studies in the areas of ergonomics, workplace adaptations, safety devices and other topics relevant to the training and employment of disabled persons in the context of Asian and Pacific developing and least developed countries and areas, to encourage innovations, and to identify research topics in consultation with service providers, user groups and the collaborative body for the identification of new work opportunities, and other relevant agencies.	The status of such research is not known, however in its submission to ESCAP, the government did not identify any research in this area, although policy statements exist for such activities.
13	To establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, with the active participation of representatives of disabled persons, to ensure that legislation relating to training and employment is effectively enforced, that policy is effectively implemented and that the relevant Decade targets are achieved.	The OCRPD has a subcommittee on Law and Employment to address this issue.
14	To establish an international clearing house to identify, gather and disseminate information on existing employment-related equipment and facilities for people with disabilities, as well as similar clearing houses at national, regional, state, provincial and district levels.	The Kingdom of Thailand and the Japanese government are collaborating to establish the Asia Pacific Centre for Persons with Disabilities.

## **7.2 Looking forward**

Thailand faces many of the barriers other countries encounter in its effort to move forward--- costs of making the environment and the workplace accessible, negative attitudes, etc. Thailand is making progress, however. Limiting its progress are discriminatory laws against people with disabilities, a policy framework that it is not enforcing and which does not fully recognize and support opportunities for employment in small businesses and the informal and self-employment sector, and reduced budgets and strain related to the economic crisis. Lack of information and more effective interministerial commitment to the disability issue is limiting attempts at mainstreaming, which has strong policy support. Gender issues and serving those in rural and remote communities remain challenges. While Thailand has more options for training personnel through access to international organizations and its own Ratchasuda College, a lack of trained personnel is still a barrier.

Strengths and opportunities include the progress that has been made, an active disability community, government commitment as evidenced by among other things, its commitment to a strong policy framework and development of the Asia and Pacific Center. The strong economic development and progress in alleviating poverty that Thailand experienced prior to the crisis and the current signs of rebound suggest that the economic picture may strengthen the opportunities for people with disabilities. As noted, Ratchasuda College and its access to international organizations is a benefit, as is the support of the employers association.

## **7.3 In-country plans and recommendations**

The Draft Plan has already been described in detail in Section 3 and it outlines a strong course of action for the development of all services for people with disabilities with a major emphasis on training and employment issues.

## **About the Authors**

### *Debra Perry*

Debra Perry is a Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation for the International Labour Office and provides technical and policy assistance to governments, employers, workers' organizations, and NGOs throughout Asia and the Pacific Region. She joined the ILO more than two years ago but has 25 years experience in the field of vocational rehabilitation. For the 10 years prior to joining the ILO, she started and managed a Washington, D.C.-based consulting business. Her business provided training, management and technical assistance to national and international NGOs, governments, private enterprises, universities, and trade unions in the areas of disability, diversity, fundraising, marketing, strategic planning and partnership development. Earlier in her career, Ms. Perry provided direct services to injured and disabled workers including those with physical, intellectual, psychiatric and sensory disabilities. For many years, Ms. Perry worked for Goodwill Industries International, one of the largest private providers of vocational rehabilitation and training services for disadvantaged and disabled persons in the world. She is a graduate of Auburn University with a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Services Education and is a Certified Rehabilitation Councilor (CRCC) and a Licensed Professional Counselor in the United States. She has worked in many countries in the region and the world both during and prior to her tenure with the ILO.

### *Julie Yoder*

Julie Yoder has worked in the field of social policy and research since graduating with a Masters degree from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in 1998. She spent 1999/2000 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam as the Acting Director of the Office of Disability Technical Assistance. There she helped to implement a new program for the NGO, Viet Nam Assistance for the Handicapped, on policy development on employment, barrier-free access and other areas. She also worked closely with the Disability Forum, an organization of local and international organizations focused on disability. In 2000/2001 she worked at the Asian Social Issues Program of the Asia Society in New York. Previously she worked with the Newmarket Company of Washington D.C. and had internships with the Brookings Institution and the Office of the United States Trade Representative. From June 2002, she assisted the Bangkok Area Office of the International Labour Organization with the 14-country study on the status of training and employment policies and practices for people with disabilities of which this report is part.

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