



IN-DEPTH RESEARCH ON YOUTH NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET) IN THAILAND



Chula
Chulalongkorn University



unicef 
for every child

© UNICEF Thailand Country Office, 2023

Prepared for UNICEF Thailand by:
College of Population Studies
Social Research Institute
Chula Unisearch
Chulalongkorn University
254 Phaya Thai Rd, Wang Mai, Khet Pathum Wan
Bangkok 10330, Thailand
www.cps.chula.ac.th

Permission to copy, disseminate or otherwise use information from this publication is granted so long as appropriate acknowledgement is given.

Disclaimer: The material in this report was commissioned by UNICEF Thailand Country Office. UNICEF accepts no responsibility for errors. The findings, interpretations and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of UNICEF.

Suggested citation: United Nations Children's Fund & College of Population Studies, Social Research Institute, Chula Unisearch (2023). *In-depth Research on Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in Thailand*. Bangkok: UNICEF.

Front photo credit: © UNICEF Thailand/2016/Thuentap

UNICEF Thailand
Phra Athit Road, Bangkok, Thailand 10200
Email: unicefthailand@unicef.org

Design and layout by: Tanat Supichayangkun

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	ix
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 BACKGROUND	8
1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES	10
1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
1.4 KEY DEFINITIONS	12
1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	13
CHAPTER 2 THE SITUATION OF YOUTH AND YOUTH NEET IN THAILAND	18
2.1 OVERALL SITUATION OF YOUTH EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IN THAILAND	18
2.1.1 Education	18
2.1.2 Employment	22
2.1.3 Training	26
2.2 YOUTH NEET PROFILE	27
2.2.1 Share of youth NEET	27
2.2.2 Gender and age of youth NEET	28
2.2.3 Geographical location of youth NEET	30
2.2.4 Educational attainment of youth NEET	33
2.3 CATEGORIES OF YOUTH NEET	35
NEET group 1, who want to develop skills, and are ready to work	35
NEET group 2, who want to develop skills, but are not ready to work	37
NEET group 3, who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work	38
NEET group 4, who do not want to develop skills, nor are ready to work	41
CHAPTER 3 RISK FACTORS IN BECOMING NEET	45
3.1 INHERENT CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH	47
3.2 INFLUENCE OF FAMILY SITUATION, PEERS AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	50
3.3 YOUTH EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS	57
3.4 SOCIOECONOMIC ECOSYSTEM	59

CHAPTER 4	EXISTING POLICIES, MEASURES AND SERVICES RELATED TO YOUTH NEET IN THAILAND	62
4.1	NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS RELATED TO YOUTH NEET	62
4.2	POLICIES AND REGULATIONS RELEVANT TO NEEDS	63
4.2.1	Educational policies	63
4.2.2	Employment policies	64
4.2.3	Training policies	65
4.2.4	Other relevant policies	66
4.3	POLICY MEASURES AFFECTING YOUTH NEET IN THAILAND	66
4.3.1	Prevention measures	68
4.3.2	Reintegration measures	70
4.3.3	Compensation measures	71
CHAPTER 5	CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING YOUTH NEET IN THAILAND	73
	LEGISLATION, POLICY AND STRATEGY	73
	LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT	77
	SERVICE DELIVERY	80
	HUMAN RESOURCES	83
	BUDGET AND FINANCING	85
	DATA, INFORMATION AND RESEARCH	86
	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	88
REFERENCES		90
APPENDIX 1:	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	99
APPENDIX 2:	DATA COLLECTION TOOLS	102
APPENDIX 2.1:	GUIDELINES FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: POLICY MAKERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL	102
APPENDIX 2.2:	GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUPS: PUBLIC SECTOR, CSOS AND NGOS THAT WORK WITH A SPECIFIC GROUP	103
APPENDIX 2.3:	GUIDELINES FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: POLICY MAKERS, CSOS, NGOS AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL	106
APPENDIX 2.4:	GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUPS: COMMUNITY LEADERS	107
APPENDIX 2.5:	GUIDELINES FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS: YOUTH NEETS (AGED 18–24 YEARS)	108
APPENDIX 2.6:	GUIDELINES FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS: PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF YOUTH NEET	111
APPENDIX 3:	ETHICAL PRINCIPLES	114
APPENDIX 4:	PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS	116
APPENDIX 5:	VALIDATION WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS	129

List of Tables

Table 1: Selection criteria of provinces	14
Table 2: Sample description	15
Table 3: Youth and adults who want to participate in training in 2016 and 2021	26
Table 4: Top three provinces with highest youth NEET rate in each region in 2020	31
Table 5: Youth NEET by educational attainment in 2021	34
Table 6: Youth NEET desire to engage in education, employment and training	35
Table 7: Reasons for NEET status of youth who want to develop skills and are ready to work by education level	36
Table 8: Reasons for not developing skills among youth NEET who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work by educational level	39

List of Figures

Figure 1: Share of population aged 15 or older by education attainment, 2016 and 2020	19
Figure 2: Reasons for school dropout	21
Figure 3: Labour force participation rate in 2016 and 2021 by sex	22
Figure 4: Youth employment in 2016 and 2021 by industry (Percentage)	22
Figure 5: Youth employment status in 2016 and 2021 (Percentage)	23
Figure 6: Youth and adult unemployment rate, 2016–2021	25
Figure 7: Time-related underemployment in Thailand (thousands), 2016–2021	25
Figure 8: Share of youth (aged 15–24 years) and their activity in 2016 and 2021	27
Figure 9: Share of youth NEET in Thailand, 2016–2020 (Percentage)	28
Figure 10: Share of male NEET in Thailand, 2016–2020 (Percentage)	28
Figure 11: Share of female NEET in Thailand, 2016–2020 (Percentage)	29
Figure 12: Share of youth NEET by age and sex, 2021 (Percentage)	29
Figure 13: Share of youth NEET by rural and urban areas, 2021 (Percentage)	30
Figure 14: Share of youth NEET by region, 2021 (Percentage)	30
Figure 15: Share of youth NEET by province, 2016 and 2021 (Percentage)	32
Figure 16: Share of youth NEET by educational level and gender	33

Figure 17: Reasons for NEET status of youth who want to develop skills and are ready to work	35
Figure 18: Youth NEET who want to develop skills and are ready to work by urban and rural areas (Percentage)	37
Figure 19: Reasons for not being ready to work among youth NEET who want to develop skills, but are not ready to work (Percentage)	37
Figure 20: Youth NEET who want to develop skills, but are not ready to work by gender (Percentage)	38
Figure 21: Reasons for not developing skills among youth NEET who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work (Percentage)	38
Figure 22: Reasons for not seeking jobs among youth who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work (Percentage)	40
Figure 23: Youth NEET who do not want to develop skills, and are not ready to work by urban and rural area (Percentage)	40
Figure 24: Reasons for NEET status among youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training, 2021 (Percentage)	41
Figure 25: Youth NEET who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training, by gender, 2021 (Percentage)	41
Figure 26: Reasons for NEET status among female youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training, 2021 (Percentage)	42
Figure 27: Reasons for NEET status among youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training by rural and urban areas, 2021 (Percentage)	42
Figure 28: Reasons for NEET status among youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training by region, 2021 (Percentage)	43
Figure 29: Factors putting youth at risk of becoming NEET	46
Figure 30: Map of interventions relating to youth NEET in Thailand	67
Figure 31: Proposed multisectoral model of governance and coordination for youth NEET	79

Acknowledgements

This research project was led by UNICEF Thailand in partnership with the College of Population Studies and Social Science Research Institute through Chula Unisearch and the Collaborating Centre for Labour Research (CU-COLLAR). The research team comprised:

Name	Affiliation	Role
Ruttiya Bhula-or	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Lead researcher
Chadatan Osatis	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Researcher
Montakarn Chimmamee	Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University	Researcher
Pichayanin Chuaynukoon	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Project Assistant
Nalat Chillananda	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Project Assistant
Ketchuda Rodngern	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Project Assistant
Nawapat Choosuwan	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Project Assistant
Chaiwut Thepho	Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University	Field Researcher
Manasnun Pinpitak	Phetchabun Rajabhat University	Field Researcher
Phatrapim Thongwan	Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University	Field Researcher
Pichitra Patipat	Burapha University	Field Researcher
Niyawahay Paiboon	Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus	Field Researcher
Natchanan Traiwattanawong	Muban Chombueng Rajabhat University	Field Researcher
Thanakorn Panyasaisophon	Nakhon Ratchasima College	Field Researcher
Thaweessak Pi	Academic Cooperation Network for Conflict Resolution and Development in the Southern Border Provinces	Field Researcher

The research was overseen by UNICEF Thailand (Ilaria Favero and Vilasa Phongsathorn). Valuable inputs were provided by Sarah Shahyar, Aarti Saihjee, Oscar Ernesto Huertas Diaz, Nataliya Borodchuk, Sirirath Chunnasart and Rubkwan Tharmmapornphilas from UNICEF Thailand and Cristina Mereuta and Maria Rosenstock from the European Training Foundation (ETF). The report was edited by Laura Evans.

UNICEF and Chulalongkorn University are grateful for the contributions of the Steering Committee members listed below:

Name	Organization
Committee members	
Pruchyawan Vananan	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
Jiraporn Sodagul	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
Supachai Pathumnakul	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (Vice Permanent Secretary)
Pawida Songchaitarawech	Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior
Rasika Channarong	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour
Korkrit Benjakul	Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour
Sara Binyoh	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
Jeerada Thammaphimuk	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
Pavinee Sumoltri	Department of Children and Youth, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
Pataraporn Laowong	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council
Advisory members	
Thantida Wongprasong	Equitable Education Fund
Orawan Saowapat	Friends International

Abbreviations

ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies	NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer	NESDC	National Economic and Social Development Council
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	NESDP	National Economic and Social Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CYCT	Children and Youth Council of Thailand	NSO	National Statistical Office
DCY	Department of Children and Youth	OBEC	Office of the Basic Education Commission
DOE	Department of Employment	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
DSD	Department of Skill Development	O-NET	Ordinary National Educational Test
EAPRO	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office	ONIE	Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education
EEF	Equitable Education Fund	OVEC	Office of Vocational Education Commission
ETF	European Training Foundation	PES	Public Employment Services
EWE	E-Workforce Ecosystem	PMT	Proxy Means Test
FGD	Focus group discussion	PWDs	People with disabilities
FTI	Federation of Thai Industries	SAO	Sub-district Administration Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SDS	Skills Development Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization	SEC	Sustainability & Entrepreneurship Centre, Sasin School of Management
ILOSTAT	International Labour Statistics	SIF	Social Innovation Foundation
iSEE	Information System for Equitable Education	SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
KII	Key informant interview	TCC	Thai Chamber of Commerce
LFP	Labour Force Participation	TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute
LFS	Labour Force Survey	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MHESRI	Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
MOE	Ministry of Education	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
MOF	Ministry of Finance	VET	Vocational Education and Training
MOI	Ministry of Interior		
MOJ	Ministry of Justice		
MOL	Ministry of Labour		
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health		
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding		
MSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security		



Executive summary

Background

The rising share of youth (aged 15–24 years) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Thailand represents a concerning social and economic phenomenon. Youth NEET constitute an obstacle to economic growth, hampering productivity and competitiveness for the whole country, especially when this condition persists for a prolonged period. For Thailand, the issue is particularly pressing as the country is now an aged society: while 20 per cent of the Thai population are aged 60 or over (Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2015; National Statistical Office (NSO), 2011–2020), the youth population aged between 15–24 years has decreased, from 9.6 million in 2016 to 9.2 million in 2021 (NSO, 2016; NSO, 2021). This demographic shift brings opportunities but also challenges, including an increase in the dependency ratio of older persons, and a corresponding decrease in labour force participation rate, both of which will inevitably have a long-term effect on the country's socioeconomic advancement.

In this context, investment in human capital development is critical. However, while skilled youth are crucial for Thailand's progress to meet the targets of the National 20-Year Strategy (2018–2037), the latest figures from the International Labour Organization (ILO) show that nearly 1.4 million (or 15 per cent) youth aged 15–24 years are NEET (ILO, 2021). Furthermore, the number of youth in the labour force declined from 4.8 million in 2011 to 3.7 million in 2021 (NSO, 2011; 2021), and the youth unemployment rate increased from 5.8 per cent to 8.2 per cent and 8.6 per cent in the third quarter in 2019 and 2021, respectively (NSO, 2021). The unemployment rate among recent university graduates also steadily increased, particularly in the second quarter of 2021, when the number of unemployed bachelor's degree graduates reached 290,000.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated circumstances surrounding youth access to quality education and employment opportunities. Besides contributing to learning losses, the pandemic led to longer job search periods and an increase in the time-related unemployment rate, both of which increase the risk of workers becoming discouraged (defined as having given up on finding a job). Meanwhile, skill requirements and employment scenarios have shifted in numerous industries. Many workers lost their jobs – temporarily or permanently – and some will need to undergo training to upskill or reskill if they wish to participate competitively in the job market (Pattarapatumthong, 2021).

Youth who are NEET are exposed to a high risk of poverty and social exclusion, as they often lack the means to improve their skills and competences. Improving employment, educational and training opportunities, and promoting social inclusion among disadvantaged youth, has therefore become a prime policy concern for the Royal Thai Government in its ambitions to become a high-income country.

Despite this, there has been little research on the factors that contribute to Thailand's NEET situation. The NEET group is varied, consisting of early school leavers, unemployed youth who are seeking work, and youth who are disengaged or discouraged, as well as those outside the labour force for other reasons (such as family carers, teenage mothers, or youth with disabilities). The risk factors leading a young person to become NEET are also manifold, including gender, low educational attainment and lack of appropriate skills, poor socioeconomic conditions, migration, ethnic background, health status and disability, family and/or home environment, and geographical location (Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) & UNICEF, 2020). As NEETs are not a homogeneous group, different support packages are required to address the various types of vulnerabilities they face. Yet a lack of data (particularly qualitative data) impedes a thorough understanding of the situation and the background of NEETs in Thailand, which is crucial to design well-targeted policies and services to address the barriers contributing towards youth NEET status (TDRI & UNICEF, 2020).

For policy makers and service providers to design the most cost-effective and targeted strategies, programmes and budgets to respond to the needs of NEETs and ultimately reduce the NEET rate, tackling information gaps for these unprotected groups is the first step in developing appropriate and targeted policy interventions. Identifying the reasons for youth vulnerability and the determinants for being a NEET is fundamental for policy makers and service providers to understand different NEET groups and design targeted policy interventions, particularly during and after COVID-19, when the socioeconomic landscape has changed significantly.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of youth NEET in Thailand, investigate the factors that contribute to their exclusion from the education system and the labour market, identify gaps in existing policies and services, and make recommendations for developing effective interventions to reduce the youth NEET population.

Key findings

Currently, Thailand has two major human development frameworks relevant to youth NEET, the 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037) and the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) (2023–2027), announced in October 2022. However, the primary authorities responsible for executing and developing specific policies to address youth NEET are diverse, posing challenges for cohesive collaboration. Key challenges that require attention include the absence of political leadership and commitment at the highest level of government with a long-term vision that supports policy coherence; lack of a public facilitator to ensure synergy across the employment, education, and training domains; the short-term and temporary nature of budget/resources allocation; and dispersed projects and activities for youth. While there are existing programmes and services in Thailand to address youth disengagement provided by the government, the private sector, and CSOs, they are mostly on a limited scale and widespread accessibility remains an issue, especially for the most disadvantaged youth, and the degree and responsiveness of measures varies between provinces. The term “NEET” is also not widely understood among public sector actors.

Sociocultural factors play a significant role in the likelihood of becoming NEET, and young women are more exposed to the risks associated with NEET status. A total of 70 per cent of the NEET group in Thailand are female, most of whom dropped out of school due to pregnancy or caring responsibilities (TDRI, 2020). Interviews in this study supported findings from the literature that females are more likely to be NEET than males due to sociocultural factors, and that youth female NEETs are more likely to be engaged in housework or responsible for caring for a newborn or elderly family member, and less encouraged by parents to move away from the home and pursue a career path. As a result, female NEETs report having insufficient time for skills development training or further education, a factor which may also be linked to economic deprivation.

Likewise, age is a significant factor, as the NEET rate is found to be higher in youth aged 20 to 24 years than for those aged 15 to 19 years. This is mainly because young people in Thailand tend to stay in education longer, thanks to the country's generous education policy. Despite this, the majority of youth NEET in Thailand only complete lower secondary education. A lower level of educational attainment therefore also determines NEET status, with those who have left school early or who have not continued their studies beyond secondary level more likely to struggle to access a wider range of employment opportunities or believe that education does not offer tangible benefits.

Youth with disabilities also face significant challenges accessing educational and employment opportunities. Their education may have been limited or interrupted due to schools' inability to accommodate their disability needs, or they may face barriers in the search for meaningful work due to stereotypes regarding the capabilities of people with disabilities, as well as accessibility and transportation issues.

Migrant youth and ethnic groups face significant challenges to education and work, including language barriers, stereotyping and administrative barriers (i.e., not having an ID card). While migrant youth may be able to access work, the roles are mostly low-paid or low-skilled. COVID-19 also forced the migration of many families, either back to their hometowns or in search of employment. The study found that relocation is a key cause of school drop out for youth whose families migrate for work.

Poverty is another crucial factor affecting NEET status. The study found that youth from low-income households had a higher probability of becoming NEET compared to other groups. Many youth have to drop out of school to work, or because their families cannot afford the hidden costs of education. In the 2021 academic year, approximately 1.9 million ultra-poor and poor students were "at risk" of dropping out of school (Equitable Education Fund (EEF), 2021). Youth who drop out of education tend to end up working in low-skilled or low-paying jobs that perpetuate a cycle of poverty, particularly among poor families, and face an increased risk that their existing skills will become obsolete and no longer meet market demands.

Geographical location also plays a role in determining NEET. This study found that Thailand's poorer provinces and rural areas have a higher proportion of NEET youth than the more prosperous provinces and urban areas, with the Northeastern region accounting for the highest youth NEET share, while the lowest youth NEET share was found in Bangkok.

Parents, communities and peers can have a strong influence over whether a youth becomes NEET. Interventions to address NEET status are more likely to succeed if parents/guardians as well as members of the youth's social circle are engaged in prevention and response measures. Youth with divorced or separated parents have a higher risk of being NEET, while living with an unemployed household member also increases the risk of being NEET. Likewise, lack of communication/support from parental figure increases the likelihood of becoming NEET, as does parents' education level. Homeless youth are even more vulnerable, as they tend to lack skills and are at risk of coming into conflict with the law.

A key issue highlighted by youth NEET, their parents and employers is a lack of career guidance and opportunities to develop the skills needed to successfully enter the labour market. While a competency-based curriculum was introduced in 2021 as part of the Thai education system reform, stakeholder feedback suggested school curricula still lack opportunities for youth to develop skills required for the current and future labour market, as well as non-cognitive skills to foster lifelong learning abilities and mindsets. Interviews revealed that the majority of youth NEET who left school consider the education curriculum to be irrelevant to the job market or careers they wish to pursue. Challenges also persist concerning the Thai vocational education and training (VET) system, including quality issues, a fragmented system, and limited progression pathways for VET students to pursue general or academic programmes, rendering it an unattractive option for many.

Skills mismatch is another problem in Thailand noted by stakeholders. This is mainly due to the lack of easily accessible information and forecasts on current and future labour market opportunities and on the required skill set of the labour force. Skills mismatch is a critical barrier to labour market participation and employment, as it inhibits youth from making informed decisions about their future. Youth NEETs and parents interviewed in this study also reported being mostly unaware of the existence of the public employment services (PES) and training opportunities offered by the Department of Employment (DOE). In Thailand, systematic support to enhance youth entrepreneurship is also lacking, both in terms of specialised training and mentorship to build youth entrepreneurial mindsets and skills, and provision of start-up funds and incentives.

Key recommendations

To address the NEET issue in Thailand, the following recommendations are offered. The recommendations are based on the existing challenges confronting youth, national goals, and the comparative advantages of stakeholders.

Legislation, policy and strategy

- Establish a national integrated NEET plan to be endorsed and adopted by each relevant ministry to promote policy cohesion and facilitate better transitions for young people from education to employment or training.
- Develop an integrated monitoring system to track school-to-work transitions for youth, including youth NEET.
- Promote life skills education and multi-stage life assessment in the school curriculum, along with the development of soft skills through work experience or project-based activities, starting from elementary level.
- Promote work-based learning programmes for youth, in collaboration with the private sector, to help align their knowledge, skills and capabilities with the demands of employers and prevent disengagement.
- Review financial and non-financial incentives for employers to offer quality work placements for youth.
- Adapt the VET system to provide more flexible programmes (for example, part-time or modular modes of study), and harness new technologies to increase access to a broad set of courses and practical experiences, with a skills qualification system in place to accredit years of experience.
- Expand PES outreach through both online and offline channels and ensure sufficient capacity to offer tailored support packages to meet youth needs, especially NEETs.
- Strengthen Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) and employment services to expand opportunities for youth employment, (re)training and entrepreneurship, including a mentorship programme, consolidated career orientation, guidance and counselling, and job matching services, as well as access to financial support such as loans and start-up funds.

Leadership, governance and oversight

- Develop an institutional structure to guide policy integration across all levels of government and across ministries as well as to support quality assurance and accountability.
- Establish a National Committee for NEET, led by key relevant ministries, to oversee efforts at national and sub-national levels to address the NEET issue in Thailand.
- Improve coordination and governance at administrative and implementation levels by adding the youth NEET agenda to an existing provincial-level committee.

Service delivery

- Act early and strengthen early warning systems and tracking capabilities in secondary schools to identify adolescents at risk of dropping out alongside additional resources, including capacity-building and individual case management to keep adolescents engaged in education and training.
- Develop a recognition system for non-formal and informal learning pathways for all young people as well as adults.
- Establish one-stop service centres at the sub-district level across the country to provide integrated service delivery for youth at local level. The one-stop service centres should serve as accessible hubs for all youth, disseminating information about available public services and support packages relating to education and employment through a targeted communication strategy.
- Develop an open-source digital platform for case referral and follow-up, as well as strengthening collaboration between civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups who conduct outreach to connect with disengaged youth.
- Develop tailor-made support packages and individual case management for specific NEET groups and their families to enable reintegration in the short-term.
- Develop a targeted communication strategy to reach youth NEET, utilizing both offline and online channels.

Human resources

- Promote a common understanding of the term “NEET” among policy makers, service providers and across sectors.
- Enhance the capacity of career counsellors in schools and public employment services to deliver up-to-date labour market information through pre-service and in-service training and systematic information sharing of best practices in collaboration with the private sector (for example, the Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) and the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI)).
- Provide teachers and school guidance counsellors with training to effectively support students with career planning and utilization of digital tools.
- Ensure sufficient human resources at the local level, and provide training for field officers on conducting outreach and reactivation of disengaged youth.
- Develop youth work occupational standards and professional qualifications for youth workers to enhance the capabilities of service providers working with and for young people.

Budget and financing

- Improve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of youth employability policies and programmes to support evidence-based budget prioritization for youth NEET.
- Ensure that the needs of youth NEET are reflected in national financing plans and budgets, and that sufficient and long-term resources are allocated.
- Develop a minimum integrated services package for youth NEET to allow more accurate costing of services.
- Utilize existing public funds for local level resourcing of programmes to support youth NEET.
- Review the extent to which upper secondary education is “free” and proactively explore extending the targeted funding support currently available to vulnerable students from the Equitable Education Fund in compulsory education (primary and lower secondary) to upper secondary education.

Data, information and research

- Promote routine data collection and analysis of information to build evidence for tailored actions, effective policy and programme planning and adequate resource allocation to address the NEET issue.
- Develop a centralized, digitized database with regular updates to facilitate stakeholder data sharing and exchange of best practices.
- Strengthen labour market information systems to facilitate effective diagnostics and forecasting and integrate statistics on youth NEET into national statistics.
- Conduct additional research on the role of gender and the care economy in contributing to higher rates of NEET among young women in Thailand; and how can access to affordable and quality childcare services for young children improve their labour market participation.

Community engagement

- Raise awareness among parents on the importance of education and training and on existing services through community mechanisms, including the support of village heads, religious leaders, community volunteers, and youth leaders (such as local members of the Children and Youth Council (CYC)).
- Promote supportive community and positive peer influences (for example, existing youth networks such as CYCs) to encourage and motivate youth to remain in or seek out education and training programmes.
- Engage youth, especially youth NEETs and the most marginalised, in programme design and implementation, as well as M&E, to ensure relevance of interventions (such as apprenticeship, traineeship and internship schemes) and sustain development impact over time.



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Thailand has made tremendous progress in social and economic development over the past four decades, shifting from a low-income to an upper middle-income nation. Impressive gains along multiple dimensions of welfare have also been achieved, including more children getting more years of education, and a social protection system that is relatively comprehensive taking care of people in all age ranges. Due to its continuous strong growth and remarkable poverty reduction, the country is largely regarded as a development success story (World Bank, 2022).

However, in recent years, Thailand has faced several challenges, including a stagnation in productivity and increasing competition from regional neighbours, which have hampered its export-led growth. Moreover, in 2021, Thailand became a complete aged society, where the proportion of persons aged 60 or above reaches 20 per cent of the total population (Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2015; NSO, 2011–2020). This will inevitably have a long-term impact on the country's socioeconomic progress due to increased spending on pension and healthcare costs, posing a constraint on future growth.

At the same time, many youth in Thailand are experiencing difficulties in either completing their education, transitioning successfully from education to work, or finding decent employment. This is reflected in the rate of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in employment, education or training (NEET). According to the ILO, in 2019, 1.4 million Thai youth were classified as NEET. Of the total male and female youth aged 15–24, 10 per cent and 19 per cent are NEET, respectively (ILO, 2020).

In this context, human capital and investment has become even more critical to facilitate a swift and resilient socioeconomic growth. It is vital that youth are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the labour market and support the country's development. Thailand's 12th NESDP (2017–2021) was implemented with the goal of providing Thai people of all ages with the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to live meaningful

lives, and encouraging systematic thinking, creativity, and essential working skills in youth.¹ However, the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected socioeconomic conditions in the country. Numerous jobs were lost, disproportionately affecting low-income families, workers with limited education, and migrant workers. Consequently, policy implementation was slower than expected.

The pandemic's severe economic implications have disproportionately affected young people (ILO, 2021). The crisis has been particularly severe in three dimensions: (1) disruptions to education, training, and work-based learning; (2) decreased employment prospects for young jobseekers and new entrants; and (3) job and income losses, along with declining employment quality, leading to a dramatic decline in youth employment and a surge in youth unemployment, especially among young women.

In terms of disruption to education, school closures during the pandemic exacerbated inequalities and resulted in lost educational opportunities, affecting vulnerable students the most. Children and youth with lower socioeconomic status and rural or migrant backgrounds had fewer opportunities for learning at home and often lacked the digital skills and/or internet access and technology needed to participate in remote learning (Tongliemnak, Maheen & Yeung, 2021). In the absence of direct student-teacher interactions, education has become much more reliant on the ability of parents and other family members to serve as teachers. As parents or caregivers' teaching abilities vary, this has increased student's learning disparities both within schools and broader education systems (Donnelly and Patrinos, 2022). School closures and inability to engage in online learning were cited as key reasons for students dropping out during the COVID-19 pandemic (United Nations, 2020). Household poverty was another key factor. A reduction in household income due to pandemic-related restrictions or job losses affected the ability of households to pay for their children's education and placed increased pressure on youth to work to supplement the household income. Households may also have been forced to migrate to look for work, also resulting in children having to drop out of school. As a result, the dropout rate of students reached 238,707 in 2021, increasing from 52,000 dropouts and 109,000 non-transitions in 2019 (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2022; UNICEF, 2019c).

In terms of impacts on employment, youth were disproportionately affected by a reduction in working hours, income, and jobs, as they are over-represented in specific industries particularly sensitive to lockdown measures, including food and beverage services, retail sales, wholesale, automotive and motorcycle repair, production of food products, and other personal service activities (Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2020). This is reflected in a rise in youth unemployment rates, which increased from 5.8 per cent in 2019 to 8.6 per cent in 2021 (NSO, 2011–2021), and time-related underemployment,² which reached 91,120 persons in 2021, compared to 47,575 persons in 2019 (ILOSTAT, 2022a).

Similarly, training requirements and in-demand skill sets have rapidly changed as a result of the pandemic (ILO, Department of Skills Development (DSD), & Chulalongkorn University, forthcoming). While the industrial sector increasingly requires low-skilled individuals to possess multiple and digitally-oriented competencies such as data literacy, digital communication, and analytics, COVID-19 put a halt to in-person, classroom-based skills training. This posed a particular challenge for those with low levels of education, those with disabilities and vulnerable youth who lack access to appropriate tools and equipment for online training. Moreover, the pandemic disrupted the skill assessment and accreditation process, hindering the entry of trainees into the labour market as well as the professional advancement of youth.

The ongoing economic and job market crisis has also negatively impacted young people's mental health, increasing stress, worry, and anxiety about their family income and their ability to continue education (ILO, 2021). A 2022 survey conducted by UNICEF, the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) and the Child and Youth Council of Thailand (CYCT), which gathered responses from a total of 55,641 children and youth aged between 9–25 years,

1 It should be noted that the 13th NESDP (2023–2027) continues to support this goal: Milestone 9 of the 13th NESDP aims to facilitate social upward mobility and reduce income and wealth disparities, including through the provision of equal access to quality education for children from poorer families, while Milestone 12 of the 13th NESDP explicitly emphasizes human resource development and the need to improve the quality of education and training and promote lifelong learning.

2 The time-related underemployment rate is defined as the proportion of employed individuals who are willing and available to work additional hours but worked fewer than a specified number of hours during the reference period.

revealed that 33.1 per cent of respondents experienced concerns and worries, while 3 per cent reported having suicide thoughts. The survey also found that 36.1 per cent of respondents noticed an increase in the number of adolescents and youth becoming NEET due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the significance of the youth NEET issue, there is limited research on the factors contributing to Thailand's NEET situation (Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul & Thongwan, 2020; TDRI, 2020; Sustainability & Entrepreneurship Center (SEC), Sasin School of Management & UNICEF, 2021). There is a need to build a foundation of evidence to advance the country's NEET agenda and provide equity-focused and evidence-based suggestions for creating policies and strategies to address the NEET phenomenon, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, where the socioeconomic landscape has significantly changed.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of youth NEET in Thailand, investigate the factors that contribute to their exclusion from employment, education or training, identify gaps in existing policies and service interventions and make actionable recommendations for developing effective interventions to reduce the country's NEET population. In addition, the study contributes to the development of a body of knowledge about Thai education and the labour market, as well as identify factors that may arise because of inequality, and promote policies that bridge the gaps between education, training and the labour market for Thai youth.

1.2 Study objectives

The study has four main objectives:

1. To provide an overview of the NEET phenomenon in Thailand by providing a brief overview of the country's present economic and labour market conditions, including recent labour market developments, young people's educational and employment performance and labour market outcomes, and available statistics on the labour market effect of the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. To determine the composition, causes, risk factors, and drivers of Thailand's youth NEET population, including an estimate of its number, profile, transition routes, and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. To conduct a review and analysis of the availability, coverage, and efficacy of existing policies, initiatives, and support services implemented in Thailand to address the NEET problem, including opportunities and gaps;
4. To provide policy findings and suggestions to assist the Thai government and other relevant stakeholders in addressing challenges faced by the youth NEET population, focusing on concrete solutions for prevention, reintegration, and compensation measures.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework provides a multi- and inter-disciplinary understanding of youth NEET.

Human Capital

Human capital is a concept that recognizes that humans can add value through investment. It emphasizes that human abilities and knowledge are a form of capital that must be developed and cultivated in order to become valuable. According to Schultz (1961), human capital refers to a person's inherent abilities and knowledge that is just as valuable as any other type of capital. Individual characteristics that develop over time are consequences of strengthening, accumulating, and collecting since childhood. It begins with families, society, schools and educational institutions at various levels, including experiential learning via formal and informal activities (Wongthongdee, 2014), as well as individual human capital accumulation. A person can increase their monetary and intangible capital, such as skills, knowledge, abilities, or experience, throughout life. There are three primary

channels for increasing human capital, including (1) family inputs; (2) quality schooling; and (3) labour market or on-the-job training for individuals transitioning from education to work (Acemoglu & Autor, 2012; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). An inherent lifelong learning attitude can also enable self-improvement. Alternatively, an employer may increase capital through the provision of training or opportunities for self-improvement for employees.

As the workforce ages, cumulative income increases, indicating a positive return on investment. However, as people age, their investment in human capital begins to diminish. As a result, the rate of return on income growth is reduced as human capital accumulation is decelerated. Work experience is another crucial factor. Human capital accumulation can increase alongside years of employment experience. If an individual begins working late, it slows the accumulation of experience capital, thereby reducing the likelihood of a return on capital accumulation (Barro, 2001; Krueger & Lindahl, 2000). Thus, if human capital is not accumulated early in life through education and work experience, it can have a profound effect on each individual's capital accumulation and the accumulation of national capital both in the short- and long-term.

Human Development Ecological Model

Ecology is a biological term that refers to the relationship between living things and their environment. Much of the research on the concept of ecology with humans aims to determine how human behaviours are related to one another and to the environment. The ecology concept posits that human behaviour is shaped by individual factors as well as environmental subsystems, including family, workplace, community, social relationships, traditions and cultures, economics, politics and living environment (Sallis, Owen, & Fisher, 2008). As such, most behaviours are the result of thinking, learning, and cultural beliefs about one's own culture that are transmitted through cultural tradition.

The analysis in this study adapted the ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1994), which hypothesized that human development could be influenced by a variety of factors as follows:

1. Microsystem factors such as activity patterns, social roles, and direct experiences in which individuals have face-to-face interactions with peers, school friends, co-workers, and family members, which is the most intimate interaction with oneself;
2. Mesosystem factors, which interact between at least two microsystems caused by the environment, in which both environments have a direct effect on individual development;
3. Exosystem factors, which interact between two or more environments, one of which has a direct effect on a person's development, and another environment has an indirect effect;
4. Macrosystem factors, which are the most extensive system in society, comprising all the systems mentioned previously, including social, cultural, belief systems, customs, and way of life; and
5. Chronosystem factors, which include changing factors over the life course such as family structure, employment and residence.

1.4 Key definitions

Youth: The study adopts the United Nations definition of youth as individuals between 15 and 24 years.³

Not in Employment, Education or Training: “The share of youth not in employment, education, or training (also known as ‘the NEET rate’) refers to the number of young people not in education, employment or training as a percentage of the total youth population” (ILO, n.d.). It gives a measure of youth who are not in education, training or work, and thus serves as a larger measure of the prospective youth labour market, covering young people who are not in school or training who are also not in the labour force. This indicator also provides a more accurate picture of the current universe of possible young labour market entrants than the youth inactivity rate, because the latter includes youth who are not working but are in school, and thus cannot be regarded as currently available for employment. In this study, NEET refers to those who are neither employed nor enrolled in education or training between the ages of 15 and 24. NEETs meet two criteria, namely: (i) they are unemployed or inactive, and (ii) they have received no education or training. To clearly define NEET, the following definitions of employment, education and training are provided:

Employment is defined by the ILO as follows: “Persons in employment are defined as all those of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. They comprise employed persons “at work”; i.e., persons who worked in a job for at least one hour; and employed persons “not at work” due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flexitime and compensatory leave for overtime)” (ILO, 2022). Based on this definition, persons engaged in economic activities leading to income generation can also be considered as employed.

Education is defined as “The processes by which societies deliberately transmit their accumulated information, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values, skills, competencies and behaviours across generations. It involves communication designed to bring about learning” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2012). Education can take place through three distinct environments: (1) formal education in education and training institutions, which is usually structured around curriculum goals and objectives, and is typically supervised by a teacher; (2) non-formal education in addition to or in instead of formal education, which is typically conducted in community-based, workplace-based, or civil society-based settings; and (3) informal contexts including daily life, the family unit, and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks feels, or acts, whether unintended or purposeful (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2012).

Training can take place and be provided by a system of schools, colleges, universities, and other formal educational institutions, whereas non-formal training is defined as training provided by any organized and sustained learning activities that do not precisely correspond to the above definition. Training may include educational programmes to teach adult literacy, life skills, career skills, and general culture, depending on country circumstances (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022a).

Life skills: Life skills are a set of cross cutting, interconnected and overlapping abilities, attitudes and socio-emotional competencies that enable individuals to learn, make informed decisions and exercise rights to lead a healthy and productive life, covering four dimensions: learning, employability, personal empowerment and active citizenship. These skills include creativity, problem solving, negotiation, decision-making, communication, self-management empathy, respect for diversity, and participation (UNICEF, 2019a; 2019b).

³ It is worth noting that Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children as individuals under the age of 18.

1.5 Research Methodology

The study research is derived from multiple sources and comprehensive analyses, conducted between January and October 2022 (see detailed research methodology in Appendix 1). The data collection tools (see Appendix 2) were developed and tested in consultation with experts and key stakeholders working on youth-related programmes. A multisectoral Steering Committee was also established to offer direction, monitoring and support for the project.

Firstly, **a desk review was conducted** of previously collected data and documents, publications, journal articles, reports, as well as legislations and regulations governing NEETs, published between 2000 and 2022. The desk review was carried out to investigate labour market outcomes for youth in Thailand, including the personal characteristics of youth NEET, using a combination of survey and administrative data sources, such as the Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and Skills Development Surveys (SDS) of the NSO. The research team also analysed relevant laws and regulations dated back further than the year 2000, if they were promulgated and/or remained applicable in the present.

A mixed-method sequential explanatory research was then conducted with two distinct phases: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data analysis provided a general understanding of the profiles of the youth NEET, while the qualitative research complemented and explained the statistical results by exploring participants' views in greater depth, including an analysis of factors that influence youth to become NEET.

The study **analysed microdata** from the 2021 SDS conducted by the NSO, including a detailed description of the personal characteristics and living conditions of youth NEET. Data on youth NEET was disaggregated by gender and age; number of household members; geographical area; degree of urbanization; educational attainment level; and household characteristics. Due to limitation of the SDS in terms of possible influential factors of becoming NEET, a countrywide data set from Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul and Thongwan (2020), which covered 2,206 households from six provinces in all regions in Thailand, was used to supplement analysis at the household level.

Target provinces for the qualitative analysis were identified based on the most recent data set of the SDS at the time of the research design. The study's scope of work covered all six geographical regions in Thailand: Bangkok Metropolitan Area, Central, East, North, Northeast, and South. As shown in Table 1 below, the selection criteria of the provinces were guided by two factors: the maximum weighted average and the highest NEET rate in the region. For the first criteria, six provinces were selected: Bangkok, Samut Prakan, Chonburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Chiang Mai and Nakhon Si Thammarat. For the second criteria, five provinces were selected: Chai Nat, Sa Kaeo, Nong Bua Lam Phu, Phetchabun, and Narathiwat. An additional province, Pattani, was also added to reflect youth characteristics and specific sociocultural factors in the Southern Border provinces area.

Table 1: Selection criteria of provinces

Region	Selected regional representative by the maximum weighted average in the region	Share of youth NEET in the region	Share of youth NEET in the province	Selected province by the highest NEET rate of each region	Share of youth NEET in the province
Bangkok Metropolitan Area	Bangkok		8.1%		
Central	Samut Prakan	22%	11.7%	Chainat	20.9%
East	Chonburi	35%	16.1%	Sa Kaeo	21.5%
Northeast	Nakhon Ratchasima	17%	19.2%	Nong Bua Lam Phu	33.5%
North	Chiang Mai	13.6%	9.6%	Phetchabun	18.8%
South	Nakhon Si Thammarat	10.4%	16.6%	Narathiwat	26.2%
				Pattani	19.8%

Source: Skills Development Survey in 2020, estimated by the authors.

A total of **72 key informant interviews (KIIs)** were conducted to gather qualitative information. At the national level, the qualitative research included **16 KIIs with policy makers, legislators, ministry officials and key CSOs and NGOs** working in various regions of Thailand to assess the availability, coverage and effectiveness of existing policies and measures or support services implemented in the country to address the NEET phenomenon, along with opportunities and gaps (Table 2).

To differentiate the influences and risks associated with NEET status in different geographical areas, **56 online KIIs were conducted at the provincial level** between May and June 2022, including provincial social officers, provincial education officers, provincial labour officers, representatives of the FTI, TCC and CSOs.

A total of **18 focus group discussions (FGDs)** were conducted. Six FGDs were carried out between March and April 2022 with **42 stakeholders at the national level working with the following youth NEET groups:** (1) youth with disabilities; (2) pregnant teens or teen parents; (3) ethnic minority and migrant youth; (4) youth in conflict with the law; (5) poor, disadvantaged and homeless youth; and (6) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) youth. In addition, twelve FGDs were conducted with **59 community leaders and CSO staff** at the provincial level (based in urban and rural areas). The objectives of the FGDs were to capture the availability, coverage and effectiveness of existing policies and measures affecting youth NEET and to gather recommendations for addressing the youth NEET problem.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak had not subsided in May 2022, the research team was unable to enter the field. **Field researchers were then recruited and trained by the lead researchers to carry out data collection** between June and August of 2022 in all target provinces, except Bangkok. A two-day online training on the data collection tools and methods was held with field researchers in May and early June 2022.

The recruitment of youth NEET and their parents/guardians was conducted through **purposive sampling** to collect the perspectives and experiences of males and females, as well as those living in rural and urban areas. In total, **120 youth NEET and 120 parents/guardians of youth NEET were interviewed.** The interviewees comprised various groups of youth NEET, including youth with a disability or chronic illness, members of an ethnic or religious minority, members of low-income households, families headed by migrants, youth in conflict with the law, and youth with substance abuse problems.

Table 2: Sample description

	1. Policy makers/ CSOs/ NGOs at national level	2. Key stakeholders working with different groups of youth NEET	3. Policy makers, CSOs/ NGOs, private sectors at provincial level	4. Community leaders in every targeted province	5. Youth NEETs (aged 18–24 years)	6. Parents/ guardians of youth NEETs	Total
	National level	National level	Provincial level	Provincial level	Provincial level	Provincial level	
	KIIs	FGDs	KIIs	FGDs	KIIs	KIIs	
Total (number of persons)	16	42	56	59	120	120	413
Bangkok Metropolitan			3	6	10	10	29
Eastern region							
Chonburi			6	5	10	10	31
Sa Kaeo			5	6	10	10	31
Central region							
Samut Prakan			5	4	10	10	29
Chai Nat			3	4	10	10	27
Northern region							
Chiang Mai			6	6	10	10	32
Phetchabun			3	4	10	10	27
Northeastern region							
Nakhon Ratchasima			5	6	10	10	31
Nong Bua Lam Phu			6	2	10	10	28
Southern region							
Nakhon Si Thammarat			6	6	10	10	32
Narathiwat			5	6	10	10	31
Pattani			3	4	10	10	27

An **online results validation workshop** was organized on 29 September 2022 to present the preliminary results of the study, and to gather feedback from key stakeholders (participants are listed in Appendix 5). The final report was developed based on comments received via the validation workshop.

Limitations

Purposive sampling helped improve the validity and reliability of the research findings by reducing social desirability bias, which can be caused by respondent' desire to provide positive information, as well as reducing retrospective bias, in which past events can be frequently distorted. Data saturation was reached from the interviews with youth NEET and their parents/guardians in the representative provinces. Additional research on children, adolescents and their parents/guardians in other provinces could provide a more nuanced understanding of youth NEET and their transitions.

As data collection in the study was carried out with youth NEET and their parents/guardians to validate and triangulate the risk factors of becoming a NEET, interviews with youth NEET were limited to those living in a family arrangement or those who lived in proximities to their parents/guardians at the time of the interview. NEETs who lived alone were not interviewed. Instead, data on this group was gathered through focus groups with CSOs and community leaders. As such, insights from NEET youth who live alone may not be reflected in detail.

In spite of these limitations, this study provides a multi-layered comprehensive analysis. It widens and improves existing knowledge and identifies knowledge gaps to inform policy, and future research on youth NEET in Thailand.

Ethics approval

This study was conducted in accordance with UNICEF's ethical standards in research, evaluation and data collection (UNICEF, 2021). Ethical approval for the study was obtained in May 2022 from the "Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Participants, Chulalongkorn University" (see Appendix 3).

Key informants and youth who participated in the study provided informed consent/assent. Interviewers ensured that youth and key informants understood the project's nature, purpose, and outcomes to obtain informed consent before the FGDs and KIIs. The interviewees were allowed to leave the FGDs or KIIs at any time during and after the interview.

Without the respondent's informed consent, no name or identifying information was included in the report or shared with authorities or any other individual or organization. All data was anonymised to ensure complete confidentiality. Numerous precautions were taken to protect the participants' privacy and transcripts, including regular password change and installation of anti-virus, firewall, and intrusion detection software to keep external devices and entities out. Audio and video files were password-protected by the data collection teams.

All research participants and parents/guardians of youth participants were given contact information of the research team and ethics committee to facilitate complaint procedures. A complaint mechanism was established by providing the contact information of the project leader to all research participants.



Chapter 2

The situation of youth and youth NEET in Thailand

The following section provides an overview of the situation of youth who are NEET in Thailand, including the overall situation of youth education, employment and training in the country and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; the youth NEET rate; youth NEET characteristics, including gender and age; and the reasons given by NEETs for not engaging in employment, education or training.

2.1 Overall situation of youth education, employment and training in Thailand

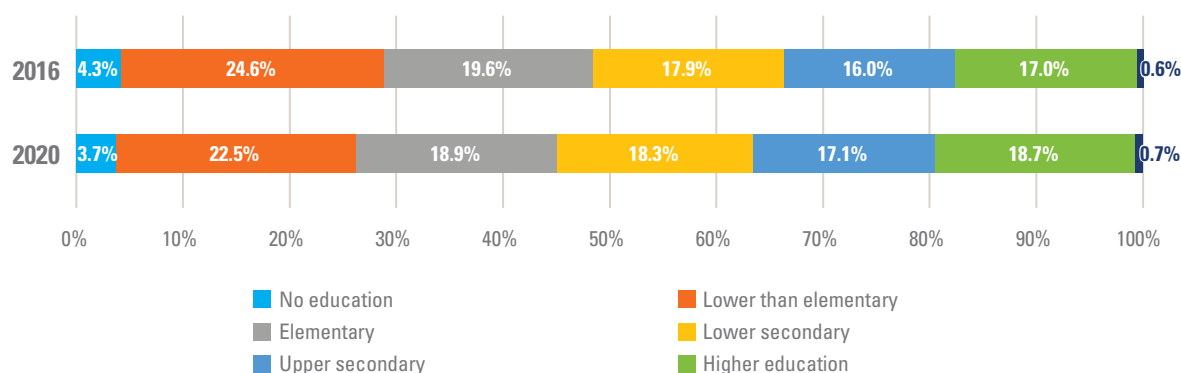
2.1.1 Education

Thailand increased free, basic compulsory education to nine years in 2003. Under this extension, by the age of 15, youth should have completed nine years of compulsory education. After this, youth can choose to continue their studies in the academic track, vocational track, or enter the workforce. The vocational track includes upper-secondary vocational education (leading to a vocational certificate), post-secondary vocational education (leading to a high vocational certificate, diploma or vocational associate degree), and university level (leading to a degree). With the advent of the credit transfer system and the acknowledgment of various sorts of qualifications from various institutions offering vocational training, the shift toward lifelong learning and a learning society has been initiated (MOE, 2008).

Education attainment and dropout

In general, the Thai population has a high proportion of graduates with a higher level of education, implying that formal education is accessible (Figure 1). Between 2016 and 2021, the share of graduates from higher education increased from 17.0 to 19.2 per cent, while the proportion of persons aged 15 or older who had never attended school was approximately 4.3 per cent in 2016 and decreased to 3.7 per cent in 2021.

Figure 1: Share of population aged 15 or older by education attainment, 2016 and 2020



Source: NSO, LFS Q3, Whole Kingdom.

Although Thailand's secondary education enrolment rates are in line with other middle-income countries in the region, they are lower in comparison to OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2021). For example, in 2020, Thailand's lower secondary net enrolment rate was 89.1 per cent, below Brunei, Singapore, the Philippines and Timor-Leste and just above the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) average (88.9 per cent); however, it is considerably lower than high-income OECD countries such as South Korea or Australia, which have net lower secondary enrolment rates above 97 per cent (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022b). Additionally, approximately one third of students in upper-secondary education are enrolled in the vocational track, and around 1 in 5 post-secondary students are enrolled in a vocational diploma programme (OECD, 2021).

While children and youth in Thailand are staying in education longer, the issue of school dropout remains a significant problem. According to the Office of the Education Council, around 2 per cent of students leave the education system each year (The Nation Thailand, 2022). In 2021, the number of dropouts reported by the MOE was 238,707, while in June 2022, 67,132 students were reported to have dropped out of education (MOE, 2022). The consequences of dropping out of education include: (1) working in low-skilled or low-paying jobs that perpetuate a cycle of poverty, especially among poor families; and (2) an increased risk that existing skills will become obsolete and no longer meet market demands (National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), 2020). These outcomes prevent decent employment opportunities and increase the likelihood of youth becoming NEET.

Possible factors affecting school dropout include family income and family living arrangements, gender, migrant status, and degree of urbanization. The Thailand Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2019 indicated that the school dropout rate was highest among children living in the poorest homes (32 per cent), households headed by non-Thai speakers (31 per cent), and children whose mothers had no education (29 per cent) (UNICEF, 2019). While girls face numerous barriers in terms of school-related experiences (such as violence, discrimination, etc.) which hinder accessibility to educational and employment opportunities (TDRI, 2020), the dropout rate is higher among boys than girls. Child labour, which is disproportionately concentrated in rural areas and among low-income families, is also found to have an effect on adolescent school attendance and academic performance (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), 2019).

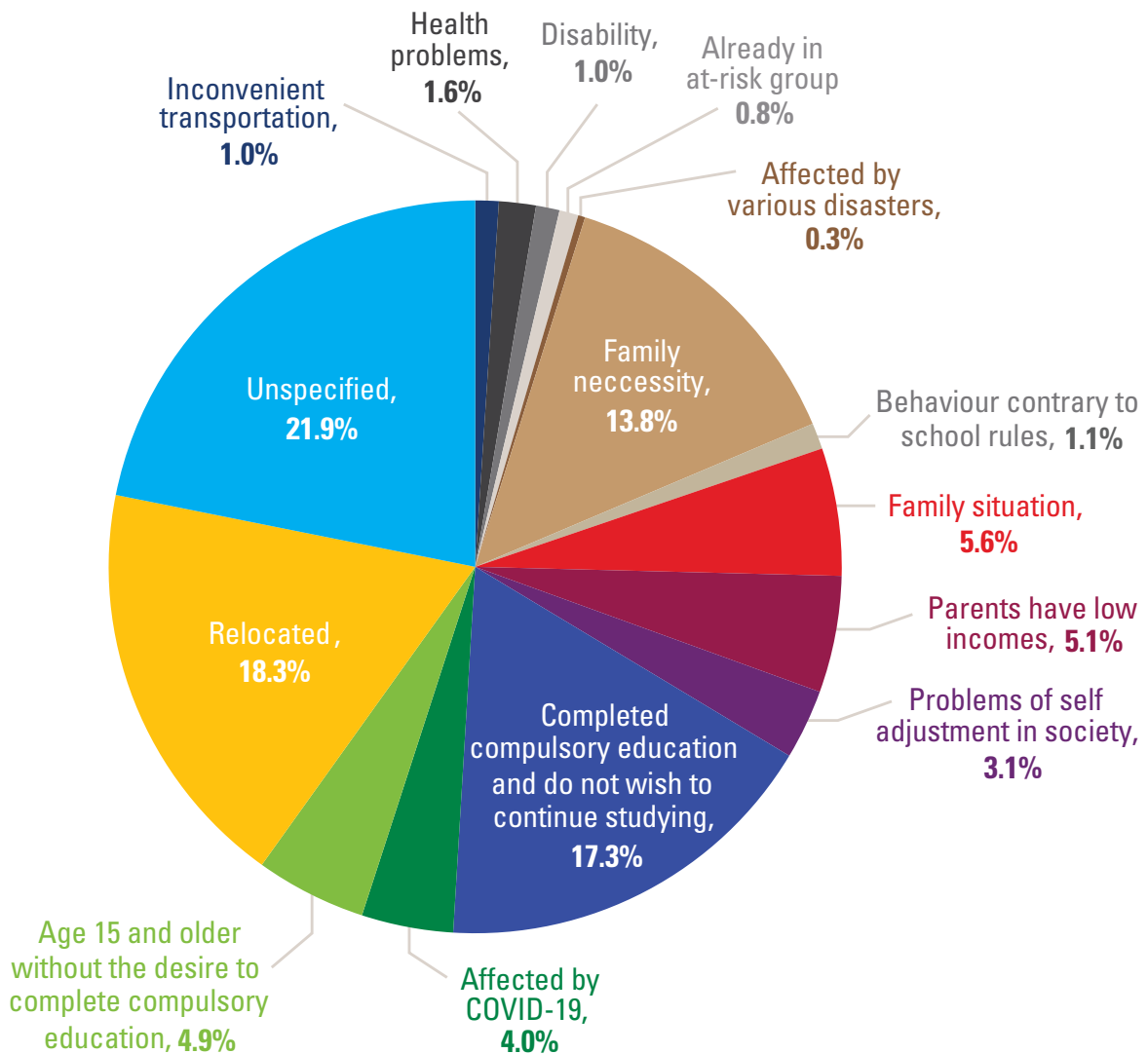
Impact of COVID-19 on education

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures hampered or prevented students from completing academic and developmental tasks, resulting in learning losses for children and youth (NESDC, 2022). As revealed by a recent high-frequency survey by UNICEF (2022b), 77 per cent of respondents reported that children learned less than half of what they would have if they had been able to participate in face-to-face learning.

Many young people, especially those from low-income households or vulnerable groups, dropped out of school due to financial difficulties brought on by the slowing economy and business closures (UNICEF EAPRO, 2019; 2020, p. 6). According to the EEF, there were approximately 1.9 million extremely poor⁴ or poor students “at risk” of dropping out in the 2021 academic year, while the overall number of school-aged children in compulsory education was about 9 million (EEF, 2021). The NESDC indicated that family wealth was a significant factor in determining the school dropout rate during the pandemic. A total of 80.3 per cent of youth from the wealthiest families (the top 10 per cent wealthiest families) continued their education at the upper secondary or lower vocational level, and 63.1 per cent continued their education at the higher education or higher vocational level. In contrast, only 40.5 per cent and 4.2 per cent of youth from the poorest families (the bottom 10 per cent of poorest families) continued to study in upper secondary or lower vocational and in higher education or higher vocational level (NESDC, 2020, p. 6).

School closures also increased inequalities, specifically due to the digital divide which became increasingly noticeable as schools were encouraged to move learning online. Lack of a home computer and access to digital infrastructure were major obstacles to online learning for many students (United Nations, 2020). Inability to engage with online education because of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a high rate of school dropout, particularly at the elementary school level. In addition, COVID-19 led many families to involuntarily migrate – either back to their hometowns or in the search for employment. A report conducted by the Bring Back to School Initiative of the MOE indicated that 18.3 per cent of children dropped out due to family relocation (Figure 2).

4 The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) system categorizes the poverty score data from the Proxy Means Test (PMT) system into three levels: Near Poor, Poor, and Extremely Poor. Extremely-poor students include: 1) students living with a family that earns less than 3,000 baht per month; and 2) students whose household conditions meet four aspects: (a) families with dependents (persons with a disability or older persons in the family); (b) deteriorated or unsafe living conditions; (c) no vehicle; and (d) if the households are farmers with no more than 1 rai of land.

Figure 2: Reasons for school dropout

Source: Bring Back to School Initiative of the Ministry of Education (โครงการพาน้องกลับมาเรียน), excluding those who moved to study at other educational institutions, and those deceased (N=37,804), retrieved on 15 August 2022 <https://dropout.edudev.in.th/>

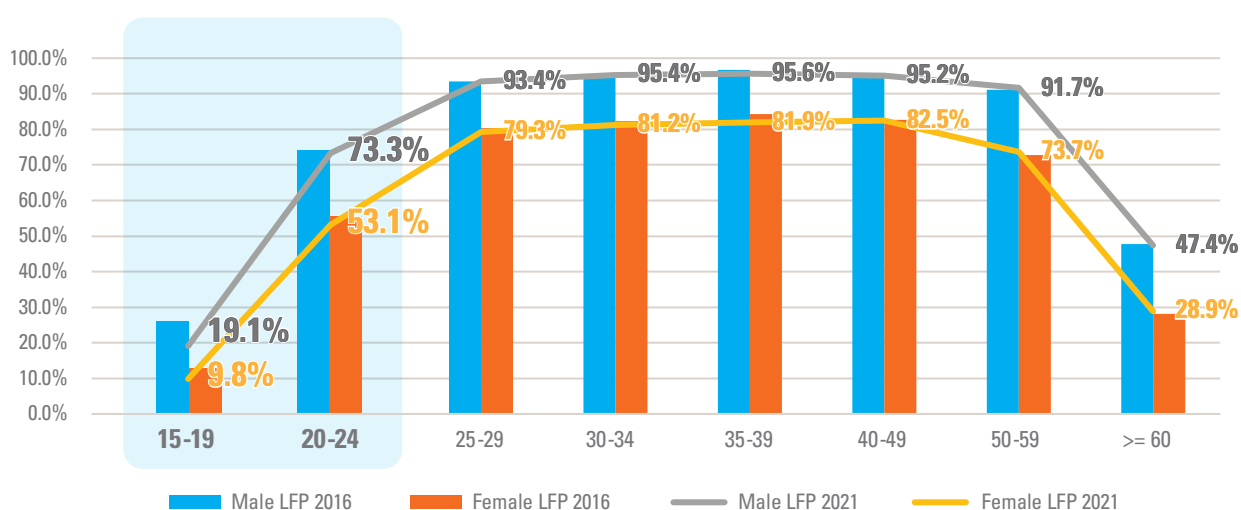
Aside from relocation, dropout rates also appear to be influenced by a perceived lack of value in continuing onto further education. While Thailand offers 15 years of free education, many younger NEET youth tend to drop out at the upper secondary level, which is the point at which compulsory free education ends. As shown in Figure 2, 17.3 per cent of youth do not want to continue studying after compulsory education. While this could be economically motivated, it may also be due to a range of other factors, including less favourable attitudes to school or lower learning attainment. However, it should be noted that even those who stay in education do not necessarily develop skills and competencies that help them transition to the world of work, suggesting that current curricula and pedagogical methods may lack relevance and fail to engage youth.

2.1.2 Employment

Labour force participation

In Thailand, the male labour force participation (LFP) rate is greater than the female LFP rate across all age groups, particularly in the 30–34 years, 35–39 years, and 40–49 years age groups (Figure 3). In addition, male LFP rates between the ages of 25 and 59 are high, reaching more than 90 per cent in 2016 and 2021, whereas female LFP rates are marginally lower, at approximately 80 per cent. A similar trend continued throughout 2021, as reflected by the decline in the LFP rate for both males and females in the 15–19 age group, which is in line with this study’s finding on the increasing number of NEETs.

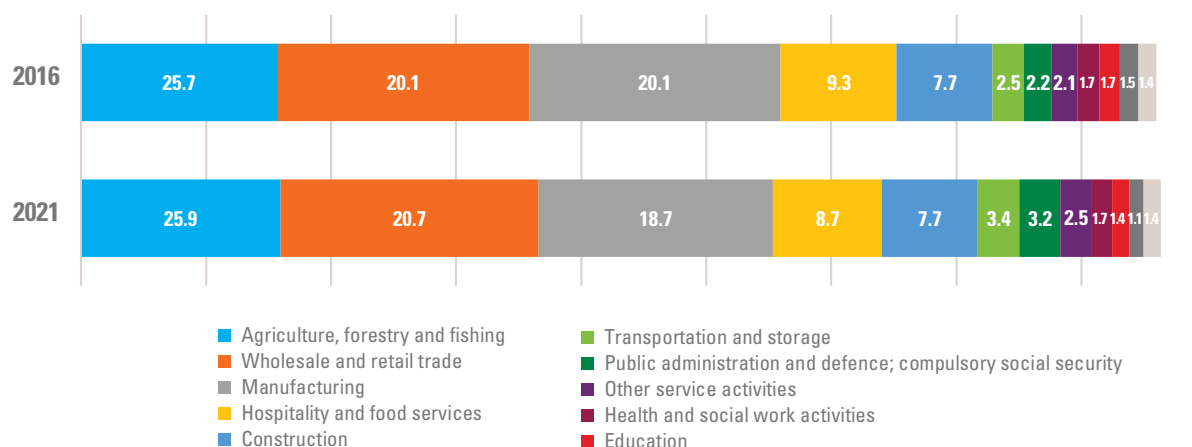
Figure 3: Labour force participation rate in 2016 and 2021 by sex



Source: NSO (2016, 2021), LFS Q3, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.

In terms of youth employment, data from the LFS revealed that the employment shares of young workers aged 15–24 remained relatively static between 2016 and 2021, and are mostly concentrated in the agricultural sector (agriculture, forestry and fishing), followed by wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing (Figure 4).

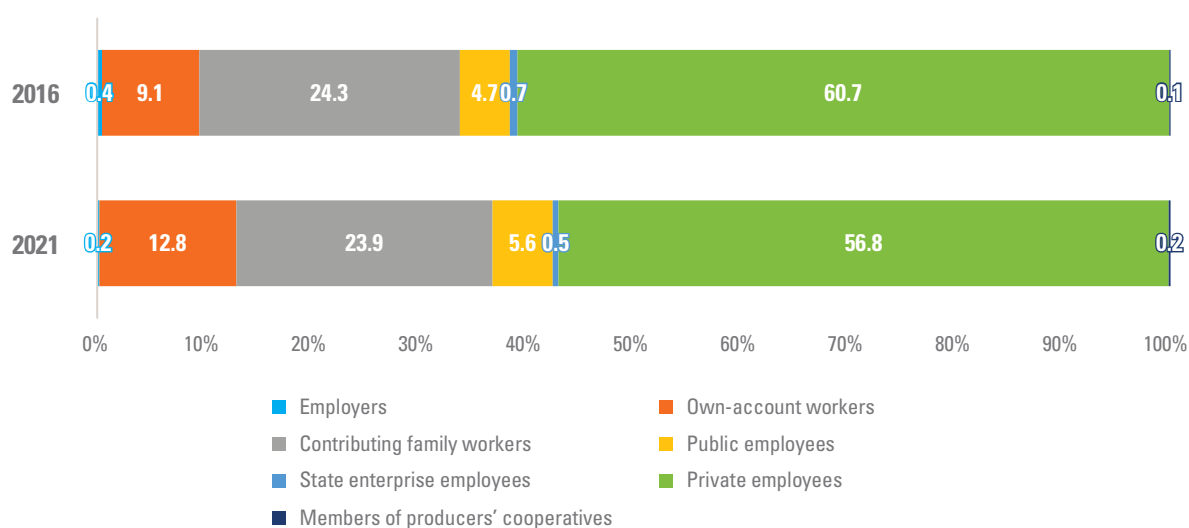
Figure 4: Youth employment in 2016 and 2021 by industry (Percentage)



Source: NSO, (2016, 2021) LFS Q1.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic appeared to affect youth employment status. The shifts in youth employment status between 2016 and 2021 reflect the challenges faced by young workers and businesses during the pandemic and the adaptation strategies they employed in response. As shown in Figure 5, the decline in young workers who are employers and private employees from 0.4 per cent in 2016 to 0.2 per cent in 2021 and 60.7 per cent in 2016 to 56.8 per cent in 2021, respectively, and the increase in youth own-account workers from 9.1 per cent in 2016 to 12.8 per cent in 2021, suggest that many businesses struggled to remain afloat, leading some workers to pursue self-employment to generate income. The slight rise in the percentage of youth who became members of producers' cooperatives from 0.1 per cent in 2016 to 0.2 per cent in 2021 also indicates that young workers sought alternative work and support, such as through cooperative arrangements.

Figure 5: Youth employment status in 2016 and 2021 (Percentage)



Source: NSO, (2016, 2021) LFS Q1.

Labour market challenges

Thai youth are exposed to a variety of circumstances that influence their ability to adapt to the labour market and the future of work. Young graduates typically struggle in the transition from school to work due to low employability skills caused mainly by low educational achievement, lack of marketable skills, and lack of soft skills. Moreover, future graduates and young job seekers lack access to consistent and timely career guidance, mentorship and/or coaching, and effective employment matching and career opportunities. Furthermore, employers prefer to hire more experienced workers, even for low-skilled positions, making it more difficult for recent graduates without internship or work experience to gain employment. This results in newly recruited individuals having skills that do not fit with the needs of employers or the economy (SEC & UNICEF, 2021; TDRI, 2020).

Besides these challenges, additional key challenges are present in the labour market. **Digital disruptions and automation** are expected to reshape businesses by 2025. Industrial machinery sales in Thailand have increased by more than sixfold, from over 60,000 units in 2018 to over 384,000 units in 2019. As digital technology and trends of automation alter the way businesses are conducted, technology substitution occurs at the expense of traditional inventions and customs. The issue of future technological displacement due to the growth of inventions such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, robotics and IoT (Internet of Things), is predicted to result in alterations to the existing ecosystem (Bank of Thailand, 2019), rendering the enhancement of Thai workers' skills and productivity a critical and pressing issue. Yet, the digital skills shortage in the country remains significant. The Future of Jobs Report 2020 revealed that only 55 per cent of working age population in Thailand were literate in required digital skills (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Meanwhile, **Thailand is facing a demographic shift and is now an aged society.** Due to the fall in population birth rates, there will be fewer workers in the future. Increasing labour productivity is crucial to sustain Thailand's economic development. Simultaneously, the life expectancy of Thai citizens has increased, leading many workers to consider continuing to work beyond retirement age. Workers approaching retirement age must also adapt and develop their abilities to survive. Rapid advancements in communication technology and the emergence of convenient and rapid modes of transportation, facilitating free movement of the factors of production, necessitate policies and plans to be in place to ensure economic competitiveness and smooth transition. One of the important markers is the expertise and quality of Thai workers. However, 52 per cent of the Thai labour force was working in the informal sector in 2021 (NSO, 2022). Most informal workers are less educated, less productive, and earn less than formal workers.

Climate change and environmental degradation have direct and indirect effects on the population's well-being and ways of work (ILO, 2018). For example, hotter climates and heat stress cause reduction in products. Climate change is also a major cause of environmental disasters, which will become more frequent and severe. Therefore, in the future, work patterns and skills requirements will need to increasingly align with environmentally friendly industries and the green sector.

Lastly, **the issue of skills mismatch is affecting the ability of Thailand's workforce to find suitable and meaningful work.** This can occur as vertical mismatch (whereby workers are over- or under-qualified or skilled for their role), horizontal mismatch (whereby workers may have a suitable level of education, but their knowledge/skills are not directly applicable for the job), skill gaps, skill shortages, and skill obsolescence. The World Bank Enterprise Surveys in 2016 found that around 37 per cent of workers in Thailand were mismatched with regard to their field of education, compared to the global average of 40 per cent (World Bank, 2016). More than 80 per cent of employed persons are concentrated in lower educated groups, whereas the proportion of labour demand for workers with a bachelor's degree and above was 15 per cent, and the labour demand for vocational graduates and lower education was 51 per cent (Chantapong & Lertpienthum, 2018).

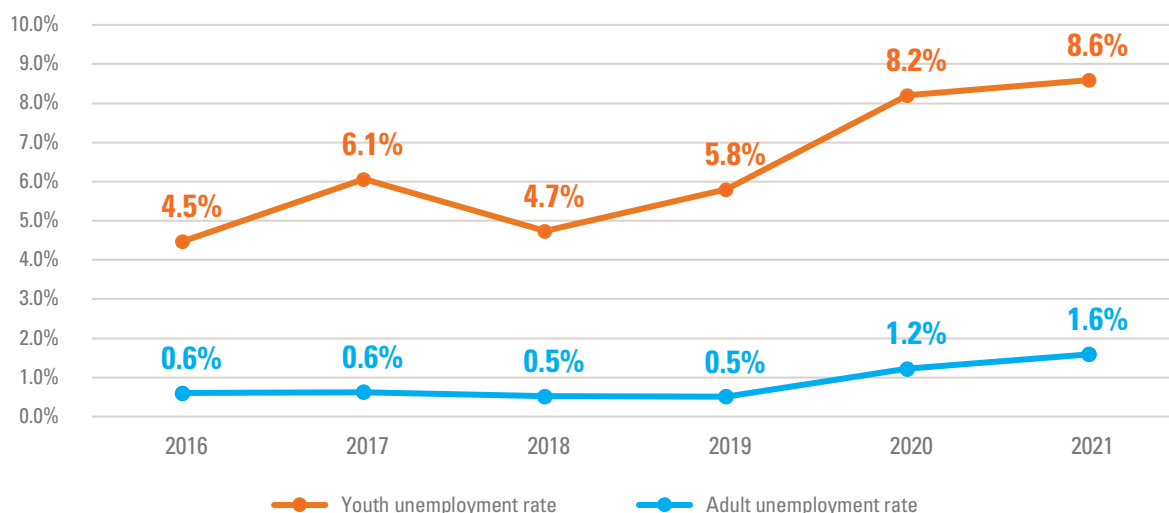
Impact of COVID-19 on employment

The unemployment rate in Thailand has been relatively low at around 1 per cent since the 1990s. However, the COVID-19 pandemic reversed this trend, especially between 2019 and 2021. The unemployment rates of youth and adults increased from 5.8 per cent and 0.5 per cent in 2019 to 8.6 per cent and 1.6 per cent in 2021, respectively, highlighting an increasing gap between the youth and adult unemployment rates (Figure 6). The NESDC (2022) also reported an unemployment rate among recent university graduates of 3.1 per cent, higher than 1.8 per cent a year earlier, identifying labour skills mismatch as a possible reason.

The rise in the unemployment gap as a result of COVID-19, especially between 2019 and 2021, led to an extended period of job searching among jobseekers, increasing the time-related underemployment rate, which poses a risk of increasing discouraged workers (who, in turn, become invisible in the unemployment rate).

Moreover, pandemic-related restrictions hampered employment in establishments with fewer than 50 employees, where between Q4 2019 and Q1 2021, youth employment fell by 18 per cent for men and 24 per cent for women. A 7 per cent reduction in total working hours (or 2 million fewer full-time equivalent jobs) was also recorded during the same period (ILO, 2021).

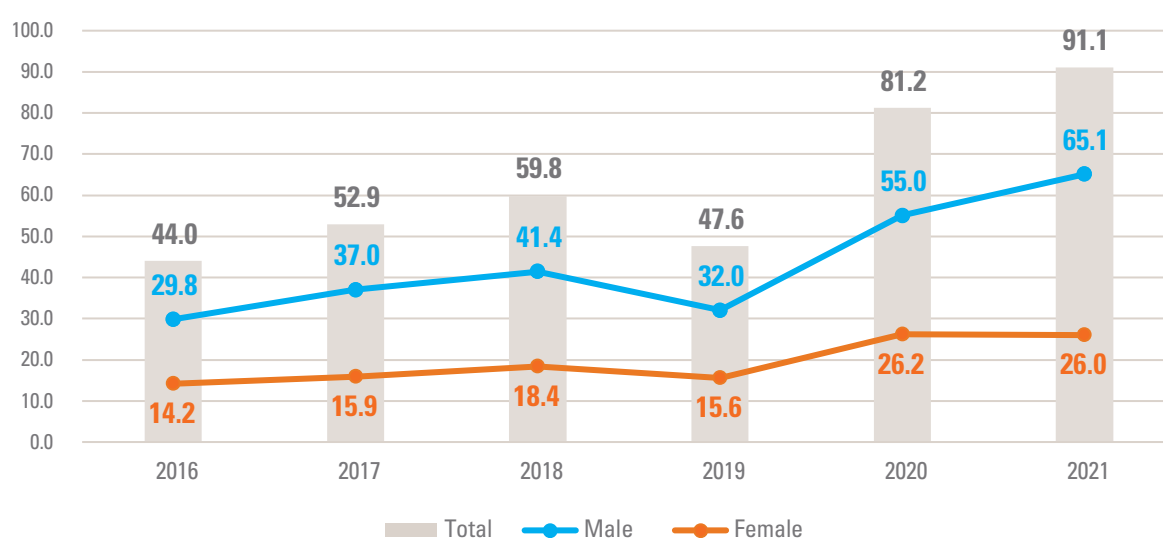
Given how the COVID-19 pandemic critically affected many business operations, skill demands, and employment scenarios have changed in many sectors. Many workers lost their jobs – temporarily or permanently – and some will need to be reallocated to other sectors if they want to remain employed, calling for upskilling and reskilling in many cases (Pattarapatumthong, 2021).

Figure 6: Youth and adult unemployment rate, 2016–2021

Note: The unemployed includes people aged 15 and over who are either: (1) not working and without a regular job, but looking for a job, applying for a job, or waiting for a job to be filled during the 30 days before the interview date; or (2) not working and without a regular job and not looking for work during the 30 days before the interview date, but are ready to work in the survey week.

Source: NSO, LFS Q3 of 2016–2021.

The share of time-related underemployed and unemployed people in the labour force can capture losses in hours worked and the need to work more. Time-related underemployment happens when an employed person's hours of work are insufficient relative to an alternative employment arrangement in which the individual is willing and able to engage. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the underemployment of both male and female youth reached 91,120 in 2021 from 47,575 in 2019 (Figure 7), with young men being more affected at a rapid pace (ILOSTAT, 2022a).

Figure 7: Time-related underemployment in Thailand (thousands), 2016–2021

Note: ILO estimate from the LFS Thailand. Time-related underemployment refers to all persons in employment who (i) wanted to work additional hours, (ii) had worked less than a specified hours threshold and (iii) were available to work additional hours given an opportunity for more work.

Source: ILOSTAT (2022a) Time-related underemployment by sex and age (thousands).

2.1.3 Training

The proportion of Thai youth who want to learn new skills ranges between 11.4 and 11.9 per cent, with females expressing a greater desire to improve their skills than males (Table 3). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted market adaptability, as demonstrated by the rapid adoption of digital technology, as well as barriers to entry and development. While short training courses are a quick way to reduce skill mismatch in Thailand, only a low proportion of youth seem to want to develop their skills (see Table 3), which reduces their likelihood of becoming skilled in ways that correspond to labour market demand.

The Skill Development Promotion Act B.E. 2545 (2002) is in effect to encourage workplace training. According to the Act, businesses with more than 100 employees are obligated to provide annual training to at least 50 per cent of their workforce. However, relatively few workers can benefit from this rule, as the majority of workers are employed by small and medium-sized businesses with fewer than 100 employees. This also limits the capacity of youth to access training provided by their workplace or through skills development centres.

Table 3: Youth and adults who want to participate in training in 2016 and 2021

	All		Male		Female	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Total	7.3%	9.4%	6.9%	9.0%	7.7%	9.7%
15–24	11.4%	11.9%	10.9%	11.8%	11.9%	12.0%
25–34	8.7%	11.7%	7.9%	11.0%	9.5%	12.5%
35–44	8.4%	11.2%	7.4%	10.0%	9.4%	12.3%
45–54	7.4%	11.3%	6.6%	10.1%	8.1%	12.3%
55–59	5.7%	9.0%	5.5%	8.8%	5.9%	9.2%
60 and over	1.9%	3.0%	2.4%	3.5%	1.5%	2.6%

Source: NSO SDS, 2016 and 2021 (Q1).

Impact of COVID-19 on training

A rapid assessment of reskilling and upskilling needs of workers and the impact of automation on workers in Thailand conducted by the ILO, the DSD, and Chulalongkorn University in 2021 (forthcoming), reveals how the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected certain populations and workers. Vulnerable groups such as low-educated workers with repetitive tasks were challenged to adopt a new form of employment or risk being replaced by robots or automation. The pandemic also reduced the motivation of low-skilled informal workers to invest in skills development or training unless training subsidies were provided by the public sector. Meanwhile, low-skilled workers in the industrial sector are increasingly required to have multiple and digitally oriented skills. However, during the pandemic, they had to undertake and pass skill training online, which was a challenge as they faced difficulties in using online platforms and lacked the necessary tools and equipment, rendering such online training ineffective and limiting coverage. Low-educated older workers and people with disabilities (PWDs) encountered the most difficulty when utilizing digital platforms.

The pandemic also disrupted the skill assessment and accreditation procedure in Thailand. Skills testing, examinations and certification for technical and vocational education and training students were postponed, and in some instances, even cancelled (ILO & World Bank, 2021). This interruption interfered with trainee entry into the labour market and general career advancement for youth.

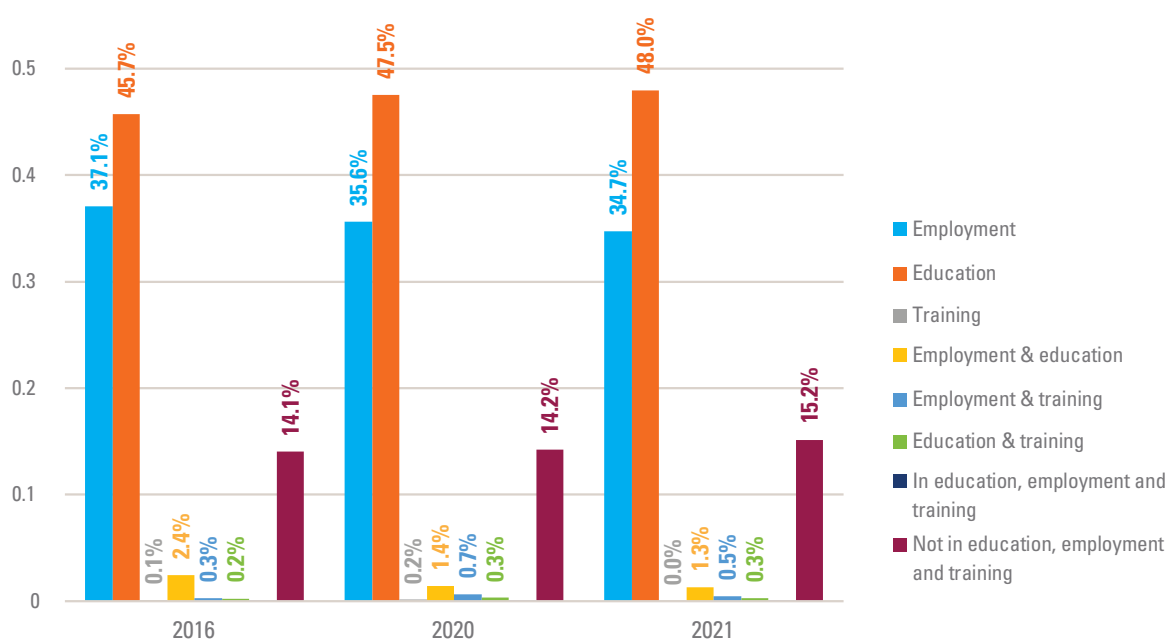
2.2 Youth NEET profile

This section presents an analysis of the microdata from the SDS conducted by the NSO between 2016 and 2021, providing a disaggregated analysis by gender and age; geographical location and degree of urbanisation; and educational attainment level.

2.2.1 Share of youth NEET

In Thailand, the population between the ages of 15 and 24 decreased from 9.6 million in 2016 to 9.2 million in 2021, illustrating the demographic shifts associated with an ageing society (NSO, 2016; NSO, 2021). Data revealed that young people tend to be in school longer. In 2016 and 2021, 45.7 and 48.0 per cent of 15–24-year-olds were enrolled in school, respectively. In contrast, the percentage of employed youth decreased from 37.1 per cent in 2016 to 34.7 per cent in 2021. The percentage of young people studying while employed decreased from 2.4 per cent in 2016 to 1.3 per cent in 2022. While the total number of youth NEET declined, the share of youth NEET increased from 14.1 per cent (1.35 million) in 2016 to 15.2 per cent (1.39 million) in 2021 (Figure 8).

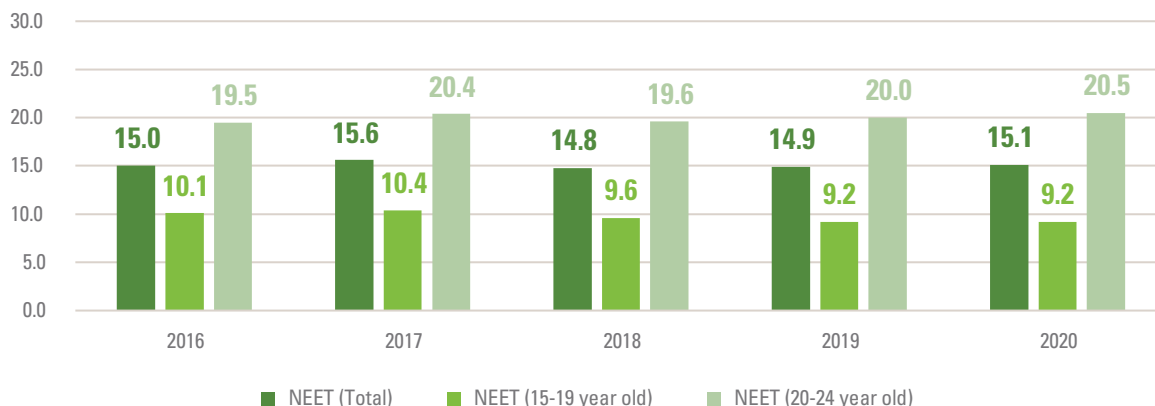
Figure 8: Share of youth (aged 15–24 years) and their activity in 2016 and 2021



Source: Author's estimation based on NSO SDS, 2016 and 2021.

The increasing share of youth NEET raises concerns over the future of Thai youth. Since 2016, the youth NEET rate has ranged between 15 and 15.6 per cent.

Figure 9: Share of youth NEET in Thailand, 2016–2020 (Percentage)

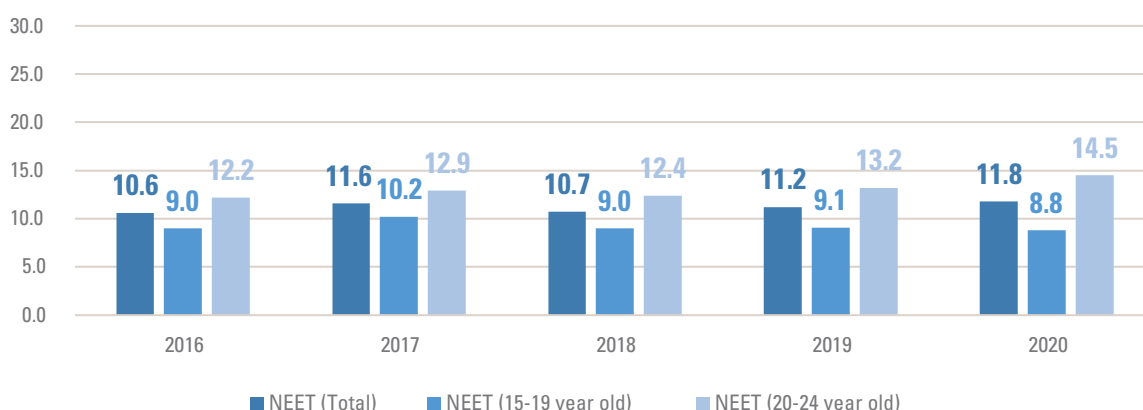


Source: ILO (2022).

2.2.2 Gender and age of youth NEET

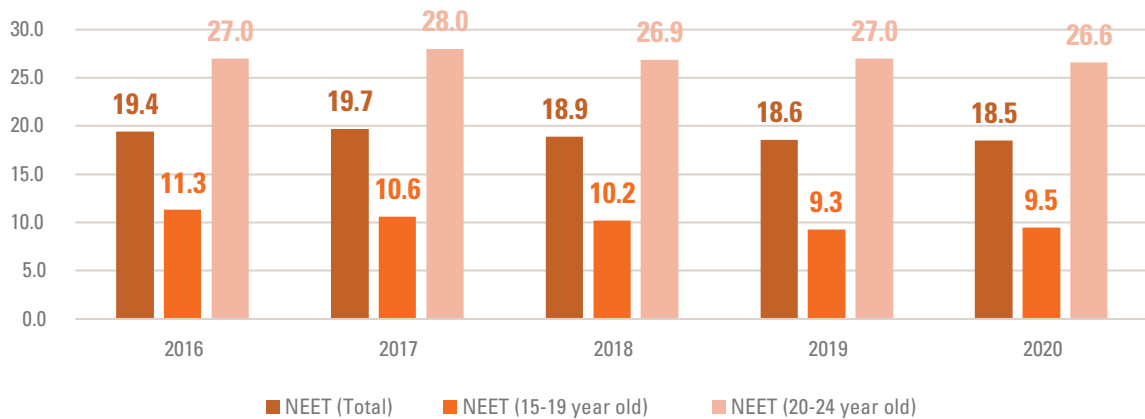
Gender and age play a significant role among the NEET population. The total number of youth NEET confirms a gender difference in line with global trends, where young women are twice as likely to be NEET as young men. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate that the number of male NEET in Thailand has risen slightly since 2016, whereas the number of female NEET has somewhat fluctuated, but has remained consistently higher than the rate for their male counterparts. There are also a high number of female NEET who are household workers due to long-embedded norms in Thai culture (ILOSTAT, 2022). Such underutilization of young women’s labour potential can have long-term consequences, such as reduced employment and earnings over a lifetime.

Figure 10: Share of male NEET in Thailand, 2016–2020 (Percentage)



Source: ILO (2022).

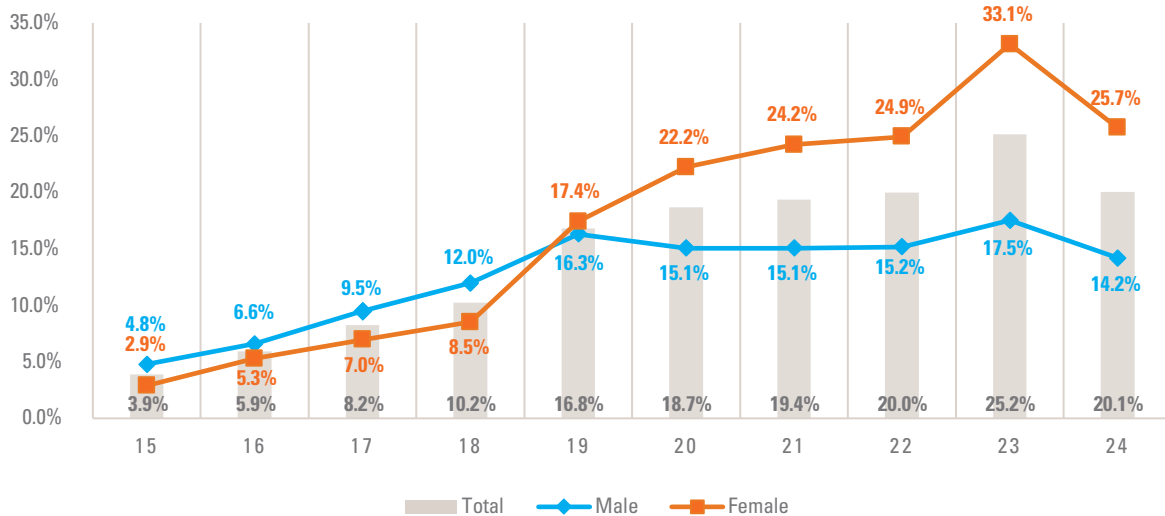
Figure 11: Share of female NEET in Thailand, 2016–2020 (Percentage)



Source: ILO (2022).

In terms of age, the share of youth NEET can be divided into two age ranges: between 15–19 years and 20–24 years (Figure 12), corresponding to the transition from lower secondary education to higher secondary education or lower vocational education, and from higher secondary education or higher vocational education to tertiary education. The NEET rate is higher in young people aged 20 to 24 years (19.5–20.5 per cent) than for those aged 15 to 19 years (see Figure 9) (ILO, 2022). As Figure 12 shows, the share of youth NEET peaked at age 23 at 25.2 per cent of the youth population in 2021 for both male and female youth. However, the steep increase of female NEET surpasses male NEET at the age of 19 years. The gender gap during these critical years indicates a need to design specific interventions focusing on female youth, where the highest gender gap difference occurs at the age of 23 years, highlighting another crucial challenge for females in entering the labour market or continuing further education or training. This may be because female NEET choose or are expected to devote time to caring for family members, which is consistent with previous findings, and/or early motherhood becomes an obstacle to continuing or returning to education (see Chapter 3 for further discussion).

Figure 12: Share of youth NEET by age and sex, 2021 (Percentage)

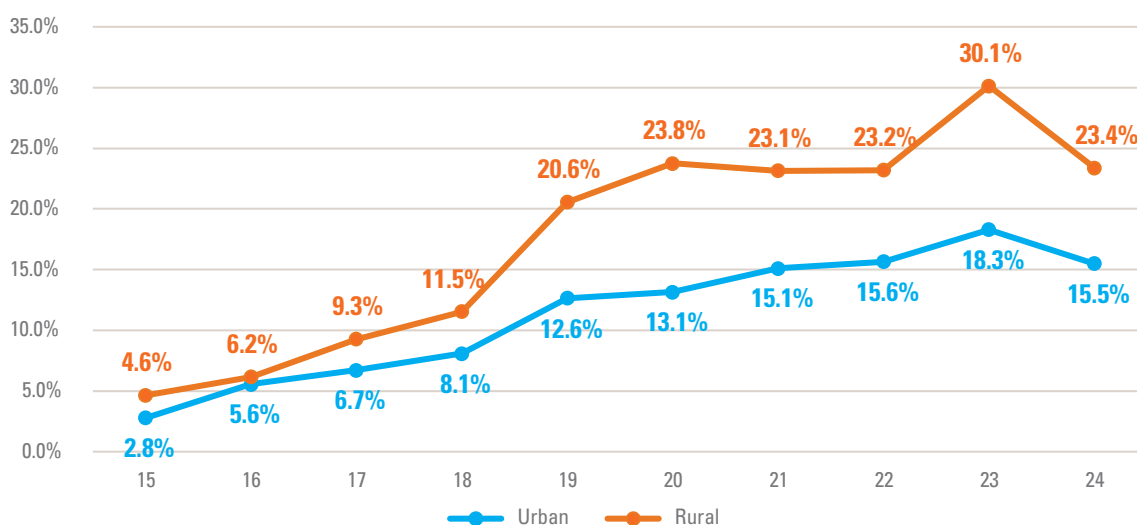


Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS, 2021 (N=1,390,799).

2.2.3 Geographical location of youth NEET

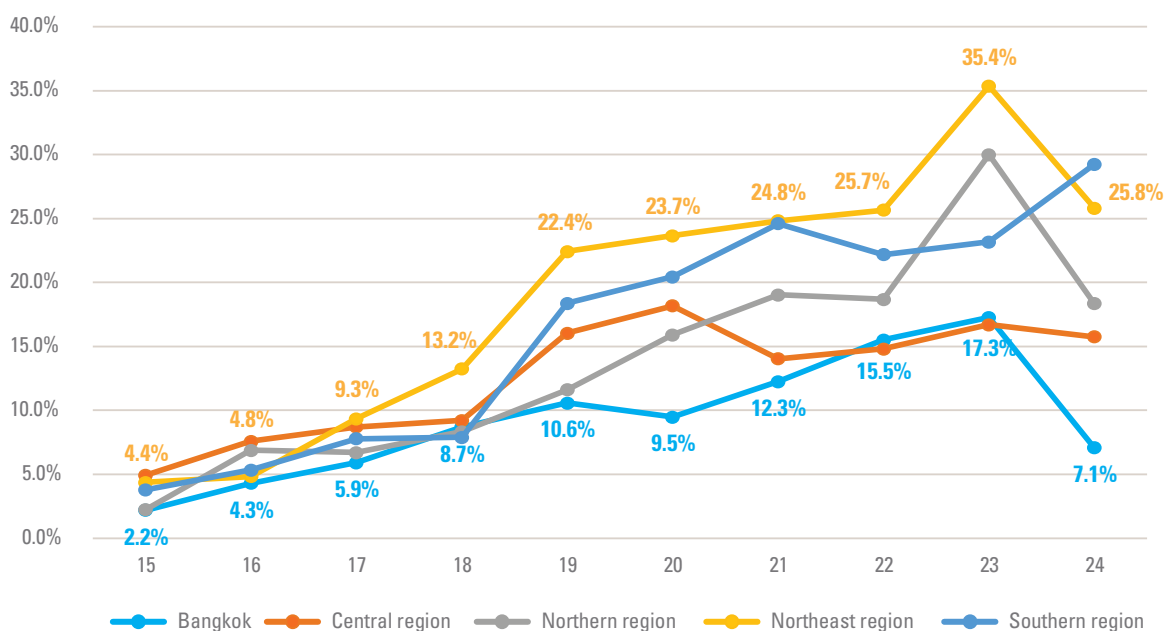
Geographical location and degree of urbanisation also influence the share of NEETs. Thailand’s poorer provinces and rural areas have a higher proportion of NEET youth than the more prosperous provinces and urban areas (Figure 13). The share of youth NEET is negatively associated with the income level of the region as the highest percentage of youth NEET is concentrated in provinces that account for a small share of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Northeastern region accounts for the highest youth NEET share, while the lowest youth NEET share was found in Bangkok (Figure 14). Table 4 demonstrates the top three provinces with the highest shares of youth NEET in each region. The top three provinces with the highest NEET rate are Nong Bua Lam Phu (33.5 per cent), Narathiwat (26.2 per cent) and Amnat Charoen (25.9 per cent).

Figure 13: Share of youth NEET by rural and urban areas, 2021 (Percentage)



Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N=1,390,799).

Figure 14: Share of youth NEET by region, 2021 (Percentage)



Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N=1,390,799).

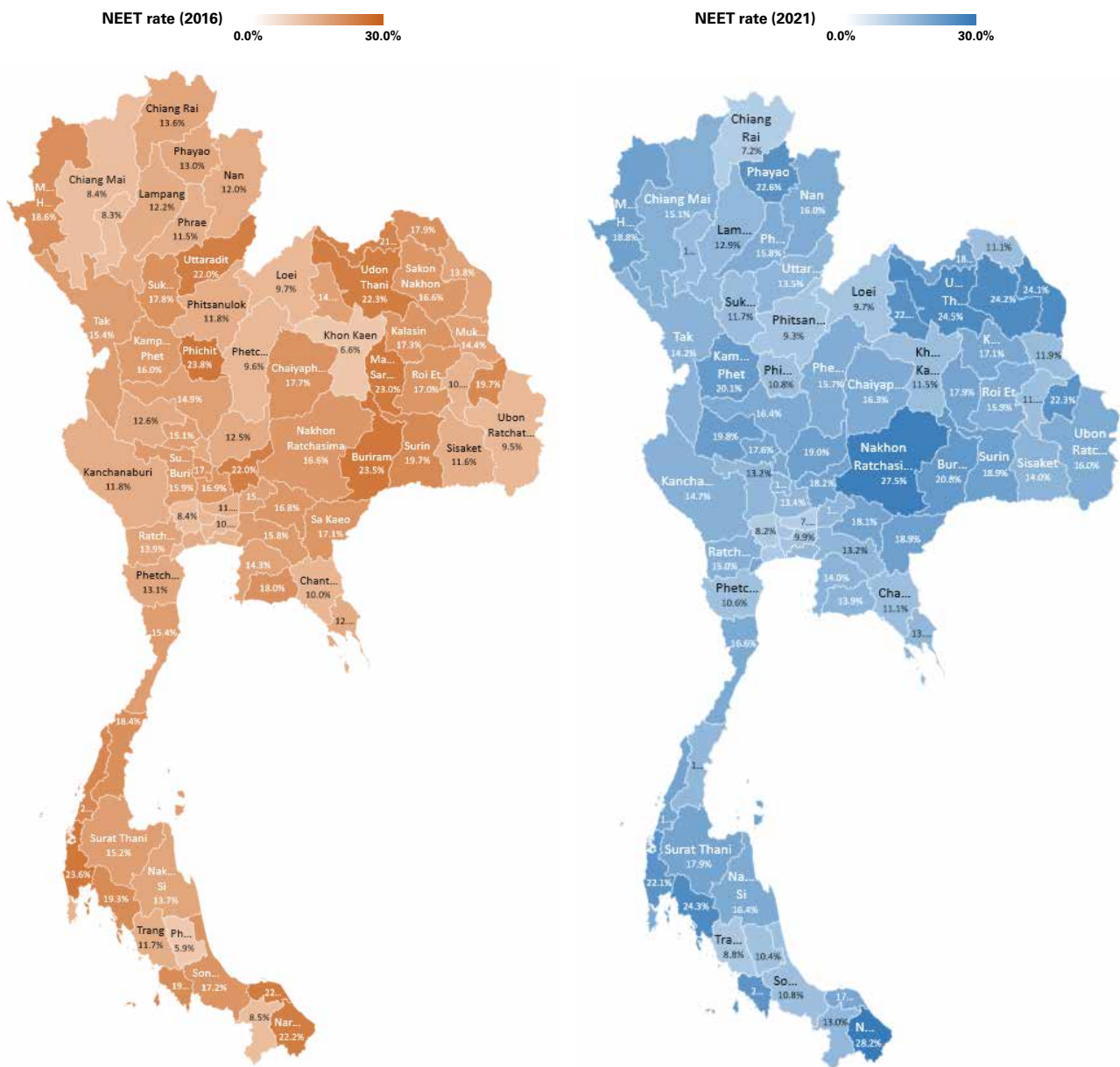
Table 4: Top three provinces with highest youth NEET rate in each region in 2020

Region	Top three provinces by shares of youth NEETs in each region*	% of National GDP**
Northern region	1. Phetchabun (18.8%) 2. Uthai Thani (18.6%) 3. Phitsanulok (18.3%)	0.50 0.19 0.59
Central region	1. Chainat (20.9%) 2. Sing Buri (20%) 3. Ang Thong (17%)	0.20 0.16 0.18
Eastern region	1. Sa Kaeo (21.5%) 2. Prachinburi (19.8%) 3. Chachoengsao (16.5%)	0.34 1.89 2.29
Northeastern region	1. Nong Bua Lam Phu (33.5%) 2. Amnat Charoen (25.9%) 3. Chaiyaphum (21.3%)	0.16 0.11 0.39
Southern region (including Western region)	1. Narathiwat (26.2%) 2. Ranong (21.7%) 3. Krabi (21.4%)	0.28 0.17 0.58
Bangkok	Bangkok (8.1%)	31.88

Source: *Author's calculation based on NSO SDS, Q1 2020; ** NESDC, 2019.

It is common for people from poorer areas to relocate to locations with better education and economic opportunities, leaving those that do not want to move, or cannot move, to remain in the poorer areas. This signifies that selective migration is one possible explanation for the higher youth NEET share. The share of youth NEET by province demonstrated that there are static areas with a relatively high share of youth NEET over time between 2016 and 2021, located in the border provinces (such as Narathiwat, Phang Nga, and Mae Hong Son) (Figure 15). However, the share of youth NEET is dynamic and can change over time, especially when migration occurs. Therefore, measures to tackle youth NEET should be designed and implemented nationally, prioritizing provinces with a high share of youth NEET.

Figure 15: Share of youth NEET by province, 2016 and 2021 (Percentage)



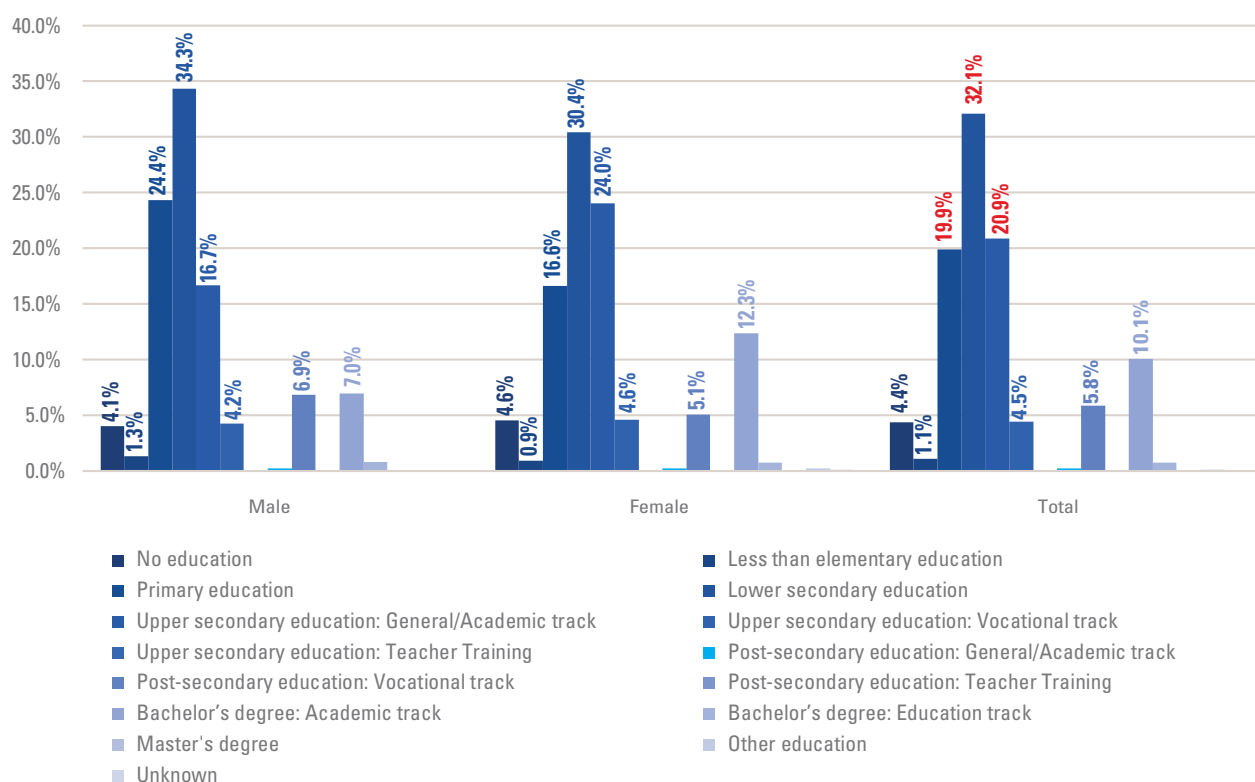
Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2016 and 2021.

2.2.4 Educational attainment of youth NEET

Educational attainment is another key factor in determining NEET status. The majority of youth NEET only complete lower secondary education (32.1 per cent), followed by upper secondary education (20.9 per cent) and primary education (19.9 per cent) (Figure 16). This aligns with findings in previous studies which found that low-educated youth are more likely to be NEET and face a greater likelihood of experiencing long-term NEET status (TDRI, 2020; SEC & UNICEF, 2021; Giret & Jean-François, 2021).

It should be noted, however, that while youth with tertiary education tend to have a greater chance of finding employment, a significant number are NEET (139,902 persons) (Table 5), signifying existing skills mismatch in the labour market (Chantapong & Lertpienthum, 2018; Matsumoto & Bhula-or, 2018; World Bank, 2016). Youth with a vocational degree are also less likely to become NEET than those with upper secondary education and post-secondary education in the academic track. This confirms that skills mismatch, especially horizontal skills mismatch, play a crucial role in youth employment opportunities.

Figure 16: Share of youth NEET by educational level and gender



Source: Authors' estimation based on SDS 2021.

Table 5: Youth NEET by educational attainment in 2021

	Highest educational attainment			Total
	Not NEET		NEET	
	Currently not studying, but in employment and/or in training	In Education		
No education	66,546		60,531	127,077
Less than elementary education	47,252	3,972	15,356	66,580
Primary education	536,352	798,015	277,006	1,611,373
Lower secondary education	881,106	2,348,662	446,175	3,675,943
Upper secondary education: General/Academic track	708,949	1,097,214	290,648	2,096,811
Upper secondary education: Vocational track	198,882	259,136	61,948	519,966
Upper secondary education: Teacher Training	379	1,153	164	1,696
Post-secondary education: General/Academic track	8,899	627	3,115	12,641
Post-secondary education: Vocational track	338,898	34,922	81,299	455,119
Post-secondary education: Teacher Training	346		60	406
Bachelor's degree: Academic track*	340,695	6,273	139,902	486,870
Bachelor's degree: Education track**	42,007		10,742	52,749
Master's degree	1,741		640	2,381
Other education	41,762	283	2,025	44,070
Unknown	18,816		1,189	20,005
Total	3,232,630	4,550,257	1,390,800	9,173,687

Source: Authors' estimation based on SDS 2021.

Note: *A person with a bachelor's degree in an academic track refers to a person who has graduated from a bachelor's degree or equivalent or higher. **A person with a bachelor's degree in education track refers to a person who studied to become a teacher.

2.3 Categories of youth NEET

According to the SDS (2021), youth NEET can be categorized into four distinct groups (Table 6). The first group are youth NEET who are ready to work and want to develop their skills. The second group consists of youth NEET who want to develop skills but are not ready to work. The third group are youth NEET who do not want to develop skills but are ready to work. The fourth group are youth NEET who do not want to develop skills and are not ready to work. As shown in Table 6, a significant majority of all NEETs (69.2 per cent) fall under the fourth group – the most disengaged of the sub-sets – highlighting that disengagement is a significant issue which requires urgent attention.

Table 6: Youth NEET desire to engage in education, employment and training

	Ready to work**		Not ready to work		Total
Want to develop skills*	Group 1	6.9% (89,074)	Group 2	11.9% (153,880)	18.9% (242,954)
Do not want to develop skills	Group 3	12.9% (166,575)	Group 4	68.2% (878,433)	81.1% (1,045,008)
Total		19.8% (255,649)		80.2% (1,032,313)	100.0% (1,287,962)***

Note: *The response was derived from the question, “Do you want to develop your skills in at least one area?”

**The response was derived from the question, “During the seven days prior to the interview, were you ready for work?”

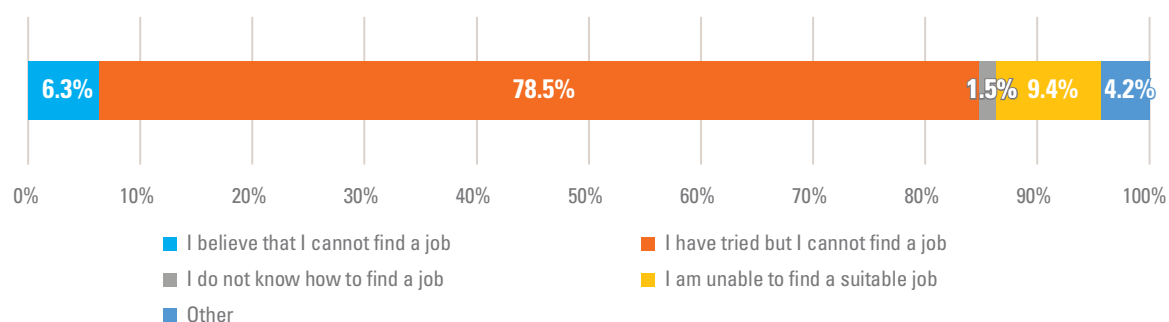
***While the total number of youth NEET was 1,390,799, the number of youth NEET used in this table was 1,287,962. As there were 102,837 youth who had not worked in the previous week but were still receiving wages, benefits from work, or who had a job or business to return to, these 102,837 youth were classified as temporary NEETs with an active plan to return to employment, education or training. Therefore, they are excluded from this table.

Source: Authors’ estimation based on SDS 2021.

NEET group 1, who want to develop skills, and are ready to work

Based on the SDS 2021, 6.9 per cent of youth NEET wished to develop skills and were also ready to work. However, the NEETs in this group were not actively seeking jobs. It is possible that some youth in this group had sought to find employment for a period of time, but became discouraged and inactive after failed attempts. As the survey results reveal, 78.5 per cent of the respondents indicated that they had tried to find jobs, but could not find one, while 9.4 per cent reported they were unable to find a suitable job and 6.3 per cent reported they did not believe they could find a job (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Reasons for NEET status of youth who want to develop skills and are ready to work



Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 89,074).

Bachelor's degree graduates in academic areas account for the largest number in this group at 26,552 out of 89,074 youth (Table 7). While this group has a high educational attainment, they indicated that they had tried to find jobs, but could not find one. Similarly, a large percentage of lower secondary graduates, upper secondary graduates and primary graduates all faced challenges in finding jobs that fit their qualifications. This confirms the skill mismatch problem among highly educated youth in Thailand, which coheres with the findings of previous studies (ILO, 2021b; SEC & UNICEF, 2021; TDRI, 2020).

Table 7: Reasons for NEET status of youth who want to develop skills and are ready to work by education level

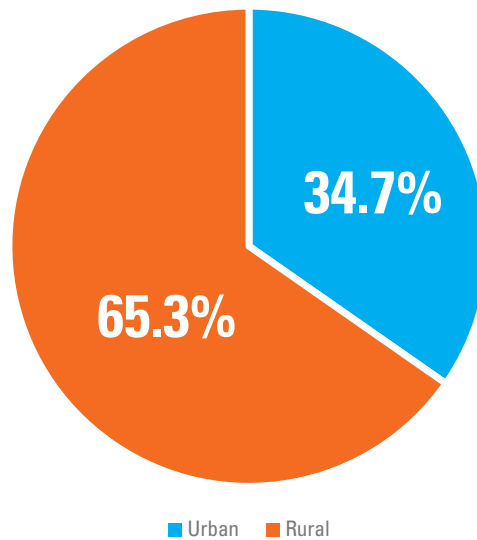
	I believe that I cannot find a job	I have tried but I cannot find a job	I don't know how to find a job	I am unable to find a suitable job	Other	Total (Number)	Percentage
No education	-	-	-	433	-	433	0.5%
Less than elementary education	-	1,425	-	-	-	1,425	1.6%
Primary education	535	8,729	161	1,530	512	11,467	12.9%
Lower secondary education	832	15,962	-	992	786	18,572	20.9%
Upper secondary education: General/Academic track	2,175	12,576	443	-	837	16,031	18.0%
Upper secondary education: Vocational track	656	1,937	-	105	-	2,698	3.0%
Post-secondary education: General/Academic track	-	-	-	340	-	340	0.4%
Post-secondary education: Vocational track	1,345	8,117	346	983	-	10,791	12.1%
Bachelor's degree: Academic track*	82	20,574	369	3,876	1,651	26,552	29.8%
Bachelor's degree: Education track**	0	625	0	138	0	763	0.8%
Total (N)	5,625	69,945	1,319	8,397	3,786	89,072	100.0%

Source: Authors' estimate based on NSO SDS 2021 (Weighted N = 89,072). Due to statistical discrepancies caused by the weighted figures, there were two-person differences from the total number of the youth NEET Group 1 (N= 89,074).

Note: *A person with a bachelor's degree in an academic track refers to a person who has graduated from a bachelor's degree or equivalent or higher. **A person with a bachelor's degree in education track refers to a person who studied to become a teacher.

Failure to find skill training or work can also be attributed to factors such as lack of training or job availability in the area, disqualification due to limited education, lack of career ambitions or simply a lack of serious job searching. As shown in Figure 18, the fact that the majority of respondents in this group reside in rural areas (65.3 per cent versus 34.7 per cent in urban areas), could offer another explanation for their inactivity, given the tendency for limited availability of training provision and jobs in such areas.

Figure 18: Youth NEET who want to develop skills and are ready to work by urban and rural areas (Percentage)

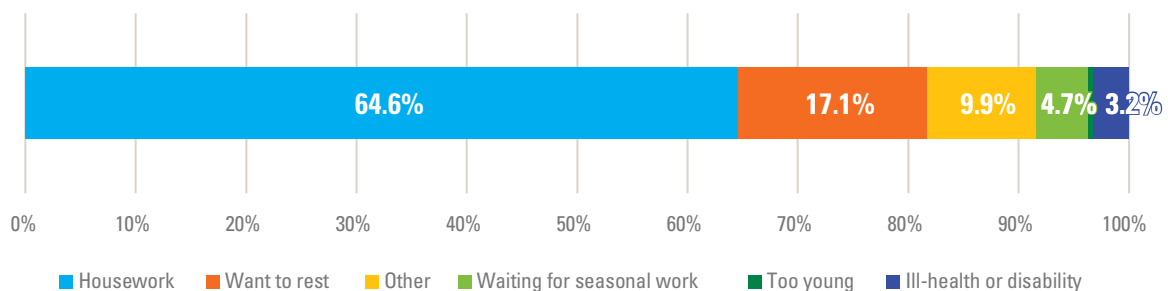


Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 89,074).

NEET group 2, who want to develop skills, but are not ready to work

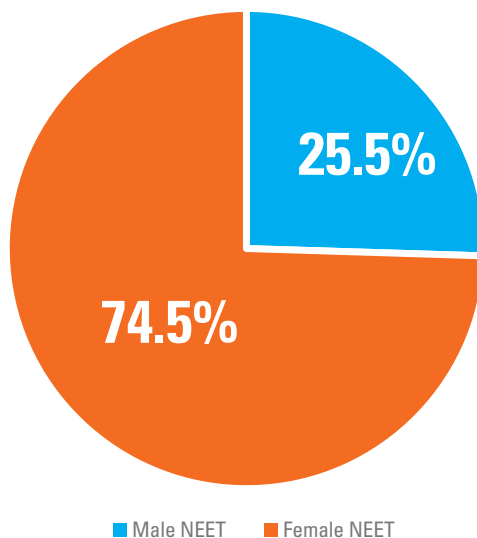
While NEETs in this group expressed their desire to develop skills, most indicated that they were not ready to work because they were engaging in housework (64.6 per cent), followed by the desire to rest (17.1 per cent) (Figure 19). The fact that the majority of respondents in this group were female (Figure 20) corresponds with previous findings (TDRI, 2020) which indicate female NEETs tend to be engaged in housework or caring responsibilities.

Figure 19: Reasons for not being ready to work among youth NEET who want to develop skills, but are not ready to work (Percentage)



Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 153,880).

Figure 20: Youth NEET who want to develop skills, but are not ready to work by gender (Percentage)

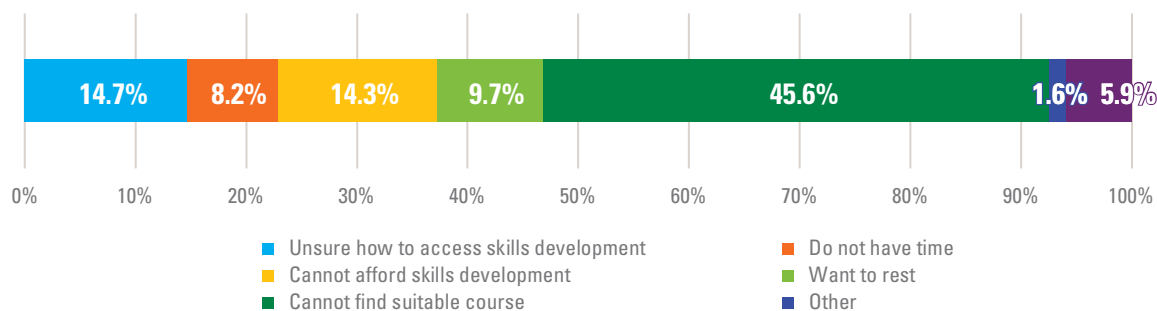


Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 153,880).

NEET group 3, who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work

Most of the NEETs in this group (45.6 per cent) reported that they had no desire to develop further skills (Figure 21). In addition, 14.7 per cent reported not knowing how or where to access skills development, while 14.3 per cent reported they did not have the financial capacity to participate in skills development.

Figure 21: Reasons for not developing skills among youth NEET who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work (Percentage)



Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 166,575).

The majority of youth NEET in this group are bachelor’s degree graduates (30.3 per cent), followed by lower secondary graduates (22.3 per cent), and upper secondary graduates (18.4 per cent), respectively (Table 8). Therefore, one plausible explanation for this group’s readiness to work and their lack of desire to develop skills could be that they tend to have relatively higher levels of education already, compared to youth NEET in other groups.

Table 8: Reasons for not developing skills among youth NEET who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work by educational level

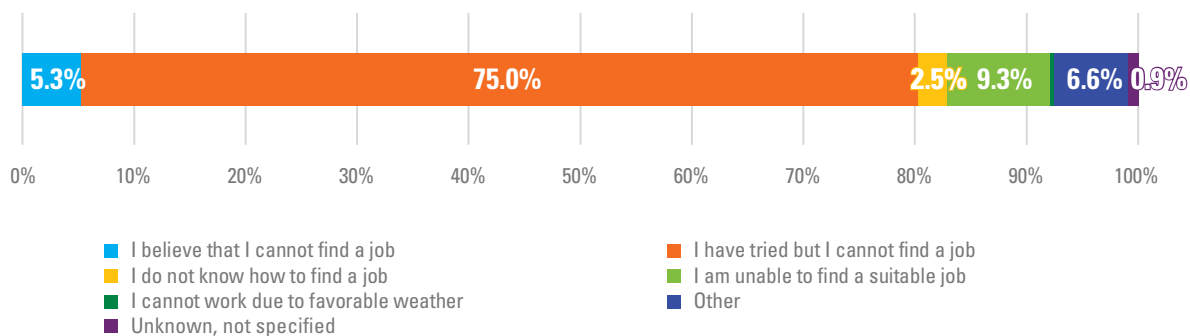
	Unsure how to access skills development	Do not have time	Cannot afford skills development	Want to rest	Cannot find suitable course	Other	Not specified	Total	Percentage
No education	315	-	-	-	386	-	-	701	0.4%
Less than elementary	910	-	-	-	1,142	-	-	2,052	1.2%
Primary education	4,997	1,123	1,740	504	3,930	-	1,555	13,849	8.3%
Lower secondary education	6,983	3,577	7,334	2,404	16,788	-	-	37,086	22.3%
Upper secondary education: General/Academic track	2,015	1,748	5,524	2,699	16,299	-	2,351	30,636	18.4%
Upper Secondary education: Vocational education track	508	2,237	74	927	4,725	-	315	8,786	5.3%
Post-secondary education: General/Academic track	438	-	-	-	-	-	-	438	0.3%
Post-secondary education: Vocational education	1,089	1,467	5,671	1,691	9,050	493	715	20,176	12.1%
Bachelor's degree: Academic track	7,170	3,094	3,030	7,684	23,152	2,149	4,255	50,534	30.3%
Bachelor's degree: Education track	-	409	516	199	552	-	-	1,676	1.0%
Master's degree	-	-	-	-	-	-	640	640	0.4%
Total (N)	24,425	13,655	23,889	16,108	76,024	2,642	9,831	166,574	100.0%

Source: Authors' estimate based on NSO SDS 2021 (Weighted N= 166,574). Due to statistical discrepancies caused by the weighted figures, there was one person difference from the total number of youth NEET in this group (N=166,575).

Note: *A person with a bachelor's degree in an academic track refers to a person who has graduated from a bachelor's degree or equivalent or higher. **A person with a bachelor's degree in education track refers to a person who studied to become a teacher.

Despite reporting that they were ready to work, the majority of NEETs in this group were not actively seeking employment (Figure 22), with a large majority (75 per cent) indicating that they had tried to find work but were unsuccessful, followed by those who reported an inability to find a suitable job (9.3 per cent), and those that believed it was not possible to find employment (5.3 per cent).

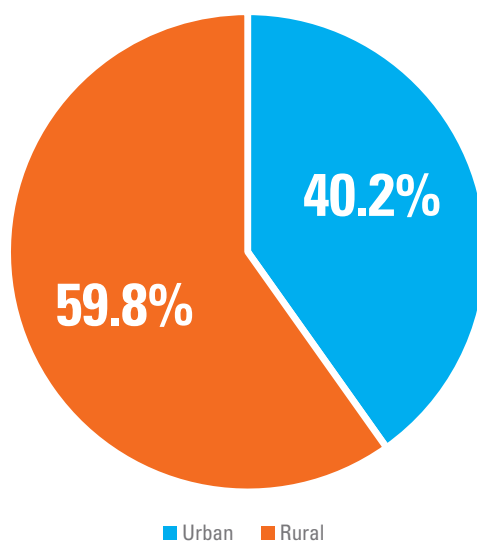
Figure 22: Reasons for not seeking jobs among youth who do not want to develop skills, but are ready to work (Percentage)



Source: Authors’ estimation based on SDS 2021 (N = 166,574).

Similar to youth NEET in group 1, a possible explanation for this group’s inactivity could be the limited availability of jobs in the local area, as most participants were residing in rural areas at the time of the survey (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Youth NEET who do not want to develop skills, and are not ready to work by urban and rural area (Percentage)



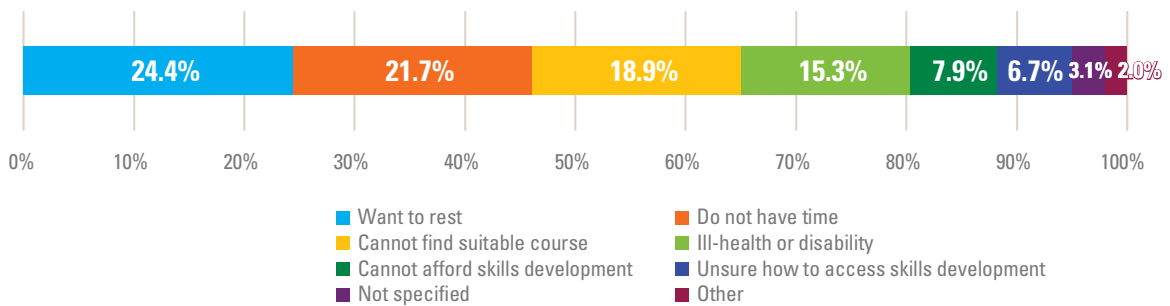
Source: Authors’ estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 166,574).

NEET group 4, who do not want to develop skills, nor are ready to work

NEETs in this group indicated that the primary reason for being absolutely disengaged was the desire to rest, which is as high as 24.4 per cent of all youth NEET in this group (Figure 24). Given their absolute disengagement, youth NEET in this group are likely to have experienced incidents or disruptions in life that led them to become NEET such as teenage pregnancy, being bullied, drug misuse and failure in school, contributing to long-term low self-esteem (please see Chapter 3 for further discussion).

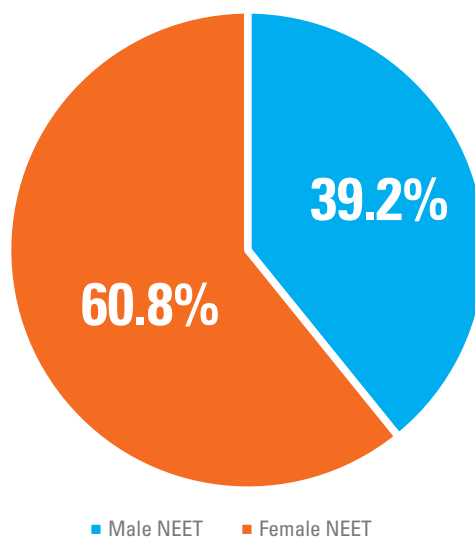
The second reason raised by youth was insufficient time for skills development or work which accounts for 21.7 per cent of this group. In this regard, gender is a crucial factor as 60.8 per cent of the NEETs in this group were female (Figure 25), among whom, 92.3 per cent reported lack of time as the main reason for their inactivity (Figure 26).

Figure 24: Reasons for NEET status among youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training, 2021 (Percentage)



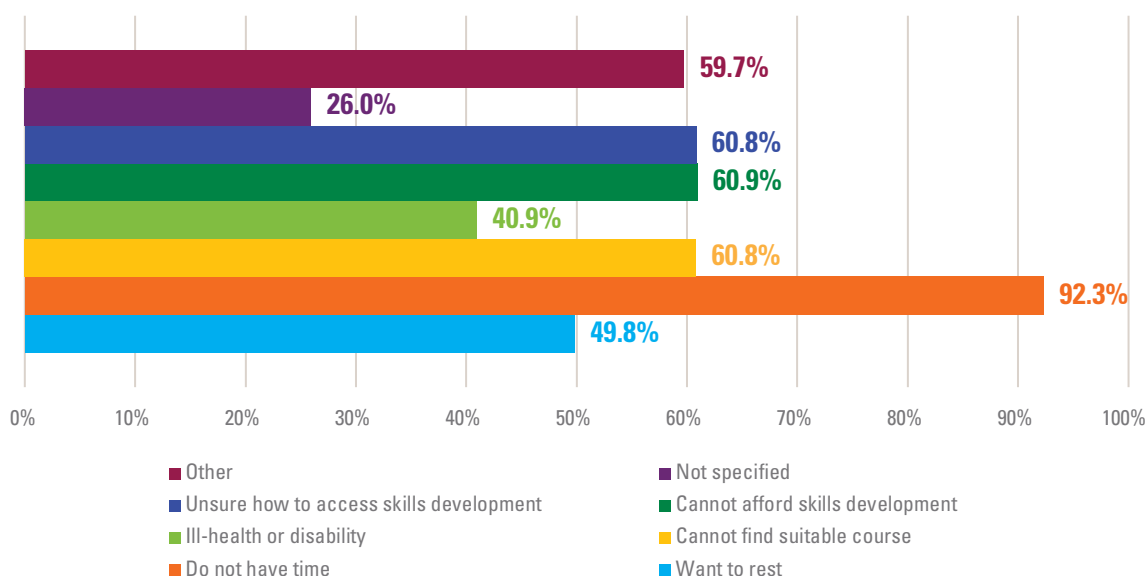
Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 878,433).

Figure 25: Youth NEET who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training, by gender, 2021 (Percentage)



Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021 (N= 878,433).

Figure 26: Reasons for NEET status among female youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training, 2021 (Percentage)

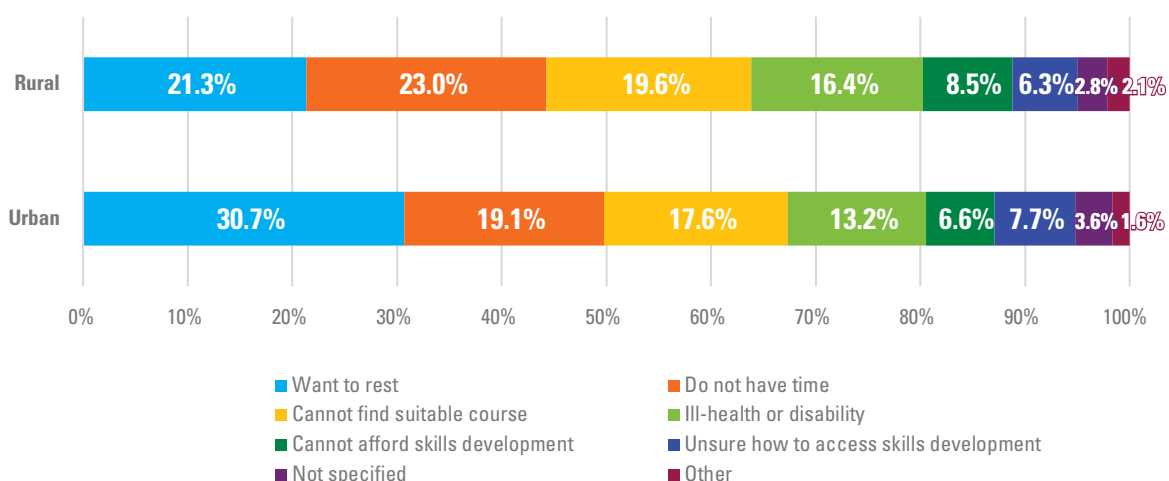


Note: This number represented 534,192 female NEET out of a total of 878,433 NEET youth.

Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021.

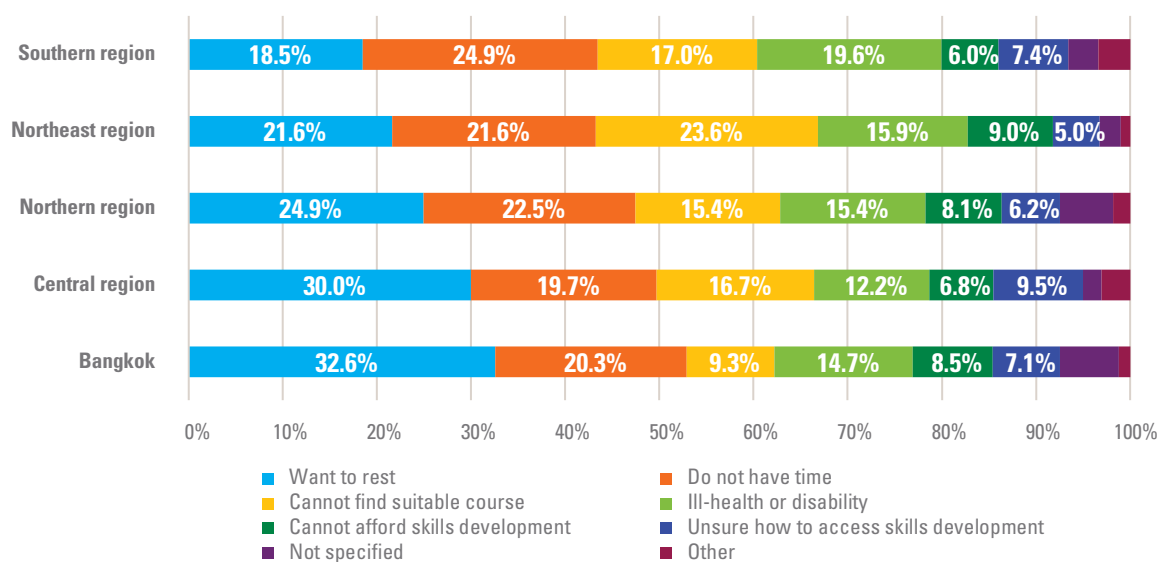
Figure 27 indicates that NEETs residing in urban areas are more likely to have the desire to rest, while in rural areas, NEETs are more likely to face time allocation issues and limited curriculum and course availability. A regional viewpoint paints a similar picture. The largest share of youth NEET in Bangkok (32.6 per cent) expressed a desire to rest as the main reason for their inactivity, while the largest share of youth NEET in the Southern region (24.9 per cent) indicated a lack of time as the main reason (Figure 28).

Figure 27: Reasons for NEET status among youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training by rural and urban areas, 2021 (Percentage)



Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021.

Figure 28: Reasons for NEET status among youth who do not want to engage in employment, education, or training by region, 2021 (Percentage)



Source: Authors' estimation based on NSO SDS 2021.

As the data discussed in this chapter reveals, multiple, overlapping factors contribute to youth NEET status. To fully comprehend the NEET phenomenon in Thailand, a comprehensive analysis of the risk factors and drivers of exclusion leading youth to become inactive and disengaged is provided in the following chapter.



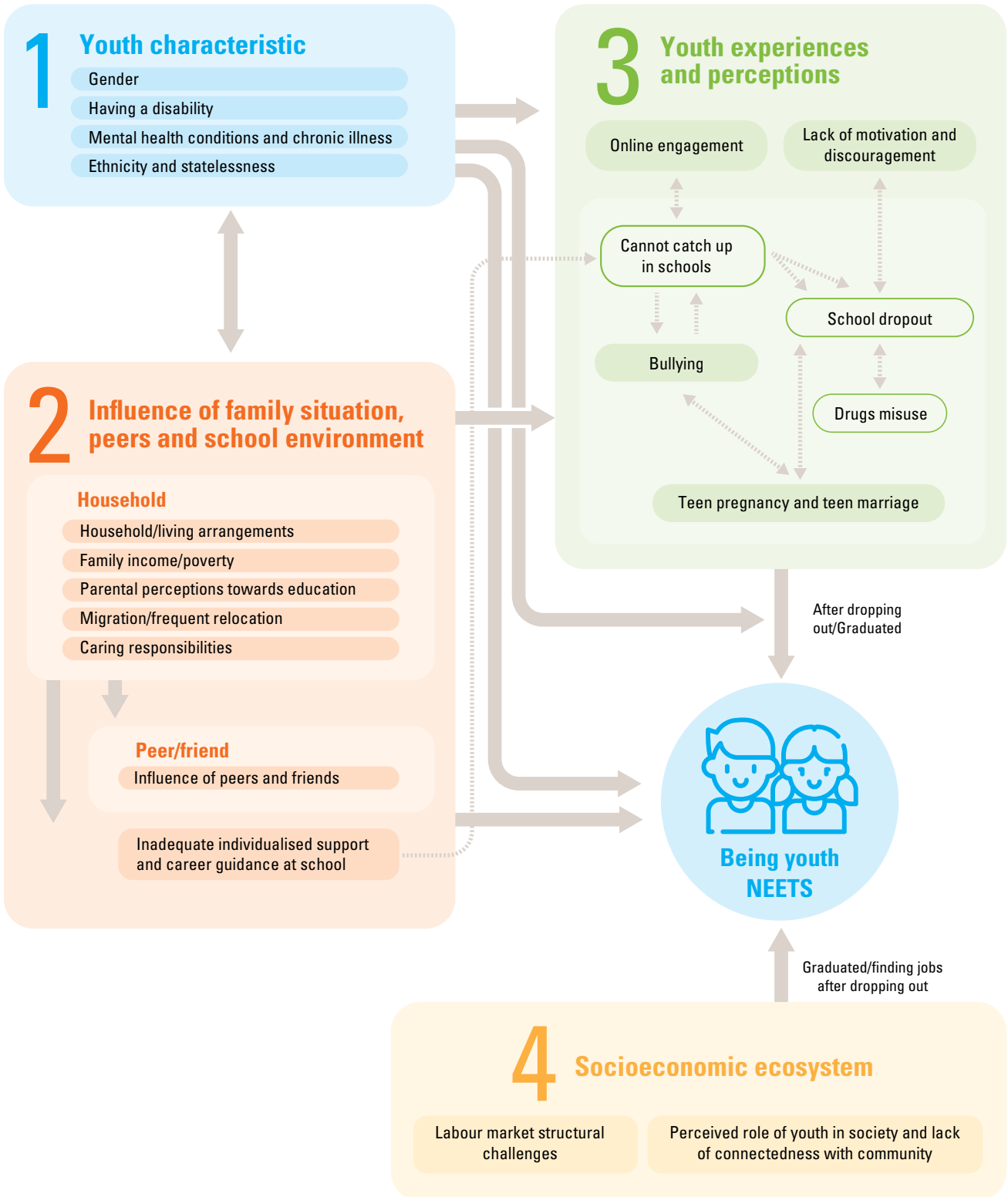
Chapter 3

Risk factors in becoming NEET

Factors contributing to youth becoming NEET are varied and may overlap. This chapter, based on both quantitative and qualitative research findings, provides a comprehensive and interconnected analysis of the risk factors and drivers that contribute to the youth NEET phenomenon in Thailand. The study classifies factors that put youth at risk of becoming NEET into four categories based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework (see Figure 29), as follows:

- 1. Inherent characteristics.** This category comprises conditions at birth, including gender, disability, chronic illness, ethnicity or statelessness.
- 2. Influence of family situation, peers and school environment.** This category encompasses the influences on youth exerted by surrounding actors, including household/living arrangement, family income/poverty, parental perceptions toward education, migrant families/frequent relocation, caring responsibilities, influence of peers and friends, and inadequate support and career guidance at school.
- 3. Youth experiences and perceptions.** This category explores youth experiences and perceptions resulting from intrapersonal factors, inherent characteristics, and interactions with surrounding individuals, including early pregnancy and teen marriage, bullying, and motivation towards education and jobs.
- 4. Socioeconomic ecosystem.** This category deals with the influences of the surrounding ecosystem, including labour market structure challenges and the degree of youth connectedness with the community.

Figure 29: Factors putting youth at risk of becoming NEET



Source: Analysed from interviews with youth NEET and parents/guardians of youth NEET (N=240).

3.1 Inherent characteristics of youth

Gender

Social norms and expectations in Thailand have a significant influence over female youth and their likelihood of becoming NEET. Generally, young women are more likely than young men to become inactive due to caring responsibilities, such as taking care of children or elderly family members (Council of the European Union, 2020; TDRI, 2020). Sharing childcare chores has been found to be particularly challenging in cultures where males are not accustomed to taking parental leave and mothers are discouraged from pursuing career goals (OECD, 2012; SEC & UNICEF, 2021).

Interviews conducted in this study confirmed that in comparison to men, young women are less likely to be encouraged to pursue employment or education, and are generally seen as more vulnerable, meaning that parents may be less willing to support them to move away from the family.

“

My brother has worked in other provinces. My mother is more concerned about me as a female than my brother. Therefore, I am living with my mother at the moment.

Female, 24, Bachelor's Degree, Rural area, Phetchabun province.

”

Disability

Disability can place youth at greater risk of becoming NEET (Coles et al., 2002; Salvà-Mut, Tugores-Ques & Quintana-Murci, 2018). Despite the 2008 Education Act for Persons with Disabilities and policy commitments made in the 2017–2036 National Education Plan, Thailand is still transitioning to fully including students with disabilities in education. Some steps have been taken to improve access, for example the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration provides inclusive education in 100 schools throughout the city (UNESCO, n.d.). There are also initiatives to encourage formal education among students with disabilities through the establishment of 43 special schools, 76 provincial special education centres, and 13,780 inclusive schools.

Despite this, youth with disabilities are more likely to have never been to school than their peers without a disability. Insufficient teaching staff with specialised knowledge currently hinders the inclusion of youth with disabilities in education. Low staff training and a lack of school facilities, including appropriate mode of transportation, are barriers to the inclusion of youth with disabilities in education (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). According to the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2022), as of September 2022, 0.8 per cent of PWDs (14,339) who have reached the compulsory school enrolment age (6 years old) are not studying. Continuing onto higher levels of education is also a challenge for PWDs. Of those with a disability ID card in Thailand, 63.6 per cent (1,360,028) have completed primary education, while 9.3 per cent (199,741) have graduated high school, and only 0.4 per cent (6,013) have graduated from higher education.

Having a learning disability may also contribute to youth not being in school and thus being NEET. Youth in this group typically have difficulties catching up with other students, while teachers are not always able to support every student due to their enormous workloads. Slow learners are frequently left behind and confused about the subjects they are learning, leading them to question why they must continue to study, as the one-size-fits-all approach does not meet their needs. It should be noted, however, that the number of people with learning disabilities with a disability ID card in 2022 was 14,502, while the most recent household survey conducted by

the NSO in 2017 indicated that the number of people with a learning disability was 148,171 (National Statistical Office, 2017). The difference between these numbers implies that there may be far more people with learning disabilities in the country than are registered, meaning that they may not be able to access support for their learning needs.

The resulting lack of formal education among youth with disabilities inevitably leads to job challenges, making it difficult for them to find employment. According to the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2022), as of September 2022, only 312,096 PWDs reported having jobs. As a result, many end up staying at home.

“

I don't work right now; I help my mother sell food, wash glasses, clean the house, and serve on occasion...

Female with learning disability, 23, Lower Secondary Education, Urban area, Phetchabun Province.

”

Even for educated youth with disabilities, there are few employment options available. Persistent stereotypes regarding the productivity and dependability of PWDs further exacerbate these disadvantages. Despite the existing quota system and non-discrimination hiring legislation, compliance with these policies is at best inconsistent.⁵

Mental health conditions and chronic illness

Mental health conditions or chronic illness can be a factor in youth becoming NEET as having a physical or mental health condition can be a barrier to accessing educational and work opportunities (Coles et al., 2002; Salvà-Mut, Tugores-Ques & Quintana-Murci, 2018; Powell et al., 2018; Zilte, 2020). Physical health issues, such as injuries, or mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, can have a lasting impact on an individual's performance in education and in the job market, as well as their likelihood of dropping out of school, lack of motivation to make life changes, and disinterest in school or work.

Recent studies have revealed concerning data regarding the mental health of adolescents and youth in Thailand. A 2022 study conducted by UNICEF Thailand in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, and the Burnet Institute, found that 1 in 7 adolescents aged 10–19 years are estimated to have a mental disorder, while suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents in the country (UNICEF Thailand et al., 2022). This corresponds with findings from the 2021 Global School-based Student Health Survey, in which 17.6 per cent of adolescents aged 13–17 in Thailand reported having recently seriously considered suicide (World Health Organization, 2021). Factors contributing to poor mental health outcomes for youth, such as exposure to violence, bullying, and isolation, may have been exacerbated by living conditions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF Thailand et al., 2022).

While youth with mental health issues or chronic illnesses are often capable of working at a certain level, they may lack the confidence or conviction to attempt work. For instance, youth may feel that they are able to work only in certain jobs at home or near to their home. However, without nearby jobs or jobs suited to their

⁵ The Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act, B.E. 2550 (2007) specifies that employers, owners of establishments and state agencies shall employ PWDs at the proportion of 1:100 (Section 33); any employer or business owner who does not recruit or employ PWDs at the proper proportion as stipulated in Section 33, shall make contributions to the Disability Empowerment Fund (DEF) (Section 34). Employers, business owners or state agencies that do wish to follow Section 33 or Section 34 may, in substitution, grant concessions, arrange places for distributing products or services, employ PWDs under a temporary employment contract, or provide training or any other assistance to PWDs or their caregivers.

circumstances, they are unlikely to work after finishing compulsory education. In most cases, interviews conducted in this study found that these youth stigmatise themselves as family burdens and may choose to assist families in running household errands instead of going to school.

“

As soon as I finished sixth grade, I stopped taking classes. I stayed at home and raised my sister's child. I put in an application for a job, but I didn't get it. I think that it is because of my heart condition.

Female, 20, Primary Education, Pethchabun province.

”

Ethnicity and statelessness

Even though youth from Thai minority groups have access to education, many still face a significant language barrier, causing some to abandon their study and seek employment in the informal sector.

“

I dropped out of school after completing sixth grade at the age of thirteen because I did not wish to study... The primary reason I did not continue studying was because I really did not understand it (a course taught in Thai).

Male NEET, 21, Primary Education, Rural area, Narathiwat province (interviewed in Yawi language).

”

Parents of youth from Thailand's ethnic minority groups tend not to value higher education and instead prefer their children to work and earn income. This group also faces difficulties in accessing public services. When ethnic youth enter higher education, they often face issues finding scholarships due to not having a Thai ID. This is likely to contribute to their increased vulnerability and risk of becoming NEET.

Meanwhile, the number of stateless children born in Thailand (people without registration status, group 0-006) is growing.⁶ In 2011, there were 17,885 such persons, who increased to 72,318 in 2016, and 87,291 in 2020 (Legal Research and Development Center, Faculty of Law, Chiang Mai University; UNICEF, 2020). The vulnerabilities associated with statelessness contribute towards becoming NEET (Gökşen & Öker, 2017). While the Thai government provides basic rights to stateless people in various fields, such as Cabinet Resolution B.E. 2548 (2005) which allows children to attend school without documentation and subsidizes their primary education, stateless people continue to face many restrictions concerning the right to education and its provisions. Furthermore, work or study-related travel outside of the district or province without an ID card is restricted. There are few employers who are willing to hire individuals without an ID card, whilst there are also those who would provide them with job opportunities that are hazardous, diminishing their chances in life (Arunothai, 2018).

⁶ Stateless children can be divided into the following two categories: The first group is comprised of stateless children who were born to parents with Thai nationality but whose birth was not reported or who were not included in the household registration, or if the father is Thai, but the mother is foreign, and the parents did not register their marriage or the birth of the child, preventing the child from being certified as having Thai nationality. The second group consists of children whose parents entered Thailand illegally, leaving them without citizenship. With their parents' undocumented immigration status, a child born in Thailand will not have Thai citizenship under the territorial principle (Legal Research and Development Center, Faculty of Law, Chiang Mai University; UNICEF, 2020).

3.2 Influence of family situation, peers and school environment

Household/living arrangements

Previous studies in other countries outline that family background plays a crucial role in the incidence of youth NEET. For example, young people with divorced parents have a higher risk of being NEET (Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Caroleo et al., 2020). This is also found to be the case for some of the NEETs in Thailand.

“

I'm not sure why, perhaps it was because I didn't stay with my mother for a while (and lost connection with my mother), so I didn't go to school.

Male, 16, Grade 3, Rural area, Narathiwat province.

”

However, the divorce or separation of parents may not be a definitive indicator associated with becoming NEET. In cases of separation to escape domestic violence or to resolve an unpleasant atmosphere in the family, a divorce or separation may benefit children or youth. If parents maintain regular communication with their children and make regular remittances toward their education and acknowledge the importance of education, youth are likely to stay in education and their educational outcomes could potentially be high. Youth NEET are more likely to experience feelings of emptiness as a result of not staying, or having disconnected communication, with their parents (Barham, Walling, Clancy, Hicks, & Conn, 2009). Therefore, it could be said that it is feelings of abandonment, rather than divorce or separation itself, that can contribute towards a youth becoming NEET.

The majority of NEETs in Thailand live in separated families, and most live with only their biological mother, not father (Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul, & Thongwan, 2020). Youth residing with their mothers in a low-income household had an 8.2 per cent higher probability of becoming NEET than other youth groups, while those who live with one or more unemployed household members are 12.3 per cent more likely to become NEET (Ibid.). This suggests that they may lack family support and resources to stay on track.

Single mothers of youth NEET are likely to have low self-esteem and may blame themselves for not having enough time to raise their child because they have to work. During the interviews, single mothers commonly complained about their children being NEET, yet they continue to provide financial support, allowing their children to rely on them or older siblings for money rather than work to support themselves.

Living with parents who cannot set a good example in terms of employment, such as those who are imprisoned, can increase the likelihood of a youth becoming NEET. Typically, if the size of the family is relatively large, other siblings may also be NEET.

“

I live with my grandmother, 52, aunt, 28, another brother, 10, and my grandmother's ex-boyfriend. My parents separated when I was a young child. When my father was arrested, my mother and I split up to start a new life. When my father came out, he also had a new family and then circled in and out of prisons, as did my mother. Now I live with my grandmother because my mother is still in prison ... My younger brother goes to school on and off.

Male, 18, Lower Secondary Education, Urban area, Bangkok.

”

Furthermore, homelessness can lead to being NEET. Youth NEET who are homeless are typically not living with their parents and are highly mobile. Many homeless youth lack literacy skills as they tend to have limited education due to family issues, poverty, and the need to work at an early age as well as lack of motivation to learn. Some of these youth may choose to return to non-formal education for primary or upper secondary level at 17 or 18 to meet the minimum qualification to apply for jobs in the formal sector, but they are generally uninterested in furthering their education. Often, they tend to lack social skills and life skills, such as patience, punctuality, and the ability to communicate and express their emotions. Some homeless youth are also motivated to join gangs and commit crimes because they desire acceptance and recognition, leading them to come into conflict with the law. Despite the need for resources and support for this youth group, homeless centres lack budget for full-time teachers and space to allow for cohabitation and recreational activities, and the number of homeless youth continues to rise (Bhula-or Saengprajaksakul, & Thongwan, 2020).

Family income/poverty

Family poverty acts as a crucial factor affecting a youth's decision to leave or stay in education. The majority of youth NEET drop out before proceeding to higher secondary education, while some drop out even earlier to earn a living. This perpetuates poverty across generations, as unskilled workers earn lower wages and are unable to pay for their children's education. Being poor can also impact a child's test performance (Das, 2019), which can be one of the factors affecting dropping out.

“

I graduated from lower secondary school and was in grade 10, but I didn't finish because my mother didn't work... My father is also ill and unable to work... When I dropped out, at first, I worked to support my mother.

Female, 20, Lower Secondary Education, Bangkok.

”

Several studies have revealed that youth are more likely to drop out if they are from low-income families with less educated parents; from households with more than three children or more than five members; and have a long commute to school or lack access to electricity (Farah & Upadhyay, 2017; Neild, Stoner-Eby & Furstenberg, 2008), the latter being especially true for poor households living in rural areas. In Thailand, youth who dropped out from school due to economic reasons are 7.1 per cent more likely than other youth groups to become NEET (Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul & Thongwan, 2020).

All stakeholders interviewed in this study noted that Thailand's 15-year free education policy is not truly free, and that parents are still responsible for many expenditures, including equipment, uniform, and activity costs, which represent a significant portion of family spending. This may be particularly true at the upper secondary level, when education is ostensibly free but not compulsory. This finding aligns with the results of a study conducted by the National Reform Commission on Education (Thaipublica, 2022), which concludes that the implementation of the 15-year free education policy must be improved. It indicates that the budget is inconsistent with the cost of living, putting 2.4 million children at risk of dropping out of the education system. Even though the budget to support this policy in 2021 was increased to 76 billion baht, the budget to support the operations of schools, such as the cost of teaching and the cost of student development activities, remains insufficient, especially for small and rural schools in underserved regions, resulting in disadvantaged students potentially being compelled to abandon their education. Even though the government offers loans through the Student Loan Fund, most students dislike borrowing, given the requirement to find a guarantor, and the lengthy process to receive the loan.

“

My husband and I cannot afford to send our children to school. We wish for our son to pursue higher education, but we don't have the funds to support him. My husband is 63 years old, working at a construction site. He has not lived at home for three years (due to the need to move to new construction sites), and we only communicate via phone calls.

Mother of male NEET, Rural area, Phetchabun province.

She (my child) didn't go to school because I didn't have any money... I was very stressed ... It is my financial situation that has forbidden my children from going to school...

Mother of female NEET, Urban area, Phetchabun Province.

”

Poverty can also drive youth to study in areas that do not meet labour market demands, resulting in limited life options. For instance, in the case of the southern border provinces, as religious institutions provide free education for boys, many boys consider this as the only viable educational option. However, these graduates have limited job possibilities upon completing their education.

“

I haven't studied for two or three years. I was studying at a Pondok Institute (a religious school) because I did not have money. If the opportunity arises, I would like to pursue a career as an Usta (a religious teacher)

Male, 20, Lower Secondary Education, Pattani province.

”

Parental perceptions towards education

Parental perceptions towards the benefits of education can affect youth perceptions toward education. If parents believe that exceptional academic achievement and high academic qualifications are the key to a better future, they are likely to make their child's educational achievement their primary parenting goal and support their child to enter higher education (Hwang, 2009; Leung & Chen., 2009; Yau, Chung, Li, & Chun, 2018).

Children of parents with a higher level of education are also more likely to be educated. Literature confirms the strong impact of parental education on a child, as well as better cognitive and non-cognitive skills and health (Pronzato, 2012; Lundborg, Nordin, & Rooth, 2018). Such intergenerational transmissions also hold true in Thailand. A national study found that if the father's and mother's education level increases by one year, the child's education will increase on average by 0.54 years and 0.49 years, respectively (Uddin, 2019).

Nevertheless, when parents/guardians have a low level of education, they tend to think that obtaining a degree is good as long as it offers employment opportunities in formal establishments and are more likely to persuade their children to study only at the compulsory level to obtain a certificate for employment and find work after graduation (i.e., upper secondary education). To these parents, it is not necessary to have a higher education.

“

I did not have any expectations. After completing lower secondary school, my granddaughter informed me that she did not wish to continue her study ... I think it is sufficient for her to be able to read and write.... I only wish that my grandchildren can read and write, as I was unable to do so myself.

Grandmother of female NEET, Urban area, Samut Prakan province.

”

Migration/frequent relocation

Migrating families, especially when the head of the household works in a low-paid occupation, or in an informal sector such as the agricultural and construction sectors, are likely to move for jobs and live temporarily in certain areas without planning for their children's education. Therefore, the ability of these children to enter, remain and complete education is limited. Figures reported by the MOE through the Bring Back to School initiative reveal that 18 per cent of the reason for school dropout was relocation (MOE, 2022).

While relocation is one of the primary causes of youth dropping out, if a youth member of a migrating family can help the family work and earn money, the youth is less likely to be NEET, or to be NEET only temporarily while in between jobs. Youth in this circumstance are likely to work occasionally, when possible, despite having a low level of education.

Complex and interlinked barriers related to identity documentation, health, community, labour and security issues (Asian Research Center for Migration, Chulalongkorn University, & UNICEF, 2022) play a role in influencing the NEET status of migrant youth from neighbouring countries. They face several additional challenges to accessing work or educational opportunities in Thailand, such as not speaking the local language fluently, schools being wary of accepting migrant students, or having trouble obtaining official recognition for their educational credentials. School teachers frequently do not feel adequately supported to teach students with multilingual and diverse learning needs, particularly in building migrant children's Thai language proficiency, communicating with their parents/guardians, and coping with frequent and prolonged absence and high dropout rates.

Many families migrating from neighbouring countries are also economically disadvantaged, further compounding the challenges they must overcome. Access to education for migrant children is determined by the migrant families' economic situation, their awareness of educational opportunities in their locale, and their perception of the value of education. Even though the Thai government provides school fees support and subsidises for migrant children, expenses such as books, supplies, extracurricular activities, and uniforms are not covered. At secondary level, parents must pay for uniforms, transportation and lunch. Total school expenses can range from 1,000 to over 10,000 baht per student, which may be unaffordable for migrant workers, especially if they have many children (UNICEF, 2022a).

“

I couldn't stay in the education system because I don't have money, and I have to relocate frequently...

Male, 18, Primary Education, Urban area, Pattani province.

”

Caring responsibilities

Youth NEET with caring responsibilities fall into two groups: those taking care of infants and young children in the family and those caring for older family members. In cases when NEET youth reported caring for infants, they are more likely to be parents and their NEET status is linked to being teen parents. Early motherhood is associated with female NEET status. This finding is also consistent with the adolescent birth rate among women aged 15–19, which is significantly higher among those with primary education at 104 births per 1,000 women compared to the national average of 23 births per 1,000 women (MICS, 2021). While NEET status for young men is primarily associated with poor labour market performance, for young women, NEET status is associated with early marriage or cohabitation, dissatisfaction with life, a lack of a sense of control, and experiencing problems in life. As a consequence of early motherhood, many teen mothers also experience time poverty as they have to spend time away from education, training or work while raising their own children, especially if there is insufficient support to help them reintegrate.

Moreover, a number of young people interviewed in this study reported providing care for family members who are sick, with disabilities, or substance-abusing. The responsibilities of these youth as caregivers include practical tasks like cooking and cleaning, physical care, emotional support, personal care, managing finances, assisting with communication, and supporting medical needs.

“

I don't have enough money to continue my studies, and my grandmother is old. I also have a medical condition, so I have to drop out and take care of my grandmother...

Male, 18, Lower Secondary Education, Urban area, Chonburi province.

”

Being a young caregiver can have a significant impact on the development of a young person. In an ageing society like Thailand, the proportion of youth NEET taking care of family members is likely to increase. The rising number of recognised young caregivers has raised concerns that they are left by increasingly overburdened adult social care services. For wealthy families, hiring a helper is likely to be an option. Therefore, poverty plays a significant role in youth being compelled to provide full-time care for an ailing family member.

Influence of peers and friends

The friendships youth develop can have both positive and negative effects on their aspirations and achievements. Friendship helps define one's worldview and values, giving one's life purpose. Friends can also reduce anxiety in unfamiliar situations, helping to boost self-confidence and feelings of well-being. Friends can increase self-esteem by fostering respect and interest in an individual's thoughts and experiences (Rabaglietti & Ciairano, 2008). In addition to enhancing personality, the support of a friend enhances cognitive functioning, such as problem solving and social and emotional competencies (Brendgen et al., 2001; Gauze et al., 1996).

On the other hand, being influenced by friends who participate in risky behaviours or delinquency can result in youth dropping out of school and becoming NEET.

“

I left school in the seventh grade when I was 13 years old because I was attached to my friends. My teacher tried to persuade me to return to school, but I refused. When I have a problem, I usually consult a friend...

Male, 21, Primary Education, Rural area, Nong Bua Lam Phu province.

”

For many teen NEETs, negative peer pressure can lead to issues such as drug misuse, which may be prevalent in their community. In fact, in Thailand, drug abuse is a major issue among youth. Data from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) revealed that Thai youth aged 15–24 formed the highest number of drug abusers in Thailand in 2019, with 38 per cent being drug addicts under treatment programmes and 35 per cent being drug offenders (MOJ, 2019). The scale of the problem is also reflected in this study's findings, where many participants interviewed reported that drug abuse was among the key causes of youth inactivity.

Drug abuse can decrease academic motivation, study skills, and goal-setting abilities. Therefore, compared to non-users, substance-using students are at a higher risk of academic failure, leading to dropout (King et al., 2006; Henry, 2010; Ford et al., 2020). Intentional and unintentional absence from compulsory education is associated with an increased risk of substance abuse among youth (Ellickson et al., 1998; Aloise-Young et al., 2002; Flisher et al., 2010; Ford et al., 2020). Substance use is significantly more prevalent among youth who have dropped out of high school compared to those who remain in school (Aloise-Young et al., 2002; Tice et al., 2017). Once youth who are drug users have dropped out of school, becoming involved in criminal activities may follow (Fergusson et al., 2003; Breslau et al., 2011).

Inadequate individualised support and career guidance at school

In most schools, there are limited resources to support youth to cultivate additional skills beyond those related to academic subjects, such as music or sports. Some students who are frustrated with the school system may choose to deal with their unhappiness by challenging the system through delinquent behaviours; others may choose to abandon school to escape the situation that is causing their frustration. Youth who have dropped out of school before establishing a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy and adequate fundamental abilities, including job-seeking and retention skills, are more likely to experience barriers to employment.

This study found that employers tend to view young people's skills as not aligning with the labour demands of the local markets, including soft skills such as discipline, punctuality, and teamwork. This may be due to school curricula not aligning with labour market demands and limited opportunities for youth to engage in work-integrated learning programmes that support their employability and school-to-work transition. In the southern border provinces, where many youth attend religious schools (the so-called Por-Noh schools) that focus solely on religious and spiritual content, the school curriculum may result in low motivation for economic activities and a focus on non-human capital accumulation endeavours, as demonstrated by the high NEET rate in the region (see Chapter 2).

Another potential barrier to employment is a lack of effective career guidance provision in school. While school career guidance systems and school counsellors can play a crucial role in facilitating the school-to-work transition, school counsellors currently lack the ability to provide youth with up-to-date information and knowledge regarding occupational trends on the global labour market. Furthermore, career guidance normally occurs in the final year of compulsory education (9th grade), leaving youth with insufficient time to prepare and consider their life choices. Most youth interviewed in this study were unaware that it is possible for them to earn a living while also earning a degree, especially through vocational routes such as the Dual Vocational Education System. There is also limited knowledge regarding public employment services among youth, as many youth interviewees were unfamiliar with how to prepare for an interview, where to look for employment and who to consult. Most youth NEET tended to look for jobs through Facebook or friends, which are not effective job placement tools.

“

I have not heard about the Department of Employment, never heard about scholarships, never use public health services, and have no idea about internships and vocational training.

Female, 20, Lower Secondary Education, Urban area, Nakhon Si Thammarat province.

”

3.3 Youth experiences and perceptions

The way youth interact with their environment and experiences can lead to their inactivity and disengagement. While a positive environment can play an important role in supporting the development and well-being of young people, certain negative life experiences can do the reverse, affecting not only their long-term self-esteem, but also their values, perceptions and outlook on life. These factors are discussed below.

Teen pregnancy and teen marriage

Teen marriage, cohabitation, and parenthood make female youth less likely to be enrolled in, or complete, higher education, have a formal job, and more likely to be NEET by the age of 22 (DeBolt, Pasley & Kreutzer, 1990; Sánchez & Favara, 2019). Marriage during teenage years is found to increase the likelihood of being NEET by 15.5 per cent (Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul & Thongwan, 2020). Once they become pregnant, teen mothers have fewer opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, and their chances of returning to school are limited, as the educational system lacks flexibility to support their reengagement. Attitudes of teachers and classmates can also make them feel alienated and less inclined to return.

Teen mothers are also more likely to have repeat pregnancies (Talungchit, Lertbunnaphong, & Russameecharoen, 2017; Jiusitthipraphai, Nirattharadorn, & Suwannarurk, 2015; Talungchit, Lertbunnaphong, & Russameecharoen, 2017; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) & NESDC, 2013), making it even harder to balance caring duties with a return to work or education.

“

I completed high school at age 15, pursued a technical vocational certificate until the second year, and then became pregnant, which stopped me from continuing my studies. After giving birth, I returned to work at Lotus as a cashier for roughly two months, then left because I was pregnant with my second child.

Female, 20, Lower Secondary Education, Rural area, Samut Prakan province.

”

Moreover, teenage mothers frequently migrate to find jobs because they are more likely to prioritize childcare or having an income to support their children. They want a job where they can make money immediately and plan for the future in the short term. However, many teenage parents and pregnant teens under the age of 18 face age restrictions in finding formal employment, leading them to become NEET. They also face the dilemma of staying at home to raise a child or going to work, without an option to further their education or acquire new skills. Due to their low education level and young age, the potential jobs available to them are likely to be low-skilled jobs or low-paid jobs in the informal sector.

Bullying

Social settings, whether in the classroom, family or community, can influence a child's sense of self and others. Children develop subjective interpretations of themselves and others from objective reality, interactions, and feedback. In particular, the classroom is an arena for the development of children's social and emotional self-constructions, self-concept and self-esteem which are key to their communication and social skills. Being bullied can therefore affect a child's self-concept and future interactions with others. This may particularly be the case for LGBTIQ+ youth, who are frequently subject to exclusion, discrimination and bullying. Family disapproval of their identity also affects their self-esteem, self-love and acceptance, leading to a lack of determination to continue their education which then limits their opportunities for decent employment.

Evidence from a recent national school-based survey with over 7,800 primary students across Thailand found that students who had been bullied were 28 per cent less likely to be happy, and more likely to drop out (Aunampai et al., 2022).

“

When I completed grade 6, I left school and stopped studying because I was afraid of my friends. I had been victimised by my friends since the fourth grade. They eventually formed a group and attacked me. If I had continued studying, I would have to keep facing this, as the school did not take it seriously.

Male, 19, Primary Education, Urban area, Sa Kaeo province.

”

Bullying perpetrated by teachers is also a significant factor leading youth to drop out of school and experience diminished self-esteem (Cornell et al., 2013; Bianchi et al., 2021).

Online engagement

While online interaction can provide children and youth valuable opportunities to learn, play, and socialise with friends and peers, as well as access information and support, online influences can also prevent teens from engaging in healthy behaviours (Nilsson, Rosendahl, & Jayaram-Lindström, 2022). Engaging with social media or online gaming can also increase the risk of youth being in danger; for example, spending more time online can increase the likelihood of youth falling victims to predatory adults with paedophilic desires, or who may introduce them to risk-taking or delinquent behaviours (UNICEF, 2020) which may result in them coming into conflict with the law and consequently dropping out of school.

Measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have led young people to utilize social media more frequently as coping mechanisms from the isolation and stress caused by school closures, limitations on extracurricular activities, or financial hardship experienced by their families. Likewise, significant changes in the family environment, such as parents working from home or juggling other responsibilities, have been linked to the rise in gaming and social media use. These factors put youth at risk of falling victim to negative social media influences that could lead them to abandon the education system, and in turn become NEET.

Lack of motivation and discouragement

Lack of motivation is often identified as one of the key risk factors of inactivity. Lack of motivation, low aspiration, lack of confidence, a sense of fatalism, and low self-esteem can be attributed to a variety of factors, including a lack of awareness of professional development opportunities, low educational attainment and unwillingness to work or study. The perceived low benefits of education is another factor leading youth to drop out or to not pursue higher education. Many youth consider further study to be unnecessary and a burden for their family, or believe that it is not worth paying for an expensive higher education which will not help them find decent jobs.

Being NEET for an extended period of time can also result in a loss of motivation and confidence (UNICEF, 2015; ILO, 2020). Youth with work experience are found to have a 16.4 per cent lower likelihood of becoming NEET than youth without work experience (Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul & Thongwan, 2020). Those who have career goals are also found to have more positive life skills, including in terms of their thinking and self-management abilities, building relationships and caring for others, giving and working with others and living a healthy lifestyle, which foster their academic tenacity and increase their likelihood of remaining in school and becoming successful (Ibid.). By contrast, residents of small towns and villages, those with only primary or secondary education, and those who do not work, have very few opportunities to leave the NEET status. They do not expect any change in their circumstances due to lack of opportunity and goals in life, and the majority of them are women (Gracey & Kelly, 2010).

3.4 Socioeconomic ecosystem

Labour market structural challenges

The economic opportunities available to youth in the surrounding labour market can significantly impact the likelihood of youth becoming NEET. For example, in Thailand's lower-income provinces, such as Sa Kaeo, Chainat, Phetchaburi, Nong Bua Lam Phu, businesses are more likely to be small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which offer limited economic opportunities and limited capital accessibility.

Instability due to ongoing conflict can also negatively impact the labour market, reducing opportunities for youth. In the three southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, economic expansion is relatively modest due to a long history of conflict and insecurity in the region, and there is little job growth as investors are unwilling to invest in the area. As a result, youth have limited opportunities for formal or wage work in these regions.

Limited financial resources, as well as underdeveloped infrastructure and communication systems in rural areas, expose youth to the risk of unemployment and poverty, and to become dependent on parental support (Zipin et al., 2015). Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul, and Thongwan (2020) found that youth living in rural areas among lower-income households are at 8.6 per cent higher risk of becoming NEET. Consequently, many young people living in rural areas or distant communities are compelled to leave their homes in search of academic and professional opportunities, migrating to urban areas and high-income provinces, such as Bangkok, Chonburi, Samut Prakan, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima and Nakhon Si Thammarat, in search of employment. As job availability is more prevalent in these provinces, the NEET rate is relatively low. However, this induced migration contributes to fewer employment and educational opportunities for rural youth (Shucksmith, 2009; White, 2012), perpetuating a cycle in which youth are compelled to migrate to seek better opportunities.

Perceived role of youth in society and lack of connectedness with community

Community engagement offers chances and resources for healthy physical and social growth from infancy to adulthood. As children grow older, their social environment expands, enabling them to interact with a wider spectrum of people than their family and friends. A caring neighbourhood or community can provide safe spaces for children and youth to play and socialise, an encouraging educational environment, positive peer influences and adult role models, and vital opportunities to stay active and establish social capital within the community as well as nurture their own sense of belonging and motivation (Jonsson, Gotfredsen, & Goicolea, 2022). However, social norms in Thailand, which place an emphasis on the deference of youth to adults, often prohibit youth from engaging or being perceived as fully participating members of society, and reduce the capacity of youth to have their voices heard and their views respected and acted upon (UNICEF, 2023). Lack of connectedness with their community and an inability to influence meaningful change to better their own situations may in turn reduce youth's sense of belonging and motivation, and instead increase disengagement and disconnection. As youth become more disengaged, their civic trust also diminishes, leading to lower accessibility to information and public services. This is the case with many youth NEET, who are found to have low expectations and little confidence about their future and to perceive institutional solutions as ineffective (Cabasés Piqué et al., 2017).

“

I cannot remember the last time I participated in a public event. I never used youth-related services, never participated in a career preparation initiative, never sought medical advice, and never knew where to get advice about children and youth from any agency, especially after I left school at grade 8.

Female, 22, Primary Education, Urban area, Nakhon Si Thammarat province

”



Chapter 4

Existing policies, measures and services related to youth NEET in Thailand

This chapter gives an overview of the availability and coverage of existing policies, measures, initiatives, and support services relevant to addressing the issue of youth NEET in Thailand.

4.1 National frameworks related to youth NEET

At present, there are two major frameworks in Thailand relating to human capital development, including youth NEET.

The 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037) is the country's first long-term plan. It outlines the country's vision for national development and growth that is both sustainable and inclusive. Thailand's national development challenges are also acknowledged in the National Strategy, including the issues of a workforce that falls short of market expectations, an aging society, disruptive technology, complex connectivity resulting from regional integration and sector liberalisation, and climate change and environmental degradation. While six major strategies are included in the National Strategy, Strategy 3 is particularly relevant to addressing the issue of youth NEET, as it establishes the framework for human capital development and strengthening. This strategy aims to develop Thai citizens of all ages to become responsible, capable, and competent citizens. Among its key development guidelines are improving learning processes to accommodate twenty-first century changes, realizing multiple intelligences, and fostering conditions that encourage human capital development. To accomplish its long-term goal, the National Strategy is continuously monitored and updated. Every five years, the National Assembly is required to review and update the Strategy.

The second major framework is **the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP)**, which serves as a medium-term policy guideline. The National Economic and Social Development Board Act 2018 authorizes the NESDC to conduct reviews of all government and state enterprise projects and programmes and make recommendations to the cabinet for appropriate actions. The 12th NESDP (2017–2021) aimed to empower Thai people of all ages by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and capabilities to live meaningful lives, with particular attention paid to fostering systematic thinking abilities, creativity, and critical job skills in youth and young people.

The 13th NESDP (2023–2027) aims to build on this further by promoting goals for a high-opportunity society. Milestone 9 of the 13th NESDP aims to facilitate social upward mobility and reduce income and wealth disparities, including through the provision of equal access to quality education for children from poorer families, while Milestone 12 explicitly emphasizes human resource development and the need to improve the quality of education and training and promote lifelong learning. Milestone 12 is aligned with the National Strategy in three ways, namely its aims to enhance competitiveness; to create an ecosystem that enhances good, competent, qualified citizens, and improve their readiness for the twenty-first century; and to minimize inequality across all dimensions. **The 13th NESDP includes a specific indicator to reduce the NEET rate to less than 5 per cent at the end of the plan.**

4.2 Policies and regulations relevant to NEETs

There are several policies and laws related to education, employment and training in Thailand. Although the NEETs may not be the direct targets of these policies or laws, the effectiveness of their application can have an impact on the incidence of youth NEET in the country.

4.2.1 Educational policies

Education policies and laws in Thailand mainly focus on establishing effective, responsive, accountable, and transparent institutions and the promotion of educational accessibility for all. For instance, **the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and its revision** stipulate the government must guarantee equal access to free basic education for all children for a minimum of 12 years, while **the Compulsory Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002)** mandates 9 years of compulsory schooling. This Act also stipulates that parents must provide a child or person under their custody with compulsory education, while the state must provide support to parents, including subsidies for providing basic education, and tax deduction/exemption for their child educational expenses. Moreover, **the 2548 (2005) Cabinet Resolution on Education for Unregistered Persons** provides access to education for the entire non-Thai population, including irregular migrants. Similarly, **the Promotion of Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion Act B.E. 2551 (2008)** outlines that non-formal and informal education should be provided to all people, with equity and quality. The Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE) is the responsible agency tasked to reach out to the unreachable, including out-of-school youth. Meanwhile, **the Vocational Education Act B.E. 2551 (2008)** was enacted to promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to play a key role in the country's human capital development. Finally, **the Equitable Education Act B.E. 2561 (2018)** was passed with the purpose of promoting equitable education. Under this Act, the EEF was established to propel support from all sectors to provide financial support for children and youth who are in greatest need; reduce educational inequality by forming partnership with different stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors; and conduct systematic research to support and develop teachers' effectiveness.⁷

⁷ The EEF is under the supervision of the Prime Minister and is governed by a Board of Governance which is appointed by the cabinet and has a multi-sectoral structure. The board members include five ministries (MOE, Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), Ministry of Interior (MOI), and Ministry of Public Health (MOPH)) and six independent experts from various disciplines (academic, private sector, civil society) (EEF, 2022).

In terms of policy implementation, Education Offices at the sub-national level are responsible for promoting human development for all ages, particularly, those in schooling age, through re-skilling, up-skilling and new skills acquisition to increase the country's competitiveness. Every district office is assigned to support educational institutions in providing appropriate learning tools and techniques to foster students' multiple intelligences (Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), 2021).

As part of the aim to decentralize responsibilities at the local level, education service provision falls into the remit of local schools under the Ministry of Interior (MOI), and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The MOI manages municipal schools through the Bureau of Local Education Administration, while the Border Patrol Police oversee primary schools in remote border areas. Moreover, demonstration schools are organized in collaboration with various universities and Rajabhat Institutes.⁸ The MOE operates a number of special schools for children with disabilities, and welfare schools for socially and culturally disadvantaged children are jointly operated by the MOE, the MOI and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). Additionally, migrant and displaced children are supported to access education through coordination between the MOI, the MOE and educational institutions to expedite non-Thai student registration.

In practice, however, the effectiveness in the implementation of these policies and laws is not encouraging. While enrolment is generally high, student assessment results indicated lower performance than the goal set in the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) scores of each subject, reflecting a quality issue (Office of the Permanent Secretary, MOE, 2020). As reported in the previous chapter, the 15-year free basic education is not considered to be truly free among youth and their families, as there are expenses relating to materials, uniforms and transportation, among others, that families must bear. While schools and teachers play a very important role in providing guidance and information to youth, limited human resources have barred them from effectively supporting youth, particularly those who require extensive or specialised supervision.

4.2.2 Employment policies

There are several laws related to employment, mainly pertaining to the Ministry of Labour (MOL). Those relevant to youth include **the Labour Relations Act B.E. 2518 (1975); the Employment Arrangement and Job Seekers Protection Act B.E. 2528 (1985); the Social Security Act B.E. 2533 (1990); the Compensation Act B.E. 2537 (1994); the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998); the Homeworkers Protection Act B.E. 2553 (2010); and the Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Act B.E. 2554 (2011)**. These laws regulate the employment relationship between employers and employees, be it in terms of compensation, health and safety or protection.

The Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998) and its revisions set a minimum age for employment and protection of young people at work. Under this law, employers are prohibited from hiring anyone under the age of 15. If a minor (those 15 years and older, but below 18) is hired, employers must notify a labour inspector within 15 days of hiring and within seven days of employment termination as well as keep a record of the workers' employment conditions. Employers cannot hire a minor between certain hours (8 p.m. to 6 a.m.) without the Director General of Employment or another authorized person's written approval, and in certain jobs and locations; and are not permitted to use minors during public holidays. However, some occupations are exempted from the Act, such as domestic workers, fishery workers, and seasonal workers. Nonetheless, given the legal restrictions and complexities of the Act, employers are less inclined to hire youth below 18 as it increases the cost of complying with the law (TDRI, 2020; SEC & UNICEF 2021). According to stakeholders, employers are more likely to hire low-skilled workers and migrants than Thai 15–17-year-olds, as these workers are generally easier to find, accept lower wages, and, in many cases, are more diligent.

The Homeworkers Protection Act B.E. 2553 (2010) was enacted to protect independent contractors' fundamental rights. The Act mandates fair wages and obliges employers to provide a contract to workers to ensure occupational health and safety, and to provide assistance to settle labour disputes. Under this Act, 'Homework' is defined as work that a hirer in an industrial business has assigned to a person to perform outside the hirer's business

⁸ Rajabhat Institutes are originated from the teachers' college system. In 2005, King Bhumibol Adulyadej collectively elevated them to become universities.

establishment, while a ‘Homeworker’ is defined as a person or a group of persons who agrees with an employer to undertake homework. This law can have an implication for preventing youth from becoming NEET, as young job-seekers prone to be NEET tend to prefer working outside of the formal sector or as freelancers in the platform economy.

The Employment Arrangement and Job Seekers Protection Act B.E. 2528 (1985) stipulates that an employment office shall be established in each province with a responsibility to assist people in finding jobs free of charge. Yet, there are no youth-focused public employment policies in place, and PES mainly aim to promote jobs for working-age populations and students in the last year of compulsory education. In this context, youth who dropped out before completing compulsory education tend to miss out on the services provided by public employment offices.

Recently, the NEET group has been included in the MOL’s 5-Year Action Plan (2023–2027), where two indicators specifically target youth NEET aged 15–24. The targets include the engagement of 100,000 NEETs by 2027 in training or employment, and a reduction of the NEET rate by 0.5 per cent annually (Ministry of Labour, 2022).

In terms of implementation, the DOE of the MOL is tasked with employment promotion and job seekers protection. The DOE is mainly responsible for analysing the labour market situation and trends, providing labour market information, and developing an employment promotion administrative system to support the working age population, including youth, to acquire jobs most suited to their knowledge and skills. PES are provided in person through the DOE’s service units in Bangkok and the Provincial Employment Offices in 76 provinces, and online through the website <https://smartjob.doe.go.th/>. However, these services are inaccessible or little known to youth as discussed in Chapter 3.

4.2.3 Training policies

The Skill Development Promotion Act B.E. 2545 (2002) and its revision establish skill standards, assessments, and quality assurance measures and guidelines to assist individuals in improving their skills for work. The Act defines “skill development” as a process that enables working age individuals to develop agility, knowledge, ability, work ethics and a positive career attitude through skill training. Accordingly, skill development initiatives, provided by the government and employers, primarily target individuals aged 15 years and older. This Act also stipulates the protection of workers’ rights against employer actions that may have a negative impact on their work during skill training and the development of non-mandatory incentive mechanisms to encourage employers to recognize the value of employee skill training and development.

Skill training is carried out by a number of government agencies, particularly the DSD, private agencies and NGOs. Since 2019, the DSD has created a network with over 20 private organizations to support skill development efforts through the provision of hands-on experience with advanced technological instruments (TDRI, 2020). Still, many working-age populations, particularly young people, lack skills and readiness to work in high-demand sectors. It is reported that 54 per cent of Thai workers need reskilling and upskilling to keep up with rapid technological changes (Chantapong & Pornpatanapaisankul, 2019). This challenge is clearly reflected in the unemployment rate of workers aged 15–19 years which is highest at 9.74 per cent, followed by the unemployment rate of those aged 20–24 years at 8.35 per cent. This implies a mismatch between training needs and the supply of skill development (Education Reform Commission, 2022). Another possible explanation, discussed in Chapter 2, is that the share of youth who want to participate in training is low, at only 11.9 per cent in 2021.

4.2.4 Other relevant policies

The Child and Youth Development Act 2007 and its revision in 2017, and **the National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act 2007** by the MSDHS, aim to improve child and youth development promotion and coordination and to enhance the well-being of children and youth, in line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2015, the DCY was established as the responsible agency under the MSDHS for determining policies and undertaking duties to promote and protect the rights of children and youth, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as youth with disabilities and those living in poverty, through collaboration with non-governmental actors and community groups as well as the private sector.

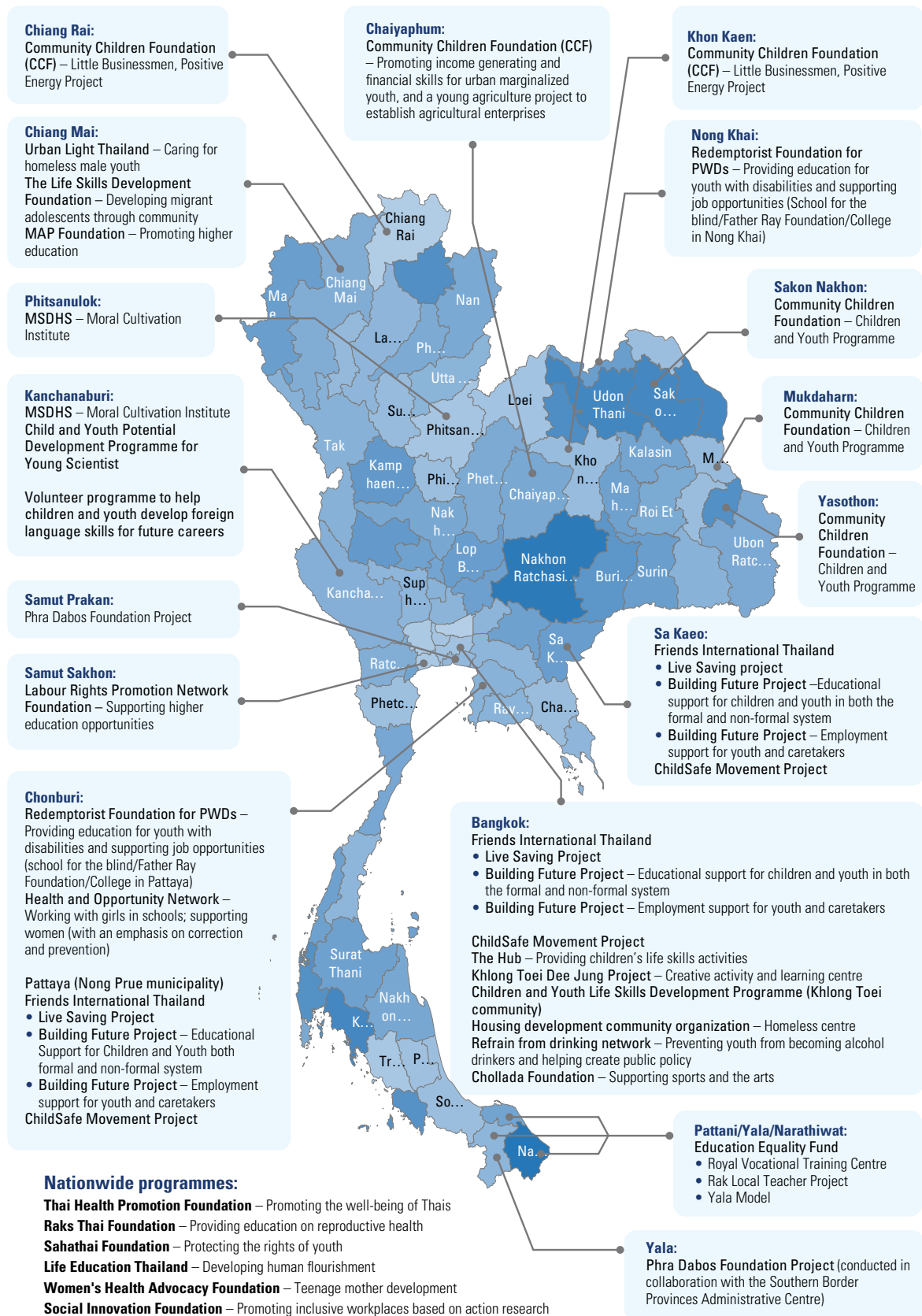
At the local level, provincial MSDHS officers work with children and youth on a case management basis, focusing on providing compensation measures to vulnerable groups. As such, NEETs who are not in a vulnerable situation, such as youth NEET from middle-income families, tend to be neglected from any policy.

Another law that has direct implications for youth NEET, especially females, is **the Prevention and Solution of the Adolescent Pregnancy Problem Act, B.E. 2559 (2016)**, which stipulates key measures for the prevention and alleviation of adolescent pregnancies across various sectors. Six ministries are assigned as the main agencies responsible for issuing ministerial orders and regulations for the execution of the Act: the MOPH, the MOE, the MSDHS, the MOL, the MOI, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESRI). Under this Act, **the Prevention and Solution of the Adolescent Pregnancy Problem Committee** was also established, chaired by the Prime Minister, to offer guidelines for the implementation of measures to prevent and alleviate adolescent pregnancy and recommendations and solutions to address implementation bottlenecks. Through this law, not only are education institutions mandated to provide age-appropriate sexuality education to students and to provide counselling and protection for pregnant students to enable them to continue education, other service providers such as public health facilities and social welfare organizations are also mandated to offer accurate and adequate information and training to prevent pregnancy in youth and assist those who are pregnant as well as to provide vocational skills training for adolescent mothers. While the efficacy of this Act was not directly assessed in this study, conditional factors such as traditions, customs and religious beliefs that result in the negative attitudes of administrators, operational workers, parents and adolescents toward pregnant teens may play a role in hindering the systematic application of this law (Jensarikorn et al., 2018).

4.3 Policy measures affecting youth NEET in Thailand

To effectively address the issue of youth NEET, a combination of targeted measures, projects and policies is critical. These can be divided into three key interventions: prevention, reintegration, and compensation measures. In Thailand, despite the fact that prevention, reintegration and compensation measures for youth NEET are appearing across the country, the degree of comprehensiveness and responsiveness of such measures varies between provinces (Figure 30). Most area-based initiatives remain uneven in terms of execution and collaboration. This section discusses selected measures and interventions affecting youth NEET in Thailand.

Figure 30: Map of interventions relating to youth NEET in Thailand



Source: The authors.

Note: The selected projects listed in the map are based on KIIs and FGDs conducted for the study, as of 2022.

4.3.1 Prevention measures

Studies have found that preventing early school leaving can be less time-consuming and resource-intensive than the efforts required to reintegrate youth who have already become disengaged with the education system (Hawley, Nevala, & Weber, 2012). In other words, the earlier the detection, the better.

Preventing youth from dropping out and becoming inactive requires a comprehensive, cross-sector strategy that takes into account a wide range of factors, including but not limited to school practice, teaching, learning, and emotional well-being.

Early warning systems can aid the design and development of targeted and tailored support to prevent youth disengagement. In Thailand, the EEF, in collaboration with the MOE, the MOF, the MOI, the MSDHS, the MOL, and the MOPH, runs the Information System for Equitable Education (iSEE)⁹ to identify and track at-risk youth, covering more than 4 million underfunded and disadvantaged children and youth nationwide. The iSEE collects a variety of data, including parents' income, household status and conditions, and information on children's health and educational needs to track their personal circumstances (including prior offenses) and calculate a risk score (Kawwongsa, 2021). However, while data from the iSEE can help schools to develop strategies for preventing dropout and their students' exposure to becoming NEET (EEF, 2022), most schools and education authorities still lack the capacity to utilize the system and to support at risk students in a timely and appropriate manner.

Another key aspect of prevention is to make education more flexible and appealing to students, including proving its relevance to the labour market and their prospects (European Training Foundation (ETF), 2015). A constrained and restrictive curriculum that does not excite students is a factor contributing to early school leaving (Hawley, Nevala, & Weber, 2012), whereas a **good quality curriculum** – one that is responsive, varied, stimulating and relevant – can help to retain students' interest and willingness to participate. Education programmes that capture the attention of participants while also providing them with in-demand skills for the job market can encourage youth to continue their education. Such programmes should include the development of essential competencies and measures to encourage educational advancement and accomplishment, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, active learner-centred approaches that involve young people directly in the learning processes can discourage early school leaving and lower school dropout rates (Brennan, 2021).

In Thailand, a new competency-based curriculum was introduced in 2021 as part of the Thai education system reform and is now being piloted in eight provinces. This curriculum aims to address existing challenges of Thai education and highlights six core skills that enable students to build on their individual potential. These skills include self-management, higher level thinking, communication, teamwork, active citizenship and environmental consciousness and sustainable coexistence with nature (CBE Thailand, 2022).

There are also several initiatives by the government and private entities that offer **flexible and alternative learning pathways** to prevent students from dropping out of the education system. For example, as part of a tripartite collaboration between the DOE, private sector and educational institutions, the MOL has implemented the nationwide 3-Mor Project supporting high-school (grade 12) and vocational education graduates to have "income, occupation and education" by allowing them to work and study at the same time. After completing the project, the participants are awarded a higher vocational education certificate.

Another project by the MSDHS – the Moral Cultivation Institute¹⁰ – was initiated to provide alternative flexible education pathways for at-risk youth in grades 7-12 who experience poverty, abandonment, and lack educational opportunities, with the aim to help improve their well-being and the livelihood of their families and communities. Through this project, at-risk youth are supported to build their life skills and employability skills in addition to foundational knowledge. At present, the project exists only in two provinces, namely Kanchanaburi and Phitsanulok.

9 The iSEE operates by linking the 13-digit identification numbers of children and their families to a large database of six ministries.

10 สถาบันเพาะกล้าคุณธรรม

Ensuring **access to career guidance and counselling** and **work-based learning programmes** is another effective means to prevent youth from dropping out and becoming NEET. By exposing young people to the world of work, they can better understand the demands of employment, which, in turn, can help maintain their drive to complete their education and facilitate a smooth transition from school to work (European Commission, 2018a).

Several programmes are being offered in Thailand by the government and the private sector. For instance, in 2018, the MOL, in collaboration with OBEC, the Office of Vocational Education Commission, the Office of the Higher Education Commission and the Department of Local Administration, along with the private sector, launched the Pracharat Ruam Palang project to provide career guidance and training for youth aged 15–22 during school breaks, enabling them to learn about the professional world by participating in work experience. The aim of the project is to help prepare youth, especially the most disadvantaged, to enter the labour market after graduation. Within the first year of the project launch, over 32,000 students were supported through the project to gain employment from over 1,100 corporations.

The E-Workforce Ecosystem (EWE) Platform, launched by the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute in September 2022, is another recent example of an innovative digital career guidance service. As the first national workforce management platform with the objective to promote lifelong learning in the country, the EWE, still under development, will offer an online one-stop service for skill assessment, career guidance, e-training, certification of competencies based on professional standards and job matching, along with an e-portfolio system, enabling users to conveniently record their educational and professional experiences.

Preventing youth from becoming NEET also involves **tailor-made support targeting different groups of at-risk youth**, for instance, youth with disabilities, teen mothers, ethnic and migrant youth, youth in conflict with the law, and homeless youth, to empower them with essential life skills that can help them avoid falling into the NEET trap. This includes the provision of sexual reproductive health education, family planning, anti-drug programmes, anti-bullying and safe school programmes and mental health support.

For youth from low-income households, **financial assistance mechanisms in the forms of subsidies, scholarships, or free school meals** can be an effective preventive mechanism against the risk of being NEET. The various scholarship and conditional cash transfer schemes of the EEF, such as Vocational Innovation Scholarships, Homegrown Teacher Scholarships, True Potential Scholarships, the Advanced Vocational Innovation Grant Programme and the Special Poor Student Subsidy Allocation Programme, have proven beneficial in providing the most economically disadvantaged children and youth across Thailand with the necessary resources to be successful in their educational endeavours according to their own aptitudes and capabilities, and preventing disengagement. To date, over 1.3 million children and youth in Thailand have been provided financial support through the fund (EEF, 2022).

The comprehensive services of the Social Innovation Foundation (SIF), which are funded by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation and the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and seek to support the employability of working-age PWDs, offer another targeted model that can help prevent youth with disabilities from becoming NEET. Working in collaboration with networks of public and private organizations that support PWDs, including provincial administrative organizations, provincial labour offices, hospitals, and schools, SIF identifies and reaches out to PWDs, adults as well as youth, to provide job-readiness training and job-matching service. As of the latest available data from November 2022, over 4,082 PWDs have successfully gained employment from 437 companies through the support of SIF.

4.3.2 Reintegration measures

Reintegration measures are those aimed at providing young people with the possibility of re-entering the educational system or facilitating their entry into the labour market. Such measures may include tracking and outreach services to identify, support and monitor inactive youth; second-chance education opportunities; and the validation of informal learning (European Training Foundation, 2015).

According to the European Commission (2015), there are seven approaches to keep youth NEET active and to help them leave the NEET status: (1) collaboration with youth outreach workers; (2) service provision at a single location (single-point services); (3) conducting youth outreach services on the move; (4) carrying out collaborative efforts to locate NEET; (5) collaboration with schools and training providers on a proactive basis; (6) creating new entry points and recruitment channels for youth through PES, social media and the internet; and (7) organizing activities or events as a tool for promotion and engagement. Several projects in Thailand contains some of these elements.

The Bring Back to School initiative of the Ministry of Education is an example of a **tracking system** in Thailand. Under this initiative, the MOE's Regional Education Administration Development and Promotion Division and the Educational Disaster and Crisis Management Unit are tasked to track, search, and document information on children and youth who dropped out of education and to support them to return to compulsory education (up to grade 9). This is achieved through enhanced cooperation among administrators, teachers, and educational personnel who provide assistance to address specific needs of dropout children and youth, such as disability or special education needs.

The Department of Local Administration under the MOI also has a dedicated education programme for out-of-school children who are vulnerable¹¹ as well as children and youth with disabilities aged 2–18 years old (Department of Local Administration, 2021). This programme involves a comprehensive set of measures from outreach activities, individual needs assessment and case management, mentoring and coaching, and educational and vocational training programmes that not only seek to build vulnerable children's and youth's foundational knowledge and technical skills, but also their life skills and social-emotional skills. Through this programme children and youth are provided tailored support according to their needs and abilities, along with job matching support when they reach the legal working age. However, reach is still limited. Even though there are over 7,000 local administrative organizations across the country, this programme is only adopted in 109 local administrative organizations mainly at the city municipality, town municipality and sub-district municipality levels, leaving those in the most remote areas unreached.

The Vocational Skills Enhancement Project led by the Office of the Ombudsman, in collaboration with the MOL, the MOE, the MSDHS and the MOI, is another example of a reintegration measure which aims to provide **second-chance opportunities** through vocational training for dropout youth, leading to decent employment. Implemented in 76 provinces across the country, the project is coordinated by the provincial governor in each province and involves stakeholders from both the public and private sectors at the local level. The project's training courses mainly focus on vocational skills aligned with local market demands, such as those for welders, mechanics, and tailors. With a training period of 4–6 months, the programme allows youth to enter the labour market as qualified workers. However, the project uptake is relatively low. Between 2020 and 2022, while the number of students who dropped out after compulsory education was over 66,000, only 2,578 students participated in the project, of whom only 753 were able to find employment (Office of the Ombudsman, 2022).

11 The definition of vulnerable children adopted is as per the MOE's categorization in 2000, which divides vulnerable children into 10 groups including those who are (1) poor; (2) drug users; (3) orphaned, abandoned or separated from their parents; (4) physically, sexually or emotionally abused; (5) have HIV/AIDs or other communicable diseases; (6) ethnic minority or stateless; (7) homeless or street children; (8) forced into child labour; (9) engaged in the sex industry either voluntarily or trafficked; and (10) in conflict with the law (see: http://www.dla.go.th/upload/document/type2/2021/12/26577_2_1638938111800.pdf?time=1638939161752http://special.obec.go.th/HV3/doc/เอกสารกรรฐนนักเรียนที่2564.pdf).

Similarly, the Office for the Promotion of Cooperation, Innovation and Scholarships (under the EEF) established Royal Vocational Training Centres, which provide out-of-school youth with free vocational training, free accommodation and daily expenses. The project also engages local entrepreneurs who provide job opportunities to youth who complete the training. Nonetheless, the scope of this project is limited to the three southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.

It is observable that the success of such reintegration programmes depends first and foremost on their ability to reach disengaged youth. Evidence from many countries (see European Commission, 2015) and from Thailand demonstrates that working with local community-based organizations can be an efficient and cost-effective tool to engage hard-to-reach youth as they already have a trusting relationship with members of the target population. Klong Toey D-Jung, Friends International Thailand, and the Phra Dabos Foundation are example of NGOs that have successfully carried out outreach activities to disengage youth in various parts of Thailand.

Strengthening the effectiveness of PES for the different groups of youth NEET is another crucial factor for ensuring the success of reintegration programmes. In Thailand, while youth in general can benefit from PES, which include skill development and labour protection (TDRI, 2020) as well as the services provided by the DOE both in person and online, including career guidance, vocational training and job-matching assistance, there is no specific employment programme targeting NEETs. Similar to prevention, effective reintegration measures also require **tailor-made approach and individual case management** to address the distinct needs of the various NEET groups.

4.3.3 Compensation measures

Compensation policies are generally ‘social assistance’ types of measures, aimed at supporting the most vulnerable groups in society. They provide economic support for people who are at the margins of society and have remained untouched by other types of policies. Compensation policies can be linked to poverty, social inequality and regional disparity, as well as individual characteristics such as having a disability, membership of an ethnic minority, refugee or displaced person status, or being a return migrant (ETF, 2014). These factors create difficult socio-economic environments and family conditions, which increase the probability of young people becoming NEETs (European Training Foundation, 2015).

As aforementioned, in Thailand, the EEF is the main body that assists and supports economically disadvantaged or underprivileged children with funds to cover their expenses until they complete their basic education. These funds are usually provided in a form of scholarships to targeted students, particularly those from very low-income families.

Children and youth with disabilities nationwide can access a disability grant of THB 800 per month if they successfully register for a disability ID card. Under the **Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act B.E. 2550 (2007)**, registered persons are also entitled to access further welfare and assistance such as rehabilitation, education, and employment. However, an evaluation conducted by Thammasat University and UNICEF in 2019 suggests that a revision of the disability grant value is needed to reflect the actual needs of persons with disabilities, especially children, as the grant amount is currently insufficient. A more responsive, child-sensitive grant would ideally be adjusted and tailored to meet the specific needs of each family, and index-linked to cost-of-living changes (Thammasat University & UNICEF, 2019).



Chapter 5

Challenges and recommendations for addressing youth NEET in Thailand

Chapter 5 highlights existing challenges and provides recommendations for addressing the issues surrounding the youth NEET issue in Thailand. The recommendations are proposed with the aim of building and strengthening institutional frameworks, promoting effective integration and reintegration of youth NEET, and promoting an enabling environment for youth to access quality educational opportunities and gain decent employment.

The recommendations are grouped according to the following areas: legislation, policy and strategy; leadership, governance and oversight; service delivery; workforce; budget and financing; data, information and research; and community engagement.

Legislation, policy and strategy

Thailand has a range of laws, policies and plans related to education, employment and training in place. However, a policy aimed at tackling youth NEET has only just emerged in the 13th NESDP with a specific indicator to reduce the NEET rate, while only the MOL has addressed the NEET issue in its Action Plan (2023–2027). As such, Thailand currently lacks effective policies to facilitate the complex transition of youth from school to employment or higher education. Instead, the mandate of each ministry governs the public services they design. While the MOL aims to promote employability and employment for the working age population (aged 15 years and over), the MOE and the MSDHS focus their services on children and youth (up to 18 years old). This lack of policy coherence leaves a large number of young people, especially those aged 18 years and older who have left school without qualifications and discouraged jobless youth, missing out on opportunities for improving their life chances and future prospects. **This calls for the establishment of a national integrated NEET plan to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration and ensure better transitions for young people from education to employment or training.**

Stakeholders identified school-to-work transition indicators as fundamental to minimise the chances of youth falling through the cracks and becoming completely disengaged. As young people go through diverse transitions between the ages of 15 and 24, it is crucial to monitor these multiple transitions (leaving school, becoming a parent, entering the workforce, changing dependents, etc.) in an integrated manner to effectively design policies and programmes that respond to their needs. Although at present various types of monitoring systems are implemented at the national and local levels by different ministries, many development indicators on youth such as those on education, employment, poverty and health are often duplicated and overlapping. This renders it difficult to track youth throughout their transition trajectory. **Therefore, there is a need for an integrated monitoring system to track school-to-work transitions for youth, including youth NEET.**

While a competency-based curriculum was introduced in 2021 as part of the Thai education system reform, it is currently being piloted in a few provinces only. Stakeholder feedback suggested a need to ensure school curricula encompass skills required for the current and future labour market, as well as non-cognitive skills that foster lifelong learning abilities and mindsets. Life skills education and multi-stage life assessment, along with the development of soft skills through work experience or project-based activities, such as communication, problem solving, collaboration and teamwork, must be promoted in the school curriculum, starting from elementary level. **A curriculum designed to help students develop self-awareness, resilience and tenacity, including the ability to look beyond short-term concerns and build a long-term vision for themselves, enduring obstacles and disappointments along the way, will enhance youth employability.** This must be accompanied by the pedagogical capacity building of teachers for delivering the curriculum, along with the development of a M&E system for monitoring its implementation.

Interviews revealed that the majority of youth NEET who left school consider the education curriculum to be irrelevant to the job market or careers they wish to pursue (see Chapter 3). Stakeholders noted that exposure to the world of work from a young age might help schools to retain students, and inspire youth to maintain their drive to complete their education. Given the varied life circumstances of young people, there is a need to encourage and expand their access to multiple education pathways, second-chance opportunities, and work-based learning programmes such as apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job training, and job-shadowing. Especially for youth from poor families or rural areas, the ability to work and earn extra income while studying can not only help to improve their livelihood, but also increase their chance to continue education and gain a qualification, improving their chances of acquiring decent employment in the future. **Work-based learning programmes are therefore an important tool to help align the knowledge, skills and capabilities of youth with the demands of employers.**

In Thailand, work-based learning programmes are, however, currently mainly offered through the dual vocational education system. Therefore, the expansion of such programmes to general education could prove beneficial. Through collaboration between the MOE, the MOL, and the MHESRI, alongside private sector companies and youth organizations, **work-based learning programmes, designed with age-appropriate working hours and conditions, should be promoted and offered to youth as early as Grade 7 or 8,** a critical time to engage youth before they decide to discontinue their education after completing compulsory education. To this end, **there is a need to review financial and non-financial incentives for employers to encourage and effectively engage them to offer quality placements for youth,** especially the most disadvantaged. Such incentives may also make the provision of work-based learning programmes attractive to SMEs, encouraging them to play an active role in developing a skilled local workforce.

In Thailand, employment outcomes of VET graduates are relatively responsive to labour market demands compared to those who complete general education. Accordingly, since 2014, efforts have been ongoing to reform the VET system, aligning training with labour market demand to improve industry responsiveness, graduate productivity, and industry connections, while the government has set a goal to increase the proportion of vocational students relative to general education students to a ratio of 60:40. However, an OECD report (2021) found several challenges concerning the Thai VET system, including quality issues, a fragmented system, and limited progression pathways for VET students to pursue general or academic programmes, rendering it an unattractive option for many. As such, to make VET more attractive as an alternative education pathway for youth, especially NEETs, **the VET system should be adapted to provide more flexible programmes (such as part-time or modular modes**

of study), and harness new technologies to increase access for students to a broad set of courses and practical experiences, with a skills qualification system in place to accredit years of experience. Moreover, given that NEETs often come from more vulnerable backgrounds, it was also recommended that they be provided with adequate financial support to participate in VET when needed.

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) can help redress education and labour market failures and prevent youth labour market detachment. In general, ALMPs for youth usually consist of: 1) employment services; 2) labour market training; 3) subsidized employment; and 4) promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship (Rosas, 2015). Several different measures may be included in one programme. In Thailand, while there are various programmes offered by numerous actors, including the government, private sector and CSOs, youth-focused ALMPs are still lacking, and widespread accessibility to public employment services (PES) continues to be an issue.

For NEETs, the provision of tailored support packages targeting their distinct needs and disadvantages is essential, for instance, the compatibility of work and private and family life through such measures as part-time work, parental leave, telework, e-work, and provision of childcare and elderly care facilities. This is especially pertinent to female NEET, on whom the burden of household and caring duties often falls. **The MOL should have overall leadership and accountability for the development and coordination of youth-focused ALMPs, supported by a monitoring and evaluation system to measure their effectiveness and improve future interventions and targeting.**

ALMPs should also be strengthened to expand opportunities for youth entrepreneurship. In Thailand, systematic support to enhance youth entrepreneurship is lacking, both in terms of specialised training and mentorship to build youth entrepreneurial mindsets and skills, and start-up funds and incentives. As a result, less than 1 per cent of Thai youth aged 15–24 are business owners, of whom 85 per cent are men (TDRI, 2020). More efforts and dedicated resources are required to build youth entrepreneurship skills from school to university level. Comprehensive entrepreneurship support systems should be established that enable intergenerational knowledge sharing, enhance growth mindset, technological skills and working knowledge in digital platforms, and facilitate access to financial resources.

The mentorship system for youth entrepreneurship should be strengthened with the MOL and MOE serving as the lead agencies, in collaboration with MHESRI. This could include leveraging existing local level entrepreneurship support initiatives, such as the “One Tambon (sub-district), One Product” project run by the MOI, to offer young people a chance to create employment opportunities that also meet their aspirations for flexibility and independence.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGISLATION, POLICY AND STRATEGY

- Establish a national integrated NEET plan to be endorsed and adopted by each relevant ministry to promote policy cohesion and facilitate better transitions for young people from education to employment or training.
- Develop an integrated monitoring system to track school-to-work transitions for youth, including youth NEET.
- Promote life skills education and multi-stage life assessment in the school curriculum, along with the development of soft skills through work experience or project-based activities, starting from elementary level.
- Promote work-based learning programmes for youth, in collaboration with the private sector, to help align their knowledge, skills and capabilities with the demands of employers and prevent disengagement.
- Review financial and non-financial incentives for employers to offer quality work placements for youth.
- Adapt the VET system to provide more flexible programmes (for example, part-time or modular modes of study), and harness new technologies to increase access to a broad set of courses and practical experiences, with a skills qualification system in place to accredit years of experience.
- Expand PES outreach through both online and offline channels, and ensure sufficient capacity to offer tailored support packages to meet youth needs, especially NEETs.
- Strengthen Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) and employment services to expand opportunities for youth employment, (re)training and entrepreneurship, including a mentorship programme, consolidated career orientation, guidance and counselling, and job matching services, as well as access to financial support such as loans and start-up funds.

Please note, considering that a high proportion of youth NEET are female, policy design and implementation should be gender-sensitive to address gender-specific vulnerabilities and risks.

Leadership, governance and oversight

Political commitment and leadership are crucial to ensure policy coordination and coherence. Stakeholders across sectors noted that while the NEET issue is relevant to many ministries, there is an absence of political leadership and commitment at the highest level of government and a lack of a public facilitator to coordinate policy interventions across employment, education and training domains. To direct policy development in line ministries and turn pledges into tangible measurable actions at the local, regional, and national levels, **there is a need to develop an appropriate institutional structure to guide policy integration across all levels of government and across ministries as well as to support quality assurance and accountability.**

Across sectors, stakeholders noted that there was a need for coordinated implementation strategies, plans and frameworks that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of every relevant agency working with young people, particularly local units, as they tend to be unaware of key policies, their specific roles, and guidance around implementation. To address this, **provincial level plans should be developed to address youth NEET**, with a multisectoral implementation plan to support local coordination.

To promote policy coherence at the national level, stakeholders suggested the establishment of a National Committee for NEET, led by key relevant ministries. The Committee should be responsible for setting a national multisectoral agenda, formulate policy, drive actions, and oversee the implementation of policies and programmes within and across sectors, between levels of government, and with non-government and informal service providers.

The National Committee should engage stakeholders at all stages of the policy cycle, including in information and expertise exchange, to give voice to varied interests, identify potential trade-offs, raise public awareness, and foster ownership. Moreover, **the National Committee should support integrated strategies and programmes to safeguard all young people from exclusion and discrimination**, including activities integrating education, employment, and social policies to address broader economic and social patterns and cultural norms. Its role should also include working with key actors and organizations at all levels to map social assistance programmes and initiatives specific or relevant to youth NEET and strategically engage stakeholders to improve the programmes' effectiveness and continuity with integrative assistance packages. To this end, **the National Committee should advocate with the government to allocate long-term resources to address the youth NEET issue (at least 5 fiscal years), promote greater sectoral collaboration in budget planning, and appeal to the business sector to contribute to a resource pool** with a view to alleviating the private sector's labour shortage and skills mismatch problem. Finally, **the National Committee should establish a systematic and robust M&E mechanism of policies and programmes related to NEET to improve planning, resource allocation, and programme effectiveness.**

The National Committee for NEET could be formed or initiated as a subcommittee from existing national-level committees, for example, the National Child and Youth Development Promotion Commission, the Skill Development and Vocational Training Coordination Committee, or the Integrated Spatial Management Policy Committee under the Royal Decree on Integrated Spatial Management B.E. 2565 (2022).¹² Given their current mandates related to children and youth social welfare, education and skill development; the MSDHS, the MOE and the MOL should take on significant leadership roles, while the MOI is recommended as a key responsible unit to oversee coordination at the provincial and municipal/sub-district levels given its responsibility for leadership of government units at the local level. The Office of the Public Sector Development Commission should also be engaged to revise the roles and missions of relevant government agencies to include the NEET agenda as part

¹² The Integrated Spatial Management Policy Committee is composed of the Prime Minister as Chairman; Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of Finance; Minister of Interior; Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office; Permanent Secretary of the MOI; Director of the Budget Office; Secretary-General of the Faculty of Public Sector Development; Secretary-General of the National Security Council; President of the Association of Provincial Administrative Organizations of Thailand; President of the Municipal League of Thailand; President of the Association of Public Administrative Organization of Thailand; Chairman of the TCC; Chairman of the FTI; Chairman of the Tourism Council of Thailand; President of the National Farmers Council; and representatives including Civil Society Representatives, Secretary-General of the NESDC and Secretary and Deputy Secretary-General of the NESDC as assistant secretary, Secretary-General of the NESDC assigned, the MOI assistant secretary, and representative of the Budget Office as Assistant Secretary.

of their action plans. **Alternatively, the National Committee for NEET could be established under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister, the NESDC or the Office of the Ombudsman** as they are responsible for designing national development plans and advising and monitoring the work of cross-functional public organizations. Crucially, one of the main components of the National Committee for NEET must include representatives from the national CYC to ensure that the voices of youth are reflected. Key representatives from CSOs related to child and youth development, as well as employers and workers representatives, should also be included.

In addition to greater leadership and coordination at the national level, **there is also a critical need to improve coordination and governance at administrative and implementation levels.** Based on the research findings, only a few provinces in Thailand demonstrate a clear policy direction on youth-relevant agenda under the provincial governors' leadership, leading to weak coordination on youth-related services. However, stakeholders noted that the establishment of an additional sub-national level committee may not be helpful as there are already many working committees at the provincial and municipal/sub-district levels. Instead, **the youth NEET agenda could be added to an existing committee so that it can be effectively implemented.** Provincial governors have the authority and responsibility to supervise the overall administration of their respective provinces, maintain law and order, and coordinate the work of the different ministerial field staffs. To this end, the MOI must be engaged as it presides authority over local governments. The NEET indicator should be considered as one of the provincial governor's key performance indicators.

At the provincial level, a committee headed by the provincial governor, the MOI, should oversee policy implementation and propose provincial-level measures for youth and youth NEET. The DCY under the MSDHS could serve as a coordinating body in collaboration with the provincial Education and Labour offices and CYC. The committee should also include representatives from CSOs involved in child and youth development in the province, as well as the Chairman of the Provincial FTI, the President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, and the President of the Provincial Federation of Thai SMEs. Furthermore, provincial religious and spiritual centres should be represented on the committee. The main responsibilities of the provincial committee should be to: raise awareness and create better understanding of the NEET issue; promote capacity building of relevant provincial stakeholders; undertake data collection on youth and youth NEET and disseminate best practices in tackling the NEET issue; facilitate greater coordination of government units; and establish a long-term resource pool for NEETs.

At the municipal/sub-district level, **municipal offices and sub-district administration organizations (SAOs) should add a youth NEET agenda into their work plans** in coordination with the municipal/sub-district divisions of social welfare and in consultation with the municipal/sub-district CYC. In this context, the municipal/sub-district social welfare offices could play a lead role in coordinating with community leaders and community-based NGOs/CSOs and youth networks to improve the effectiveness of existing referral mechanisms in local social assistance programmes, carry out awareness-raising activities among local population and stakeholders on the youth NEET issue, establish local financial resource pool for effective outreach activities and immediate assistance for youth NEET or youth at-risk, and collect local level data on youth and youth NEET to feed into the provincial level policy and programme plans to tackle NEETs. In addition, the committee should include representatives from ONIE and health and labour volunteers in municipal offices and subdistricts to improve outreach efforts, and involve representatives from various religious and spiritual centres to conduct the sensitive process of changing social norms in a constructive manner. Promoting employability at the municipal/subdistrict level also requires the participation of local employer representatives. Key to the success of this model will be to ensure that communities and local authorities have capacity around children and youth development so that their needs can be prioritized and appropriate actions resourced accordingly.

The proposed multisectoral model of governance and coordination for youth NEET is provided in Figure 31.

Figure 31: Proposed multisectoral model of governance and coordination for youth NEET



Service delivery

Early warning systems can aid the design and development of targeted and tailored support during school to work transitions, to prevent youth disengagement. For vulnerable youth, the risk is especially high at the point of transition between lower and upper secondary education. Through the leadership of the MOE, **an early warning system for detecting student disengagement, especially for at-risk groups, should be developed.** In Thailand, the O-NET is normally conducted to evaluate academic proficiency and thinking ability of Grade 6, 9 and 12 students. As part of an early warning system, an attitude test could be included as an additional module to the O-NET. An additional option is to implement an early warning system to detect the youth at risk in collaboration with the EEF through the iSEE, or through an existing database of OBEC's Data Management Center (DMC) such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS) starting at primary level, in collaboration with the DCY through its Child Protection Management Information System (CPMIS).

As NEETs are not a homogeneous group, different support packages are required to address the various types of vulnerabilities they face. In this regard, **individual case management adopting a person-centred approach that aims to identify and address the full range of barriers and issues the young person face is essential,** since it can help reduce fragmented support and promote reintegration through the assistance of a case manager, who – with the right technical knowledge and experience – can determine and plan the most suitable support package for each individual youth. **Tailor-made support packages** may include anti-drug programmes and easy-to-access rehabilitation programmes, family planning support, mentoring and coaching, and flexible learning, as well as basic support to help youth gain self-awareness, develop self-esteem and rediscover an interest in learning. To ensure the effectiveness of such reintegration measures, the social, religious and cultural context of youth must also be taken into account, to ensure that the social services being offered align with their beliefs, attitudes and needs.

While the level of support required by individual NEET varies, in most cases, it will necessitate an intense level of support from a range of professionals from the education, social and health sectors. **To support coordination between these sectors, a robust referral system needs to be in place.** Although there are a number of area-based public and CSO case managers in Thailand, such as those under the Department of Local Administration's education programme for vulnerable out-of-school children, and programmes led by CSOs such as Friends International and Klong Toey D-Jung, several youth NEET frequently relocate, especially those from migrant families, making it challenging to provide effective support for them. **It is therefore necessary to develop an open-source digital platform for case referral and follow-up, as well as to improve information sharing for case managers.** As the platform can contain sensitive and private information about youth and their families, multiple levels of data protection should be designed to accommodate different levels of data accessibility. **A referral system should also be developed for monitoring youth NEET between rural and urban areas and between provinces.** The MSDHS should oversee the development, coordination and management of this platform, under which a case manager registration system must be incorporated.

In the educational sphere, as poor academic achievement is one of the top reasons identified for early school leaving in the study, **targeted support for slow learners can help to tackle achievement problems before they lead to dropout, for instance through supplementary tuition or teaching assistants.** Furthermore, as many early school leavers tend to acquire skills and competences outside the classroom – for example, through work experience, responsibilities within the household, participation in non-formal training, hobbies or volunteering – **mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning should be developed under the leadership of the MOE** to enable young people to make use of their learning in terms of career progression and further learning. Recognition of such non-formal and informal learning can help raise young school leavers' self-esteem, aspirations and employability, thus reducing the risk of them becoming NEET.

Youth NEET and parents interviewed in this study mostly reported being unaware of the existence of the employment services and training opportunities offered by the DOE, as well as other agencies. Furthermore, youth were particularly vocal about the poor quality and unattractiveness of existing services. Therefore, **there is a need to expand PES outreach through both online and offline channels, and ensure that PES are equipped with sufficient capacity – both in terms of budget and skilled staff – for dealing with individual clients’ needs and being able to offer effective regional coverage.**

Providing integrated service delivery and increase access to public services for youth NEET at the local level was suggested by stakeholders as the solution for expanding PES outreach. To do so, it is necessary to establish one-stop service centres across the country at sub-district level, where multiple services are offered so that young people can get what they need through a single access point. The one-stop service centres should be developed through a collaborative network including schools/educational institutions, training providers, communities, CSOs, career counsellors and social service staff and volunteers of government agencies. Guided by a standard set of guidelines, the centres must be equipped with a well-designed system and sufficient budget to ensure the delivery of accessible, timely services that address the needs of young people, including the most vulnerable. The one-stop service centres could be established as part of PES under the leadership of the MOL, but should also work closely with the SAO/municipal unit working with youth, particularly the sub-district/municipal CYC and the DCY at the provincial level.

The services provided by these centres should include a comprehensive support package for youth, including consultations on available public services and financial and compensation support (for example, information on the Child Support Grant for young mothers, many of whom are NEET). **The centres should also conduct engagement activities** to prevent youth from dropping out of school, deal with cases of out-of-school children and school dropouts, and offer alternative pathways and second chance opportunities for those who stopped studying before obtaining a qualification. **More accessible funding options to support underprivileged youth – such as funding to cover transportation costs, uniforms, and equipment to start a business – should also be provided through the centres.** Furthermore, the centres should enhance young people’s opportunities by promoting their active participation in policy development and provide safe spaces for them to access recreational activities, such as arts and sports, advice, and information to improve their employability and entrepreneurial skills, for instance, through apprenticeship, internship or scholarship schemes offered by various stakeholders. Most importantly, **youth should be offered tailored support packages and follow-up services that suit their individual needs,** for example, specific services for youth with disabilities, homeless youth, teen mothers and so on.

Lastly, to effectively engage youth NEET as well as support and publicize the work of the one-stop service centres, **a targeted communication strategy to reach youth NEET should be developed.** Utilizing the internet, social media or mobile applications can be an effective way to disseminate key messages quickly and in a manner which suits youth, especially those with a smartphone. In addition to utilizing the internet and social media, other communication channels should also be used for youth without a smartphone, as well as for vulnerable youth or youth with specific needs. Youth should be involved in the design of communication strategies and tools to ensure that the tone and messaging are youth-friendly, and information should be provided in a range of formats (for example, in different languages, with audio description) to meet the accessibility needs of all youth NEETs (Council of the European Union, 2020).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

SERVICE DELIVERY

- Act early and strengthen early warning systems and tracking capabilities in secondary schools to identify adolescents at risk of dropping out alongside additional resources, including capacity-building and individual case management to keep adolescents engaged in education and training.
- Develop a recognition system for non-formal and informal learning pathways for all young people as well as adults.
- Establish one-stop service centres at the sub-district level across the country to provide integrated service delivery for youth at local level. The one-stop service centres should serve as accessible hubs for all youth, disseminating information about available public services and support packages relating to education and employment through a targeted communication strategy.
- Develop an open-source digital platform for case referral and follow up, as well as strengthening collaboration between CSOs, NGOs and other groups who conduct outreach to connect with disengaged youth.
- Develop tailor-made support packages and individual case management for specific NEET groups and their families to enable reintegration in the short-term.
- Develop a targeted communication strategy to reach youth NEET, utilizing both offline and online channels.

Human resources

In Thailand, the term “NEET” is not widely understood among public sector actors, and has only recently appeared in the policy dialogue in the 13th NESDP. The term “youth NEET” also overlaps with other terms used by relevant ministries. For example, although the MOE has categorized vulnerable children to encompass 10 groups, NEET is not included in the categorization and is likely to be confused with Out-of-School Children (OOSC); hence, their recommendations for addressing the issue of NEETs are confound with those suggested for OOSC, who are usually poor and underprivileged, whereas NEETs encompass diverse groups. Similarly, the MSDHS and the MOL are likely to misconstrue NEETs as vulnerable youth, such as teen mothers, youth from low-income families and juveniles in conflict with the law. In general, the definition of youth NEET is being mixed up, leading to the lack of dedicated policies at ministry level and implementation at the national and subnational levels. **Therefore, there is a need to promote a common understanding of the term NEET across sectors, prioritizing government staff at all levels** in order to enhance policy dialogue and programme design.

A key challenge to effectively address NEET highlighted by most stakeholders is with regards to limited capacity of the service providers, be it in terms of conducting outreach, providing career guidance or offering individualised support. For instance, capacity gaps within the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Offices were commonly raised by stakeholders. Therefore, the MOE, the MOL, the MSDHS, and the MOI should take concrete actions to secure adequate budget and resources for consistent capacity building and professional development of their staff, especially field officers working at the local level. **As well as ensuring sufficient human resource at the local level, field officers such as social workers and community developers of the relevant ministries should be trained on conducting outreach and reactivation of disengaged youth**, along with mentoring and coaching skills, as these are among the most important steps to prevent youth from becoming NEET or in reducing the time spent as NEET.

At the school level, stakeholders highlighted the need to enhance career guidance in school, as it is generally perceived as the least important subject by teachers. While the DOE, in collaboration with the MOE, has set an annual target number of schools and youth to reach with career guidance support, through open house activities or career days to increase youth employability, not all schools are visited by labour officers due to limited human resources. As such, **teachers and school guidance counsellors must be provided with necessary training**, both through pre-service and in-service training, and the systematic exchange of best practices in conjunction with the private sector, **to acquire up-to-date knowledge about the labour market as well as information on available PES so that they can effectively support students with life choices and career planning**. Moreover, as the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the adoption of digital technology in many sectors, not least in education, **there is also a need to ensure teachers are equipped with technological knowledge and ability to help children and youth to effectively and safely utilize digital tools in their learning and skills development**.

Improvement of employment conditions, compensations and benefits and welfare for teachers and service providers working with youth, particularly government employees who are not yet enrolled as a civil servant, as well as those working in non-formal and informal learning settings, such as teachers in learning centres, was also noted as a significant measure that must be taken to improve the quality of services provided to youth.

To address the capacity gap of provincial officers, suggestions were also made to enhance the capacity of civil society actors and community volunteers to perform outreach, create spaces for youth engagement and participation and implement activities to help reduce the risk factors associated with the NEET status, for instance through anti-bullying campaigns, skills development, and recreational or extra-curricular programmes, in collaboration with sub-national level one-stop service centres. However, in Thailand, the youth sector, unlike other social services, lacks standards for quality and definitions of professional competencies, nor uniform standards of practice or ongoing professional development expectations, while formal complaints mechanisms to deal with breaches of conduct are also lacking. **There is a need, therefore, to support the development of youth work in Thailand, which in turn shall contribute to enhancing the capabilities of service providers working with young people** to better work with and for youth to support them in navigating their transition periods and other mega-trends that affect their lives, and to ensure that youth have an opportunity to join the 21st century economy and be a part of Thailand's social and economic development story.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Promote a common understanding of the term “NEET” among policy makers, service providers and across sectors.
- Enhance the capacity of career counsellors in schools and public employment services to deliver up-to-date labour market information through pre-service and in-service training and systematic information sharing of best practices in collaboration with the private sector (for example, the TCC and FTI).
- Provide teachers and school guidance counsellors with training to effectively support students with career planning and utilization of digital tools.
- Ensure sufficient human resources at the local level and provide training for field officers to conduct outreach and reactivate disengaged youth.
- Develop youth work occupational standards and professional qualifications for youth workers to enhance the capabilities of service providers working with and for young people.

Budget and financing

Short-term budget planning and inadequate budget allocation were noted as significant barriers to the successful implementation of policies and programmes to address issues related to NEET and youth disengagement. While there are various projects and initiatives offered by the government, private sector and CSOs to support youth-related education, employment and training initiatives, the budgets of such projects are mostly short-lived (around 1 to 2 years) and typically restricted to higher-income areas, barring them from delivering truly effective and sustainable benefits for youth.

The process of budget setting and allocation across sectors is a notable challenge, where competing interests and priorities and differing levels of awareness and perceived responsibility of different agencies for youth-related programme contribute to a lack of coordination. **Improving monitoring and evaluation of youth-related programmes to support evidence-based budget prioritization is therefore a key step to improve budgeting for youth NEET.**

Given that the reduction of the NEET rate has recently become an indicator in the national plans (for example, the 13th NESDP and the MOL's Action Plan 2023–2027), **there is an urgent need to ensure the issue of youth NEET is reflected in national financing plans and budgets, and that sufficient and long-term resources are allocated with simple budgeting procedures** to offer timely services to address the needs of young people, especially those who are NEET. In this regard, the MOF, the Bank of Thailand, the Budget Bureau and the NESDC must be engaged to develop targeted fiscal measures that are also gender sensitive to support the most disadvantaged youth. One possible option is to establish the NEET agenda as a cross-sectoral budget programme with a focal point or host (potentially, a National Committee for NEET) with responsibility for administration, monitoring and supervision of all relevant agencies. **To support budgeting, a minimum integrated services package for youth NEET should be developed to allow more accurate costing of services.**

While public financial resources should be the main source of funding for NEET-related programmes, existing public funds, such as the EEF and the Thai Health Promotion Fund, are other potential sources of local level resourcing for youth NEET. To support initiatives related to NEET, funding for pilot programmes could be provided alongside a robust evaluation framework to measure effectiveness and ensure scale up of successful initiatives. Financial support from agencies such as UNICEF and the private sector could also be leveraged to support further research into NEET issues and promote new innovations.

Lastly, stakeholders noted that families often struggle to meet the hidden costs associated with education, such as school uniform, equipment, activity and transportation costs, increasing the likelihood of economically motivated school dropout. Therefore, to inform adequate budgeting, a review of the 1999 Education for All Policy – which states every child is entitled to 15 years of free education regardless of their legal status or nationality – is recommended to assess how “free” the provision of free education policy truly is, and formulate ways to reduce the financial burden on families.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

BUDGET AND FINANCING

- Improve M&E of youth employability policies and programmes to support evidence-based budget prioritization for youth NEET.
- Ensure that the needs of youth NEET are reflected in national financing plans and budgets, and that sufficient and long-term resources are allocated.
- Develop a minimum integrated services package for youth NEET to allow more accurate costing of services.
- Utilize existing public funds for local level resourcing of programmes to support youth NEET.
- Review the extent to which upper secondary education is “free” and proactively explore extending the targeted funding support currently available to vulnerable students from the Equitable Education Fund in compulsory education (primary and lower secondary) to upper secondary education.

Data, information and research

As previously mentioned, there is limited research and data collection on NEET in Thailand, leading to limited understanding about who NEETs are, and the factors that put them at risk of becoming NEET. While this research offers more in-depth information about youth NEET profiles and the reasons for their becoming NEET, there is still a need to promote regular data collection and analysis of information to build evidence for specific actions and effective policy and programme planning and adequate resource allocation, given that the NEET status is not static and that different sub-groups require tailored approaches and interventions.

Moreover, currently there is no platform or mechanism to share data on NEET and best practices in tackling the issue. Stakeholders recommended to **establish a platform overseen by the MSDHS to serve as a knowledge hub for data and information sharing among stakeholders for better understanding of youth NEET and to promote collaboration and dialogue.** In turn, the platform can also increase engagement of all relevant stakeholders and their contributions towards the formulation of policies and programmes to address the NEET issue as well as strengthen the quality and oversight of NEET interventions. All relevant service providers must be encouraged to collaboratively provide data input into the platform. To support this, standard operating procedures across government agencies and a minimum set of harmonised indicators must be developed for all sectors and relevant units at both the national and local level to report or contribute to.

Nationally, stakeholders also reported there is a lack of a common database and limited age disaggregated data on young people. Although the Digital Government Development Agency was assigned to develop the Open Government Data of Thailand (data.go.th) with the aim to facilitate convenient public access to government information covering different sectors, this open data source has not been effectively utilized by state agencies. Besides, different ministries generally have their own database that is not systematically shared, nor routinely updated. Data inconsistencies among the various databases resulting from distinct data collection methods and criteria used were also raised. This leads to inefficiency and ineffectiveness in capturing and delivering timely assistance to at-risk youth who might fall through the cracks. For instance, the MOE has a data platform on

OOSC (<https://oosc-report.firebaseio.com/>), but the latest datasets reported are from 2018. **The need for digitalisation of government databases is therefore a priority**, as many agencies still rely on a paper-based system, rendering data linkage and sharing and collaboration extremely difficult.

Furthermore, a key factor contributing to the skill mismatch problem in Thailand noted by stakeholders is the lack of easily accessible information and forecasts on current and future labour market opportunities and on the required skill set of the labour force. This is a critical barrier to labour market participation and employment of youth as it inhibits them from making informed decisions about their future. Thus, **there is a need to enhance labour market information systems, for example through the use of big data, to facilitate effective labour diagnostics and forecasting as well as to integrate youth NEET statistics into the national statistics classification**, particularly in the LFS, to aid the design of future-oriented training policies and support programmes for youth.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

DATA, INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

- Promote routine data collection and analysis of information to build evidence for tailored actions, effective policy and programme planning and adequate resource allocation to address the NEET issue.
- Develop a centralized, digitized database with regular updates to facilitate stakeholder data sharing and exchange of best practices.
- Strengthen labour market information systems to facilitate effective diagnostics and forecasting and integrate statistics on youth NEET into national statistics.
- Conduct additional research on the role of gender and the care economy in contributing to higher rates of NEET among young women in Thailand; and how can access to affordable and quality childcare services for young children improve their labour market participation.

Community engagement

Parents, community and peers can have a strong influence over whether a youth becomes NEET. Interventions to address NEET status are more likely to succeed if parents/guardians as well as members of the youth's social circle are engaged in prevention and response measures.

Stakeholders noted that **there is a need to raise awareness among parents and guardians on the importance of education and training as well as information about existing public services, alternative occupations, and different successful career paths.** Such activities could be done through community mechanisms with the support of teachers, educators, village heads, religious leaders, community volunteers, and youth leaders (such as local members of the CYC). Parental awareness-raising programmes should entail both general and targeted interventions to reach different groups of parents, as discussion of the tangible returns to education and the negative long-term repercussions of being NEET are likely to be more important to relatively lower-income households. It is also important that public-private-academia support systems are developed for parents across all socioeconomic groups.

Reaching out and identifying youth NEET who are dependent on their parents/guardians is another challenge that requires attention, as effective outreach activities to engage with this group will require the acceptance of both the youth NEET and their family members. In this regard, all reintegration activities require continuity and consistency to gain trust from the youth and their family through various methods. An effective intervention requires both long-term human and financial resources, as it is essential for family members to work together with case managers to provide support for the youth.

Likewise, community engagement and peer-to-peer support mechanisms are vital instruments for preventing youth disengagement. **Promoting supportive community and positive peer influences can help encourage and motivate youth to remain in or seek out education and training programmes.** A healthy community can also help support youth whose family members cannot provide assistance for various reasons, or those who are estranged from their family. In such cases, NEET support programmes must rely on committed community volunteers and community leaders to help track and provide tailored assistance to youth who lack support systems.

Community participation measures can include **the establishment of peer-to-peer activities utilizing existing youth networks** (for example, CYC) as a means to enhance youth's motivation and active participation in recreational programmes, and **capacity building of communities to support the implementation of youth interventions at the sub-district level in an intergenerational manner.** In this regard, strengthening mechanisms for community feedback and monitoring is important. Stakeholders noted that **communities must be closely engaged to develop key indicators to monitor progress and evaluate the responsiveness of youth-related interventions to the needs of young people in their communities.**

Furthermore, religious beliefs and social norms can shape youth's perceptions and behaviours, as is the case in the Muslim-dominant area of Thailand's three southern border provinces. In this context, it is important that **religious leaders are engaged to help shape a new perspective for youth to prevent them from becoming NEET or to escape the NEET status.** Bringing school principals to speak at the religious event on Friday is one of the activities suggested by stakeholders to increase the school attendance of youth in the region.

In Thailand, while there are many initiatives developed for youth of various needs, stakeholders noted that to a large extent they lack the involvement of youth in the design and implementation process, especially among government programmes, whereas programmes run by CSOs and/or NGOs tend to be more attentive to involving youth voices, for instance, those focusing on training youth leaders. Therefore, to effectively address the issue of youth NEET, **it is essential to ensure that programmes and interventions designed for youth are driven from the bottom-up and that youth are engaged in the process of developing solutions for their problems.** Through active participation, young people can play a vital role in their own development as well as that of their communities. In fact, **integrating youth engagement in programme design and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation is critical to sustaining development impact over time. Youth must be supported with the necessary tools, such as information and training, to actively participate and contribute to finding solutions for themselves and their peers.** Initiatives such as UNICEF's Young People Advisory Board, where young people are offered training to participate in policies and programmes design, can be one model for adopting to the design and delivery of services for NEETs.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Raise awareness among parents on the importance of education and training and on existing services through community mechanisms, including the support of village heads, religious leaders, community volunteers, and youth leaders (for example, local members of CYC).
- Promote supportive community and positive peer influences (such as existing youth networks such as CYC) to encourage and motivate youth to remain in or seek out education and training programmes.
- Engage youth, especially youth NEETs and the most marginalised, in programme design and implementation, as well as M&E, to ensure relevance of interventions (such as apprenticeship, traineeship and internship schemes) and sustain development impact over time.



References

- Acemoglu, D., & Autor, D. (2012). What does human capital do? A review of Goldin and Katz's race between education and technology. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(2), 426–463.
- Anderson, V. (2017). Criteria for evaluating qualitative research. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 28(2), 125-133. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21282>
- Arunothai, N. (2018, September 10). *Stateless people problems: Complicated but not hopeless*. Retrieved from Know deeply with Chulalongkorn University: <https://www.chula.ac.th/cuinside/12859/>
- Aunampai, A., Widyastari, D. A., Chuanwan, S., & Katewongsa, P. (2022). Association of bullying on happiness at school: evidence from Thailand's national school-based survey. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 27(1), 72-84. doi:10.1080/02673843.2021.2025117
- Bank of Thailand. (2019). *Upgrading Thai workers skills: A big problem in the age of technology that changes the world (การยกระดับทักษะแรงงานไทย: โจทย์ใหญ่ยุคเทคโนโลยีเปลี่ยนโลก)*. เข้าถึงได้จาก Bank of Thailand: https://www.bot.or.th/Thai/ResearchAndPublications/articles/Pages/Article_20Feb2019.aspx
- Barham, C., Walling, A., Clancy, G., Hicks, S., & Conn, S. (2009). Young people and the labour market. *Economic & Labour Market Review*, 17–29. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1057/elmr.2009.56>
- Barro, R. J. (2001). Human capital and growth. *American Economic Review*, 91(2), 12-17. doi:DOI: 10.1257/aer.91.2.12
- Beadle, S. (2018). *Youth guarantee mutual learning seminar: Tracking and mapping young people not in education, employment or trainings (NEETs)*. Zagreb, Croatia: European Commission.
- Bhula-or, R., Saengprajaksakul, S., & Thongwan, P. (2020). *Increasing awareness and participation of youth who are not in employment, education, or training, as well as youth who are not engaged in human capital accumulation activities to foster the development of youth potential to enter the labor market*. Bangkok: Thai Health Promotion Foundation.
- Brendgen, M., Bowen, F., Rondeau, N., & Vitaro, F. (2001). Effects of Friends' Characteristics on Children's Social Cognitions. *Social Development*, 8(1), 41-51. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9507.00079>
- Brennan, J. (2021). *Flexible learning pathways in British higher education: A decentralized and market-based system*. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- Breslau, J., Mille, E., W.-J. J., & Schweitzer, J. B. (2011). Childhood and adolescent onset psychiatric disorders, substance use, and failure to graduate high school on time. *Journal of psychiatric research*, 295–301. doi:DOI: 10.1016/j.jpsychires.2010.06.014
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological Models of Human Development. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 3, 37-43.
- Bynner, J. (2005). Rethinking the youth phase of the life-course: the case for emerging adulthood? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8, 367–384.
- Bynner, J., & Parsons, S. (2002). Social Exclusion and the Transition from School to Work: The Case of Young People Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(2), 289-309. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1868>
- Caroleo, F. E., Rocca, A., Mazzocchi, P., & Quintano, C. (2020). Being NEET in Europe Before and After the Economic Crisis: An Analysis of the Micro and Macro Determinant. *Social Indicators Research*, 149, 991–1024. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02270-6>

- Chantapong, S., & Lertpienthum, K. (2018, June 24). Skills Mismatch Traps and Challenges to Education 4.0. *MPG Economic Review*. Retrieved from https://www.bot.or.th/Thai/ResearchAndPublications/DocLib_/Article_24Jul2018.pdf
- Chantapong, S., & Pornpatanapaisankul, K. (2019). *Upskilling Thai workers – A big question in the time of the technological disrupted world*. Bangkok: Bangkok of Thailand. Retrieved from https://www.bot.or.th/Thai/ResearchAndPublications/articles/Pages/Article_20Feb2019.aspx
- Coles, B., Hutton, S., Bradshaw, J., Craig, G., Godfrey, C., & Johnson, J. (2002). *Literature review of the costs of being 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' at age 16-18*. Norwich: Department of Employment and Skills. Retrieved from <https://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/RR347.pdf>
- Council of the European Union. (2020). on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation. *Official Journal of the European Union*. Retrieved from [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1104\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1104(01)&from=EN)
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative & mixed method approaches* (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Das, D. (2019). Academic resilience among children from disadvantaged social groups in India. *Social Indicators Research*, 719–739. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1899-y>
- De Luca, G., Mazzocchi, P., Quintano, C., & Rocca, A. (2020). Going behind the high rates of NEETs in Italy and Spain: The role of early school leavers. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(1), 345-363.
- DeBolt, M. E., Pasley, B. K., & Kreutzer, J. (1990). Factors affecting the probability of school dropout: A study of pregnant and parenting adolescent females. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 5(2), 190–205. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/074355489052006>
- Department of Employment Ministry of Labour. (2016). *Career guidance service of Department of Employment (In Thai)*. Bangkok: Ministry of Labour. Retrieved from <https://www.doe.go.th/prd/assets/upload/files/phetchabun-th/53deb170f83da152dce0258ed9d59d38.pdf>
- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities . (2022). *Situation of Persons with Disabilities as of 30 September 2022 (Quarterly)*. Bangkok.
- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. (2017). Announcement Regarding Prescribing Practices and Documents in Requesting Support for the Operation of the Service Center for the People with Disability. Retrieved from <http://dep.go.th/uploads/Docutents/bd3b4bd8-ea27-4c3d-bb9a-7b702bb-7214d%E0%B8%9B%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B0%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A8%20%E0%B8%9E%E0%B8%81.%20%E0%B9%81%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%87%E0%B9%81%E0%B8%A5%E0%B8%B0%E0%B9%81%E0%B8%9A%E0%B8>
- Department of Local Administration. (2021). *Guideline to provide education for vulnerable children*. Bangkok. Retrieved from http://www.dla.go.th/upload/document/type2/2021/12/26577_2_1638938111800.pdf?time=1638939161752.
- Dixon, J., & Hyde, M. (2000). A Global Perspective on Social Security Programmes for Disabled People. *Disability & Society* (5), 709-730. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/713662002>
- Dweck, C. S., Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2014). *Academic Tenacity: Mindsets and Skills that Promote Long-Term Learning*. California. Retrieved from <https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/manual/dweck-walton-cohen-2014.pdf>
- Ebstyne King, P., & Furrow, J. L. (2004). Religion as a Resource for Positive Youth Development: Religion, Social Capital, and Moral Outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*, 40(5), 703–713. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.40.5.703>
- Education Reform Commission. (2022, 09 22). Retrieved from Thai ED Reform 2022: <https://www.thaiedreform2022.org/inspiration/20211229-adult-skills-assessment/>
- EdWINGS. (2022, March 7). *Our Projects*. Retrieved from EdWINGS: <http://edwings.co/>
- Elliott, D. S. (1966). Delinquency, School Attendance and Dropout. *Social Problems*, 13(3), 307–314. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/799257>

References

- Equitable Education Fund. (2022). In *การจัดการศึกษาเชิงพื้นที่เพื่อลดความเหลื่อมล้ำ*. Bangkok: Equitable Education Fund.
- Equitable Education Fund. (2022). *The manual for the iSEE "iSEE Public"*. Bangkok: Equitable Education Fund. Retrieved from https://isee.eef.or.th/download/คู่มือการใช้งาน_iSEE_Public.pdf
- Eurofound. (2012). *NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Eurofound. (2021). *NEETs*. Retrieved from Eurofound: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/neets#infographic>
- European Commission. (2018a). *Effective outreach to NEET: Experience from the Ground*. European Commission.
- European Commission. (2018b). Youth guarantee mutual learning seminar on 'Tracking and mapping young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)'. In ICT (Ed.), *Youth Guarantee Mutual Learning Seminar*, (p. 21). Zagreb.
- European Training Foundation. (2015). *Young People Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET): An Overview in ETF Partner Countries*. Torino. Retrieved from https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/BFEEBA10DD412271C1257EED0035457E_NEETs.pdf
- European Training Foundation. (2021). *Youth disengagement and skills mismatch in the western balkans*. Retrieved from https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/02_youth_western_balkans_final.pdf
- Farah, N., & Upadhyay, M. P. (2017). How are school dropouts related to household characteristics? Analysis of survey data from Bangladesh. *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 5(1). doi:10.1080/23322039.2016.1268746
- Fergusson, D. M., Horwood, L. J., & Beautrais, A. L. (2003). Cannabis and educational achievement. *Addiction*, 98(12), 1681–1692. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2003.00573.x>
- Fund, U. N. (2021). *UNICEF procedure on ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis*. PROCEDURE/OOR/2021/001. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1786/file/UNICEF%20Procedure%20on%20Ethical%20Standards%20in%20Research,%20Evaluation,%20Data%20Collection%20and%20Analysis.pdf>
- Gauze, C., Bukowski, W. M., Aquan-Assee, J., & Sippola, L. K. (1996). Interactions between family environment and friendship and associations with self-perceived well-being during early adolescence. *Child Development*, 67(5), 2201-2216. doi:PMID: 9022238
- Gazda, G. M., Childers, W. C., & Brooks, D. K. (1987). *Foundations of counseling and human services*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Giret, J. J., & Jean-François. (2021). Untangling the roles of low skill and education in predicting youth NEET statuses: negative signalling effects in comparative perspective. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. doi :10.1080/03057925.2021.1951664
- Gökşen, F., & Öker, İ. (2017). Gender and migrant workers' fragile transitions from education to employment. In C. M. Jacqueline O'Reilly, *Youth Employment: STYLE Handbook* (Vol. 1, pp. 163–166). Bristol: CROME. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jacqueline-Oreilly/publication/319396025_Youth_Employment_STYLE_Handbook/links/59a7f84e4585156873d1eef2/Youth-Employment-STYLE-Handbook.pdf#page=179
- Gracey, S., & Kelly, S. (2010). *Changing the NEET mindset: Achieving more effective transitions between education and work*. London: Learning and Skills Network.
- GutiérrezGarcía, R. A., Benjet, C., Borges, G., Ríos, E. M., & MedinaMora, M. E. (2017). NEET adolescents grown up: eightyear longitudinal followup of education, employment and mental health from adolescence to early adulthood in Mexico City. *Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg*.
- Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2008). The role of cognitive skills in economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 46(3), 607–668. Retrieved from <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Hanushek%2BWoessmann%202008%20JEL%2046%283%29.pdf>

- Hawley, J., Nevala, A.-M., & Weber, T. (2012). *Recent policy developments related to those not in employment, education and training*. Ireland: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions . Retrieved from <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/emcc/comparative-information/recent-policy-developments-related-to-those-not-in-employment-education-and-training-neets>
- Hendricks, P. A. (1998). Developing youth curriculum using the targeting life skills model: Incorporating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities to assess impact of life skill development. *Iowa State University Extension*.
- Hodkinson, P. (. (1996). Careership: The individual, choices and markets in the transition to work. In J. B. Avis, *Knowledge and nationhood, Education, politics and work*, (pp. 121–139). London.
- Hsu, A. S., Chen, C., & Greenberger, E. (2019). Parental Warmth Moderates the Association Between BMI Trajectories and Academic Achievement. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 39(3), 371-394. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431618757677>
- Hwang, K.-K. (2009). The Development of indigenous counseling in contemporary confucian communities. *Counseling Psychologist*, 37(7), 930–943. doi:doi: 10.1177/0011000009336241
- ILO/SIDA. (2021). Young people not in employment education or training. *ILO/SIDA partnership on employment technical brief #3*. Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26634NEET_Sida_brief.pdf
- ILOSTAT. (2021). *ILO modelled estimates*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- ILOSTAT. (2022). Indicator description: Share of youth not in employment, education or training (youth NEET rate).
- ILOSTAT. (2022a). *Time-related underemployment by sex and age*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- International Labour Office. (2015). *National employment policies: A guide for workers' organisations*. Geneva: International Labour Office. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_334921.pdf
- International Labour Office. (2018). *The employment impact of climate change adaptation. Input Document for the G20 Climate Sustainability Working Group*. Geneva.
- International Labour Organization & World Bank. (2021). *Skills development in the time of COVID-19: Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training*. Bangkok: International Labour Office. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/--ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_766557.pdf
- International Labour Organization. (2020). *Global employment trends for youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs International Labour Office*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- International Labour Organization. (2021a). An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis. *Statistical Brief*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/briefingnote/wcms_795479.pdf
- International Labour Organization. (2021b). Thailand labour market update: Concern remains over the drawn out impact of COVID-19. *ILO Brief*, p. 2021. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/--ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_829228.pdf
- International Labour Organization. (2021c). Young persons not in employment and education (NEET). *ILO Brief*, 16.
- International Labour Organization. (2022). *Glossary of statistical terms*. Geneva. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/glossary/#E>
- International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Share of youth not in employment, education or training (youth NEET rate)*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/ilostat-files/Documents/description_NEET_EN.pdf
- International Labour Organization, Department of Skills Development, Chulalongkorn University . (To be published). *Rapid Assessment on Reskilling and Upskilling Needs of Workers and Impact of Automation on Workers in Thailand*. Bangkok.
- International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT. (2022, February 28). *ILOSTAT*. Retrieved from <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/youth/#>

References

- Jiusitthipraphai, T., Nirattharadorn, M., & Suwannarurk, K. (2015). The effects of promoting self-efficacy program on the oral contraceptive used behavior among adolescent mothers. *Journal of the Medical Association of Thailand*, 98(5), 444–450. doi:PMID: 26058271
- Krueger, A. B., & Lindahl, M. (2000). Education for growth: Why and for whom? *Journal of Economic Literature*, 1101-1136. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/jel.39.4.1101>
- Legal Research and Development Center, Faculty of Law, Chiang Mai University; UNICEF. (2020). *Ending and Protecting Child Statelessness in Thailand: Developing An Accelerated Nationality Review Model*. Chiang Mai: UNICEF. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/6471/file/Stateless%20Child%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- Leung, S., & Chen., P. (2009). Counseling psychology in chinese communities in Asia: Indigenous, multicultural, and cross-cultural considerations. *Counseling Psychologist*, 944–966. doi:doi: 10.1177/0011000009339973
- Lundborg, P., Nordin, M., & Rooth, D. O. (2018). The intergenerational transmission of human capital: the role of skills and health. *Journal of Population Economics*, 31, 1035–1065. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-018-0702-3>
- Matsumoto, M., & Bhula-or, R. (2018). Problem of skills mismatch in Asia and the Pacific: How useful are the existing measurement for future skills strategies? In I. R. Pacific, *Skills and the Future of Work: Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific* (pp. 338-363). Bangkok: International Labour Organization. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/--ro-bangkok/--sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_650239.pdf
- McCrae, N., Gettings, S., Pursell, E., & McCrae, Gettings & Pursell. (2017). Social Media and Depressive Symptoms in Childhood and Adolescence: A Systematic Review. *Adolescent Research Review*, 315–330. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-017-0053-4>
- Minamida, A. (2021). *Nurturing “Intermediaries” through music and arts management: A case study of Klongtoey D-Jung*. Retrieved from <https://www.mekongculturalhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Art-Social-Action-Klongtoey-D-Jung-Thailand.pdf>
- Ministry of Education. (2008). *Toward a learning society in Thailand an introduction to education in Thailand*. Bangkok. Retrieved from <https://www.bic.moe.go.th/images/stories/book/ed-eng-series/intro-ed08.pdf>
- Ministry of Education. (2022, June 15). *สรุปภาพรวมการรายงานข้อมูลโครงการ พาน้องกลับมาเรียน*. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from จำนวนนักเรียนทั้งหมด จำแนกสถานะการติดตาม: <https://dropout.edudev.in.th/>
- Ministry of Labour. (2022). *5-Year Government Action Plan (2023-2027)*. Bangkok. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UHHz1NjBgw1mU_sB3Oq5nrguOR4WMXptM/view
- National Economic and Social Development Board. (2022). *The Thirteen National Economic and Social Development Plan*. Bangkok: National Economic and Social Development Board. Retrieved from <https://www.nesdc.go.th/download/document/Yearend/2021/plan13.pdf>
- National Statistical Office. (2016, 2021). *Labor Force Survey*. Bangkok: Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.
- National Statistical Office. (2017). *Disability Survey*. Bangkok. Retrieved from http://www.nso.go.th/sites/2014en/Survey/social/SocialSecurity/Disabilitysurvey/2017/Full_Report.pdf
- National Statistical Office of Thailand . (2021). *Skills Development Survey*. Bangkok.
- National Statistical Office of Thailand. (2011-2021). *Labor Force Survey (Q3)*. Bangkok.
- National Statistical Office of Thailand. (2016). *Labor Force Survey*. Bangkok.
- National Statistical Office of Thailand. (2020). *Labor Force Survey*. Bangkok.
- National Statistical Office of Thailand. (2022). *Informal Employment Survey*. Bangkok.
- Neild, R. C., Stoner-Eby, S., & Furstenberg, F. (2008). Connecting entrance and departure: The transition to ninth grade and high school dropout. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(5), 543–569. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124508316438>

- Nilsson, A., Rosendahl, I., & Jayaram-Lindström, N. (2022). Gaming and social media use among adolescents in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 39(4), 347-361. doi:doi:10.1177/14550725221074997
- OECD. (2020). *THAILAND'S EDUCATION SYSTEM AND SKILLS IMBALANCES: ASSESSMENT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS*. ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT WORKING PAPERS No. 1641.
- Office of the Basic Education Commission. (2021). *Annual Report*. Bangkok : Ministry of Education .
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2019). *Gross Regional and Provincial Product, 2019 Edition*. Bangkok: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. Retrieved from https://www.nesdc.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=11539&filename=gross_regional
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2020). *Thailand's Social Situation and Outlook of Q1/2020*. Bangkok. Retrieved from https://www.nesdc.go.th/nesdb_en/download/SocialPress_Q1-2563-Eng.pdf
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2022). *Thailand's social situation and outlook of Q1/2022*. Retrieved from Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council: https://www.nesdc.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=5491&filename=socialoutlook_report
- Office of the Permanent Secretary, M. o. (2020). *Government Action Plan Assessment Report*. Bangkok.
- Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education . (2019, February 13). *Executive mission news*. Retrieved from Bringing the school-age population back into the education system: <https://www.moe.go.th/%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%B3%E0%B8%9B%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B0%E0%B8%8A%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%A2%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B5%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A5%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%9A%E0%B9%80/>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2011). *OECD reviews of vocational education and training: Learning for jobs*. Paris: OECD.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012). Gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship: Final report to the MCM 2012. *Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level*, (p. 252). Paris.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *OECD skills strategy 2019: Skills to shape a better future*. Paris: OECD Publishing. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). *Thailand's education system and skills imbalances: assessment and policy recommendations*. ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT WORKING PAPERS No. 1641.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *Refer to education at a glance database*. Paris.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *Vocational Education and Training in Thailand*. Paris. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1787/cc20bf6d-en>
- Pattarapatumthong, W. (2021, Jul 5). *Skills challenge*. Retrieved from Bangkok Post: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2143523/skills-challenge>
- Pignatti, C., & Belle, E. V. (2018). Better together: Active and passive labour market policies in developed and developing economies. *Working Paper No. 37*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_660003.pdf
- Powell, A., Salignac, F., Meltzer, A., Muir, K., & Weier, M. (2018). *Background report on young people's economic engagement*. UNSW. Sydney: Report for Macquarie Group Foundation. Centre for Social Impact,. Retrieved from https://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/MGF_Background_report_Final_Cc3YmM2.pdf
- Pronzato, C. (2012). An examination of paternal and maternal intergenerational transmission of schooling. *Journal of Population Economics*, 591–608. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-010-0311-2>
- Rabaglietti, E., & Ciairano, S. (2008). Quality of friendship relationship and development tasks in adolescence. *Cognition, Brain, Behavior*, 12(2), 183–203.

References

- Ripamonti, E., & Barberis, S. (2021). The association of economic and cultural capital with the NEET rate: differential geographical and temporal patterns. *Journal for Labour Market Research*, 55(13). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12651-021-00296-y>
- Rosas, G. (2015). Active labour market policies: What works for youth? *Piloting Youth Guarantee on the Ground: Experiences from the European Parliament Preparatory Action* (p. 15). Brussels: International Labour Office. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_612070.pdf
- Rossmann, G. B., & Wilson, B. L. (1985). Numbers and words: Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single large-scale study. *Evaluation Review*, 9(5), 627-43.
- Sallis, J. F., Owen, N., & Fisher, E. B. (2008). Ecological models of health behavior. In K. Glanz, B. K. Rimer, & K. Viswanath, *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice* (Fourth edition ed., pp. 465–485). Jossey-Bass.
- Salvà-Mut, F., Tugores-Ques, M., & Quintana-Murci, E. (2018). NEETs in Spain: an analysis in a context of economic crisis. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 37(2), 168-183. doi:10.1080/02601370.2017.1382016
- Sánchez, A., & Favara, M. (2019, May). Consequences of Teenage Childbearing in Peru: Is the Extended School-day Reform an Effective Policy Instrument to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy? *Young Lives Working Paper 185*, p. 32. Retrieved from <https://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/YL-WP185.pdf>
- Sasin & the United Nation Children's Fund. (2021). *Voices of youth and employers on youth employability in thailand*. Bangkok.
- Save the Children Thailand. (2019, October 20). โครงการ USAID ACHIEVE เปิดรับสมัครฝึกอบรมทักษะอาชีพแก่เยาวชน. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/SaveTheChildrenThailand/posts/2550942328278515/>
- Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review*, 51(1), 1-17.
- Secretariat of the House of Representatives. (2015). *Reform Agenda 30 : Reforming the system to support an aging society*. Bangkok: Secretariat of the House of Representatives Publishing House. Retrieved from https://cdc.parliament.go.th/ewtadmin/ewt/parliament_parcy/download/parcy/057.pdf
- Shucksmith, M. (2009). Disintegrated Rural Development? Neo-endogenous Rural Development, Planning and Place-Shaping in Diffused Power Contexts. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 50(1), 1-14. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2009.00497.x>
- Siltragool, W. (2008). Thailand Non-Formal Education. UNESCO.
- Sorsa, K. (2020). *WP4 youth guarantee and one-stop guidance center: case Study report*. Retrieved from <https://www.localfinland.fi/sites/default/files/media/file/Finland%20Youth%20Guarantee.pdf>
- Talungchit, P., Lertbunnaphong, T., & Russameecharoen, K. (2017). Prevalence of Repeat Pregnancy Including Pregnancy Outcome of Teenage Women. *Siriraj Medical Journal*, 69(6), 363-368. doi:10.14456/smj.2017.68
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. California: Sage Publications.
- Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative. (2003). *Community resource mapping: Knowing your youth services landscape*. Austin: School & Main Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.norapriest.com/samples/mapping.pdf>
- Thaiger. (2022, April 15). *Economic aftershocks of Russia's invasion on Thailand's economy*. Retrieved from Thaiger Business: <https://thethaiger.com/news/business/economic-aftershocks-of-russias-invasion-on-thailands-economy>
- Thailand Development Research Institute. (2020). *Youth employability scoping study*. Bangkok: Thailand Development Research Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/4771/file/Youth%20Employability%20Scoping%20Study.pdf>
- Thailand Life Education. (2019). *Life education Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://www.lifeeducation.in.th/>
- ThaiPublica. (2018, September 6). *เกาะกระแส*. Retrieved from เปลี่ยนชีวิตนักเรียนให้ "สดใส" ด้วยระบบ "ISEE" และการเอาใจใส่ของครูโรงเรียนวัดห้วยแก้ว จ.เชียงใหม่ ไม่ให้เด็กหลุดออกนอกระบบการศึกษา: <https://thaipublica.org/2018/09/isee-system-equitable-education/>
- Thaipublica. (2022, July 20). *"Free study for 15 years" does not exist. 2.4 million extra-poor children, likely to fall outside the system*. Retrieved October 1, 2022, from Koa Kra Sae: <https://thaipublica.org/2022/07/eef-29-05-2565/>

- Thammasat University & UNICEF. (2019). *Policy Implementation analysis on disability grant of Thailand*. Bangkok. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/5511/file/Policy%20Implementation%20Analysis%20on%20Disability%20Grant%20of%20Thailand%20EN.pdf>
- Tongliemnak, P., Maheen, & Yeung, a. Y. (2021). Education. In U. N. Oxford Policy Management, *Social Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Thailand* (pp. 75-106). Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/5071/file/Social%20Impact%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20in%20Thailand.pdf>
- Uddin, M. N. (2019). Intergenerational transmission of human capital: Evidence with an alternative instrument from Thailand. *Journal of Economic Studies*, 46(3), 671-680. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/JES-10-2017-0288>
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (2012). *UNESCO guidelines for the recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning*. Germany: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2022). *Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex*. Retrieved February 28, 2022, from Glossary: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/participation-rate-youth-and-adults-formal-and-non-formal-education-and-training>
- UNESCO-UNEVOC. (2015). *World TVET Database Thailand*. International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training .
- UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. (2019). *Learning against the odds: Evidence and policies to support all out-of-school children and adolescents in East Asia and Pacific*. Bangkok. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/3816/file/out%20of%20school.pdf>
- UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, & Department of Children and Youth, MSDHS. (2020). *Preliminary report on the impacts and needs of children and youth in the situation of COVID-19, online survey, from March 28 to April 10, 2020*. Bangkok: UNICEF. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/th/media/4031/file>
- United Nations. (2020). *Socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 in Thailand*. Bangkok: United Nations. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/5666/file/Socio-Economic%20Impact%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20in%20Thailand.pdf>
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2015). *Assessment of the status and analysis of the profile of adolescents and young people not in employment, education or training*. Bulgaria: United Nations Children's Fund. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/sites/unicef.org.bulgaria/files/2018-09/NEETs_ENG_Summary.pdf
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2019). *Addressing the gaps: Key Results from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Thailand 2019*. Bangkok: UNICEF Thailand. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/5541/file/Key%20results%20from%20the%20Multiple%20Indicator%20Cluster%20Survey%20Thailand%202019%20EN.pdf>
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2020). *Keeping children safe online during the Covid-19 pandemic: Guidance for mobile operators and online content providers*. Bangkok. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/4181/file/Guidance%20for%20mobile%20operator%20and%20online%20content%20providers.pdf>
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2022). *Education knows no border: A collection of good practices and lessons learned on migrant education in Thailand* . Bangkok.
- United Nations Children's Fund. (n.d.). *The challenge*. Retrieved January 10, 2022, from Education: All children should have access to quality education: <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/what-we-do/education>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2012). *International Standard Classification of Education: ISCED 2011*. Canada: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (n.d.). *Thailand*. Retrieved October 1, 2022, from Inclusive: <https://education-profiles.org/eastern-and-south-eastern-asia/thailand/~inclusion>
- United Nations Population Fund Thailand Country Office & Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. (2013). *The State of Thailand's Population 2013: Motherhood in childhood facing the challenge of adolescent pregnancy*. Bangkok.

References

- United State Agency for International Development. (2019). *USAID Thailand counter trafficking in persons: annual report october 1, 2018- september 30 ,2019*. USAID.
- Valkov, P. (2018). School dropout and substance use: Consequence or predictor? *12th International Balkan Education and Science Congress*, (p. 7). Nessebar, Bulgaria. doi:DOI: 10.15547/tjs.2018.02.004
- Vorapanya, S., & Dunlap, D. (2014). Inclusive Education in Thailand: Practices and Challenges. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(10), 1014–1028.
- Welsh Assembly Government. (2008). *Delivering Skills that Work for Wales: reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.
- White, B. (2012). Agriculture and the Generation Problem: Rural Youth, Employment and the Future of Farming. *IDS Bulletin*, 43(6), 9-19. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2012.00375.x>
- Wongthongdee, S. (. (2014). *Human Resource Development* (Second edition ed.). Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.
- World Bank. (2016). *Enterprise Surveys: Data for Thailand*. Bangkok: World Bank Group. Retrieved from <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/2016/thailand#workforce>
- World Bank. (2022, September). *World Bank in Thailand*. Retrieved from Overview: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/thailand/overview>
- World Health Organization. (1997). *Life Skills Education for Children and Adolescents in Schools*. Geneva: World Health Organization. Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/63552/WHO_MNH_PSF_93.7A_Rev.2.pdf?sequence=1
- Yau, T. S., Chung, M. L., Li, H. C., & Chun, D. W. (2018). Myth of the Inferior Status of Vocational Education: The Case of Hong Kong. *Chinese Education & Society*, 51(6), 476-490. doi:DOI: 10.1080/10611932.2018.1570801
- Zilfite, S. (2020). *Research on Patterns among Youth in a NEET Situation*. Biedrība ideA. Retrieved from https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/toolbox_tool_download-file-2414/Research_long_version.pdf
- Zipin, L., Sellar, S., Brennan, M., & Gale, T. (2015). Educating for futures in marginalized regions: A sociological framework for rethinking and researching aspirations. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 227- 246. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2013.839376>
- Zuilkowski, S. S., Jukes, M. C., & Dubeck, M. M. (2016). "I failed, no matter how hard I tried": A mixed-methods study of the role of achievement in primary school dropout in rural Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 100–107. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2016.07.002>

Appendix 1: Research Methodology

This study used a mixed-method design, beginning with a quantitative research method and progressing to a qualitative method. At the early stage, a multisectoral Steering Committee was established to offer direction, monitoring, and support for the project. Three steering committee meetings were organized, along with a validation workshop, to report on progress and address any issues to ensure that relevant activities were suitably undertaken throughout the research and to gather suggestions on proposed recommendations. The list of steering committee members is shown in the Acknowledgements. The detailed methodologies are described in this section.

Desk review

First, a desk review was carried out to investigate labour market outcomes for youth in Thailand, including the personal characteristics and living conditions of youth NEET using a combination of survey and administrative data sources such as LFS, NSO data, and administrative data sources. The process entailed a literature review (both in English and Thai), interpreting secondary data, and compiling a reference list to keep all materials structured and accessible. It also included analysing previously collected and published data and documents, publications, journal articles, reports, as well as legislations and regulations governing NEETs published between 2000 and 2022, compiled with the objective of studying trends, gaps, and potential for resolving the NEET issues. However, the research team also investigated relevant laws and regulations dated back further than the year 2000, if they were promulgated and/or remained applicable in the present.

A mixed-method sequential explanatory design

The study used a mixed-method sequential explanatory design with two distinct phases: quantitative and qualitative (Creswell, 2003). The quantitative data analysis provided a general understanding of the research questions, while the qualitative research phase refined and explained the statistical results by exploring participants' views in greater depth (Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003). This design proved useful when unexpected results from the quantitative study arose, as the qualitative research helped to drill down into the questions to gain a better understanding of the issues. However, a design limitation included the time and resources required to collect and analyse both types of data.

The data collection and critical analytical components in this study included the number/share of youth NEET; the characteristics/profile of youth NEET; underlying causes and risk factors of becoming NEET; transition pathways; and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth NEET. The number/share, the profile of youth NEET, and the underlying causes and risk factors for becoming NEET were analysed through quantitative research. Qualitative research was used to complement the primary data collected on causes and risk factors, transition pathways, and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth NEET.

Quantitative research

The study analysed microdata from the LFS, and the SDS¹³ conducted by the NSO in 2021, including a detailed description of the personal characteristics and living conditions of youth NEET. Data on youth NEET was disaggregated by gender and age; number of household members; geographical area; degree of urbanization; educational attainment level; and household characteristics. The SDS employed a two-stage stratified sampling procedure. The 77 strata and provinces that comprise Bangkok were classified as municipal or non-municipal. After identifying municipal and non-municipal enumeration areas (EAs), a list of private and collective households was selected for each sampled EA (NSO, 2021). NSO weight estimates were then applied to represent the whole country.

13 The key questions in the SDS to generate a proxy of being NEET are:

- (1) Question regarding employment:
"In the seven days preceding the interview date, did you work for income/salary/wage/profit/compensation or work for a household business without being paid?" If the respondent indicated "no," the respondent is treated as an unemployed person.
- (2) Question regarding education:
"(Name)...What class are you currently enrolled in? If the respondent indicated "not currently enrolled," the respondent is treated as not in education in any study.
- (3) Question regarding training:
"In the last year, how many courses/subjects/fields have you taken that contribute to ... (name)... skills development?" If the respondent indicated "zero," the respondent is treated as not in training.

In the SDS, a youth NEET was identified by answering that he/she was not working within seven days prior to the interview, not currently enrolled in any education, and did not participate in a skills development activity within the last year prior to the interview. However, there was a limitation on the proxy representing training as the time specifics of training in the previous year could not be determined. While the SDS can represent data for the entire country and by province, it also has a limitation on the number of possible influential factors, particularly family variables.

Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul and Thongwan (2020) conducted a countrywide NEET survey in Thailand, incorporating a questionnaire on youth and their family members. This study included household surveys covering 2,206 households with 807 eligible youth (aged 15-24 years). The data came from a sample of youth from six provinces: Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, Chonburi, Songkhla, Pattani, and Bangkok. This study analysed the dataset of Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul and Thongwan (2020) to complement the synthesis from the SDS (the most recent year available). While the Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul and Thongwan (2020) study did not cover all provinces, the benefit of using this dataset was in its use of straightforward questions, which asked whether the correspondent was currently either working, studying, or training. It also contained family factors and life goal questions, which helped this study to obtain a more comprehensive analysis. While the SDS secondary data was used as nationally representative for youth NEET analysis at the individual level, the secondary data from Bhula-or, Saengprajaksakul and Thongwan (2020) was regionally representative and was used to supplement the first data set at the household level.

Qualitative research

The qualitative research included KIs and FGDs held in twelve different geographical locations throughout Thailand. The research team conducted interviews with various groups, including 16 policy makers at the national level; 56 policy makers, CSOs/NGOs, and representatives from the FTI and TCC at the provincial level; and 120 youth NEET and 120 parents. A total of 18 focus groups were conducted, consisting of 6 public sectors, CSOs, NGOs at the national level for specific groups, and 12 community leaders. The data collection included the data collection tools (Appendix 2), the ethical approval (Appendix 3), and the brief profile of the interviewees and focus group participants (Appendix 4).

The research team aimed to address two key issues:

- (1) The composition, causes, risk factors, and drivers of Thailand's youth NEET population, including their transition pathways, and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (2) The availability, coverage and effectiveness of existing policies and measures/support services implemented in the country to address the NEET phenomenon, along with opportunities and gaps. Policies and measures were classified into three types as follows: (1) preventive policies and interventions, such as educational policies and interventions aimed at preventing early school leaving and facilitating a smooth transition from school to work; and social protection policies and interventions, such as universal income support social transfers through contributory and non-contributory schemes aimed at alleviating poverty among families with children; (2) reintegration policies and programmes, such as traditional employability policies and efforts aimed at helping young people re-enter the education system or the labour market; and (3) compensation policies and activities, such as expanded social assistance to address situations where reintegration is especially difficult due to poverty.

The research team conducted six focus groups with stakeholders representing youth NEET between March and April 2022. To capture the availability, coverage and effectiveness of existing policies and measures, six youth NEET groups were organized according to social group/identity/vulnerabilities, as follows: youth with disability; teen pregnancy; ethnic minorities and migrant youth; youth in conflict with the law; poor, disadvantaged and homeless youth; and LGBTIQ+.

The data collection tools for youth NEET and their parents (see Appendix 2) were developed and tested in consultation with the experts and key stakeholders representing youth NEETs, with an aim to analyse causes, risk factors, and drivers of Thailand's youth NEET, including their transition pathways on youth NEET in different areas. Ethical approval was approved in May 2022 (Appendix 3).

The qualitative research included KIs with policy makers, legislators and ministry officials at the national level, and key CSOs/NGOs that work with youth NEET in various regions of Thailand. The availability, coverage and effectiveness of existing policies and measures or support services implemented in the country to address the NEET phenomenon, along with opportunities and gaps.

In identifying representative provinces from each region, the research team applied a weighted average, using a provincial NEET dataset from the SDS in 2020 as a reference. The components of the criteria include: (1) Intensity of youth NEET (percentage of youth NEET in each province), and (2) Intensity of youth NEET in each region (percentage of youth NEET in the region, considering the number of youth NEET at the regional level).

National coverage was critical to ascertain the characteristics of the youth NEET population, identify possibilities and gaps, and make policy recommendations. The scope of work of this study therefore spanned six geographical regions in Thailand: Central, North, Northeast, East, South, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

The selection criteria of the provinces were considered by two dimensions: (1) the maximum weighted average in the region; and (2) the highest NEET rate in the region. For the first criteria, six provinces were selected: Bangkok, Samut Prakan, Chonburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Chiang Mai and Nakhon Si Thammarat. For the second criteria, the five provinces with the highest NEET rate of each region were Chai Nat, Sa Kaeo, Nong Bua Lam Phu, Phetchabun, and Narathiwat. However, a sixth province, Pattani, was added to reflect youth characteristics and specific sociocultural factors in the Southern Border provinces area (please see Table 1 in Section 1.5 of Chapter 1).

The research team conducted focus groups with community leaders and CSOs in urban and rural areas of each targeted province to discuss the availability, coverage and effectiveness of existing policies and measures or support services implemented in the areas, and provide recommendations to youth NEETs.

To reflect area differences, the research team conducted online in-depth interviews with key informants, including provincial social officers, provincial education officer, provincial labour officer, as well as representatives of the FTI and TCC at the provincial level. In-depth interviews with CSOs working with youth in the targeted province were also conducted between May and June 2022. The brief profile of the interviewees and focus group participant is shown in Appendix 4.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak has not yet subsided in May 2022, the main research team was unable to enter the field. To address this issue, the research team recruited field researchers between June and August 2022 in all targeted provinces, except Bangkok. The research team held a two-day online training session in May 2022 and early June 2022 with researchers/lecturers in the field. A total of 110 youth NEET and 110 parents/guardians in each province were interviewed by field researchers, accompanied by the research team joining through an online channel. A further 10 youth NEET and 10 parents/guardians were interviewed by the research team in person in August 2022. In recruiting youth NEETs and their parents/guardians, the research team utilized purposive sampling to collect the perspectives and experiences of males and females, rural and urban populations. Bias was prevented and mitigated throughout the research and data analysis process. The two-day training taught national research teams how to recognise and prevent interviewer bias.

The research team made a rigorous effort to include youth and their parents/guardians in the risk factors analysis that led youth to become NEET. Social desirability bias, caused by respondents' desire to provide positive information, hampered researchers' ability to collect in-depth data, as did retrospective bias, which caused past events to be frequently distorted, due to the gap between an experience and its recollection. Interviews with parents/guardians were used to complement interviews with youth NEET and cross check responses. This methodology helped improve the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Primary research findings included information gathered from 15 policy makers at the national level; 56 key policy makers at the local level; representatives from the FTI and TCC at the provincial level; and 120 youth NEET and 120 parents. A total of 18 focus groups were conducted, consisting of 6 public sectors, CSOs, NGOs at the national level for specific groups, and 12 community leaders.

An online results validation workshop was organized to present the preliminary results of the study, and to gather feedback from key stakeholders (participants are listed in Appendix 5). The final report was developed based on comments received via the validation workshop.

Appendix 2: Data collection tools

This appendix outlines the data collection tools used with: (2.1) Policy makers at the national level (KIIs); (2.2) Public sector, CSOs and NGOs that work with specific groups (FGDs); (2.3) Policy makers, CSO/NGOs and representatives from the private sector at the provincial level (KIIs); (2.4) Community leaders at the community level (FGDs); (2.5) Youth NEET (in-depth interview); and (2.6) Parents and guardians of youth NEET (in-depth interview).

Appendix 2.1: Guidelines for key informant interviews: policy makers at national level

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Timing:

This interview may take approximately 60 minutes, depending on how much time you have available and how much discussion is generated by the questions.

Confidentiality

- The information you provide will assist us in developing and strengthening policies and programmes to tackle youth NEET issues. You may withdraw at any time: now, during the interview, or even after the interview has concluded, in which case your transcript and tape recording will be destroyed. With your permission, we may wish to include quotations from the interview in the report. Permit us to proceed, or do you have any concerns you'd like to voice now?
- Please will you kindly sign the consent form and return it to us so that we can keep it as a record?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
(1) Identify mandate of the organization and challenges in tackling youth who are NEET;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Labour • Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation 	(1) Identify mandate of the organization and challenges in tackling youth who are NEET; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe your role, responsibilities/mandate of your organization?
(2) Review, analyze, and map existing policies and measures/ support services implemented in the country, identifying potential and gaps;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Interior • Ministry of Social Development and Human Security • The Office of National Economic and Social Development Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the existing policies to tackle youth NEET? What are mechanisms, gaps and challenges in implementation? • Please describe the youth situation and challenges relating to youth under your organizations' mandate.
(3) Suggest recommendations		(2) Review, analyze, and map existing policies and measures/support services implemented, identifying potential and gaps; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please describe projects/activities your organization has undertaken in the last five years, relating to youth overall, and/or youth NEET specifically • Please describe or explain existing NEET policies/ measures/projects, especially those under your responsibilities (to be grouped into prevention measures, reintegration measures, and compensation measures) • Do you face any implementation challenges/obstacles/ issues in relation to policies/measures/projects related to NEETs or youth in general in implementing such policies/measures/projects?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
		<p>(3) Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please suggest approaches or interventions, as well as policies, to tackle youth NEET issues at all levels of society, including: 1) the family, 2) the community, 3) the provincial level, and 4) the national level. What are the mechanisms that you are referring to? What are effective ways to implement such interventions/policies? (identify prevention, reintegration and compensation approaches). In terms of policy recommendations, could you please suggest prevention measures, reintegration measures, and compensation measures for the NEET group?

Appendix 2.2: Guidelines for focus groups: public sector, CSOs and NGOs that work with a specific group

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group.

Timing:

This focus group may take approximately 120 minutes, depending on how much discussion is generated by the questions.

Confidentiality

- The information you provide will assist us in developing and strengthening policies and programmes to tackle youth NEET issues. Your identity will not be revealed in the final report, and your transcript and recording will be kept separately from your name and contact information.
- By joining the focus group, you fully agree to give information. With your permission, we may wish to include quotations from the focus group in the report. Permit us to proceed, or do you have any concerns you'd like to voice now?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
<p>(1) Identify the mandate of the organization and challenges in tackle youth NEET; the characteristics of Thailand's youth NEET population, including transition pathways and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;</p> <p>(2) Review, analyze, and map existing policies, measures/support services implemented in the country, identifying potential and gaps;</p> <p>(3) Suggest recommendations</p>	<p>Group 1. Youth with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabilities Thailand (DTH) Social Innovation Foundation The Redemptorist Foundation for PWDs Committee of the Rights of PWDs (United Nations) Children and Youth Council of Thailand Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security Thai Health Promotion Foundation Special Education Bureau, Office of Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education Faculty of Social Administration Thammasat University 	<p>(1) Identify mandates of the organization and challenges in tackling youth NEET;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your mandate in relation to youth and policies/programmes to tackle youth NEET *(Using mapping youth service landscape –template is shown below this table) Please describe the youth situation and challenges relating to youth under your organization's mandate. <p>(2) Review, analyze, and map existing policies and measures/support services implemented, identifying potential and gaps;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please describe projects/activities your organization has undertaken in the last five years relating to youth NEET

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
	<p>Group 2. Teen parents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friend of Women Foundation 2. Family Network Foundation 3. Women's Health Advocacy Foundation 4. Path2Health Foundation 5. Foundation for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Rights and Justice 6. Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities 7. Department of Social Development and Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security 8. Bureau of Reproductive Health, Department of Health (Ministry of Public Health) 9. Ministry of Education 10. College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University <p>Group 3. Ethnic, Minorities and Migrant Youth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rak Thai Foundation 2. Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation 3. Migrant Assistance Programme (MAP) Foundation, Chiang Mai 4. The Mirror Foundation 5. Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University 6. Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University 7. Professor, Mae Fah Luang, Chiang Rai 8. Office of the Non-formal and Informal Education, Samut Songkhram 9. Office of the Non-formal and Informal Education, Tak Province <p>Group 4. Youth in conflict with the law</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baankanjana 2. Baanpranee 3. Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection, Ministry of Justice 4. Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please describe or explain NEET policies/measures/projects, especially those under your responsibilities (to be grouped into prevention measures, reintegration measures, and compensation measures.) • Do you face any difficulties working with NEET youth or implementing such policies/measures/projects? Please describe critical success factors/challenges in implementation. <p>(3) Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please suggest methods or interventions, as well as policies, to support youth NEET at all levels of society, including 1) the family, 2) the community, 3) the provincial level, and 4) the national level. What mechanisms/projects are you referring to? • In terms of policy recommendations, could you please suggest prevention measures, reintegration measures, and compensation measures?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
	<p>Group 5. Poor, Disadvantaged and Homeless Youth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundation for Child Developer 2. Four Regions Slum Network 3. Children and Youth Council (Bangkok) 4. The Community Organizations Development Institute 5. Human Settlement Foundation 6. Issarachon Foundation for Better Life of Children, Equitable Education Fund <p>Group 6. LGBTIQ+ Youth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. M Plus Foundation 2. Health and Opportunity Network 3. Rainbow Sky Association 4. Department of Women's Affair and Family Development 5. Faculty of Public Health, Thammasat University 6. Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University 7. College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University 	

Mapping youth service landscape template

	My Organization	Partner or Programme	Intersections & Overlap	Gaps	Action Steps	Funds (Period)	Funds (How funds can be used)	Funding gaps/ Matching Funds Required? Partner required?
Mission or Purpose								
Ages & Type of Youth Served								
Programmes, Services, Activities								
Area and Clients								
Related Programme Elements								
Others								

Source: Adapted from Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative (2003).

Appendix 2.3: Guidelines for key informant interviews: Policy makers, CSOs, NGOs and private sector representatives at provincial level

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Timing:

This interview may take approximately 60 minutes, depending on how much time you have available and how much discussion is generated by the questions.

Confidentiality:

- The information you provide will assist us in developing and strengthening policies and programmes to tackle youth NEET issues. You may withdraw at any time: now, during the interview, or even after the interview has concluded, in which case your transcript and tape recording will be destroyed. With your permission, we may wish to include quotations from the interview in the report. Permit us to proceed, or do you have any concerns you'd like to voice now?
- Please will you kindly sign the consent form and return it to us so that we can keep it as a record?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
<p>(1) Identify the characteristics of youth NEET population in the province, including transition pathways and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;</p> <p>(2) Review and analyze existing policies and measures/support services implemented in the province, identifying potential and gaps;</p> <p>(3) Suggest recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial officers (11) • Business representatives • Provincial Federation of Thai Industries and Thai Chamber of Commerce (11) • Provincial educators (11) • CSO/NGOs (if available) 	<p>(1) Identify the characteristics of youth NEET population in the province, including transition pathways and the COVID-19 pandemic's effects;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please describe the youth situation & youth NEET in your area. • What could be the underlying causes for youth to become NEET? • In your opinion, what are the most influential factors in becoming youth NEET? <p>(2) Review and analyze existing policies and measures/support services implemented in the province, identifying potential and gaps;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please describe plans/policies and measures related to youth NEET that are being implemented in your responsible area. • Do you face any obstacles/issues dealing with youth NEET in your area of responsibility? Please describe. • Please kindly mention any other relevant agencies that are working together to address the NEET issue in your area. <p>(3) Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please suggest methods or interventions, as well as policies, to encourage youth NEET at all levels of society, including 1) the family, 2) the community, 3) the provincial level, and 4) the national level. What mechanism/project are you referring to? • In terms of policy recommendations, could you please suggest prevention measures, reintegration measures, and compensation measures?

Appendix 2.4: Guidelines for focus groups: Community leaders

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group.

Timing:

This focus group may take approximately 120 minutes, depending on how much discussion is generated by the questions.

Confidentiality:

- The information you provide will assist us in developing and strengthening policies and programmes to tackle youth NEET issues. Your identity will not be revealed in the final report, and your transcript and recording will be kept separately from your name and contact information.
- By joining the focus group, you fully agree to give information. With your permission, we may wish to include quotations from the focus group in the report. Permit us to proceed, or do you have any concerns you'd like to voice now?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
<p>(1) Identify the characteristics of youth NEET population in the community, including transition pathways and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;</p> <p>(2) Review and analyze existing policies and measures/support services implemented in the community, identifying potential and gaps;</p> <p>(3) Suggest recommendations;</p> <p>(4) Suggest youth NEET in the community, using a snowball technique to probe the hidden population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 community leaders in Bangkok, one province in the North, one province in the South, one province in the Central region, one province in the East, and one province in the Northeast 	<p>(1) Identify the characteristics of youth NEET population in the province, including transition pathways and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please describe the youth situation & youth NEET in your area. • What could be the underlying causes for youth NEET? • In your opinion, what are the most influential factors facing youth in becoming NEET? <p>(2) Review and analyze existing policies and measures/support services implemented in the province, identifying potential and gaps, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth plans implemented under your mandates for the youth in your area and provincial plan and provincial strategies relevant to youth. • Do you face any obstacles/issues dealing with NEET or youth both within and outside your area of responsibility? Please describe. <p>(3) Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you rate opportunities for young people in your place of residence in terms of: a) finding a suitable job b) Getting a good education c) Having fun/leisure opportunities? (3 scales: good/average/bad) • Please suggest methods or interventions, as well as policies, to encourage youth NEET at all levels of society, including 1) the family, 2) the community, 3) the provincial level, and 4) the national level. What mechanism/project are you referring to? • In terms of policy recommendations, could you please suggest recommendations in relation to these 3 types of measure: prevention measures, reintegration measures, and compensation measures? <p>(4) Indicate youth NEET in the community, using a snowball technique to probe the hidden population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please kindly introduce other relevant agencies that are working together to accomplish NEET issue in your area.

Appendix 2.5: Guidelines for in-depth interviews: Youth NEETs (aged 18–24 years)

Rationale for the age range: This study's sample is youth NEET aged 18 to 24 years. Youth aged 18 and older are more likely to be able to describe their life transitions, the factors that contributed to their decision to be a youth NEET, and to make recommendations.

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Timing:

This interview may take approximately 60 minutes, depending on how much time you have available and how much discussion is generated by the questions.

Confidentiality:

- The information you provide will assist us in developing and strengthening policies and programmes to tackle youth NEET issues. You may withdraw at any time: now, during the interview, or even after the interview has concluded, in which case your transcript and tape recording will be destroyed. With your permission, we may wish to include quotations from the interview in the report. Permit us to proceed, or do you have any concerns you'd like to voice now?
- Please will you kindly sign the consent form and return it to us so that we can keep it as a record?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
<p>(1) Identify the youth's characteristic, including transition pathways and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;</p> <p>(2) Identify problems and challenges causing youth to become NEET;</p> <p>(3) Suggest recommendations for youth to return to employment, education, or training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 NEETs in each province 	<p>Ice breaking question: Please describe your life at the moment – (less than 5 mins)</p> <p>(1) Identify youth's characteristics, including transition pathways and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you not been in education, employment or training? • What is your source of income right now? Is your income sufficient to satisfy your basic needs? • Do you have a person (children, people with special needs, etc.) to take care of? <p>(2) Identify problems, and challenges causing youth to become NEET;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been out of school, unemployed, not had a paid job? Why? Did you have a chance to consult someone to address this issue? • When you face a challenge/problem, who do you talk to? • Why have you not been able to get/complete education? What prevented you from getting education/training? • What has prevented you from continuing to learn and getting the education you wanted? • Why don't you want to study or who discourages you from learning? • Why have you not been able to find a job? What prevents you from getting a job? • What are your skills and competences? Do you have a diploma/certificate for specific qualifications? • What occupation would you like to pursue, if any? Why? • Do you have experience in approaching/using services of the state or municipal institutions (social services, police, crisis centres, etc.)? If yes, how was your experience? • Where do you see yourself in 3, 5 or 10 years from now? Do you have any life goals or goals relating to education and occupation/employment? • Are you looking for education, employment, training opportunities? If yes, what are the obstacles to get into education, employment or training? If no, why?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points														
		<p>(3) Recommendations for youth NEET to return to employment, education, or training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever used/visited youth services? (Use the below template to map youth services) • How was your experience? • Do you require assistance, projects, or information from the public sector or any other stakeholders in order to return to education, employment, or training? • Prevention: In your opinion, what can help you to avoid becoming NEET? • Reintegration: In your opinion, what can help you to return to education, employment, or training (case-by-case assessment)? If nothing, then why? • Compensation: In your opinion, what can help support/compensate and facilitate you to exit the NEET status? <p>Some examples of measures</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="722 819 1420 1279"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="722 819 1023 853">Prevention measures</th> <th data-bbox="1023 819 1102 1133" rowspan="2">Youth NEETs</th> <th data-bbox="1102 819 1420 853">Reintegration measures</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="722 853 1023 1133"> <p><i>How to prevent youth becoming NEET</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and track hard-to-reach youth and those at risk. 2. Use street counsellors to engage vulnerable youth and provide career guidance from an early age. 3. Provide relevant, quality education and teaching methods with flexible education pathways. 4. Promote vocational education and apprenticeships. </td> <td data-bbox="1102 853 1420 1133"> <p><i>How to help youth return to education, employment or training</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local non-profits to reach disengaged youth. 2. Promote effective public employment services/hubs designed for different youth NEET groups. 3. Map available services to help youth NEETs to reintegrate with study, work or training. </td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3" data-bbox="722 1155 1420 1189">Compensation measures</th> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" data-bbox="722 1189 1420 1223"> <p><i>How to help compensate and facilitate youth to change their NEET status</i></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" data-bbox="722 1223 1420 1279"> <p>Use street counsellors and all relevant stakeholders to support and engage vulnerable youth and compensate by case.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: European Commission (2018a) and ILO (2015).</p>	Prevention measures	Youth NEETs	Reintegration measures	<p><i>How to prevent youth becoming NEET</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and track hard-to-reach youth and those at risk. 2. Use street counsellors to engage vulnerable youth and provide career guidance from an early age. 3. Provide relevant, quality education and teaching methods with flexible education pathways. 4. Promote vocational education and apprenticeships. 	<p><i>How to help youth return to education, employment or training</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local non-profits to reach disengaged youth. 2. Promote effective public employment services/hubs designed for different youth NEET groups. 3. Map available services to help youth NEETs to reintegrate with study, work or training. 	Compensation measures			<p><i>How to help compensate and facilitate youth to change their NEET status</i></p>			<p>Use street counsellors and all relevant stakeholders to support and engage vulnerable youth and compensate by case.</p>		
Prevention measures	Youth NEETs	Reintegration measures														
<p><i>How to prevent youth becoming NEET</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and track hard-to-reach youth and those at risk. 2. Use street counsellors to engage vulnerable youth and provide career guidance from an early age. 3. Provide relevant, quality education and teaching methods with flexible education pathways. 4. Promote vocational education and apprenticeships. 		<p><i>How to help youth return to education, employment or training</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local non-profits to reach disengaged youth. 2. Promote effective public employment services/hubs designed for different youth NEET groups. 3. Map available services to help youth NEETs to reintegrate with study, work or training. 														
Compensation measures																
<p><i>How to help compensate and facilitate youth to change their NEET status</i></p>																
<p>Use street counsellors and all relevant stakeholders to support and engage vulnerable youth and compensate by case.</p>																

Mapping of Available Youth Services (Youth's perspective)

Have you ever used/ visited any youth services? (The interviewee picks one and answers)

- Never used/ visited
- Yes, I used the following services
- No, I have never used any youth service, but I know some, as follows:

One table for each service	Category	Details
Types of Services	<p>Educational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Educational services <input type="checkbox"/> General education/training <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative education <input type="checkbox"/> Dropout prevention <input type="checkbox"/> Adult basic education/GED <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring/academic support <input type="checkbox"/> Test preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Study skills <input type="checkbox"/> English/ESL support <input type="checkbox"/> Basic literacy support <input type="checkbox"/> Basic math support <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostics/learning disabilities <p>Career & College Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Career research and planning <input type="checkbox"/> College research and planning <input type="checkbox"/> Interest and skills assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Career fairs/days <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadowing; job rotation <input type="checkbox"/> College exploration exploration & readiness activities <input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid/scholarships <p>Counselling & Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling – general <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling - substance abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling - education/career <input type="checkbox"/> Health/medical <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant and parenting youth support <p>Work-Based Learning & Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Paid internships <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid internships <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative learning (co-ops) <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeships <input type="checkbox"/> Year-round employment <input type="checkbox"/> Summer employment <input type="checkbox"/> Work-study <input type="checkbox"/> Other work experience <p>Other Youth Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development <input type="checkbox"/> Community service/youth activism <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural activities <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational/sports activities <input type="checkbox"/> Civic/political activities <p>Other Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing and shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation 	When? Why? Easily accessible?
How did you access services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> By referral from another agency or programme <input type="checkbox"/> Open access – free services <input type="checkbox"/> Open access – cost for services <input type="checkbox"/> Youth must apply/interview <input type="checkbox"/> Varies by service or programme 	When? Why? Easily accessible?
What is the type of organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community-based organization/civic <input type="checkbox"/> Govern-ment agency <input type="checkbox"/> Education/training <input type="checkbox"/> Business, employer, or employer group <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce development/employment <input type="checkbox"/> Church or faith-based group, or temples <input type="checkbox"/> Other 	When? Why? Easily accessible?
Who are they providing services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood <input type="checkbox"/> Grades PK-5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 6-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 9-12 <input type="checkbox"/> Young adults, ages 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> College <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-school youth/dropouts <input type="checkbox"/> Adult services available <input type="checkbox"/> Youth with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless youth <input type="checkbox"/> Foster youth; youth exiting foster care <input type="checkbox"/> Migrant youth <input type="checkbox"/> Non-native English speakers <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile offenders <input type="checkbox"/> Income eligible youth only (low income) 	When? Why? Easily accessible?

Appendix 2.6: Guidelines for in-depth interviews: Parents/guardians of youth NEET

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Timing:

This interview may take approximately 60 minutes, depending on how much time you have available and how much discussion is generated by the questions.

Confidentiality:

- The information you provide will assist us in developing and strengthening policies and programmes to tackle youth NEET issues. You may withdraw at any time: now, during the interview, or even after the interview has concluded, in which case your transcript and tape recording will be destroyed. With your permission, we may wish to include quotations from the interview in the report. Permit us to proceed, or do you have any concerns you'd like to voice now?
- Please will you kindly sign the consent form and return it to us so that we can keep it as a record?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points
<p>(1) Identify the characteristics and background of their children, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;</p> <p>(2) Identify the problems/incidents that contributed to their children becoming youth NEET; and</p> <p>(3) Suggest recommendations to encourage their children to return to work, education, or training.</p>	<p>Parents of NEETs in each region: Bangkok, one province in Northern region, one province in Southern region, one province in Central region, one province in Eastern region, and one province in Northeastern region</p>	<p>(1) Identify the characteristics and background of their children, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your occupation? Work hours? How old are you? Married status? • How many children do you have and how old are they? Who looks after them? • What are the main sources of income for you / your family/ your children? • Is your income sufficient to satisfy your basic needs? (3 scales: Enough/almost enough/not enough) • Do you stay together or is someone in your family working in another city/ province/country? • Are you taking care of any person with specific needs? Please specify whom. <p>(2) Identify the problems/causes that contributed to their children becoming NEET;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What caused your child to become excluded from education, employment or training? • What are your expectations for your children now? • What prevents your children from accessing education, employment or training? <p>(3) Recommendations to encourage their children to return to work, education, or training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you rate opportunities for young people in your community to: a) Find a suitable job; b) Get a good education; c) Have fun /leisure opportunities? (3 scales: good/average/bad) • Do you know what opportunities are available to your child in terms of training and finding a job? • Do you have experience in accessing services provided by the state or municipal institutions (e.g., social services, police, social services, etc.)? If yes, how was your experience? • What sort of help and support would you like to have for your children to access education, employment or training? Have you ever used/visited any youth services? (Use the following template to map youth services)* • Prevention: In your opinion, what can help your child from becoming NEET? • Reintegration: In your opinion, what can help your child to return to education, employment, or training (case-by-case assessment)? If nothing, then why? • Compensation: In your opinion, what can help support/compensate your child to facilitate his/her exit from the NEET status?

Key objective	Target	Key discussion points												
		<p>Some examples of measures</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">Prevention measures</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">Reintegration measures</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"><i>How to prevent youth becoming NEET</i></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"><i>How to help youth return to education, employment or training</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and track hard-to-reach youth and those at risk. 2. Use street counsellors to engage vulnerable youth and provide career guidance from an early age. 3. Provide relevant, quality education and teaching methods with flexible education pathways. 4. Promote vocational education and apprenticeships. </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Youth NEETs</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">Compensation measures</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black;"><i>How to help compensate and facilitate youth to change their NEET status</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black;">Use street counsellors and all relevant stakeholders to support and engage vulnerable youth and compensate by case.</td> </tr> </table> <p>Source: European Commission (2018a) and ILO (2015).</p>	Prevention measures	Reintegration measures	<i>How to prevent youth becoming NEET</i>	<i>How to help youth return to education, employment or training</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and track hard-to-reach youth and those at risk. 2. Use street counsellors to engage vulnerable youth and provide career guidance from an early age. 3. Provide relevant, quality education and teaching methods with flexible education pathways. 4. Promote vocational education and apprenticeships. 	Youth NEETs	Compensation measures		<i>How to help compensate and facilitate youth to change their NEET status</i>		Use street counsellors and all relevant stakeholders to support and engage vulnerable youth and compensate by case.	
Prevention measures	Reintegration measures													
<i>How to prevent youth becoming NEET</i>	<i>How to help youth return to education, employment or training</i>													
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and track hard-to-reach youth and those at risk. 2. Use street counsellors to engage vulnerable youth and provide career guidance from an early age. 3. Provide relevant, quality education and teaching methods with flexible education pathways. 4. Promote vocational education and apprenticeships. 	Youth NEETs													
Compensation measures														
<i>How to help compensate and facilitate youth to change their NEET status</i>														
Use street counsellors and all relevant stakeholders to support and engage vulnerable youth and compensate by case.														

Mapping of Available Youth Services (Parents/Guardians’ perspective)

Have you ever used/ visited the following services for your child? (The interviewee picks one)

- Never used/ visited
- Yes, I used the following services for my child
- No, I have never used any youth services for my child, but I used to/ know some, as follows:

One table for each service	Category	Details
Types of Services	<p>Educational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Educational services <input type="checkbox"/> General education/training <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative education <input type="checkbox"/> Dropout prevention <input type="checkbox"/> Adult basic education/GED <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring/academic support <input type="checkbox"/> Test preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Study skills <input type="checkbox"/> English/ESL support <input type="checkbox"/> Basic literacy support <input type="checkbox"/> Basic math support <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostics/learning disabilities <p>Career & College Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Career research and planning <input type="checkbox"/> College research and planning <input type="checkbox"/> Interest and skills assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Career fairs/days <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadowing; job rotation <input type="checkbox"/> College exploration & readiness activities <input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid/scholarships <p>Counselling & Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling - general <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling - substance abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling - education/career <input type="checkbox"/> Health/medical <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant and par-enting youth support <p>Work-Based Learning & Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Paid internships <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid internships <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative learning (co-ops) <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeships <input type="checkbox"/> Year-round employment <input type="checkbox"/> Summer employment <input type="checkbox"/> Work-study <input type="checkbox"/> Other work experience 	When? Why? Easily accessible?

One table for each service	Category	Details
	<p>Other Youth Opportunities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development <input type="checkbox"/> Community service/youth activism <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recreational/sports activities <input type="checkbox"/> Civic/political activities</p> <p>Other Support</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Housing and shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</p>	
How did you access services?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> By referral from another agency or programme <input type="checkbox"/> Open access – free services</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Open access – cost for services <input type="checkbox"/> Youth must apply/interview</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Varies by service or programme</p>	When? Why? Easily accessible?
What is the type of organization?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Community-based organization/civic <input type="checkbox"/> Government agency <input type="checkbox"/> Education/training</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Business, employer, or employer group <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce development/employment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Church or faith-based group, or temples <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	When? Why? Easily accessible?
Who are they providing services?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood <input type="checkbox"/> Grades PK-5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 6-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 9-12 <input type="checkbox"/> Young adults, ages 18-24</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> College <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-school youth/dropouts <input type="checkbox"/> Adult services available <input type="checkbox"/> Youth with disabilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Homeless youth <input type="checkbox"/> Foster youth; youth exiting foster care <input type="checkbox"/> Migrant youth</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-native English speakers <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile offenders <input type="checkbox"/> Income eligible youth only (low income)</p>	When? Why? Easily accessible?

Source: Adapted from Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative (2003).

Appendix 3: Ethical principles

This study was conducted in accordance with UNICEF's procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation and data collection (UNICEF, 2021). Below are the ethical protocols and principles that govern the research, evaluation, data collection and analysis in this study.

Ethics Review Board approval

The ethical approval to conduct the data collection and analysis for this study has been reviewed by Chulalongkorn Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subject. As per the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Principles, the following five principles guided the creation of ethical evidence: respect, beneficence, justice, integrity and accountability (UNICEF, 2021, p. 2).

Informed consent

Primary research was conducted with the informed consent of key informants, parents/guardians, and youth, as specified in the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis (UNICEF, 2021). The interviewers ensured that youth as well as all key informants understood the research project's nature, purpose, and outcomes in order to provide informed consent (with the acknowledgement that this could be withdrawn at any time). Without the consent of the youth and the informed consent of their parent or guardian, no child or adolescent under the age of 18 years was interviewed. Stakeholders were consulted to ensure that the timing of interviews and focus group discussions was convenient for parents/guardians and youth, without interfering with their work, schooling, or other critical routine activities. Additionally, respondents were questioned regarding their satisfaction with the length of the interview and the location of the interview. They were informed that they have the right to withdraw without penalty at any time during the interview, and that they may even choose to withdraw – and have their transcript destroyed – following the conclusion of the interview.

Child safeguarding

All research participants, as well as the parents/guardians of participating youth, were provided with contact information for the research team and the ethics committee, which facilitates the process of making a complaint. Every precaution was taken to ensure that participants did not suffer harm, stigma, further marginalization, or discrimination as a result of their participation in the research. This applied to all aspects of the research process, from identifying and recruiting study participants to selecting venues and facilitating focus group discussions. Researchers conducted the data collection process in a respectful and acceptable manner, avoiding language or tone of voice that stigmatizes, marginalizes, or patronizes. The final report and advocacy materials portray all research participants as persons with inherent human dignity, regardless of their socioeconomic status or personal circumstances.

Stakeholder and research participation

Every effort was made to ensure that respondents were able to express themselves in their preferred environment. Open-ended questions were used in place of standardized questionnaires to allow respondents to direct the interview process. Interviews/focus groups were 'guided conversations' in which participants had the opportunity to express themselves while contributing critical information. The importance of mutual respect and meaningful engagement were emphasized. Every effort was made not to inflate respondents' expectations. No participant was stigmatized, marginalized, or subjected to discrimination during or after their participation in the research. This also included subject selection and recruitment, as well as the facilitation and location of focus group discussions. The "do no harm" philosophy was reflected in all interactions with study participants, government officials, service providers, and other members of the community.

Data handling

Without the full informed and express permission of the research participants, no name or identifying feature of the respondents was included in the report, nor shared with the authorities or any other person or organization. Numerous safeguarding measures were implemented to ensure participants' privacy. The research teams collecting data were trained to store audio and video recordings in password-protected files. Additionally, frequent password changes, careful consideration of access rights, and the use of anti-virus, firewall, and intrusion detection software to prevent unauthorized access by external devices and entities were used as additional safeguards for electronic data. No personally identifiable information, such as names or contact information, were saved with the transcripts. The final research outputs include findings and recommendations that remain anonymous in order to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Ethical approval number

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from "Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Participants, Chulalongkorn University" (Approval number 650036).

Appendix 4: Profile of the interviewees and focus group participants

Group 1: Policy makers at the national level (In-depth interviews)

NO.	Organization	Position
1	Ministry of Education (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Director of Regional Educational Administration Promotion and Development Division
2	Ministry of Education (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Head of Regional Disaster Management and Educational Crisis Group
3	Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Deputy Permanent Secretary
4	Ministry of Interior (Department of Local Administration)	Director of Local Education Development Division
5	Ministry of Interior (Department of Local Administration)	Director of Non-formal Education, Art and Culture, and Indigenous Knowledge Promotion Sub-division
6	Ministry of Labour (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Policy and Strategy Expert
7	Ministry of Labour (Department of Skill Development)	Foreign Relations Officer, Practitioner Level
8	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Technical Advisor on Social Development (Plan and Policy Analyst, Advisory Level)
9	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Social Worker, Senior Professional Level
10	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Department of Children and Youth)	Youth Specialist
11	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council	Social Development Investment Specialist
12	Equitable Education Fund	Director Manager, Area-Based Education for Educational Equity Project, Phitsanulok province
13	Friends International Thailand	Country Programme Director
14	Thai Health Promotion Foundation	Director (6th Department)
15	Youth in charge	Director
16	Community Children Foundation	Regional Programme Officer 2 Regional Programme Officer 5

Group 2: Policy makers at the provincial level (In-depth interviews)

NO.	Organization/ Region	Position
Metropolitan, Bangkok		
1	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (Social Development Office)	Deputy Director, Social Development Department
2	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (Department of Education)	Director, Bureau of Education
3	Thai Chamber of Commerce	Committee Member, Social Development and Corporate Social Responsibility Committee
Eastern region: Chonburi province		
4	Provincial Labour Office	Labour Specialist, Professional Level
5	Provincial Education Office	Director of Education Development Group
6	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Provincial Social Development and Human Security Officer
7	Chonburi Federation of Thai Industries	Vice Chairman, Chonburi Federation of Thai Industries
8	Chonburi Chamber of Commerce	Vice Chairman, Chonburi Chamber of Commerce (Education Division), and Assistant Vice Chairman, Chonburi Chamber of Commerce
9	Chonburi Juvenile and Family Court	Associate Judge, Chonburi Juvenile and Family Court
Eastern region: Sa Kaeo province		
10	Office of Provincial Labour	Provincial Labour Officer
11	Provincial Education Officer	Educational Supervisor to the Provincial Education Office
12	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Provincial Development and Human Security Officer
13	Sa Kaeo Chamber of Commerce	Deputy Secretary – General, Sa Kaeo Chamber of Commerce
14	Community Children Foundation (CCF) Under the Royal Patronage of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn	Regional Programme Officer
Central region, Samut Prakan province		
15	Office of Provincial Labour	Provincial Labour Officer
16	Provincial Education Officer	Deputy Provincial Education Officer
17	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Provincial Development and Human Security Officer
18	Samut Prakan Federation of Thai Industries	Consultant, Samut Prakan Federation of Thai Industries and Lecturer, Samut Prakan Technical College
19	Samut Prakan Chamber of Commerce	Secretary to the Vice Chairman, Samut Prakan Chamber of Commerce
Central region, Chai Nat province		
20	Office of Provincial Labour	Labour Specialist, Professional Level

NO.	Organization/ Region	Position
21	Provincial Education Office	Education Officer and Educational Supervisor Specialist, Senior Professional Level
22	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Provincial Development and Human Security Officer
Northern region, Chiang Mai province		
23	Provincial Education Officer	Education Specialist, Senior Professional Level
24	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Provincial Social Development and Human Security
25	Chiang Mai Federation of Thai Industries	Vice Chairman, Chiang Mai Federation of Thai Industries
26	Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce	Vice Chairman, Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce
27	Chiang Mai Creative for Development Centre	Director
Northern region, Phetchabun province		
28	Office of Provincial Labour	Provincial Labour Officer
29	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Social Worker, Professional Level; and Social Development Worker, Professional Level
30	Phetchabun Federation of Thai Industries	Chairman, Phetchabun Federation of Thai Industries
31	Phetchabun Chamber of Commerce	Vice Chairman, Phetchabun Chamber of Commerce
Northeastern region, Nakhon Ratchasima province		
32	Office of Provincial Labour	Provincial Labour Officer
33	Provincial Education Officer	Provincial Education Officer
34	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Provincial Development and Human Security Officer
35	Nakhon Ratchasima Federation of Thai Industries	Chairman, Nakhon Ratchasima Federation of Thai Industries
36	Nakhon Ratchasima Chamber of Commerce	Chairman, Nakhon Ratchasima Chamber of Commerce
Northeastern region, Nong Bua Lamphu province		
37	Provincial Labour Office	Provincial Labour Officer
38	Provincial Education Officer	Provincial Education Officer
39	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Social Development and Human Security Officer
40	Nong Bua Lamphu Federation of Thai Industries	Chairman, Nong Bua Lamphu Federation of Thai Industries
41	Nong Bua Lamphu Chamber of Commerce	Chairman, Nong Bua Lamphu Chamber of Commerce
42	Community Children Foundation (CCF) Under the Royal Patronage of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn	Regional Programme Officer

NO.	Organization/ Region	Position
Southern region, Nakhon Si Thammarat province		
43	Office of Provincial Labour	Province Labour Officer
44	Provincial Education Officer	Provincial Education Officer
45	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Social Worker, Practitioner Level
46	Nakhon Si Thammarat Federation of Thai Industries	Chairman, Nakhon Si Thammarat Federation of Thai Industries
47	Nakhon Si Thammarat Chamber of Commerce	Chairman, Nakhon Si Thammarat Chamber of Commerce
48	Provincial Children and Youth Council	Chairman
Southern region, Narathiwat province		
49	Office of Provincial Labour	Provincial Labour Officer
50	Provincial Education Officer	Provincial Education Officer
51	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Social Worker, Practitioner Level
52	Narathiwat Federation of Thai Industries	Chairman, Narathiwat Federation of Thai Industries
53	Narathiwat Chamber of Commerce	Chairman, Narathiwat Chamber of Commerce
Southern region, Pattani province		
54	Office of Provincial Labour	Provincial Labour Officer
55	Provincial Education Officer	Provincial Education Officer
56	Office of Social Development and Human Security	Social Development Officer, Senior Professional Level

Group 3: Community Leader (Focus groups)

NO.	Province/ Region/ Subdistrict	Position
Metropolitan, Bangkok		
1	Phra Khanong Subdistrict	Community Leader, Premruethai Community, Phra Khanong Subdistrict
2	Phra Khanong Subdistrict	Community Leader, Suan Sai Community, Phra Khanong Subdistrict
3	Phra Khanong Subdistrict	Community Leader, Phumchit Community, Phra Khanong Subdistrict
4	Phra Khanong Subdistrict	Community Leader, Koh Klang Community, Phra Khanong Subdistrict
5	Klong Toei Subdistrict	Community Leader, Suan Aoi Community, Klong Toei Subdistrict
6	Klong Toei Subdistrict	Representative of Suan Aoi Community, Klong Toei Subdistrict

NO.	Province/ Region/ Subdistrict	Position
Eastern region: Chonburi province		
7	Na Roek Subdistrict	Assistant Village Head, Moo 2 Community, Na Roek Subdistrict
8	Na Roek Subdistrict	Subdistrict Administrative Organization Officer, Na Roek Subdistrict
9	Ban Suan Subdistrict	Community Leader, Noen Yaiwat Community, Ban Suan Subdistrict
10	Ban Suan Subdistrict	Community Leader, Khao Mayura Community, Ban Suan Subdistrict
11	Municipality Subdistrict	Teachers for underprivileged children, Municipality Subdistrict
Eastern region: Sa Kaeo province		
12	Mueang Town Municipality	Provincial Red Cross Committee Member, Provincial Red Cross Committee
13	Mueang Town Municipality	Director, Provincial Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education
14	Mueang Town Municipality	Chairman, Provincial Village Health Volunteer Club
15	Mueang Town Municipality	Deputy Provincial Education Officer, Provincial Education Office
16	Khlong Hin Pun Subdistrict	Chief Administrator of the Subdistrict Administrative Organizations, Khlong Hin Pun Subdistrict
17	Khok Sung Subdistrict	School principal, Tab Praya Pittaya School, Khok Sung Subdistrict
Central region, Samut Prakan province		
18	Samrong Subdistrict	Assistant to Community Development Officer, Samrong Administrative Subdistrict
19	Nai Khlong Bang Pla Kot Subdistrict	Assistant to Community Development Officer, Nai Khlong Bang Pla Kot Administrative Subdistrict
20	Pu Chao Saming Phrai Subdistrict	Social Worker, Practitioner Level, Pu Chao Saming Phrai Subdistrict Administrative Organization
21	Bang Pla Subdistrict	Assistant to Community Development, Bang Pla Subdistrict Administrative Organization
Central region, Chai Nat province		
22	Chai Nat Town Municipality	Recreation Officer, Municipality Administrative Organization
23	Pho Phithak Subdistrict	Community Development, Professional Level, Pho Phithak Subdistrict Administrative Organization
24	Wat Khok Subdistrict	Community Development, Professional Level, Wat Khok Subdistrict Administrative Organization
25	Nong Bua Subdistrict	Community Development, Professional Level, Nong Bua Subdistrict Administrative Organization

NO.	Province/ Region/ Subdistrict	Position
Northern region, Chiang Mai province		
26	Don Kaeo Subdistrict	Social Worker, Professional Level, Don Kaeo Subdistrict Administrative Organization
27	Don Kaeo Subdistrict	Child Caregiver, Don Kaeo Subdistrict Administrative Organization
28	Don Kaeo Subdistrict	Child Protection Committee & Chairperson of the Social Development and Human Security Volunteer, Don Kaeo Subdistrict Administrative Organization
29	Chang Phueak Subdistrict	Chairperson of the Social Development and Human Security Volunteer, Chang Phueak Subdistrict Administrative Organization
30	Luang Nuea Subdistrict	Director of Social Welfare Division, Luang Nuea Subdistrict Administrative Organization
31	Luang Nuea Subdistrict	Village Head, Ban San Sai Community, Luang Nuea Subdistrict Administrative Organization
Northern region, Phetchabun province		
32	Wang Pong Subdistrict	Community Leader, Wang Pong Subdistrict Administrative Organization
33	Wang Pong Subdistrict	Community Leader, Wang Pong Subdistrict Administrative Organization
34	Chon Daen Subdistrict	Community Leader, Chon Daen Subdistrict Administrative Organization
35	Chon Daen Subdistrict	Community Leader, Chon Daen Subdistrict Administrative Organization
Northeast region, Nakhon Ratchasima province		
36	Ban Mai Subdistrict	Village Head, Ban Mai Subdistrict
37	Ban Mai Subdistrict	Chairperson of the Village Health Volunteer, Ban Mai Subdistrict
38	Ban Mai Subdistrict	Representative Community Member, Ban Mai Subdistrict
39	Ban Mai Subdistrict	Representative Community Member, Ban Mai Subdistrict
40	Pak Thong Chai Subdistrict	Village Head, Pak Thong Chai Subdistrict
41	Pak Thong Chai Subdistrict	Chairperson of the Village Health Volunteer, Pak Thong Chai Subdistrict
Northeastern region, Nong Bua Lamphu province		
42	Na Mafueang Subdistrict	Director of the Welfare and Social Affairs Division, Na Mafueang Subdistrict Administrative Organization
43	Na Mafueang Subdistrict	Community Leader, Na Mafueang Subdistrict

NO.	Province/ Region/ Subdistrict	Position
Southern region, Nakhon Si Thammarat province		
44	Thai Buri Subdistrict	Village Head, Thai Buri Subdistrict
45	Thai Buri Subdistrict	Chief of the Office of the Subdistrict Administrative Organizations, Thai Buri Subdistrict
46	Thai Buri Subdistrict	Director of Education, Religion and Culture Division, Thai Buri Subdistrict
47	Pak Phanang Town Municipality	Community Leader, Chai Talay Community, Pak Phanang Town Municipality
48	Pak Phanang Town Municipality	Community Leader, Pak Phanang Town Municipality
49	Pak Phanang Town Municipality	Teacher Representative, Pak Phanang Town Municipality
Southern region, Narathiwat province		
50	Narathiwat Town Municipality	Representative of Civil Society Organizations based in Narathiwat Town Municipality
51	Narathiwat Town Municipality	Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychologist & Representative of Civil Society Organizations
52	Narathiwat Town Municipality	Representative of Youth Network Tadika
53	Narathiwat Town Municipality	Representative of Nusantara Orphanage Foundation
54	Narathiwat Town Municipality	Representative of Southern Border Civil Society Council Network
55	Khok Khian Subdistrict	Lecturer of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Princess of Naradhiwas University & Representative of Civil Society Organizations
Southern region, Pattani province		
56	Tanyong Lulo Subdistrict	Community Leader, Tanyong Lulo Subdistrict
57	Pitu Mudi Subdistrict	Community Leader, Pitu Mudi Subdistrict
58	Anoru Subdistrict	Community Leader, Anoru Subdistrict
59	Anoru Subdistrict	Representative of Community Leader, Anoru Subdistrict

Group 4: Stakeholder representatives working with different groups of youth NEET (Focus groups)

NO.	Organization	Position
Youth with Disability		
1	Social Innovation Foundation	President
2	Social Innovation Foundation	Project Advisor
3	Redemptorist Foundation for PWDs	Director and Deputy Secretary-General of the Foundation Redeemer for the Development of Persons with Disabilities
4	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities	Social Development Worker
5	Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Office 9)	Programme Management Specialist
6	Office of the Basic Education Commission Ministry of Education	Senior Academic officer
7	Thammasat University (Faculty of Social Administration)	Lecturer of Faculty of Social Administration
Teen pregnancy		
8	Women's Health Advocacy Foundation	Manager
9	Bureau of Reproductive Health Department of Health	Public Health Technical Officer (Senior Professional Level)
10	Ministry of Education (Office of the Permanent Secretary)	Regional Educational Administration Promotion and Development Division officer (Plan and Policy analyst, Practitioner Level)
11	Holt Sahathai Foundation	Social Worker
12	Holt Sahathai Foundation, Southern Office	Social Worker
13	Friends International Thailand	Saving Lives Project Manager
14	Friends International Thailand	Future Project Manager
15	Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thamma-sat University	Lecturer
Ethnics, minorities and migrant youth		
16	RaksThai Foundation	Programme Co-Ordinator
17	RaksThai Foundation	Programme Officer
18	RaksThai Foundation	Field Assistant
19	RaksThai Foundation	Field Officer
20	Labour Protection Network (LPN)	Executive Director
21	Labour Protection Network (LPN)	Manager
22	MAP Foundation	Education Programme Staff
23	Ethnic People Development Foundation (EPDF), Mea Ai District	Director of the Foundation
24	ThaiHealth Promotion Foundation (Office 9)	Project Management Analyst

NO.	Organization	Position
25	Samut Sakhon Office of the Non-Formal and In-formal Education	Analyst and Project Management
26	Tak Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education	Educator
27	Asian Research Centre for Migration, Chulalongkorn University	Researcher
Youth in Conflict with the Law		
29	Childline Thailand	Hub Manager
30	Chollada Foundation	Director
31	Stop Drink Network	Director
32	Ban Kanjanapisek, training centre for children and youth	Manager
33	Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Office 9)	Programme Management Specialist
34	Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection, Ministry of Justice	Expert Plan Administrator
35	Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour Employment Promotion Division	Labour Specialist, Senior Professional Level
36	Life Education Thailand	Director
Poor, Disadvantaged and Homeless Youth		
37	Children and Youth Council of Thailand	Chairman of Children and Youth Council of Bangkok
38	Community Organization Development Institute (POCH)	Senior Architect
39	Childline Thailand	Hub Manager
40	Klong Toey Dee Jang Foundation	Project Manager
41	Urban Light Foundation (Chiang Mai)	Director of Programmes
42	Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Office 9)	Project Management Analyst
LGBTIQ+ Youth		
43	Health and Opportunity Network (HON)	Director
44	Foundation for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Rights and Justice (For-SOGI)	Trainee
45	Foundation for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Rights and Justice (For-SOGI)	Trainee
46	Department of Women's Affairs and Family Institute, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	Lawyer
47	Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Office 9)	Senior Project Management
48	Faculty of Public Health, Thammasat University	Deputy for Student Affairs and Corporate Communication

Group 5 and 6: Guardians/Parents and Youth (In-depth interviews)

NO.	Region/Province/ Urban-Rural	Guardian/ parent Sex	Youth Sex
Metropolitan area			
1	Urban	Female	Female
2	Urban	Male	Male
3	Urban	Male	Female
4	Urban	Female	Female
5	Urban	Male	Female
6	Urban	Female	Male
7	Urban	Female	Female
8	Urban	Male	Male
9	Urban	Female	Female
10	Urban	Female	Female
Eastern region: Chonburi province			
1	Rural	Female	Male
2	Rural	Male	Male
3	Rural	Female	Male
4	Rural	Female	Male
5	Rural	Female	Female
6	Urban	Female	Male
7	Urban	Male	Male
8	Urban	Female	Female
9	Urban	Female	Male
10	Urban	Male	Female
Eastern region: Sa Kaeo province			
1	Rural	Male	Male
2	Rural	Female	Male
3	Rural	Female	Male
4	Rural	Female	Male
5	Rural	Female	Female
6	Urban	Female	Male
7	Urban	Female	Male
8	Urban	Female	Female
9	Urban	Female	Male
10	Urban	Male	Female

NO.	Region/Province/ Urban-Rural	Guardian/ parent Sex	Youth Sex
Central region: Samut Prakan province			
1	Rural	Female	Female
2	Rural	Female	Female
3	Rural	Female	Male
4	Rural	Female	Male
5	Urban	Female	Female
6	Rural	Female	Female
7	Rural	Female	Female
8	Urban	Female	Female
9	Urban	Female	Female
10	Urban	Female	Male
Central region: Chai Nat province			
1	Urban	Female	Male
2	Urban	Female	Female
3	Urban	Female	Male
4	Urban	Female	Male
5	Rural	Female	Female
6	Rural	Male	Female
7	Rural	Female	Male
8	Rural	Female	Male
9	Rural	Female	Female
10	Urban	Female	Female
Northern region, Chiang Mai province			
1	Rural	Female	Female
2	Urban	Female	Female
3	Urban	Female	Female
4	Rural	Female	Male
5	Urban	Female	Male
6	Rural	Female	Female
7	Rural	Female	Female
8	Urban	Female	Female
9	Urban	Female	Female
10	Rural	Female	Female

NO.	Region/Province/ Urban-Rural	Guardian/ parent Sex	Youth Sex
Northern region, Phetchabun province			
1	Rural	Female	Male
2	Urban	Female	Male
3	Urban	Female	Female
4	Urban	Female	Female
5	Rural	Female	Female
6	Urban	Male	Female
7	Rural	Female	Female
8	Urban	Male	Female
9	Urban	Female	Female
10	Rural	Female	Male
Northeastern region, Nakhon Ratchasima province			
1	Rural	Female	Male
2	Rural	Male	Male
3	Urban	Male	Male
4	Rural	Female	Male
5	Urban	Female	Male
6	Rural	Female	Male
7	Rural	Female	Female
8	Urban	Female	Female
9	Urban	Female	Male
10	Urban	Female	Female
Northeastern region, Nong Bua Lam Phu province			
1	Rural	Female	Female
2	Urban	Male	Male
3	Urban	Female	Female
4	Rural	Female	Male
5	Rural	Female	Female
6	Urban	Female	Male
7	Urban	Female	Female
8	Rural	Female	Male
9	Urban	Female	Female
10	Rural	Female	Female

NO.	Region/Province/ Urban-Rural	Guardian/ parent Sex	Youth Sex
Southern region, Narathiwat province			
1	Rural	Female	Male
2	Urban	Female	Male
3	Urban	Female	Female
4	Rural	Male	Male
5	Urban	Female	Female
6	Rural	Female	Male
7	Urban	Male	Male
8	Rural	Female	Male
9	Rural	Male	Male
10	Urban	Male	Male
Southern region, Pattani province			
1	Rural	Female	Female
2	Urban	Male	Male
3	Rural	Female	Female
4	Urban	Female	Female
5	Rural	Female	Male
6	Urban	Female	Male
7	Urban	Female	Female
8	Rural	Female	Male
9	Urban	Female	Female
10	Rural	Female	Male

Appendix 5: Validation workshop participants

Validation workshop took place on 29 September 2022.

No.	Organization	Position
1	Office of The Ombudsman Thailand	Chief of Ombudsman Thailand
2	Office of The Ombudsman Thailand	Adviser to Chief of Ombudsman
3	Office of The Ombudsman Thailand	Director of Duties of the State Inspection Section 1
4	Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour	Foreign Relations Officer, Practitioner Level
5	Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour	Director of Employment Promotion Division
6	Department of Labour Protection and Welfare, Ministry of Labour	Labour Specialist, Professional Level
7	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education	Officer
8	Department of Education, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	Director Division of Student Capacity Promotion
9	Department of Local Administration	Educator
10	National Research Council of Thailand	Division of Research and Innovation Funding Management 3
11	National Research Council of Thailand	Plan and Policy Analyst, Senior Professional Level
12	Office of the National Economics and Social Development Council	Plan and policy analyst, expert level
13	Thailand Science Research and Innovation	Academic Officer
14	Digital Economy Promotion Agency	Officer
15	Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University	Deputy Director for Academic Affairs
16	Children and Youth Council of Bangkok	President of the Children and Youth Council of Bangkok
17	Bangkok Youth Centre (Thai-Japan) Culture, Sports and Tourism Department	Recreation Professional, Senior Professional Level
18	Thai Health Promotion Foundation (9th Department)	Representative from Thai Health Promotion Foundation (9th Department)
19	Life Skills Development Foundation	Executive Director
20	Life Skills Development Foundation	Organizational and Youth Network Coordinator

No.	Organization	Position
21	Life Skills Development Foundation	Assistant coordinator
22	Childline Thailand Foundation	Hub Manager
23	MAP Foundation	Sponsorship Officer
24	Kenan Foundation Asia	Senior Manager, Education Development
25	Kenan Foundation Asia	Senior Manager, Partnerships
26	UNICEF Thailand	Young People Advisory Board
27	UNICEF Thailand	Young People Advisory Board
28	UNICEF Thailand	Education Officer
29	UNICEF Thailand	Adolescent Development Officer
30	UNICEF Thailand	Chief of Adolescent Development and Participation
31	Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University	Lecturer
32	Resource Management Division Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus.	Academic Officer
33	Burapha University (Faculty of Public Health)	Lecturer
34	Nakhon Ratchasima College	Lecturer
35	Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University	Lecturer
36	Independent Scholar	NGO
37	Phetchabun Rajabhat University	Lecturer
38	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Project Manager
39	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Researcher
40	Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute	Researcher
41	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Research Assistant
42	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Research Assistant
43	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Research Assistant
44	College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University	Research Assistant

