

THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SOCIAL CHANGES ON EDUCATION

Internal and external social changes affect education in Thailand in multiple dimensions, as follows:

Domestic Social Aspects:

1. **Aging population structure** – The declining number of school-aged children has led to many schools closing or merging. At the same time, lifelong learning curricula for the elderly must be developed.
2. **Economic inequality** – Children from poor households lack access to quality educational resources, such as the internet, learning materials, and qualified teachers.
3. **Labor migration** – Schools in rural areas face a shortage of students, while urban and suburban schools are overcrowded.
4. **Changing values and lifestyles** – Consumerism and digital technology have shortened children's attention spans but also created more opportunities for online learning.

External Social Aspects:

1. **Need for international cooperation** – Thailand must adapt its curriculum to align with global standards, such as promoting English language skills and 21st-century competencies.
2. **Technological advances and digital transformation** – Online learning, AI, and big data have become essential, requiring investment in infrastructure and teacher development.
3. **Cross-border labor mobility** – Thailand needs to produce a skilled workforce capable of competing in the global market, while also coping with an increasing number of migrant students in the system.
4. **Global crises, such as COVID-19 and climate change** – These have forced Thai education to rapidly adapt to hybrid models (online and on-site) and integrate sustainability content.

Key Systemic Impacts:

- The need to reform the curriculum to be modern, flexible, and connected to the real world.

- The challenge of developing highly competent teachers who can respond to change.
- The widening gap between urban and rural schools, and between high-income and low-income groups.
- Opportunities to use technology and innovation to reduce inequality, but this requires budget and cooperation from all sectors.

Conclusion: Both internal and external changes serve as pressures and opportunities, compelling education in Thailand and other countries to urgently adapt toward equality, modernity, and future-readiness.