

Stocktaking: the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children in Thailand

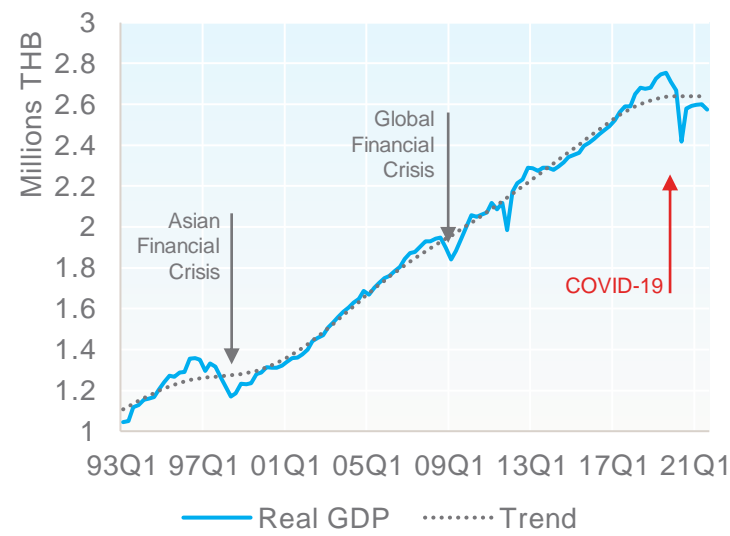
PART 1: IMPACT OF COVID-19 AT MACRO-LEVEL

COVID-19 CAUSED UNPRECEDENTED INCOME AND JOB LOSS

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a greater economic impact on Thailand than the Asian and Global Financial Crises of 1997–98 and 2008–09, respectively, implying significant income and welfare losses.

GDP THAILAND, 1993-2021

Constant prices, seasonally adjusted [1]

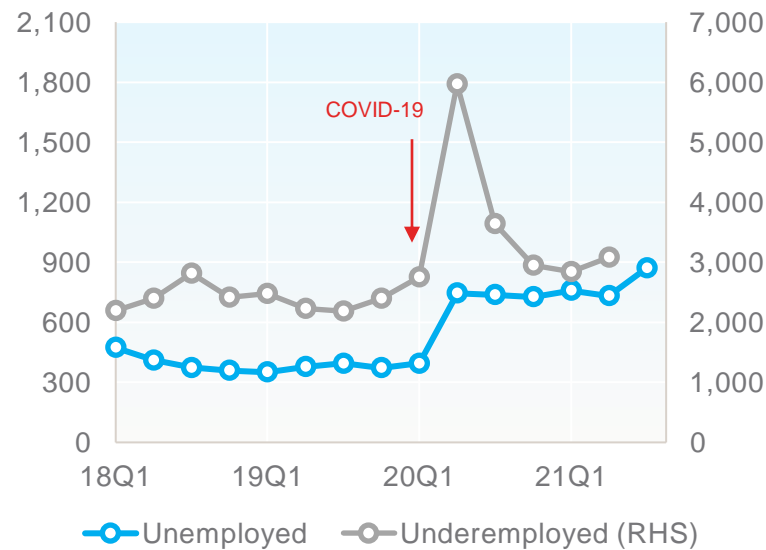


Source: [1] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. (2022, February 21). *Gross Domestic Product Chain Volume Measures: QGDP 4th Quarter 2021* [Dataset]. Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. [2] National Statistical Office. (2021, December 22). *The Labor Force Survey 2021* (Quarter 3: July - September 2021) [Dataset]. National Statistical Office. [3] Bank of Thailand. (2021, October). *Monetary Policy Report September 2021*. Authors' calculation

Unemployment increased in Q1 2020. Employment declined in urban areas while increasing in rural areas, reflecting counter-urbanization. Underemployment also grew significantly in Q2 2020, before returning to pre-COVID-19 levels in Q4 2020.

UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED WORKERS

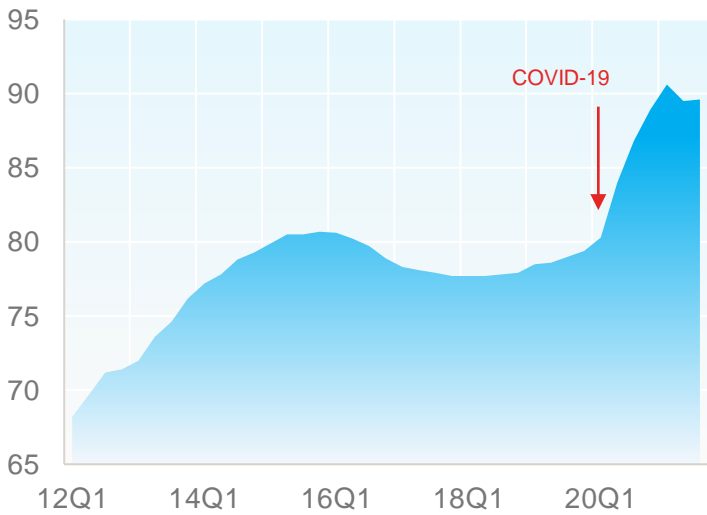
Thousand persons [2]



Household-debt-to-GDP ratio considerably increased in Q2 2020, coinciding with the outbreak of the first pandemic wave and the beginning of provincial lockdowns.

HOUSEHOLD DEBT TO GDP

% to nominal GDP [3]

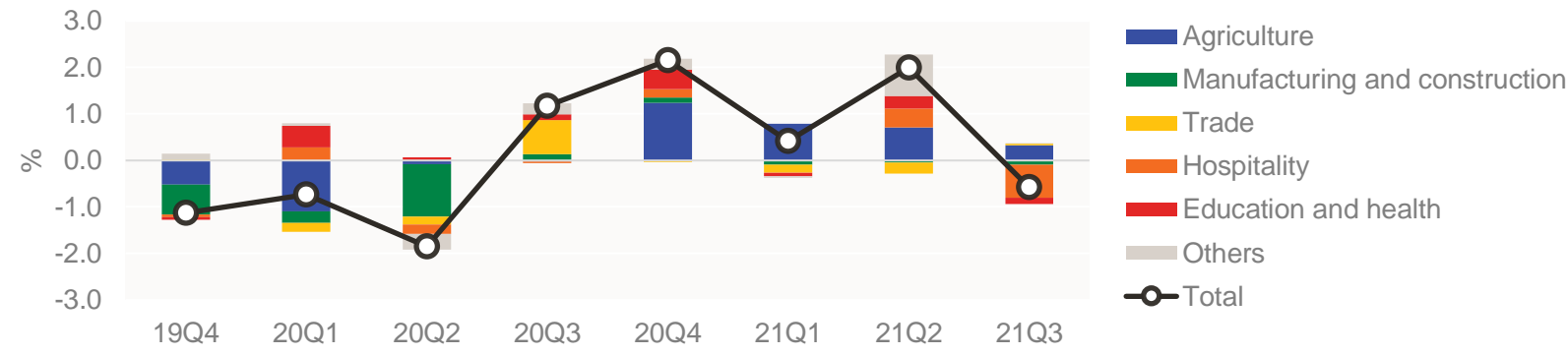


EMPLOYMENT IN MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, TRADE AND HOSPITALITY WERE MORE VULNERABLE

CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT

Change from the same period of the prior year [1]

Employment declined dramatically in Q2 2020, primarily in manufacturing and construction, as well as agricultural sectors. The situation eased in Q3 2020 but deteriorated again in Q3 2021, with the hospitality sector bearing the brunt of the decline.

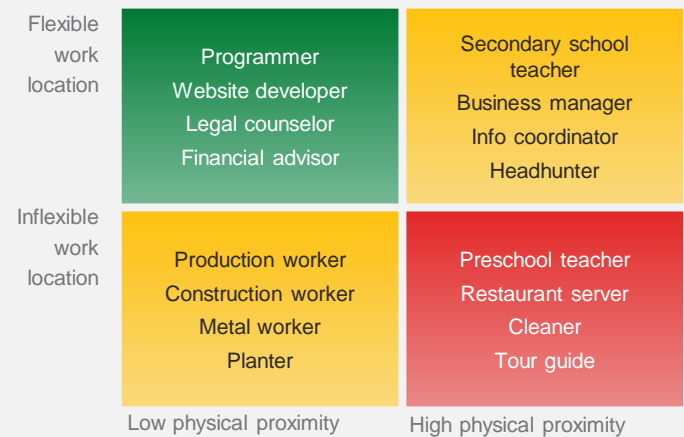


COVID-19 PREDOMINANTLY IMPACTED LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Lekfuengfu Piyapromdee Porapakkhram and Wasi (2020) found that low-income workers tended to work in labour-intensive manufacturing and face-to-face service industries. The study also found people working as preschool teachers, restaurant servers, cleaners and tour guides were severely impacted by COVID-19. Furthermore, low-income households depleted their savings the fastest.

IMPACTED GROUPS

Selected occupations



FRACTION OF PREDICTED IMPACT BY EARNING DISTRIBUTION

The proportion of wage-earning individuals by the derived impact level

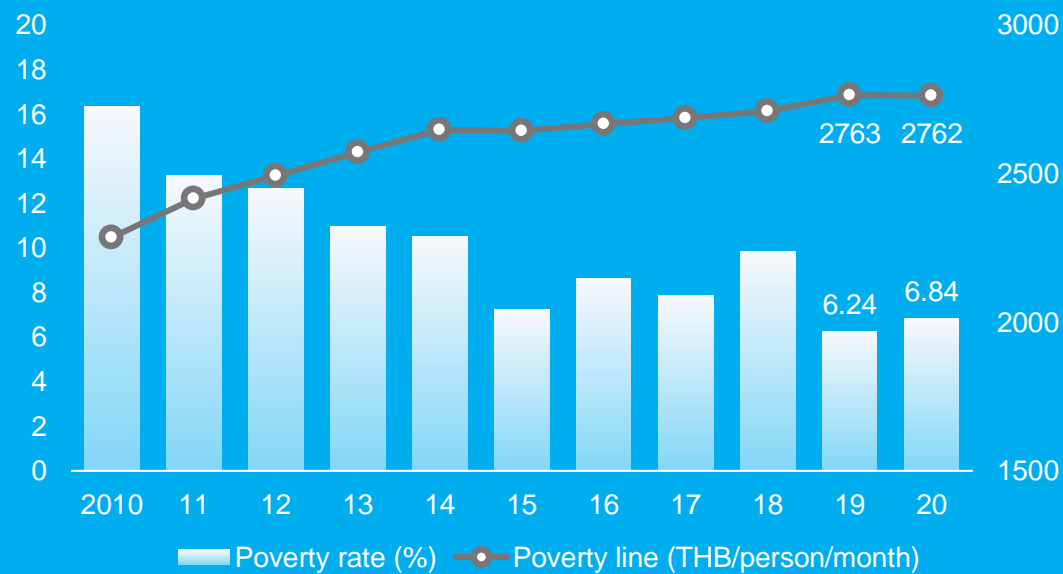


Source: [1] National Statistical Office. (2021, December 22). *The Labor Force Survey 2021 (Quarter 3: July - September 2021)* [Dataset]. National Statistical Office. [2] Lekfuangfu, N., Piyapromdee, S., Porapakkhram, P., and Wasi, N. (2020). *On Covid-19: New Implications of Job Task Requirements and Spouse's Occupational Sorting* (Discussion Paper No. 133). Puey Ungphakorn Institute for Economic Research.

THE PROLONGED PANDEMIC HAS STARTED TO INCREASE POVERTY

In 2020, approximately 400,000 more people fell below the poverty line, raising the poverty rate to 6.84 per cent, up from 6.24 per cent in 2019. The impact upon citizens in the municipal area was more pronounced.

INDICATORS OF POVERTY [1]



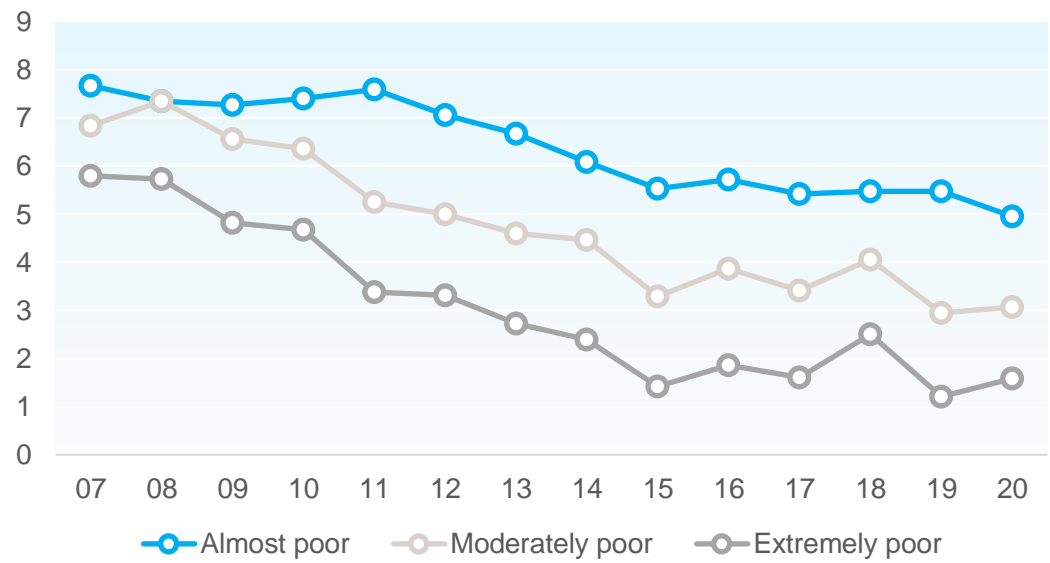
Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2021, September). *Poverty and Inequality Report 2020*.

NEW ENTRIES TO POVERTY WERE EXTREMELY POOR

330,000 people entered into poverty in 2020, most were extremely poor, accounting for a 25.8 per cent increase from 2019. The poverty gap has also been widened, indicating that individuals living in poverty moved further away from the line.

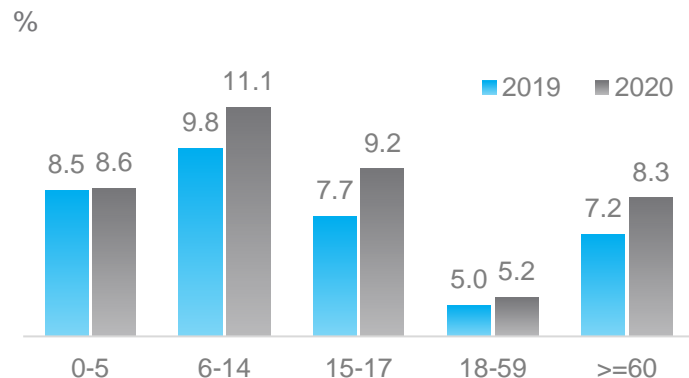
NUMBER OF POOR AND ALMOST POOR CITIZENS

Thousands [1]

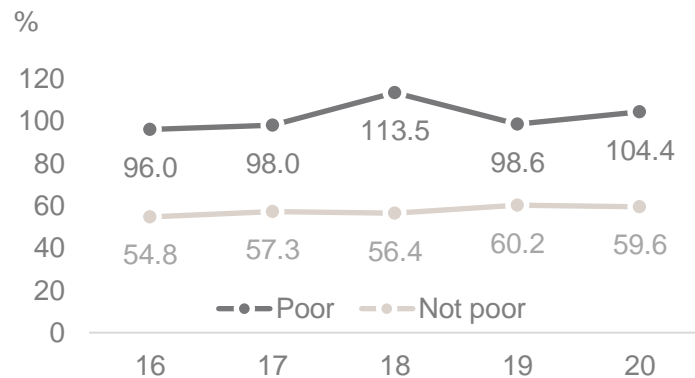


POVERTY WAS CONCENTRATED IN HIGHLY DEPENDENT, SKIPPED GENERATION HOUSEHOLDS. POVERTY LEVEL AMONG CHILDREN WAS HIGHER THAN AMONG OTHER AGE GROUPS

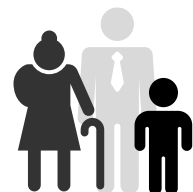
POVERTY RATE BY AGE



DEPENDENCY RATIO



18%



of skipped-generation households in 2020 were poor. The poverty rate climbed from 14.2 per cent in 2019, the largest increase of any household group.

Source: [1] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2021, September). [Poverty and Inequality Report 2019](#). [2] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2021, September). [Poverty and Inequality Report 2020](#). Note: Households with high dependency include households with children, elderly and people with disabilities.

SOCIAL PROTECTION HAS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN PROTECTING LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE IMPACT OF COVID-19



30 million individuals reached OR
81.5 % of households

“...emergency social assistance payments appeared to have been pro-poor and progressive, even though they were not explicitly poverty targeted.”

Source: World Bank. (2021). [Towards Social Protection 4.0: An Assessment of Thailand's Social Protection and Labor Market Systems](#).

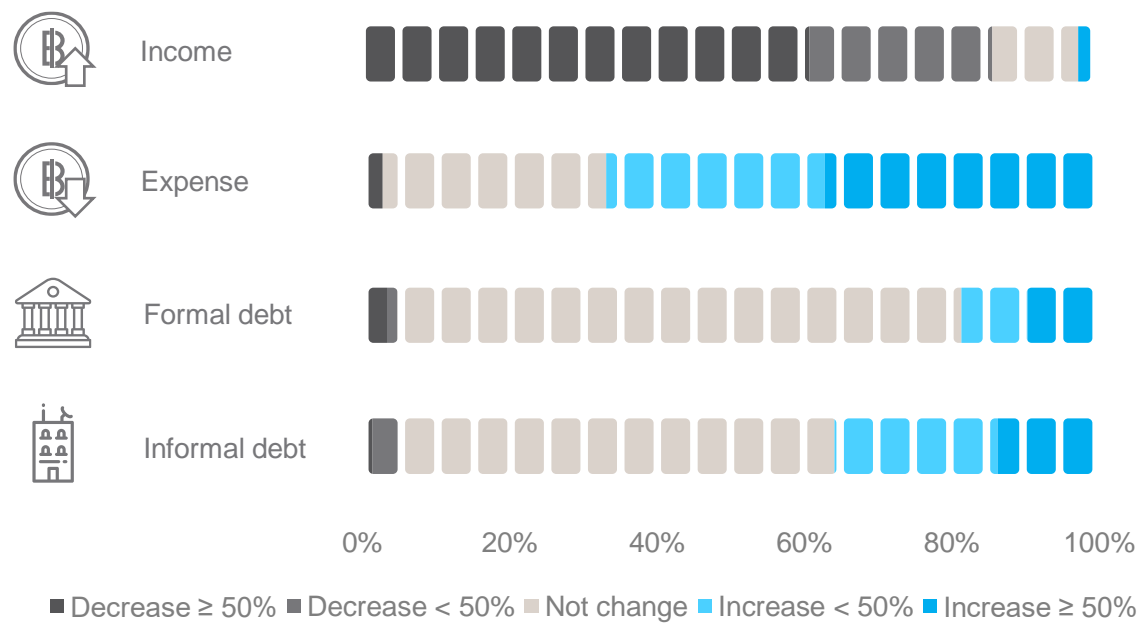
PART 2: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PARENTS

HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCED INCOME LOSS, INCREASED EXPENDITURE, AND CREDIT CONSTRAINT

As a result of COVID-19, parents endured a loss in income and an increase in household expenses with limited access to loans from financial institutions. During the first wave of COVID-19 in early 2020, growing household expenses had a significant impact on low-income households. Particularly during April and May 2020, the majority of people were placed on job suspension (pay or hours decreased), followed by sales reductions, business shutdowns, and job dismissal, while nearly a quarter of parents experienced no impact.

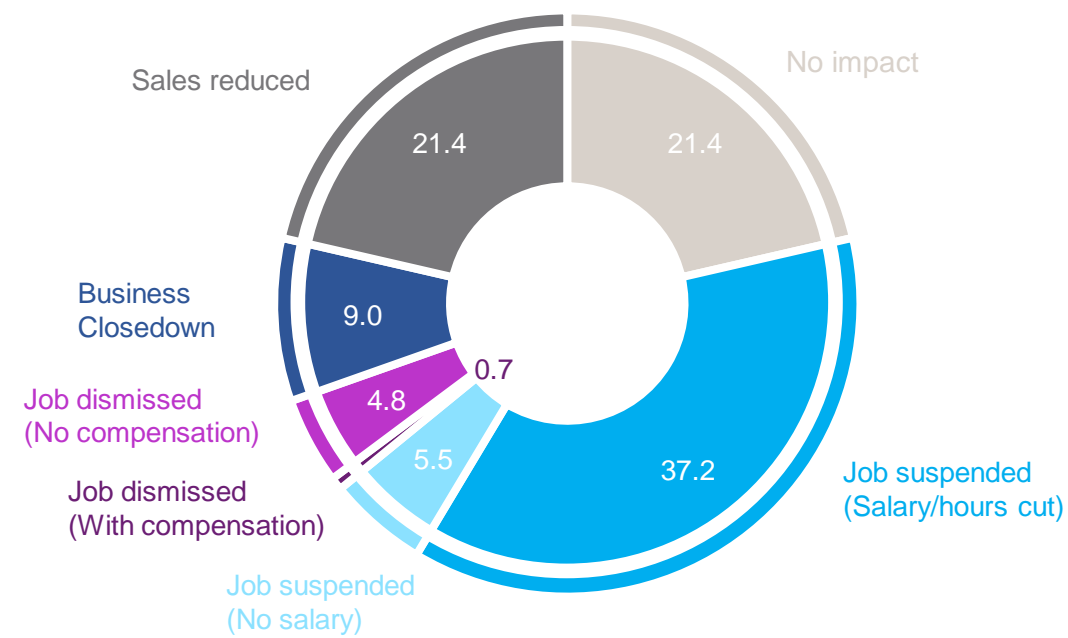
REPORTED CHANGE IN FINANCIAL SITUATION FROM PRE-COVID LEVEL, APRIL-MAY 2020

% share of surveyed parents with young children (0-6 years) in Bangkok.



REPORTED EMPLOYMENT STATUS DURING COVID-19, APRIL-MAY 2020

% share of surveyed ECD parents in Bangkok.

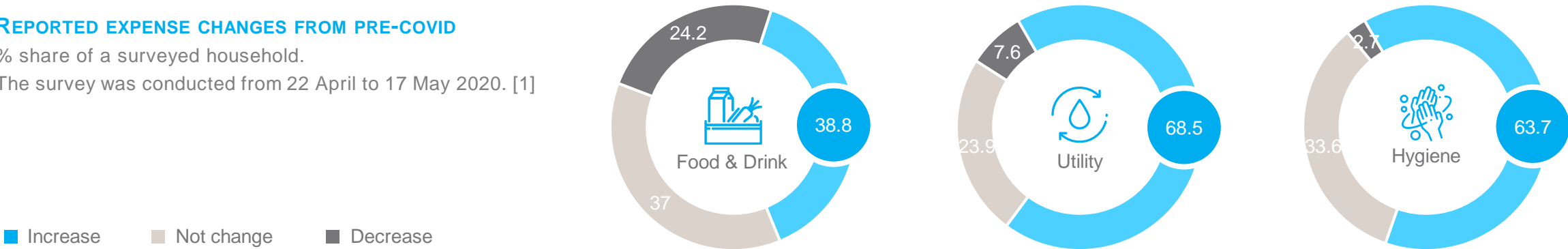


Source: UNICEF & Thailand Development Research Institute. (2020). *The COVID-19 Impact on Vulnerable Families: Families with children with disabilities*.
Note: Survey was conducted from 27 Apr to 18 May 2020.

HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCED INCOME LOSS, INCREASED EXPENDITURE, AND CREDIT CONSTRAINT (CONT.)

During the first wave of COVID-19 in early 2020, parents incurred increased expenditures on food and beverages, utilities, as well as hygiene goods. Increased monthly expenditures on children and associated education costs were a significant economic strain on parents, especially during the back-to-school season (May 2020), compounded by uncertainty over the COVID-19 situation. In 2021, the economic burden on children’s education was further exacerbated due to the prolonged and reduced income of parents.

REPORTED EXPENSE CHANGES FROM PRE-COVID
% share of a surveyed household.
The survey was conducted from 22 April to 17 May 2020. [1]



7975 THB
was the estimated monthly expenditure on a child in 2021. The number was higher than the poverty line of 2762 THB calculated in **2020**, putting heavier pressure on low-income households. [2]

2.1%
was the estimated increase in stipend, fee, and educational activities in **2020**. Around 33.9% resorted to bank lending while 30.9% borrowed from relatives and friends. [3]

89.8%
of surveyed parents in the Bangkok Metropolitan area in **2021** concerned with liquidity for educational purposes. [4]

Source: [1] UNICEF & Mahidol University. (2020). *A Rapid Assessment of Children Left Behind During the COVID-19 Pandemic Situation*. UNICEF. [2] Thai Post. (2021, November 21). *Dusit Poll reveals survey results of childcare expenses in the Covid-19 era, an average of 8 thousand baht per month*. [Thaipost.net](#). [3] Kasikorn Research Center. (2020, May 27). *2020 Back-to-School Season: Parents in Greater Bangkok to Spend Roughly THB28.26 Billion, Up Only 0.1% YoY (Current Issue No.3113)*. [4] Kasikorn Research Center. (2021, May 25). *COVID-19 Dents Household Liquidity, Forcing Parents to Cut their Children’s Educational Expenses during the 2021 School Year for the Second Straight Year (Current Issue No.3226)*.

COVID-19 CAUSED SCHOOL CLOSURES FROM 18 MARCH - 30 JUNE 2020, LEADING TO SUB-OPTIONAL REMOTE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS

The Ministry of Education announced a closedown of schools and ECD centers from 18 March – 30 June, 2020 (the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic). Schools used a variety of instructional methods to keep providing education services, such as on-air, on-hand, and on-demand delivery. However, parents were concerned with the quality of remote learning offered. Additionally, parents found that finding electronic devices and internet connections to support their children’s remote learning caused a financial strain. This greatly affected poor families, especially those with numerous children who were learning remotely.

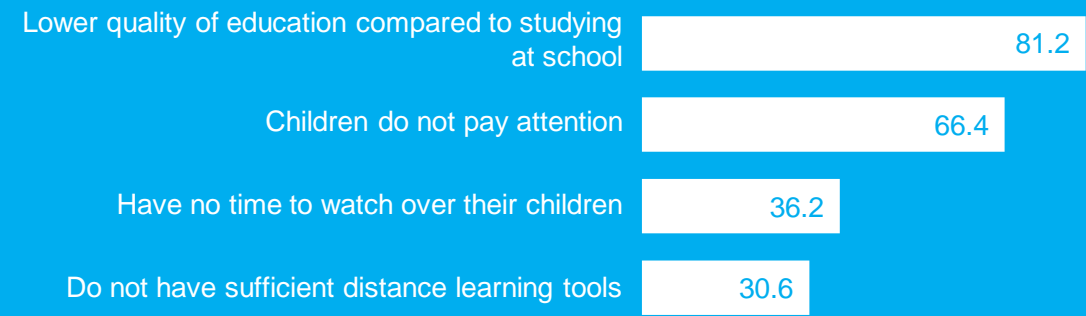


Note: *Schools under red zone can organize distance learning (on-air, on-demand, on-hand (via mailing). For schools in other zones, the provincial governors have the authority to close any schools regardless of the authority which the schools are under (MoE or Mol). Schools need to be in compliance with hygiene measures following the Provincial Committee for Disease Control.

REMOTE LEARNING POSED A QUALITY CONCERN AND ECONOMIC BURDEN TO PARENTS

PARENTS' KEY CONCERNS ABOUT REMOTE LEARNING

percentage share to the total number of surveyed parents [1]



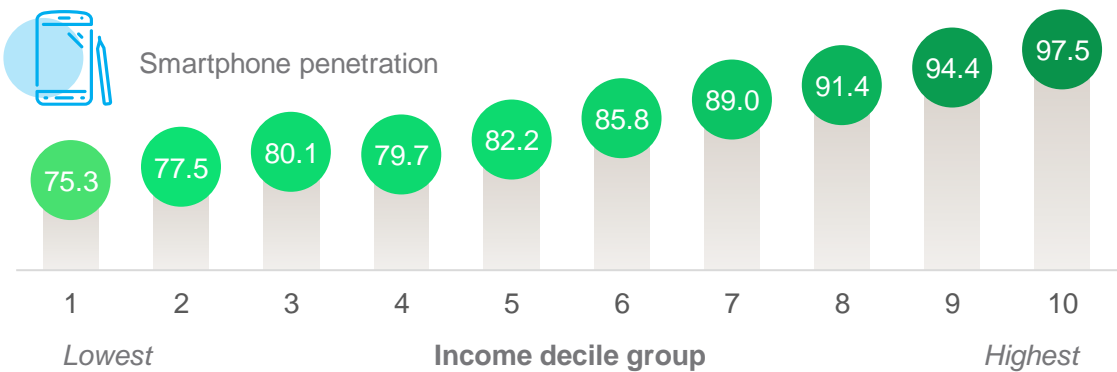
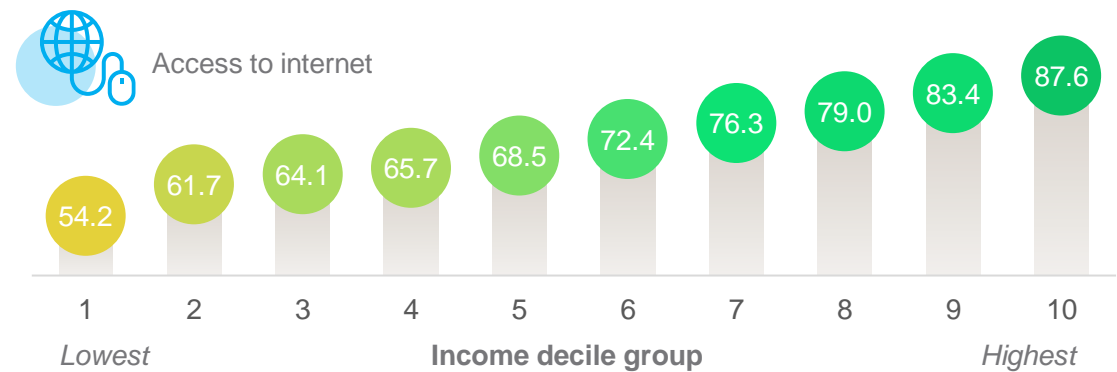
Remote learning posed many challenges for learners, teachers, and parents due to resource constraints, limited mastery of technology, and limited time to play a role in supporting children's learning at home.

Remote learning required access to the internet, smartphones, and other devices, which incurred an additional economic burden on households, especially low-income ones.

Most parents expressed their concern about the lower quality of education when compared to studying at school. They were also concerned that children do not pay attention, especially kindergarten or primary school students, while parents do not have time to watch over their children.

TECHNOLOGICAL READINESS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

% as of November 2021 [2]



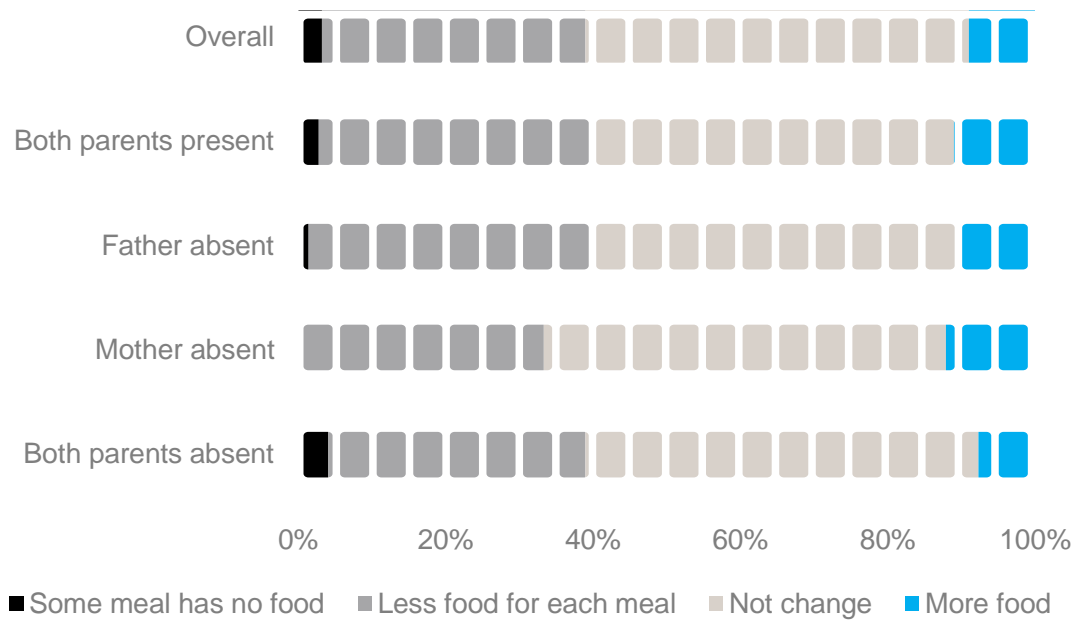
Source: [1] Statista. (2021, August 25). *Parental Worries of Online Classes during COVID-19 Thailand 2020* [Dataset]. Statista Research Department. [2] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2022, February). *Social Situation and Outlook Quarter 4 2021*.

EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 HAD A DETRIMENTAL INFLUENCE ON PARENTS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

The protracted nature of the pandemic had a detrimental influence on family health, particularly on the mental health of parents, children and adolescents. During the first wave of COVID-19, 37 per cent of [surveyed households](#) [1] had less food than before COVID-19, with 3.2 per cent reporting no food available for some meals. The situation was worse for households whose father or both parents were absent. The problem of poverty within families was exacerbated in 2021 [2]. The Social Services 1300 Hotline received a larger number of calls concerning poverty, housing problems, and issues around displacement compared to the same period before COVID-19.

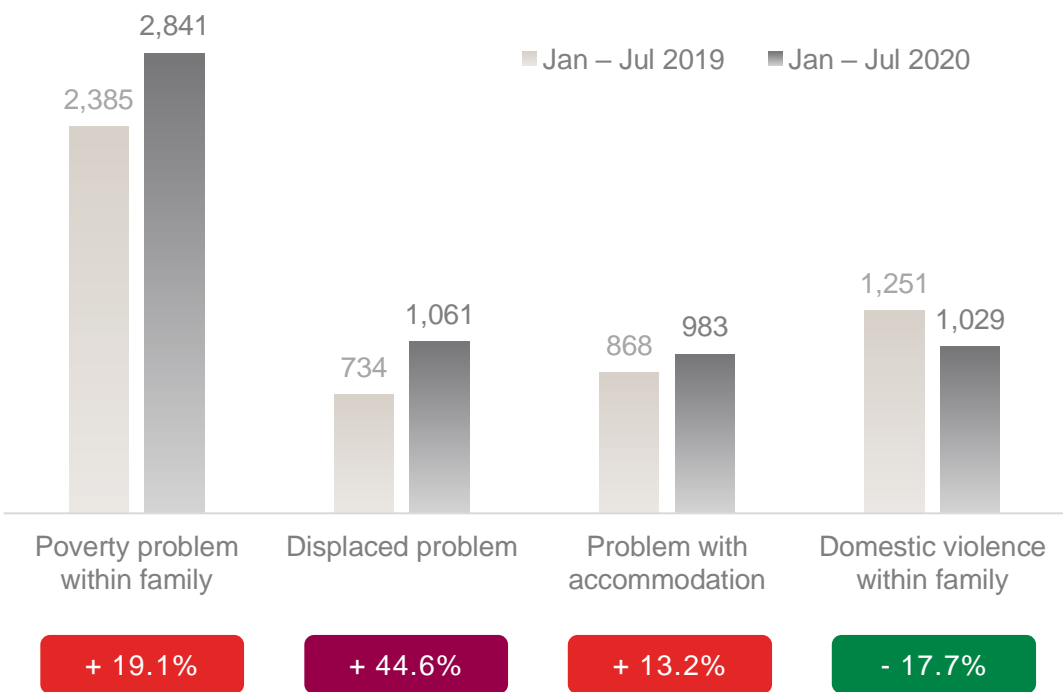
THE QUANTITY OF DAILY FOOD BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

Percent share of surveyed households [1]



THE NUMBER OF CONSULTING CASES WITH SOCIAL SERVICE HOTLINE

[2]



Source: [1] UNICEF & Mahidol University. (2020). *A Rapid Assessment of Children Left Behind During the COVID-19 Pandemic Situation*. UNICEF. [2] Thailand Development Research Institute. (2021, July 8). *Social Issues that are being reported during the COVID-19 crisis*. TDRI: Thailand Development Research Institute.

PART 3: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN

MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS HAD LOWER ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES. BREASTFEEDING NUMBERS DECREASED.

The COVID-19 pandemic restricted mobility and disrupted routine service delivery for pregnant mothers which had an impact on pregnant women's ANC utilization. According to the MoPH Data Center, the total number of pregnant women receiving at least five ANC visits [1] steadily increased between 2018 and 2020. However, in 2021, the proportion of pregnant women obtaining adequate ANC decreased.

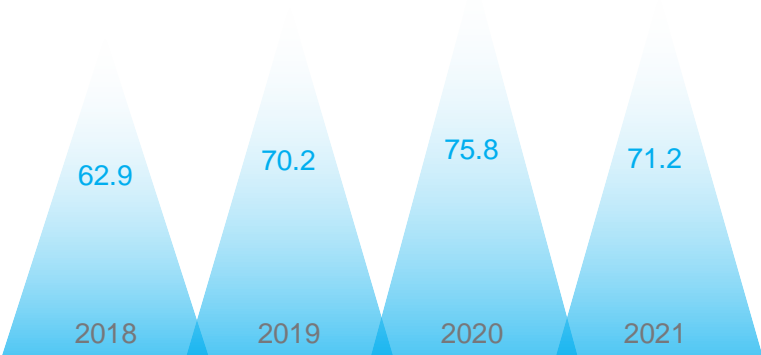
The assessment of the [impact of COVID-19 on ANC and Well Child Clinics](#) indicated that the prolonged pandemic hindered pregnant women's access to health services, resulting in a drop in attendance in both ANC (60 percent) and Well Baby Clinics (80 percent) [3]. Moreover, COVID-19 put pressure on health service providers who were facing problems in an increase of work burden in ANC and Well Baby Clinics, as well as a shortage of equipment and supplies [2].

Breastfeeding within the first hour of life and exclusive breastfeeding for six months protects children against all forms of malnutrition and many common childhood illnesses. A study on [“factors affecting breastfeeding practices under lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand: A Cross-sectoral study”](#) [4] discovered that “the influence of lockdown on breastfeeding resulted in a slight decrease in breastfeeding by 4.32 percent, especially leading mothers to change the method, reduce the frequency, and stop breastfeeding”.

A decline in exclusive breastfeeding from the study was in line with the MOPH data [2] showing a decrease in the number of six-month exclusive breastfeeding in 2021 from 176,217 mothers in 2020 to 151,062 mothers in 2021).

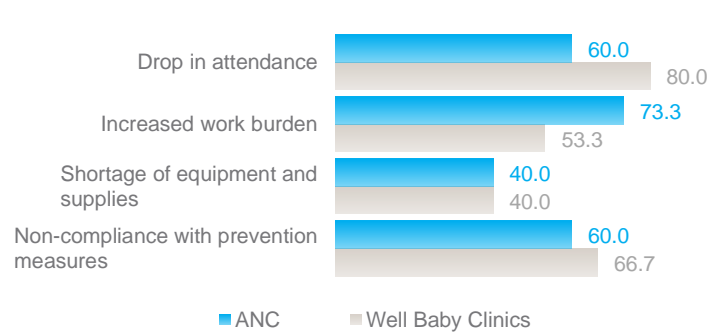
PERCENTAGE OF PREGNANT WOMEN WITH ≥5 ANC VISITS

% of total pregnant woman [1]



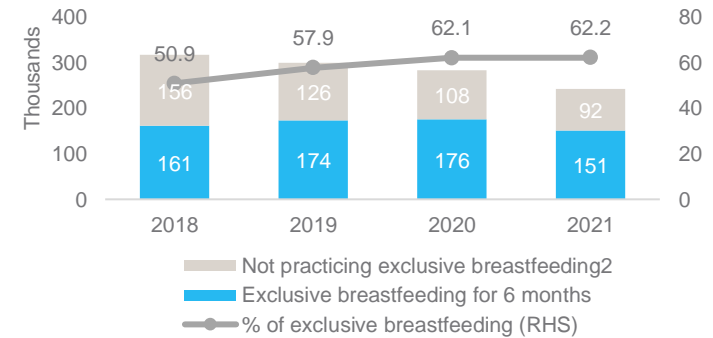
REPORTED IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SERVICE PROVIDER

% of total respondents [2]



EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING RATE

[3]



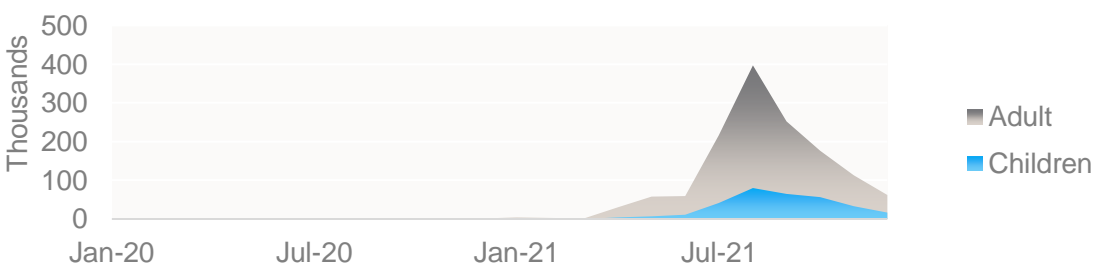
Source: [1] [2] Ministry of Public Health. (2020, January 1). *Mother and Child Health* [Dataset]. Ministry of Public Health. [3] Ministry of Public Health & UNICEF Thailand. (2021, August). *Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on ANC and Well Child Clinic in Thailand*. [4] Piankusol, C., Sirikul, W., Ongprasert, K., & Sivoiroj, P. (2021). *Factors Affecting Breastfeeding Practices under Lockdown during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Thailand: A Cross-Sectional Survey*. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(16), 8729.

CHILDREN’S HEALTH WAS DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY COVID-19

During the **first wave** of COVID-19 in 2020, the Thai Government imposed strict measures from 15 March to the end of June 2020 by closing workplaces, public transport, ECD centers, schools, universities, as well as cancelling public events. The **second wave** also affected students with partial school closedown in 28 red zone provinces during 4-31 January 2021. The subsequent COVID-19 waves in June and September 2021 infected a great number of children with severe infections occurring in May 2021. Since then, the case fatality rate for children was between 0-0.03 percent. The fatality rate peaked in November 2021 at 0.034 per cent and began to decline in the first ten days of December 2021.

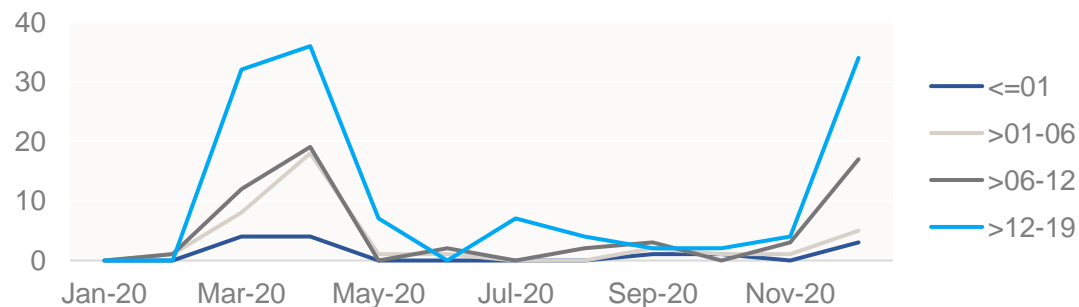
On average, children aged 0 to 19 years accounted for 0-10 per cent of all new infections in the first and second waves (March–May 2020) but 10–25 per cent in the third wave (April–September 2021). The number of newly infected children had peaked in August 2021 and subsequently declined.

NUMBER OF NEW INFECTIONS

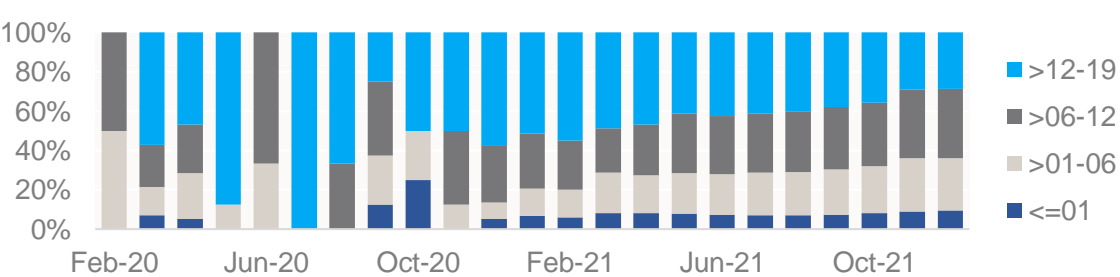


NUMBER OF NEW INFECTIONS IN CHILDREN BY AGE COHORT

The first and second wave

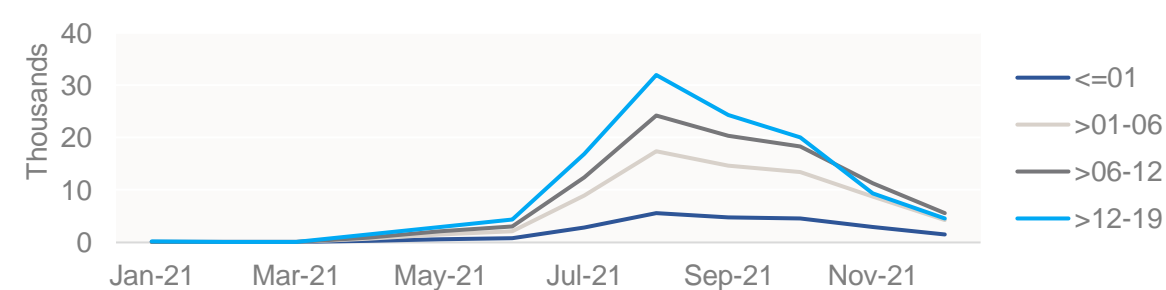


SHARE OF NEW INFECTIONS IN CHILDREN BY AGE COHORT



NUMBER OF NEW INFECTIONS IN CHILDREN BY AGE COHORT

The third wave



Source: Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. (2020, January 1). [Daily Update on the Covid-19 Infection Situation](#) [Dataset]. Department of Disease Control.

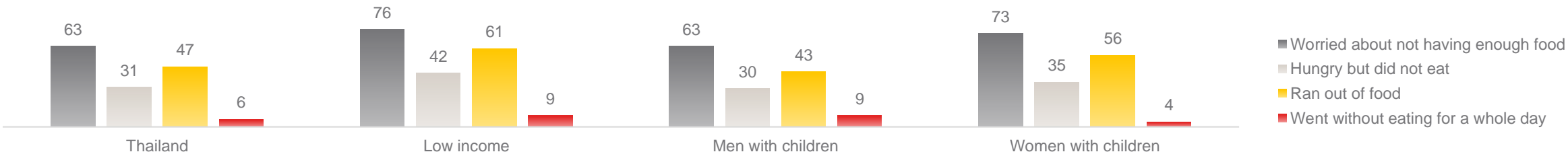
COVID-19 EXACERBATED FOOD INSECURITY, PARTICULARLY AMONG VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS, PLACING MALNOURISHED CHILDREN AT RISK OF DEVELOPING MALNUTRITION

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic worsened households' economic conditions and disrupted food supply chains, limiting access to nutritious food and making it harder for families with children. This exacerbates chronic diseases related to inadequate nutrition and undermines children's growth. [World Bank](#) [1] commissioned Gallup Poll to conduct a Rapid Phone Survey from April to June 2021 and found that low-income households had less access to food, resulting in malnutrition in their children. Around 60 per cent of low-income households and households of women with children ran out of food and nearly 40 per cent of both groups were hungry and did not eat.

Thailand had a “double burden of nutrition” among children aged 0-5 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MoPH [Mid-Term Review](#) [2] shows the nutritional status of children aged 0-5 years remained stable between 2019 and 2021. However, stunting is a major issue among young children (11.7 per cent in 2021) and should be a top national priority for ECD. Additionally, the proportion of children aged 6-14 years with optimal growth has deteriorated (from 63.5 per cent in 2020 to 58.7 per cent in 2021). In 2021, stunting among children aged 6-14 years was also prevalent at 9.7 per cent, while obesity is at 11.2 per cent.

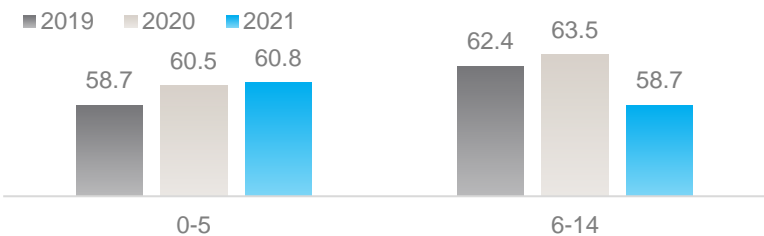
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOUSEHOLDS: MANY HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY DURING THE PAST YEAR

% of total respondents, rapid phone survey from 27 April to 15 June 2021 [1]



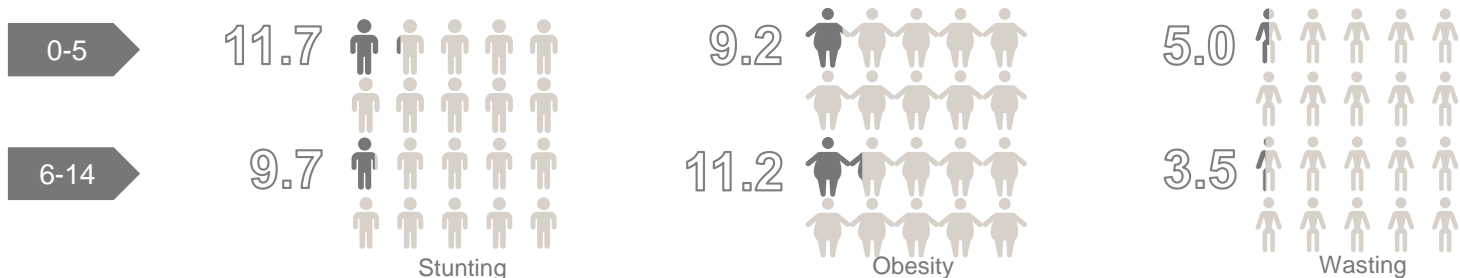
CHILDREN WITH OPTIMAL GROWTH

% of total surveyed children by age [2]



CHILDREN WITH MALNUTRITION IN 2021

percentage of total surveyed children by age [2]

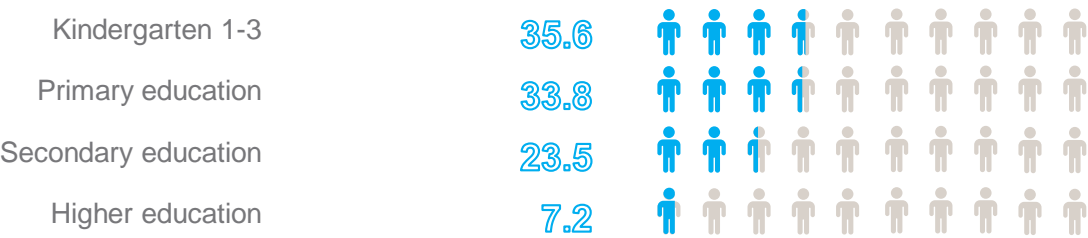


CLOSURE OF ECD CENTERS AND PRE-SCHOOLS IMPEDED CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

- The closure of ECD centers and preschools harmed children's health and development by depriving them of nutrition services and stimulating activities, especially for vulnerable groups that rely on school meals. The adverse effect is significant as 86.3 per cent of children aged 36-59 months in Thailand were enrolled in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme ([MICS 6](#), 2019). [UNICEF and UNESCO](#) emphasize that ECE promotes physical health, emotional safety, social connections and engaged learning. Reopening ECE settings can provide children with much-needed emotional support, learning opportunities and offer reliable childcare options for parents returning to work.
- Children between the ages of 0 and 6 years learn best through direct and hands-on experiences and thrive in environments that include face-to-face interactions. [Suan Dusit poll](#) [1] found kindergarten 1-3 (35.6 per cent) were more adversely impacted by remote learning than the other levels of education.
- The MoPH developed a nation-wide child development screening tool “Development Surveillance and Promotion Manual” (DSPM) to screen children for developmental delays at five key developmental stages: 9, 18, 30, 42 and 54 months. [The recent HDC data](#) indicates that child development, in general, decreased in 2021. Most notably the first screening rate decreased from 66.2 per cent to 61.7 per cent. However, child development among CSG recipients remains almost constant.

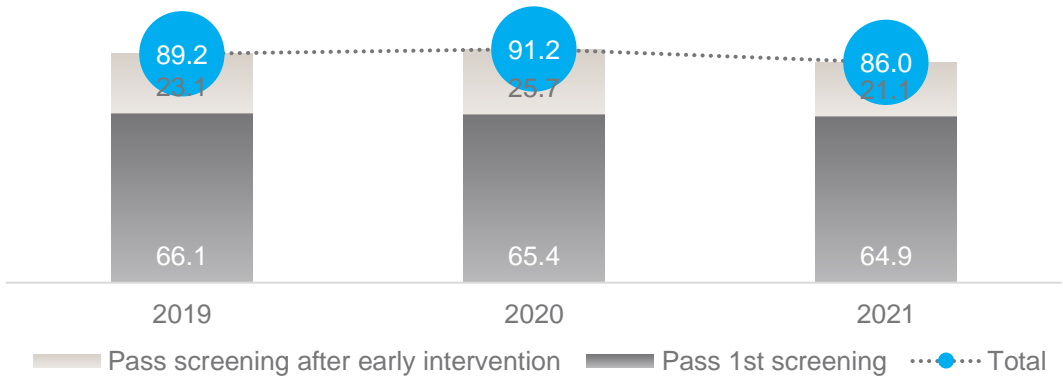
DEGREE OF ADVERSE EFFECTS OF REMOTE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

% to total respondents [1]



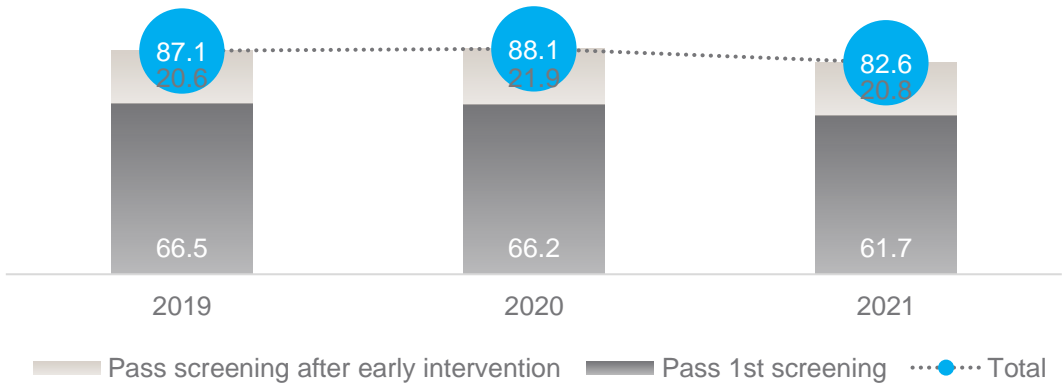
CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCREENING – CSG RECIPIENTS

Based on Developmental Surveillance Promotion Manual (DSPM)
% of total screened children [2]



CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCREENING – GENERAL CHILDREN

Based on Developmental Surveillance Promotion Manual (DSPM)
% of total screened children [2]

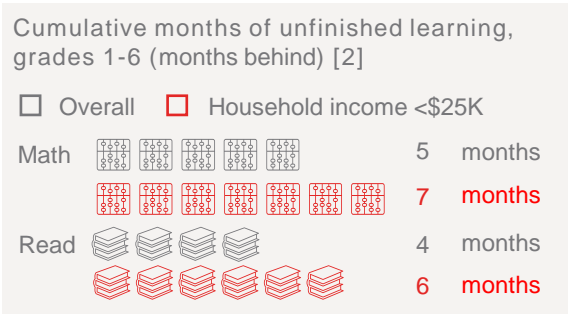


Source: [1] Bangkok Post. (2021, June 20). *Most say online learning will lower education quality: poll*. Bangkok Post Newspaper (Online) [2] Ministry of Public Health. (2020, January 1). *Mother and Child Health* [Dataset]. Ministry of Public Health.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ALTERNATE LEARNING MAY DISRUPT CHILDREN’S FOCUS AND DELAY THEIR LEARNING OUTCOMES

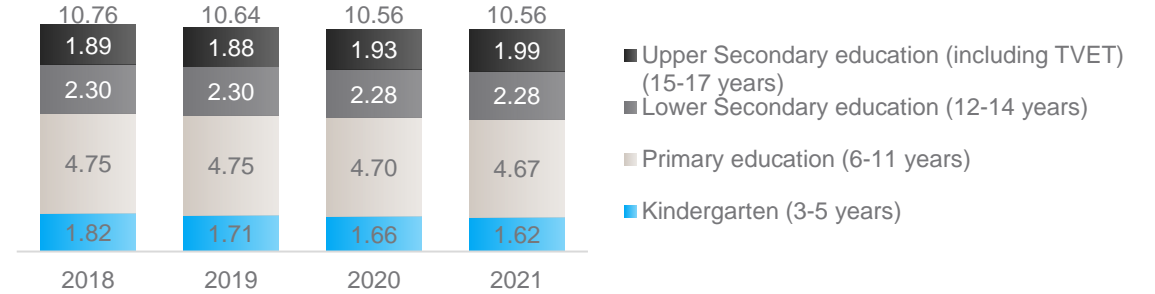
School closures resulted in a risk of dropping out of school and a loss of learning globally [1], [2]. In Thailand, COVID-19 enforced school closures and required the education system to deliver alternative instructions, including on-air, on-hand, and on-demand for three semesters. The crisis brought education to a halt across the country with school closures in early 2020 and the subsequent remote learning affecting almost 9 million children, aged 3-17 years. Although enrollment did not fall from 2020 to 2021 [3], this did not guarantee that pupils were learning. The [World Bank](#) [4] revealed that in 2021, while the number of students enrolled remained unchanged, many students had learning challenges as a result of their inability to focus on remote learning and those with a lack of access to devices were the most vulnerable.

TWO STUDIES INDICATE THAT SCHOOL CLOSURES FROM COVID-19 COULD RESULT IN DROPOUT AND LOSS OF LEARNING



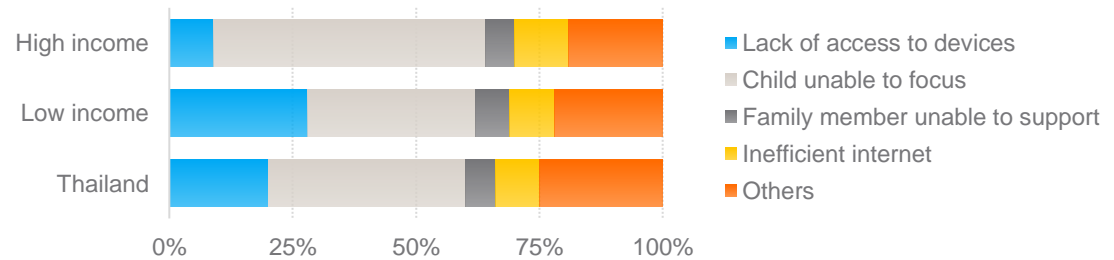
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLING IN EDUCATION

Million persons, by the level of education, 2018-20 [3]



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDENTS’ LEARNING

%, 2021 [4]



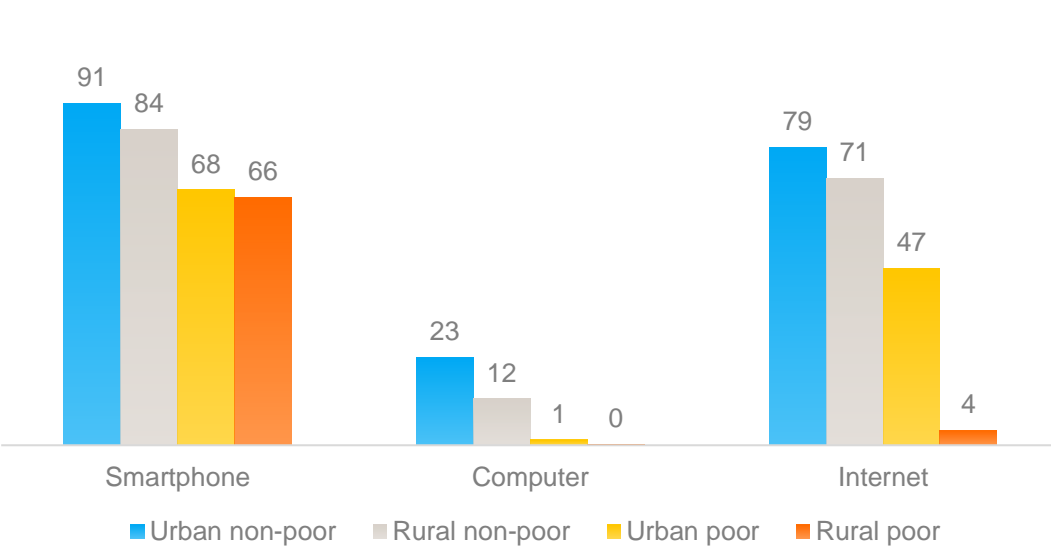
Source: [1] UNESCO, UNICEF, & World Bank. (2021). *The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery*. [2] Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, E. (2021, November 11). *COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning*. McKinsey & Company. [3] Ministry of Education. (2020, January 1). *Education Statistics* [Dataset]. Ministry of Education. [4] World Bank. (2021). *Impact of COVID-19 on Thailand’s Households*.

CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS FACED UNIQUE BARRIERS TO USING EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

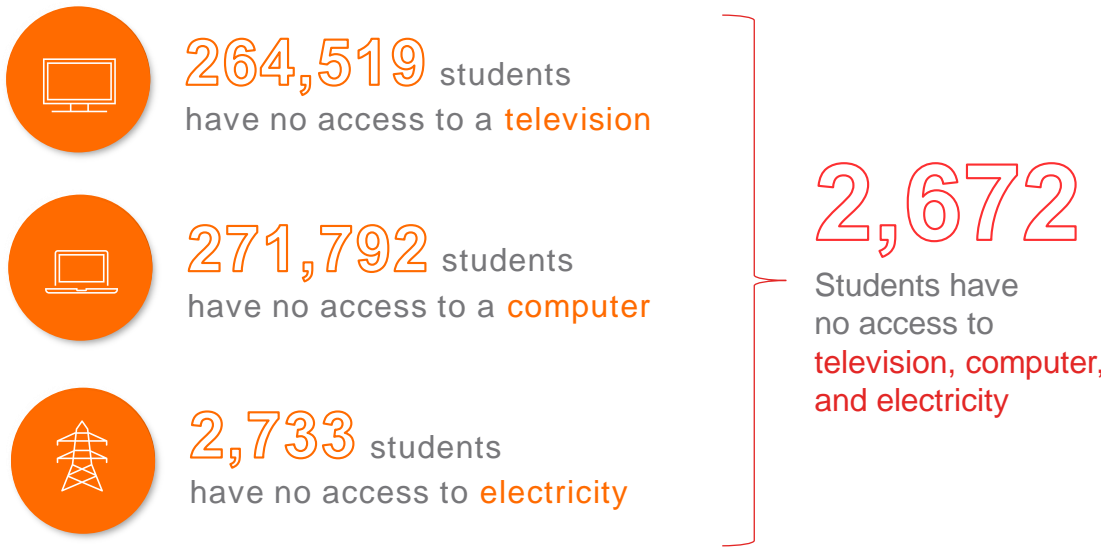
Remote learning was an area of tension for all parties (teachers, parents, and students). The majority of issues center on students' inability to focus on online learning and hence not obtaining adequate knowledge, as well as a shortage of devices and difficulties in accessing the internet [1], especially for poor children.

EEF [2] reported that the school closure policy affects a total of 271,888 children. According to EEF's ultra-poor children's statistics from 2021, 264,519 students lived in households without television, 271,792 students lived in households without computers, and 2,733 students lived in households without electricity. Children from Tak, Nakorn Ratchasima, Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala (three deep south provinces) have the greatest difficulties in accessing electricity and educational equipment.

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY BY LOCATION AND ECONOMIC STATUS
2020 [1]



POOR CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE DUE TO THE INABILITY TO ACCESS ELECTRICITY AND LEARNING EQUIPMENT
2021 [2]



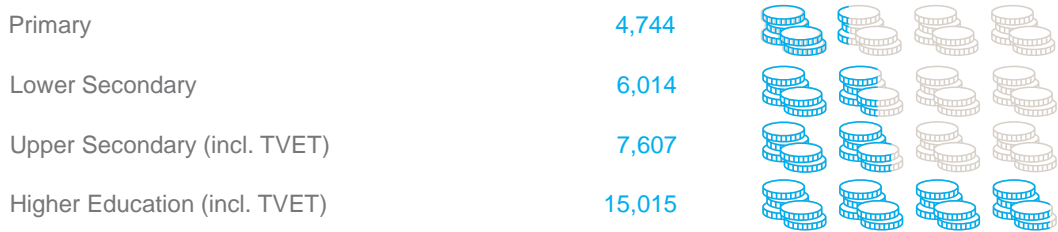
Source: [1] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2021, September). *Poverty and inequality report 2020*. [2] Equitable Education Fund. (2021). *Situation and Risk Factors that result in the Out-of-School Children* [Slides]. Equitable Education Fund.
Note: EEF conducted a survey of ultra-poor children in 29 provinces who had learning difficulties owing to a lack of electricity and equipment during COVID-19 pandemic. It was discovered that 87.94 percent of children, or 271,888 students, were experiencing difficulties. Narathiwat, Pattani, Tak, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Yala were the provinces with the most challenges, Nov 2021

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WAS HARMFUL TO CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME GROUPS, POTENTIALLY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Although the Thai constitution indicates that the state shall provide free education for 12 years from pre-school to lower secondary and the government provides education subsidies for 15 years until upper secondary, [NESDC](#) [1] reported that households had significant out-of-pocket expenditures, which varied based on level of education. As a result, the impact of COVID-19 disproportionately disadvantaged children from low-income households, potentially forcing them to drop out of school. To help vulnerable children cope with the impact of COVID-19, EEF awarded scholarships to a total of 1,070,000 children from low-income families in 2020 and provided additional assistance to 753,996 pupils affected by COVID-19. The household of ultra-poor children receiving EEF’s scholarship had a decline of household income from 1,159 Baht in Semester 1/2019 to 1,077 Baht in Semester 1/2020. However, in Semester 1/2021, the situation slightly improved, reaching 1,094 Baht. Although administrative data indicated that the [number of enrollments](#) were stable in 2020 and 2021, the disparity in enrollment between lower and higher-income households persisted. The [World Bank](#) [3] reported that the enrollment rate for children aged 6-17 years from lower-income families was only 86 per cent in 2021. This was due to “not enough money to pay for school-related expenses”, and “concerns of parents and students for catching COVID-19”.

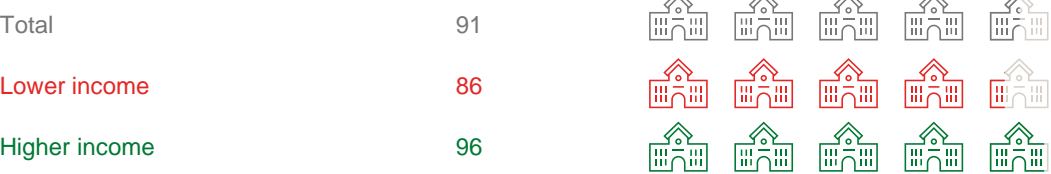
OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENDITURE ON TOP OF FREE EDUCATION POLICY

Baht per household by level of education, 2020 [1]



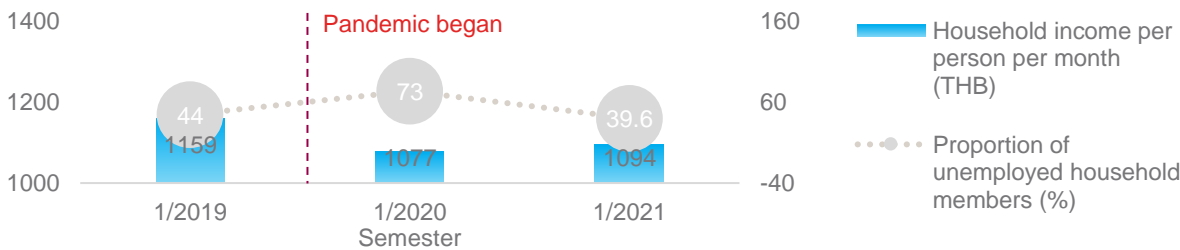
ENROLLMENT RATE (INCOME GAP)

% by income level, 2021 [3]



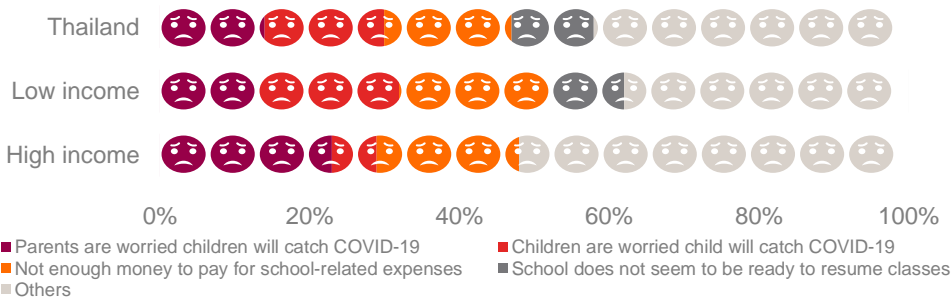
COVID-19 IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLD RECEIVING EEF SCHOLARSHIPS

2021 [2]



REASON SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN WERE NOT ENROLLED

% by income level, 2021 [3]



Source: [1] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2021, September). *Poverty and Inequality Report 2020*. [2] Equitable Education Fund. (2021). *Situation and Risk Factors that result in the Out-of-School Children* [Slides]. Equitable Education Fund [3] World Bank. (2021, November). *Impact of COVID-19 on Thailand’s Households: Insights from a Rapid Phone Survey*.

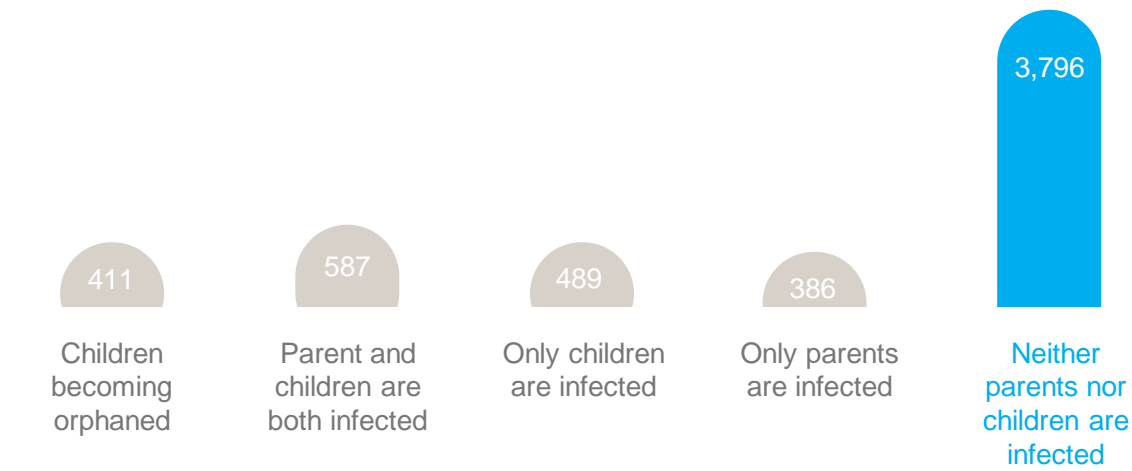
COVID-19 HAD A NEGATIVE SOCIAL IMPACT, ESPECIALLY ON VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Besides educational and direct health issues, COVID-19 had a devastating influence on vulnerable children. A growing number of households reported being negatively affected by COVID-19 and sought assistance, despite the fact that they were not infected. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Department of Child and Youth](#), MSDHS, UNICEF and child protection stakeholders established multiple channels for case reporting beginning in July 2021 via a 24-hour hotline (54 per cent), mobile application (6 per cent), Line Official Account (36 per cent), and the website CPIS (4 per cent). From 1 January until 13 December 2021, all cases reported through the channels received different aid and early interventions including services from social workers (69 per cent), cash transfer (24 per cent), and treatment (7 per cent).

The [Department of Child and Youth](#) reported that COVID-19 caused a number of children and young adolescents to be orphaned. There was a total of 441 new orphans reported from 27 July to 13 December 2021 as a result of COVID-19, with 76 per cent 6-18 years old. The majority of new orphans enrolled in primary (7-12 years) and secondary school (13-18 years).

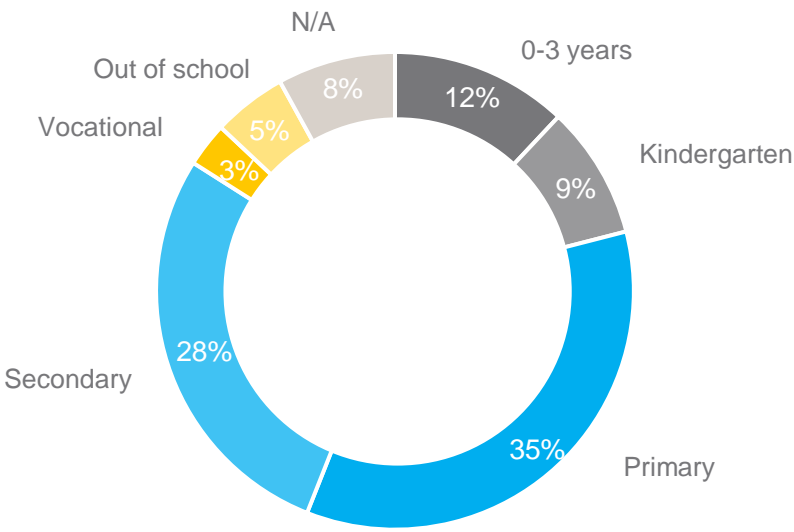
REPORT OF SOCIAL IMPACT

Number of children socially affected by COVID-19 (27 July – 13 December 2021)



COVID-19 LED ORPHANS BY EDUCATION LEVEL

% of children being reported as orphaned as a result of COVID-19 during 27 July – 31 December 2021, by age group (from a total of 441 children)

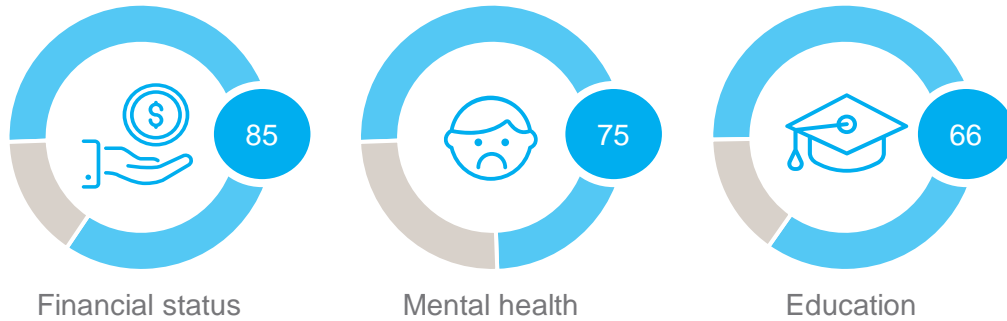


Source: Department of Child and Youth. (2021). *COVID-19 Social Impact Update*. Department of Child and Youth, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Facebook). Facebook.
Note: the data presented on this slide is based on author's calculation and been derived from the infographic and information provided on the Department of Child and Youth Facebook Fanpage

COVID-19 HAD AN EFFECT ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

% to total respondents, a survey conducted during the first wave of COVID-19 [1]



- COVID-19 had a negative effect on children and adolescents' emotional wellbeing, most notably on older teens and female students. During the first wave of the pandemic, UNICEF conducted a [survey on impact of COVID-19 on children and young people](#) between 28 March and 10 April 2020 and found that young adolescents were anxious about their family's financial situation (85 per cent), their education (66 per cent), and their mental health (75 per cent). Additionally, [Journal on depression and anxiety](#) demonstrated that 50 per cent of young adolescents experienced despair and/or anxiety during lockdown. Among children and adolescents who had been part of the study, females, older teens, and teens who use substances were more vulnerable and required special attention.
- In general, Thailand's adolescent pregnancy situation has gradually improved. In 2021, [MOPH](#) [2] reported that the adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years and 15-19 years), as well as the percentage of repeat teen pregnancies, was gradually improved over the pre-COVID year. Moreover, a greater proportion of early pregnant mothers would return to education.
- The impact of young adolescents on unemployment was exacerbated in 2021. [TDRI research](#) [3] found that young teenagers faced a problem of unemployment, as evidenced by the considerable increase in the percentage change in NEET status from the first quarter of 2021 to 76.73 per cent at the end of 2021. The majority of girls who were in NEET status performed domestic work (more than 76 per cent).

ADOLESCENT NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING STATUS

% change from Q1-2021 [2]



SITUATION OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCIES

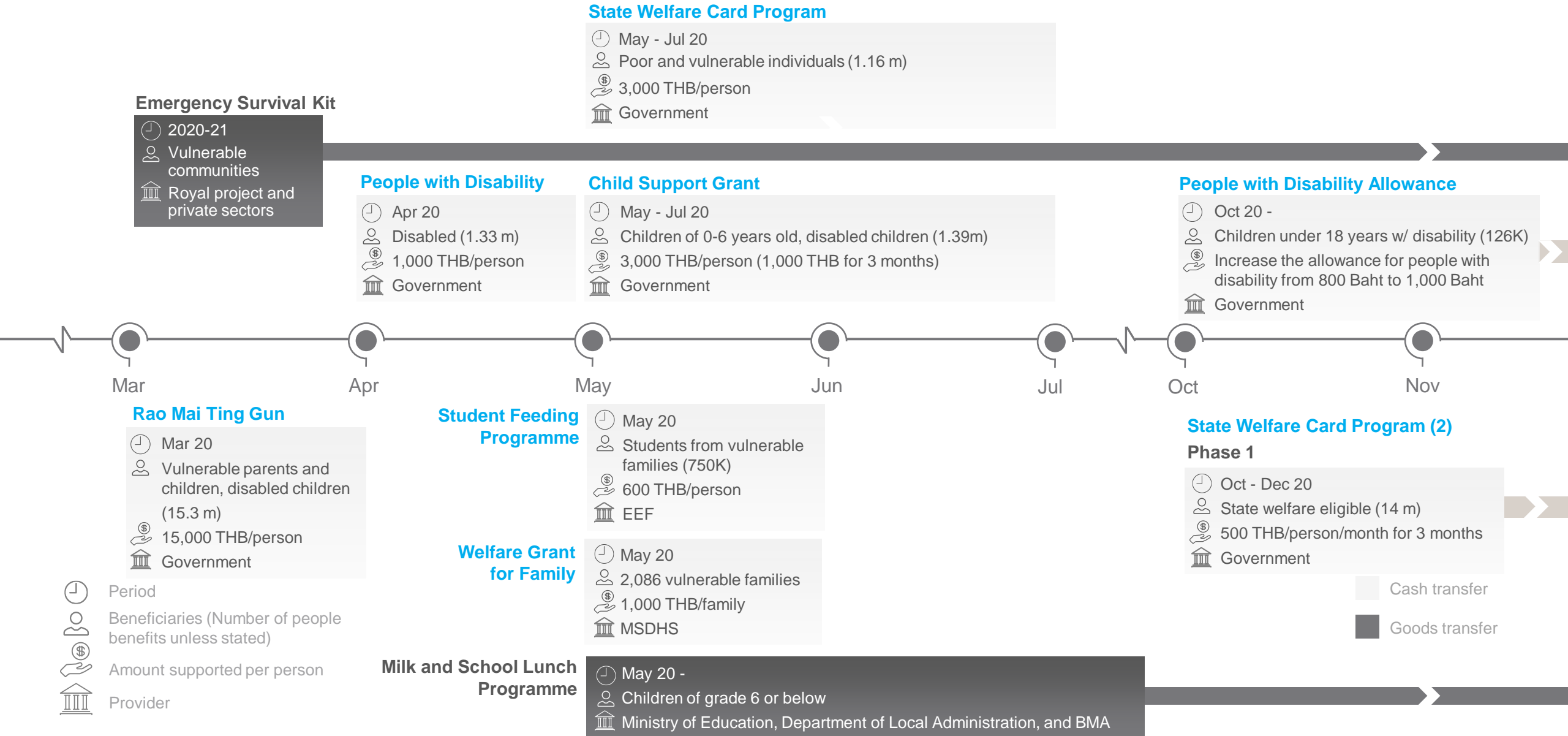
Adolescent birth rate (per 100 women aged 15-19 years [3])



Source: [1] UNICEF, UNDP, & UNFPA. (2020). *A Survey on Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Young People and Their Needs*. [2] Ministry of Public Health. (2021). *Situation Analysis of Adolescent Pregnancy (15–19 years) in Thailand*. [3] Thailand Development Research Institute. (2021b, October 20). *Covid-19 Crisis Among the unemployed-non-educational youth: the Government's unresolved problems*. TDRI: Thailand Development Research Institute.

PART 4: COVID-19 TIMELINE AND GOVERNMENT MEASURES

TIMELINE (2020)



Note: EEF stands for “Equitable Education Fund”, MSDHS stands for “Ministry of Social Development and Human Security”, BMA stands for “Bangkok Metropolitan Administration”.

TIMELINE (2021)

Rao Chana

- Register: Jan - Feb 21, Spend: Jan – Jun 21
- Any individual who registered
- 7,000 plus additional 2,000 THB/person
- Government

School Grant

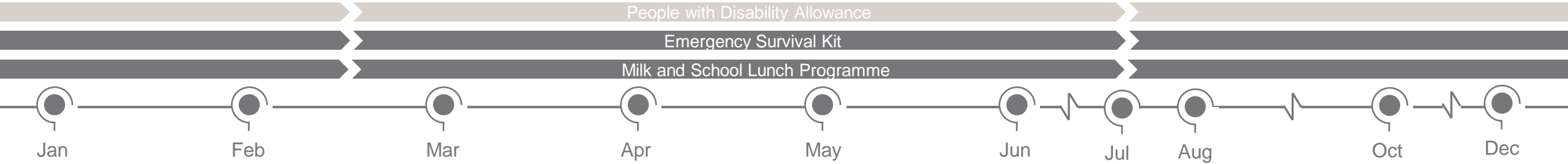
- Mar 21
- 30,879 public educational institutions and 4,008 private school
- max 10,000 THB/institution
- Ministry of education

Student Grant (2)

- May 21
- Extremely poor children from kindergarten 3, grade 6 and grade 9 (286 ts)
- 800 THB/person
- Ministry of education

Student Grant (3)

- 15 Aug – 15 Oct 21
- kindergarten to upper secondary level, vocational certificate
- 2,000 THB/person (11m students)
- 165 THB/person (3.6m students)
- Ministry of education



State Welfare Card Program (2) Phase 2

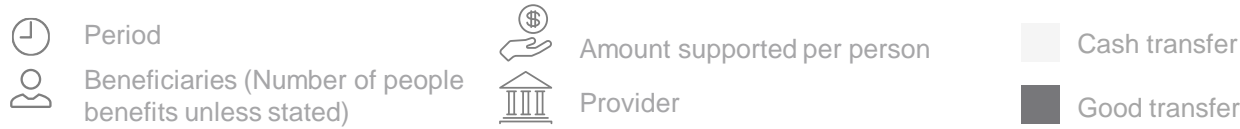
- Jan - Mar 21
- State welfare eligible (14 m)
- 500 THB/person/month for 3 months
- Government

State Welfare Card Program (2) Phase 3

- Jul - Dec 21
- State welfare eligible (13.6 m)
- 200 THB/person/month for 6 months
- Government

Increase Buying Capacity for Vulnerable People Who Need Special Assistance

- Jul - Dec 21
- Vulnerable groups, bedridden, no access to internet or smartphone (12.5 m)
- 200 THB/person/month for 6 months
- Ministry of Finance



PART 5: HUMAN INTEREST STORIES



“

The prolonged COVID gets me stressed. There were times that I could not reach the students under my responsibilities because many parents were concerned that I may have COVID. Sometimes, I could only reach to communicate just to community leaders and could not reach the students. This gives me a concern that children do not have enough experience in reading and writing and would, consequently, lose their learning.

”



Mr. Torpong Takhamdee teaches at Longpaewitaya School in the Sop Moei district in Mae Hong Sorn province. Longpaewitaya School is located in a rural area and is difficult to reach, particularly during the rainy season, when the school frequently floods, and students must float over the water to study. All of the students are from hill tribes and speak the Karen language. The school provides education from kindergarten to lower secondary level (Mattayom 3).

Mr Torpong has been a teacher for three years, and this is his first teaching job. When COVID-19 became widespread, his school had been closed and he needed to deliver alternative learning via on-hand and on-demand methods. Online teaching is not an option for his students and himself because both students' houses and schools lack reliable electricity and internet connection. He travelled to see his children in two villages with his motorcycle, which sometimes broke down. He taught all subjects to elementary school pupils but also students from other levels who lived in the two villages.

“

I too am concerned about COVID-19's impact on my education. I hope that students' voices are heard and that their concerns are addressed. If I can make a wish, I wish that students would only be required to take examinations in mandatory subjects, relieving us all of stress. I would not want to see any of my friends drop out of school owing to their incapacity to manage or achieve their educational goals.

”



Mr. Naphat Roengnanthakon is an upper secondary school student (Mattayom 5), majoring in Science and Math at Satunwittaya School. He is also serving as a chair of the Provincial Child and Youth Council, Satun province since 2021. He is preparing for the university entrance examination, while he needs to manage his time to lead the activities with the Provincial Child and Youth Council.

In 2021, he led a survey among children and youth groups about the impact of COVID-19. While respondents indicated concern about their household's financial status and some were unable to continue working part-time jobs, their primary concern was with their schooling. They all raised concerns about the inflexibility of the curriculum and examinations. Students must readjust to remote learning while also responding to the fact that all subjects were presented with numerous assignments to complete.

