

# THAILAND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING (MIPAA), 2002 - 2016



The Department of Older Persons  
The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

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**Published By**

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**Design and Publish**

Amarin Printing & Publishing Public Company Limited  
376 Chaiyaphruk Road, Taling Chan, Bangkok 10170  
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## PREAMBLE

Since 2002 when the United Nations organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, Spain, it reaches the international obligations on ageing under the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), therein 3 following main targets are stipulated: i) Older Persons and Development; ii) Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age; and iii) Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environment. The State Parties to the United Nations shall mutually observe these targets to take their action on ageing and formulate their development strategies to eventually achieve.

Thailand as one State Party to the United Nations has prepared this Report on implementation of such global obligations on ageing to present its action and progress made therein between 2002 and 2016 to depict the significant tasks in compliance with and responsively to the targets of elderly development under MIPAA. This Report is compiled through a valuable contribution made by the parties and sectors involved in the elderly both public and private agencies, especially the public agencies which act as mechanisms for the tasks on the elderly supervised by the National Committee on the Elderly under the Act on the Elderly, B.E. 2546 (2003 A.D.)

The Department of Older Persons under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security serves as the national main agency in coordination and enhancement of actions on the elderly both in policy and practice. We hope that this Report could provide overall information of our implementation of obligations under the United Nations framework, where our progress of tasks is resulted from a useful contribution made by all social sectors and the intention of the Thai government to ensure consecutive fulfillment of Thai elderly development policy under the obligations encouraged by the United Nations. It is for the purpose of upgrading and achieving the Thai elderly well-being finally.

**The Department of Older Persons**  
**The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security**

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# SUMMARY

## Progress of Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: MIPAA 2002

The Report on Thailand Elderly Prospect, B.E. 2557 (2014 A.D.) by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board states that there are approximately 10 million elderly persons in Thailand or equivalent to 15% of the total population of 65 million persons. These numbers explicitly show Thailand has become an ageing society for more than a decade (in 2005 the Thai elderly population is about 6.7 million persons or equivalent to 10.5% of the total population).

It is forecast that within 2030 the number of the Thai elderly population will almost double from current number, i.e. increasing to about 17.7 million persons or equivalent to 25% of the total population or about one fourth of the total population.

The progress of Thailand implementation of MIPAA during 2002 – 2016 can be summarized as follows:-

### 1. Older Persons and Development

#### • *Plans and Policies on the Elderly*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly (2002 – 2021), the Revised Plan of 2009 serve as the national strategic plan to orientate the integrated development and work on the elderly whether readiness preparation of the population to achieve quality ageing, promotion and upgrading of the elderly, social protection for the elderly, administration of comprehensive tasks on the elderly, or dissemination of knowledge about the elderly.

Additionally, the significant work is that Thailand has promulgated the Act on the Elderly, B.E. 2546 (2003 A.D.) stipulating protection and security of rights for the elderly whether in terms of health, social, or economic including various benefits and public services for access to. Under the Act on the Elderly, B.E. 2546 (2003 A.D.), ‘the National Committee on the Elderly’ was formed to act as the national mechanism for implementing the policy on the elderly chaired by the Prime Minister.

### • *Protection of the Elderly and Security for Ageing*

Thailand provides every elderly person with financial aid of stairs type payment in accordance with their ages permissible from the age of 60 onwards (except those who are regularly granted the government pension) in the amount of 600 – 1,000 Baht/month/person. For those who are of working age, the security for ageing has been established under the Act on Social Security, B.E. 2542 (1999) and tax deduction is permitted to the elderly and children who take care of their elderly parents as well as financial support for funerals of the poor elderly of 2,000 Baht/funeral.

In addition, the Elderly Fund was established as the government fund to be lent to individual elderly persons for their occupational purpose and for supporting activities launched by elderly networks.

In 2015, Thailand has set up the National Savings Fund to extend saving chance to people of working age (aged 15-59), who have no income security aiming at their access to pension at old age. It is undertaken through contributions jointly made by members and the government to the Fund where the members shall continually receive monthly pension at their complete 60 years age throughout life.

## **2. Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age**

Thailand implements the National Health Care Coverage Policy for people of all age groups including the elderly. The objectives thereof are to provide people with comprehensive health services free of charge rendered by health care agencies nationwide at sub-district and province levels under the charge of the Ministry of Public Health as the main agency in providing health services for the elderly. The health services for the elderly are focused on facilitating accessibility of services to the elderly such as home health care (HHC) provided by the interdisciplinary family care teams, elderly clinics, services for dentures, preventive and curative care for dementia, encouragement of well-being for the elderly and promotion of grouping in a form of elderly clubs for the purpose of joining in health and social activities, etc.



### 3. Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments

Thailand initiated the home caregivers (HC) for the elderly in 2003 and has extended to various areas nationwide in 2007 pursuant to the resolutions of the Cabinet. It is focused on the elderly access to care, aid and support provided by volunteer caregivers in their own communities. This is to enable the elderly to live with their families and communities under the concept “**ageing in place**”. The HC project has been extended to all sub-districts nationwide since 2013.

In the meantime the government encourages establishment of **Community-based Elderly Centers** in sub-districts of all districts by integrating tasks of the agencies involved under good cooperation and contribution made by Sub-district (Tambon) Administrative Organization (SAO or TAO) and elderly network organizations along with endeavor and initiation to enhance safe housing and friendly environment of public places for the elderly within communities under the concept of **universal design (UD)** supported by academics of universities’ faculty of architecture in each region.

In addition, there is seeking, collation, encouragement and support of the **Elderly Brain Bank** project in each community aiming at transmission of wisdom, expertise and experience of the elderly in various fields to young generation and building networks in combination and linking of the relevant information nationwide.

### 4. Implementation and Follow-up

Thailand carries out **monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly in each 5 years’ period: The first time the monitoring and assessment was done in 2007 and the second time in 2012** by academics from the College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University. This is to monitor the progress of action on the elderly as a whole both the policy and the implementation including to analyze its strength and weakness and challenging issues to put in subsequent action. The third monitoring and assessment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly is done in 2016.

Moreover, in each year the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute compiles the **Report on the Situation of the Thai Elderly** to propose the updated information and significant situation of the elderly such as demographic, health, economic and social welfare involving the elderly.

In 2014 the National Statistical Office has performed the **national survey of the elderly** for the 5<sup>th</sup> time. It contains updated information based on the elderly population census nationwide to present information about health, economic and social for the agencies in charge to use in formulating and implementing the subsequent policy.

### Challenging issues for the subsequent implementation of action on the elderly

The issues to be emphasized in driving subsequent implementation of action on the elderly are:

- **Readiness preparation for stability at old age by encouraging the national savings system with widened coverage, i.e. to include those who do not access income security in the working age group in the old-age pension payroll when ageing;**
- **Pooling cooperation of all parts and sectors to prepare long-term care for the elderly, including to develop workforce so as to ensure their availability for the elderly long-term care;**
- **Encouraging use of the elderly knowledge, ability and potentiality in work after their retirement age;**
- **Ensuring proper and safe environment for the elderly; and**
- **Strengthening the capacity of sub-district administrative organizations and empowering the relevant network organizations to efficiently work involving the elderly.**

# Part 1

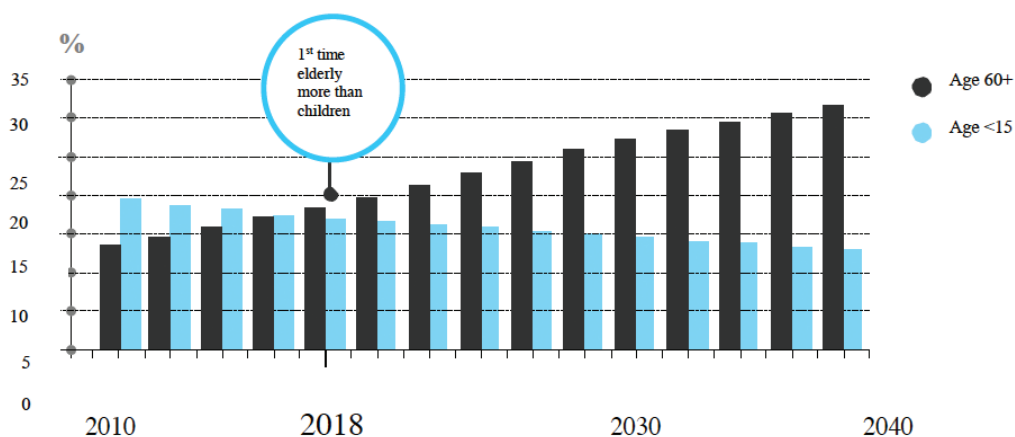
## Demographic Transition



## 1. Situation of the Thai Elderly Population

Thailand has become the ageing society since the elderly population has increased more than 10 percent since 2005. In the subsequent decade, number of the elderly will continually increase at the rush rate. In 2014 number of elderly persons in Thailand was projected to more than 10 million or about 15.3 percent of the total population of about 65 million (the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University: 2014). Based on this information, within not exceeding 20 years from now or in 2034 the proportion of elderly population will increase to about 29 percent or about one third of the total population of the Country. It is a significant change of the population structure of the Thai society, i.e. the elderly population will be in larger number than the juvenile population (Knodel and Chayovan, 2009). It means Thailand has become the complete aged society and number of the elderly population aged 80 years and more (the late-elderly) will be projected to almost 20 percent in 2040.

**Diagram 1. Percentage of population aged less than 15 years and aged 60 years and more in 2010 - 2040**



Source : Thailand's Population Prospect 2010-2040, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board

Additionally, number of the working age population which act as producers and supporters of the elderly, is likely to gradually decrease, as well. It is evidenced

by the Potential Support Ratio of approximately 10 persons of working age (15-60 years) per 1 elderly person in 2000 and having decreased to approximately 6 persons per 1 elderly person in 2010, and predicted to keep on decreasing to 2 persons per 1 elderly person in 2030 (Knodel and Chayovan: 2009).

## 2. Average Age of the Elderly

Average age of the Thai elderly is likely to continually increase. In 2009 the average age of elderly men is 65.0 years and the average age of elderly women is 68.1 years. Subsequently in 2014, the average age of elderly men has increased to 71.0 years while the average age of elderly women has increased to 77.5 years (the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University: 2014). It is further forecast that in the next decade both elderly men and women will have average age more than 80 years onwards.

## 3. The Elderly with Their Family

Resulted from change in family size in the present, the extended families with many generations living together have reduced, while single families with only a couple of spouses and children living together have increased. In addition, the ongoing decline of fertility in the previous decade also significantly results in fewer numbers of elderly persons living with their children and family members. Based on the survey of elderly persons throughout the Country conducted by the National Statistical Office in 2014, it shows that 60.4% of elderly persons living with their spouses, while the rate of their living alone has increased from 3.6% in 1994 to 8.7% in 2014. This fact apart from reflecting the direct result of the ongoing birth rate and the migration of the working age and younger generation, also reflects the chance of the older generation to live with their children or rely on their children at old age will reduce accordingly.

However, the survey of elderly persons 2014 further shows that children are still the first important income source to support their elderly parents, although the proportion of the elderly who continue their jobs after the retirement age has continually increased from 31.9% in 1984 to 39.5% in 2014.

## Part 2

# Thailand's Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: MIPAA



# 1. Older Persons and Development



## 1. Older Persons and Development

### 1.1 Plans and Policies on the Elderly

#### 1) The 1<sup>st</sup> National Plan on the Elderly, 1982-2001

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Plan on the Elderly, 1982-2001 is deemed the first national plan of Thailand with 20-year term that was launched to orientate significant guidelines and scope for development of the Thai elderly in the following aspects:

- Health
- Education
- Social and Income Security
- Social and Cultural Participation
- Social Welfare Services

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Plan on the Elderly is a long-term plan that clearly states the intention of Thailand to actually begin implementation of its elderly policy and national plan with the aim of this national plan serving as instrument in encouraging, supporting and developing guidelines of action on the elderly.

#### 2) Declaration on the Thai Elderly

In 2000 Thailand proclaims **the Declaration on the Thai Elderly**, which is the same year that the United Nations proclaims to be **the International Year of Older Persons**. This is to declare the government intention of recognizing the importance of promoting, developing and providing the elderly with all chances cooperated by all parts either the public, the private or the people sectors including the organizations of public interests. It is to drive explicit and exact implementation of action on ageing as clearly mentioned in **the Declaration on the Thai Elderly** especially about the protection of the elderly in terms of their health care, valuable life with dignity, happily living with families, access to proper care, protection from abandonment, access to education and learning as well as social participation.

#### 3) The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly, 2002-2021 (Revised 2009)

The objectives of this Plan are to enhance the elderly to achieve their well-being by means of their leading a valuable life with dignity, autonomy and stable security. It is simultaneously to encourage Thai society in recognition of the elderly as valuable contributions and integrating their contributions to social development.



- **The strategy on the population readiness preparation for their quality ageing** comprising 3 main measures, i.e.

- (1) Measures on old age income security
- (2) Measures on lifelong education and learning
- (3) Measures on encouraging social conscience in recognition of the elderly value and dignity

- **The strategy on promotion and upgrading of the elderly** comprising 6 main measures, i.e.

- (1) Measures on health promotion, prevention from illness and preliminary self-care
- (2) Measures on promotion of the elderly gathering together as networks and strengthening the elderly representative organizations/networks
- (3) Measures on promotion of elderly occupations and income
- (4) Measures on support of the capable elderly
- (5) Measures on encouragement and support of all media to include the elderly programs and enabling the elderly to access knowledge, news and information
- (6) Measures on promotion and support of proper housing and friendly environment for the elderly

- **The strategy on the elderly social protection system** comprising 4 main measures, i.e.

- (1) Income protection
- (2) Health security
- (3) Families, caregivers and protection
- (4) Service systems and supportive networks

- **The strategy on managing to upgrade national work on the elderly and develop personnel thereof** comprising 2 main measures, i.e.

- (1) Managing to upgrade national integrated work on the elderly
- (2) Promotion and support of developing personnel on the elderly

- **The strategy on procession and upgrading of knowledge on the elderly and monitoring the implementation of the National Plans on the Elderly**

comprising 3 main measures, i.e.

- (1) Support, encouragement and upgrading of knowledge on the elderly so as to formulate policies and develop useful services or activities for them
- (2) Following up and monitoring the implementation of the National Plans on the elderly
- (3) Upgrading the elderly data system to be accurate and updated under the simply accessible database system.

Thailand by academics of the College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University has followed up to monitor the progress done in implementation of its 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly in every 5 years term (the 1<sup>st</sup> time of monitoring done in 2007 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> time done in 2012). The findings from such monitoring are used to modify some targets and indicators of the Plan, so that the agencies involved shall jointly supervise the work to achieve these targets in accordance with the relevant indicators. In 2017 the 3<sup>rd</sup> monitoring will subsequently be performed.

#### **4) The Act on the Elderly, 2003**

It expresses Thailand's efforts to encourage guarantee of right protection to the elderly in a form of "legislation". In 2003 the Act on the Elderly, 2003 was enacted and became in force on January 1, 2004. This law states that the Thai nationals aged complete 60 years shall be entitled to social, health, economic protection and support including benefit of access to public services and facilities as follows:

1. rapid and convenient medical and public health services;
2. education, religion, news and information useful for their living;
3. appropriate occupations and occupational training;
4. self-development and social activities participation and gathering together as networks;
5. facilities and safety in public buildings, places, vehicles and other public services;

6. support of transportation fares;
7. exempt from entrance fees in visiting the government places;
8. rescue and assistance for tortured or exploited or abandoned elderly persons;
9. counseling and suggestion on legal proceedings or family problem solutions;
10. provision of housing, food, clothing for them as deemed necessary;
11. support of monthly allowance; and
12. assistance in their funerals.

In addition, the Act on the Elderly, 2003 also stipulates to set up **the National Committee on the Elderly** to serve as a national mechanism on the elderly by the Prime Minister acting as its President. The National Committee on the Elderly comprises members who are representatives of relevant government and private agencies including specialists and academics, lecturers from educational institutes. The major responsibilities of the National Committee on the Elderly are to formulate policies and guidelines to protect, promote and support status, role and activities concerning the elderly as well as to monitor the implementation of the national policies and plans on the elderly. The National Committee on the Elderly regularly organizes its meeting once in each quarter of a year, where the agenda thereof shall be the matters resulting in the policy and the work on the elderly.

## 1.2 The Elderly Participation in Social and Development Activities

### The Elderly Participation in Elderly Clubs or Associations:

The government realizes importance of the elderly gathering together to perform activities. Consequently, **the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the Senior Citizen Council of Thailand** in collaboration with public and private agencies in sub-districts and provinces, encourage and support the elderly to gather together in the form of elderly clubs aiming at their participation in activities organized by their own groups where to join in activities so as to enhance and improve their physical, mental and social condition to eliminate their loneliness and depression especially those who live alone.

In 2005, Thailand proclaimed “Healthy Thailand” as the national agenda to encourage well-being in Thai people of all ages, it is stipulated to set up an elderly club in each sub-district, so there are elderly clubs in every sub-district of all provinces nationwide. Presently, there are approximately 25,000 elderly clubs. Normally, each elderly club organizes healthiness enhancement activities for the elderly such as exercise, hygiene knowledge enhancement, nutrition or physical & mental care for the elderly including recreational, religious, traditional and cultural activities. These activities are to encourage the elderly well-being and their chance to participate in social activities along with access to correct knowledge of how to perform themselves under the suitable self-care.

### 1.3 The Elderly and Work

#### 1.3.1 Promotion and Extension of the Elderly Vocational Chance:

The Ministry of Labour is assigned by the National Committee on the Elderly to extend chance and promote the elderly employment with the aim of lessening the labour shortage of the Country. To this end, the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with its agencies such as the Department of Employment and the Department of Skill Development and agencies involved under the Subcommittee on Promotion and Extension of Occupation for the Elderly, under the supervision of the National Committee on the Elderly, have jointly considered chance to widen occupational channels for the elderly by means of letting the elderly register to notify their intention to work and providing counsels on their occupations including disseminating information about labour markets for the recruitment that suits their knowledge, skill and meets the requirements of employers who desire to employ elderly labour aged more than 60 years onwards. In the meantime, institutes of skill development in provinces have organized vocational training for the elderly such as Thai massage, handicrafts, food preservation, etc. Moreover, many programs on income furtherance have been launched. For example, any elderly persons with specific knowledge, expertise or skill are invited to act as lecturers with remuneration to transmit their knowledge to trainees, i.e. various artistic work either making artificial flowers, handicrafts, weave, or music, etc.

Additionally, the Ministry of Labour is in the process of formulating the policy to create and extend occupational chance for the elderly by proposing the strategic plan on the elderly occupations, phase 1 (2017-2021) to the agencies involved for mutual implementation in cooperation with all sectors. The significance of such plan comprises distribution jobs up to homes and communities; extending the retirement age both in the public and the private business sectors; encouraging ongoing employment in the private sector; encouraging employment of elderly persons in jobs that suit their age, experience and physical capability as well as establishing database of the elderly labour markets. The said plan will serve as important instrumentality to encourage chance to include the elderly in the production force and to reduce the labour shortage problem in the manufacture and service sectors, which is the challenging issue of Thailand on the threshold of an ageing society.

### 1.3.2 Extension of the Retirement Age

As Thailand is facing shortage of specialists in several fields especially education and justice, the extension of the retirement age is applicable to judges, public prosecutors, lecturers at universities from 60 years to 65 years on a voluntary basis.

It is widely accepted that personnel in the course of justice such as judges and public prosecutors, are experienced and expert in a specific field with long-term skill in their performance of duties including experience and expertise in adjudication and making judgment. These make many senior judges and public prosecutors still able to perform their duties efficiently even at the age over the retirement age.

For the preceding reasons, the Judiciary, the Office of Attorneys General have promulgated the Act on Regulations of Appointment and Holding Office as Senior Judges, B.E. 2542 (1999) and the Act on Regulations of Appointment and Holding Office as Senior Attorneys General, B.E. 2543 (2000) so as to extend the age of retired and senior officials from 60 years to 65 years (on a voluntary basis). If any

judge and public prosecutor after having worked until their complete 65 years of age and are still able to continually perform their duties (and voluntary to continue their service), there is the consideration process which is done on a case-by-case basis by their supervision departments. In case of getting approved, such person can continually act as judge or public prosecutor until the complete 70 years of age.

Regarding the government educational institutes, there are lots of retired lecturers with knowledge, skill, expertise who are healthy and able to transmit their knowledge and experience to students. Moreover, some areas of knowledge are particularly possessed by each individual person especially the scientific field. Consequently, the Office of the Higher Education Commission under the Ministry of Education has issued the Regulations of Civil Servants in Universities, B.E. 2547 (2004 A.D.) stating that any civil servant in a university who acts as lecturer and has academic rank from the associate professor at his/her 60 years of age, can renew his/her service until the complete 65 years of age on a voluntary basis at discretion of the executive board of each university, which shall stipulate guidelines and procedures to renew the service age of lecturers at universities after retirement age taking account of his/her previous service record.

Additionally, in medical institutions such as hospitals or the faculty of medicine of universities, the senior medical doctors and lecturers who are specialists in each area especially the shortage areas of knowledge, are invited to continue their service after retirement age. That makes those senior doctors cum lecturers can continue to transfer their knowledge making a valuable contribution to the society and maintaining their knowledge, skill, particular expertise and occupational capacity as well as solving the problem of lacking particular specialized medical doctors.

Simultaneously, since 2009 the Office of the Civil Service Commission has announced the positions at the specialist level or high qualifications that can be extended the service from 60 years to 65 years of age, such as legal counsels, medical doctors, dentists and veterinarians and at the special skill level such as painters,

sculptors, musicians, fine and applied artists (music) and Thai classical dancers.

However, Thailand is in the process of encouraging extension of retirement age in the private business sector where the retirement age is fixed at 55 years to be extended to 60 years or further extended to 65 years. Additionally, it is seeking incentive measures to attract the private business sector to renewing employment of its employees or staff including executives whether full-time, part-time or advisory service so as to reduce the labour shortage problem and reduce expenses incurred in training new staff in replacement of those who retire at the retirement age. This also enhances good image of business entities in giving chance and realizing valuable knowledge, capability and expertise of the elderly by integrating them into the productivity of their organizations.

#### 1.4 Access to Knowledge, Education and Training

The Act on the Elderly, B.E. 2546 (2003 A.D.) stipulates to widen educational and learning chance for the elderly. In that connection, the Ministry of Education by the Office of Non-formal Education along with the Community Development Department under the Ministry of Interior have organized activities in community-based learning centers which provide services to people of all ages in each sub - district nationwide. Those activities are to enhance learning of the elderly through various media such as books, newspapers, articles including those in the form of radio, television and the Internet. Additionally, the community-based learning centers also launch interesting activities to transfer the elderly knowledge and wisdom to community members leading to integrating knowledge of the elderly with knowledge of other generations through a variety of activities. Transmission of vocational knowledge, skill and handicraft of the elderly to community members is to widen occupational chance and generate income for community members.

Moreover, many elderly clubs which are located in sub-districts have launched activities to encourage education and learning of the elderly; one significant activity is conducted in the form of the “**School for the Elderly**”, where to organize learning and teaching by elderly persons taking part therein as students and as teachers.

The subjects or courses to be run suit the desire and interest of elderly persons such as English, dialects, use of computers, handicrafts, cuisines and desserts, vocational training including artistic work, recreations and cultures, etc. Presently, the **School for the Elderly** is the popular activity where to exchange knowledge and the field trips to be made to any elderly clubs of good practice in order to guide establishment of networks, so that they can cooperate in educating elderly persons and sharing experience among them. The activities of the School for the Elderly are launched to enhance lifelong learning of the elderly.

## 1.5 Income Security, Social Protection/Social Security and Elimination of Poverty

### 1.5.1 Universal Monthly Allowance for Elderly Persons: Non-contributory Pension

The government has supported the poor elderly in the form of monthly allowance since 1993, where firstly the allowance was in the sum of 200 Baht (about US\$7). The elderly persons who are entitled to such allowance shall be the poor ones with no income, nor relatives nor family members to take care of, or be those who are abandoned; provided they are required to register themselves with their community leaders or sub-district administrative organizations (SAO) for means test and justification of their qualifications. At the beginning, there were 20,000 elderly persons nationwide accessing the said monthly allowance. Subsequently in 1999 the government increased the monthly allowance to 300 Baht (about US\$10) and simultaneously has gradually increased number of the entitled elderly persons. In 2007 the government by the Local Administration Department increased this monthly allowance to 500 Baht per month (about US\$17) and from 2009 onwards, the government has extended the chance to all elderly persons to equally receive this allowance (except public servants who are already entitled to the government pension). In 2012 the government has increased the amount of monthly allowance in accordance with the years of their growing old or the 'stair type' payment, therein the persons aged 60-69 are entitled to monthly allowance of 600 Baht (about US\$20), those who aged 70-79 entitled to monthly allowance of 700 Baht (about US\$23), those who aged 80-89 entitled to monthly allowance of 800 Baht (about



US\$26), and those who aged 90 years and more entitled to monthly allowance of 1,000 Baht (about US\$33).

### 1.5.2 Old Age Insurance

Since 1999 the Social Security Office, the Ministry of Labour has initiated a program of the old age insurance to the social security system (to cover accidents or injuries at work, at child delivery, disabilities, death, support for their children, ageing and unemployment). This is with the aim of providing protection in a form of pension at old age for employees in any firms or companies which have 1 employee and more after their retirement or at their complete 55 years of age. Such pension shall be paid to employees who insure themselves and make contributions to the social security fund and have reached the complete age of 55 years and ceased their employment.

Since the initiation of the old age insurance in 1999, the Social Security Office has paid compensation in the form of retirement bonus to the insured aged 55. Regarding monthly old age pension, it shall begin to be paid after the insured has made contributions for not less than 180 months (15 years) and be paid to the insured employees throughout their life. The Social Security Office shall begin to pay old age pension to the insured from 2014 onwards.

In 2015 there are employees insured under the social security system about 13 million persons nationwide, and the old age pension has been paid to about 10,000 persons of the insured who have already retired from their work.

### 1.5.3 Government Pension Fund

This fund is established to provide financial welfare for public servants at old age aiming at setting disciplines for regular monthly savings for the fund members during their working age. The government makes partial contributions to the fund while the contributions made by the members are partially invested for such returns as permitted by law and then the said returns taken to be allocated for refunding to the members. Presently (2015) there are approximately 1 million public servants as members of the fund.

#### 1.5.4 Provident Fund

It is the fund mutually established by employers and employees for income stability at retirement age. The fund is raised by means of monthly contributions jointly made by the employers and the employees who are admitted as the fund members. This fund is established to set disciplines for employees for consecutive saving so as to ensure the income stability at their retirement age, where the employers assist in contributions to the fund. Members of the provident fund shall receive their full amount of money at termination of their membership or at retirement age. The money to be refunded to members comprise the whole contributions consecutively made by the members along with contributions made by the employer and benefit arising from investment of the fund, which will support expenses of the members at retirement age so as to ensure quality of their life. Such money from the provident fund which is refunded to members at retirement age shall fully be exempt from tax. The Office of the Securities and Exchange Commission is the agency which registers the provident fund and regulates standards and ratings of the agencies that service the provident fund. In 2015 there are 414 provident funds and 2.8 million employees who are members of those funds.

#### 1.5.5 National Savings Fund

The Act on the National Savings Fund, B.E. 2554 (2011 A.D.) implemented by the Fiscal Policy Office under the Ministry of Finance aimed at building the income security at old age by means of savings for those working age (15-59 years) people who still have no income security after retirement age or those informally employed people not covered by the social security system. The objectives of this fund are to set disciplines of saving for people at their working age serving as income security in the form of monthly pension after retirement age. The National Savings Fund was, therefore, established in 2015 and is deemed as one significant measure of ensuring and upgrading old age income security for employees, where any employees admitted to membership of the National Savings Fund shall make monthly contributions thereto with the government mutual contributions. When the members at complete 60 years of age shall consecutively be entitled to monthly pension throughout their life.

### 1.5.6 Tax Privilege for the Elderly

**The Revenue Department**, the Ministry of Finance provides following tax privileges as social support for the elderly:

1) Tax deduction entitled to any child who takes care and supports his/her own parents of not exceeding 30,000 Baht per year per one parent, and tax deduction of not exceeding 30,000 Baht per year for supporting one non-income parent-in-law.

2) Tax deduction entitled to any child who takes care of his/her own parents by a means of purchasing health insurance policies for their parents, of not exceeding 15,000 Baht deduction per year per one parent; and purchasing health insurance policies for their parents-in-law, of not exceeding 15,000 Baht deduction per year per one parent-in-law.

3) Tax deduction entitled to persons aged 65 years and more, while any person aged 65 years and more who gains income of not exceeding 190,000 Baht per annum shall be entitled to tax exemption.

### 1.5.7 The Elderly Fund

The Elderly Fund is established in 2004 pursuant to the Act on the Elderly 2003 in order to serve as the government fund for assisting expenditure on promotion, support and protection of the elderly; thereby the government supports the budgets to the Elderly Fund in each year. The Elderly Fund is managed and regulated by its Executive Board appointed by the National Committee on the Elderly.

The Elderly Fund serves as the elderly financial resources especially to support activities of elderly groups, clubs or networks in the elderly occupational enhancing and upgrading.

#### **Objectives of the Elderly Fund Expenditure are:**

1. To support programs/projects in order to promote and develop the elderly in terms of education, health, social living, religion, data and information, news, occupations, social activities participation, promoting the role of volunteers, encouraging the target group to act as community networks. The support shall be provided in compliance with the size of programs/projects, i.e. small, medium or large ones.

2. To provide loans for elderly persons so as to serve as their occupational capital. In case of individuals, the loans shall be granted not exceeding 30,000 Baht per person and in case of groups, those groups shall have not less than 5 members. Such loans shall be repaid in installments within the term of not exceeding 3 years without interest.

3. To support organizations involved in counseling or legal proceedings including family problem solutions for the elderly by assisting with court fees and other necessary expenses in legal action.

In each year the Elderly Fund is fiscally supported of approximately 120 million Baht and is granted as occupational loans for approximately 50,000 elderly persons per year.

#### 1.5.8 Financial Support for Elderly Funerals

The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has issued the Ministerial Notifications Re: “Stipulation of Guidelines, Methodologies and Conditions of Aid, Facilitation and Provision of Traditional Funerals Support”, B.E. 2547 (2004) with objectives to provide financial support for funerals for poor elderly persons who pass away in the amount of 2,000 Baht each.

### 1.6 The Elderly and Emergency

#### Aid Provided for Elderly Persons Facing Social Problems

The government provides various aid for elderly persons who are facing natural disasters and social problems either current or long-term aid such as financial support or emergency homes, aid for foods, clothes, medicines, medical treatments and health rehabilitation, counsels via the call center of the One Stop Service Crisis Center (OSCC) at telephone no. 1300, as well as aid in legal proceedings including the counsel on admission to the emergency homes and the old people’s homes for those elderly persons without family nor caregiver. The agencies in charge in this matter are **the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Interior** and **the Ministry of Justice**.

For the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (M-Society), 2 ministerial notifications have been issued involving aid for elderly persons who are encountering social problems, namely

1) The Ministerial Notifications Re: **“Stipulation of Guidelines, Methodologies and Conditions of Aid, Facilitation and Provision of Housing, Food and Clothing for All Elderly Persons in Need”** with the aim of providing aid for those elderly persons with no housing, or suffering food and other basic necessities shortages.

2) The Ministerial Notifications Re: **“Stipulation of Guidelines, Methodologies and Conditions of Aid, Facilitation and Provision of Support for Elderly Persons Who Are Illegally Abused or Exploited or Abandoned as well as Counseling Service”**, B.E. 2548 (2005) with the aim of counseling and helping those elderly persons who are abandoned and facing financial and mental trouble.

Additionally, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in collaboration with sub-district administrative organizations (SAO) select any areas risky to natural disasters such as flood, landslide and then organize training for officers of SAO and the people sector involved where to educate and guide them in aiding elderly persons facing those disasters whether preparation and provision of aid during disasters and rehabilitation thereafter. To this end, media on knowledge, guidance and ways to practice including relevant handbooks are prepared for use in training and disseminating, supporting and extending the range of actions thereof.

For **the Ministry of Justice** by **the Rights and Liberties Protection Department**, it has set up the **“Justice Clinic”** in every province throughout the Country to provide counseling service on rights protection stipulated under the law including to coordinate with the Lawyers Council of Thailand and other agencies involved to seek lawyers for elderly persons who have to take legal action or to support expenses funded by the agencies involved in case of legal action as well as to educate elderly persons the correct knowledge of rights and liberties as stipulated by law.

## 2. Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age



## 2. Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age

### 2.1 Access to Health Service on the Equal and Full Coverage Basis

Thailand by the National Health Security Office (NHSO) provides security for integral health care services for the elderly free of charge. In this connection, the agencies under the Ministry of Public Health are responsible for such health care services in all levels covering diseases prevention, filtering out diseases, treatments and physical and mental health enhancement such as mouth and dental care, sight care, physical therapy under rehabilitation services, provision of assistive devices for elderly persons with disabilities in order to facilitate their movement and daily activities performance, as well as referral service to send elderly patients to receive treatments continually at other medical care institutions in the necessary cases. The elderly can access those health care services at all governmental hospitals nationwide in sub-districts, districts and provinces.

In addition, taking convenience for the elderly into account, the Ministry of Public Health has organized healthiness encouragement services for the elderly including benefit to access varieties and full coverage health care services as follows:-

#### 2.1.1 Home Health Care (HHC)

The Ministry of Public Health provides health care services for the elderly by focusing on the convenient services at home through the health network system at all levels from sub-district hospitals (sub-district health system: SDHS), district hospitals (**district health system: DHS**) where there are health data collation, health care services in medical care institutions, encouragement of volunteer caregivers to act as mechanism in taking care and enhancing diseases prevention to protect the elderly. Additionally, there are proactive health care services by the “**Family Care Teams**” comprising **multidisciplinary** teams from community and provincial hospitals to give health care to the elderly such as **home visiting** to provide health counsel and health examination at home (**Home Health Care**). The target groups are those elderly persons discharged from hospital and requiring consecutive care at home, such as those with chronic disease or disabilities, those who are bedridden unable to perform daily activities themselves so requiring close care and watch over; inter alia those with chronic disease are the main target group of the home health care service.

The multidisciplinary team consists of physicians, nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers and hygienists. They will pay visits to elderly persons and provide them with care and treatments, provide family members or caregivers of elderly persons with counsels to educate them on knowledge and correct understanding so as to enable them to properly care for elderly persons, as well as follow up on their services from time to time.

### **2.1.2 Providing the fast lane for older persons to use OPD (outpatient diagnosis) services in hospitals**

Every governmental hospital provides the fast lane for elderly persons or special right to access diagnoses via the fast lane arranged separately from the normal lane for general patients so as to facilitate and assist elderly persons to access health care services more rapidly and take no long time to receive treatments.

### **2.1.3 Particularly opening elderly clinics in a form of comprehensive care services**

The governmental medical care institutions either the central or the provincial or the community's ones open the elderly clinic in the OPD ward to particularly provide comprehensive care services for elderly persons either physical or mental health, or social trouble as necessary and compatible to problems of each elderly person, including identifying and performing operations for cataract free of charge. Additionally, assistive devices are provided such as canes, wheelchairs and other devices if it is necessary for any elderly persons to use such devices in their daily life.

### **2.1.4 The Project of Dentures in the service of HM the King**

It is a campaign for promoting and rehabilitating oral and dental hygiene for elderly persons free of charge to help them have teeth for proper chew. This Project has been launched since 2005. In each year, the Department of Health under the Ministry of Public Health sets the target to fix/insert dentures for approximately 35,000 elderly persons nationwide. From 2005 to 2015, there are about 400,000 elderly persons granted denture and about 10,000 elderly persons granted denture



roots under this program launched in the service of HM the King. Elderly persons can approach for such service at more than 200 hospitals nationwide.

### 2.1.5 Filter out dementia in elderly persons

Under the national health security scheme, the Ministry of Public Health by medical care institutions of all levels around the Country provide physical examination for elderly persons where to simultaneously filter out their dementia. In addition, the Department of Mental Health under the Ministry of Public Health also launches a campaign for training and preparing media to disseminate knowledge to personnel in hospitals and stakeholders nationwide including elderly caregivers, as well as conducts activities for elderly persons to know how to prevent themselves from dementia.

To this end, there is much cooperation among educational institutes such as the Faculty of Medicine, Mahidol University, and the Public Health System Research Institute in researching and filtering out dementia since occurrence so as to give preventive, curative and rehabilitative care subsequently.

### 2.1.6 The Project of Health Promotion Temples

The Project of Health Promotion Temples is launched by the Ministry of Public Health with targets in all 878 districts of all 76 provinces around the Country. It is aimed to have 1 health promotion temple per each district. The objectives of this Project are to combine health knowledge with religious activities for community members where temples serve as the community place to organize activities in which elderly persons usually participate. Consequently, enhancement of health knowledge through the monks' preaching is in compliance and compatibility with lifestyles of old folk.

### 2.1.7 The Project for Development of the Community Based Integrated Health Care and Social Welfare Model for the Elderly

The Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launch the LTOP project on care service for the frail elderly and other

vulnerable people. This project is extended from the Project for Development of the Community Based Integrated Health Care and Social Welfare Model for the Elderly (CTOP) in Thailand which was completed in 2011. The LTOP project has operation term during 2013 - 2017 with objectives to study and develop the long-term care model that will be suitable for the frail elderly through the integrating knowledge, resources and the interacting among the agencies involved to build and propose the model which can serve as the 'prototype' of the elderly long-term care service. It is implemented in 6 pilot sub-districts where to train the relevant personnel for knowledge, skill and experience in tasks both in policy and practice in Thailand and Japan along with to organize the training for care managers and caregivers. This is aimed at creating knowledge and skill required for formulating the elderly long-term care plan both health and social care plans. In the meantime, there are processes of close and consecutive monitoring and evaluating any changes thereof and health of elderly persons therein in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the elderly long-term care system either at homes or in institutions. Additionally, based on the monitoring of implementation of this project in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2015, it appears that this project can successfully widen and improve capacity of the cooperation mechanism in both policy and practice at the sub-district level for providing the elderly with long-term care services in compliance with the context and fact of the elderly in each pilot areas.

## 2.2 The Elderly and Their HIV/AIDS Infection

The Ministry of Public Health has reported that about 1.46 percent of HIV infected patients are elderly persons or equaling about 5,000 persons from all 400,000 HIV infected patients (2014). Under the National Health Security Scheme, HIV infected patients shall be entitled to receive anti-virus drugs gratis from all governmental hospitals. Anti-virus drugs can strengthen health and lessen various disease infections causing the HIV infected patients able to live longer. For the poor HIV infected patients shall be entitled to apply for registration to receive the 'subsidy for HIV infected patients' paid by the sub-district administrative organizations where their domiciles are situated. Such subsidy shall be monthly paid in the amount of 500 Baht until those patients die.

In addition, any AIDS impacted elderly persons such as those who have to care their HIV infected family members or care their orphan children whose parents died of HIV, can apply for further support either financial or counsel provided by sub-district administrative organizations (SAO) and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The said support is given in forms of financial support, survival kits and scholarships for orphans and children whose parents died of HIV.

Simultaneously, those AIDS impacted elderly persons shall access help from home caregiving volunteers who have passed the relevant training where the volunteers will visit and raise their morale and assist in coordinating with the agencies involved to provide further support for them if necessary.

### **2.3 Training of caregivers and professionals in elderly caregiving**

The Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Thai Red Cross Society, the Senior Citizen Council of Thailand and the National Health Security Office support to organize the training to educate necessary knowledge and skill in the elderly caregiving for the parties involved under the following programs:

#### **- Training of Public Health Personnel**

It is the training to educate knowledge, skill and experience in elderly caregiving for doctors, nurses and medical personnel including training in medical treatments, health enhancement, prevention from health risks and health rehabilitation. It is to encourage knowledge and skill particularly in elderly caregiving. The trainees come from the medical institutions nationwide such as central hospitals, provincial hospitals, community hospitals and health care centers. Duration of the training depends on contents thereof and necessity to specific areas of elderly caregiving, i.e. treatments and care for specific diseases, etc.

Additionally, in each year the Faculty of Medicine in universities including the Ministry of Public Health grant scholarships and budgets for specific training to doctors who are interested in any relevant courses especially the gerontology to participate in additional study or training abroad and return to work as expert gerontologists.

### - Training of Elderly Caregivers

It is the training to educate knowledge and skill of basic elderly care giving for people or any person to act as elderly caregivers. The training provides knowledge and skill of elderly care taking of both the healthy elderly and the frail elderly with chronic disease or the bedridden elderly. Most of the trainees are elderly family members or any people interested in performing duties as an elderly caregiver.

Additionally, the Ministry of Public Health by the Department of Health budgeted by the National Health Security Office have organized the training of public health personnel to act as care managers. It is to educate knowledge of formulating the care plan for an individual elderly. This training takes 70 hours period to train personnel which mostly are the public health personnel to have knowledge, understanding and capacity in formulating care plans and interacting with caregivers or volunteers in each sub-district.

Moreover, many educational institutes including the business sector which realize the demand and requirement in producing personnel to act as elderly caregivers have organized short-term training courses (approximately 12 weeks) to educate knowledge and skill of elderly caregiving responsively to the requirement of the caregivers as well as provide them with recruitment after their passing those training courses.

## 2.4 The Elderly and Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health has published handbooks on basic elderly mental health care to serve as guidelines of the elderly caregiving and organizes the training in the elderly mental health enhancement aiming to educate the elderly caregivers in communities on the useful basic knowledge and skill. These handbooks are designed for training as the basic instrument for the caregiving volunteers to filter out and assess mental health of elderly persons during home visits. The preliminary filtering out by such instrument enables the volunteers to assess the primary mental health of the elderly thereby the volunteers can coordinate and approach for proper treatments for any elderly persons vulnerable to mental health problems, namely worry, loneliness and depression.

In addition, the Department of Mental Health also supports health care hospitals in sub-districts and community hospitals in districts to launch the elderly mental health care programs which cover activities for prevention from mental disorder and enhancement of mental health. Those activities comprise brain exercise by means of stimulating perception and memory, activities to strengthen self-confidence and encourage social participation or recreational activities to lessen the risk to dementia and depression of the elderly.

## 2.5 The Elderly and Disabilities

Based on the data on persons with disabilities in 2015, it shows that there are more than 1.5 million persons with disabilities. Among these persons, more than 50% are persons aged over 60 years. The elderly with disabilities are entitled to their rights under the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act of 2007 where they are required to register themselves and receive ID cards for persons with disabilities at the National Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in Bangkok and at the Provincial Offices of Social Development and Human Security nationwide. The aid provided to the elderly with disabilities covers free health care services such as medical treatments, rehabilitation and assistive equipment in accordance with their need.

The elderly with disabilities are also entitled to the monthly financial support of 800 Baht or referred to as the ‘**disability pension**’ (apart from their old-age pension with the sum entitled in ascending order according to their ageing). This is to enable the elderly with disabilities to afford money for their quality living.

Moreover, the Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities provides loan services without interest for any elderly persons with disabilities who are still able to work serving as their occupational funds where the loan of not exceeding 40,000 Baht is permissible for each of elderly persons with disabilities.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in collaboration with sub-district administrative organizations organize training for volunteers in communities to enable them to give preliminary health and social help to persons with disabilities in communities such as home visits, social aid, care and watching over, interaction with the agencies involved to make them a referral i.e. necessary medical treatments for the purpose of persons and the elderly with disabilities achievement of their well-being.

### 3. Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environment



### 3. Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environment

#### 3.1 Housing and Living Environment

##### Arrangement of Friendly Environment for the Elderly

Since 2005 the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning under the Ministry of Interior has issued the Ministerial Rules stipulating facilities in buildings for disabled persons and elderly persons, therein it contains significance on provision of facilities such as signage displaying locations of facilities, ramps and elevators, stairs, parking, entrances and exits between buildings, doors, toilets, different touch surfaces. In that connection, theatres, auditoriums and hotels which are public places are stated under those Ministerial Rules to provide the aforesaid facilities for convenience of disabled persons and elderly persons in access to such public services.

To set a trend and conduct a campaign for the public awareness and interest in arrangement of friendly environment and facilities for the elderly:- The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in cooperation with academics from the Faculty of Architecture of Chulalongkorn University, and the Faculty of Architecture of Chiang Mai University and Thammasat University as well as the sub-district administrative organizations have organized the training since 2009 to educate on provision of facilities in housing including public buildings and places where community members access for joint usage, namely health care centers, elderly centers, temples, markets, post offices, police stations and municipalities/sub-district administrative organizations, etc. Additionally, many understandable handbooks are published to disseminate knowledge to people and elderly persons on design, construction and modification of buildings such as to fix railings, ramps, sufficient lighting in houses as well as to apply domestically available materials to design and installation so as to reduce expenses, i.e. to substitute bamboos for iron railings for the elderly to grip on, etc.

Apart from the preceding work, there are services of housing modification and repair provided for the elderly by the Ministry of Social Development and

Human Security in cooperation with sub-district administrative organizations. The process thereof is to survey and collate data on any housing unsuitable and risky to accidents and unsafe for the elderly, then set the list of priorities to get dealt first under the supporting budgets. This is with the aim of achieving the safe and friendly housing and environment for the elderly.

In the meantime, the private business sector especially real estate, sanitary facilities and construction materials businesses take on the more vital role in enhancing the safe and friendly environment for the elderly. To this end, the models of safe and friendly housing for the elderly are provided with safe and friendly toilets and sanitary facilities. New materials are designed and innovated to ease more convenience in living for the growing old and the elderly which are increasing in number and becoming prospective buyers of such facilities as responsively to their need at old age.

### 3.2 The Community Volunteer Caregivers for the Elderly

The Project of the Elderly Home Caregiving Volunteers is initiated in 2003 as a pilot project with objectives to provide care and support for the elderly in communities by means of training community members to act as home caregiving volunteers. The training takes 3 days and is organized in target communities. The contents of training are fundamental knowledge on both theory and practice of servicing as home caregivers for the elderly. After training, the trainees who have successfully passed the training and desire to join the Project shall apply for acting as elderly home caregivers subsequently. The Project of the Elderly Home Care Giving Volunteers is adopted by the Cabinet in 2007 and has been extended to all sub-districts nationwide since 2013. The extensive training for volunteers who are going to act as the elderly home caregivers has been arranged in collaboration with sub-district administrative organizations and the Senior Citizen Council of Thailand.

These volunteer caregivers will be assigned to pay usual visits to the elderly to talk and serve as mentor and simultaneously perform other duties as follows:



- offering companionship;
- looking after their meals and medicines;
- assisting in their bathing and dressing;
- cleaning their house;
- arranging and adjusting inner environment of their house;
- looking after their health and exercise;
- taking them to see the doctor;
- coordinating with health personnel to facilitate home health care for the elderly;
- visiting elderly inpatients;
- taking them to participate in community activities;
- coordinating with government agencies to assist the elderly who are in need of help.

This Project of Community Home Care Giving Volunteers for the Elderly is not only directly useful for the elderly well-being, but also encourages family and community members who previously neglected or gave insufficient care to the elderly turn to review and realize the importance of providing proper care to the elderly including the necessary treatment toward elderly members in their own families and communities. In the meantime, this Project still plays the significant role in conservation of tradition and culture of unity, respect, gratitude and assistance, support and care for the elderly. In 2015 there are more than 80,000 volunteer caregivers providing care for the elderly in communities nationwide.

### 3.3 The Community-based Elderly Development Centers

The Community – based Elderly Development Center (CEDC\*) is the implementation of the development concept extended from the Multipurpose Senior Citizen Centers which has been operated by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security since 2007 serving as the pilot project launched in 8 sub-districts in 8 provinces and subsequently extended to other areas that get ready to set up CEDC.

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\*Only for the purpose of simplifying understanding of the contents herein, it shall be, in no case, deemed the official abbreviation.

The government has provided financial support to establish CEDC in all 878 districts in every province nationwide since 2014 by means of upgrading the previous multipurpose centers to form CEDC with the intention that CEDC will serve as the place for the elderly and persons in other age groups in communities to join in activities together (or the ‘Elderly Activities Center’). The activities of CEDC cover both activities organized inside and outside the centers focusing on encouragement of the elderly participation, so that they can access their life quality enhancement whether physical, mental health or social status through the transmission of knowledge, experience, wisdom, promotion of their occupational skill for additional income, promotion and development of their volunteer caregivers to collate and analyze elderly data and to simultaneously act as the significant community-based mechanism for watching over, caring for and safeguarding the elderly as well as taking part in launching activities to enhance the elderly wellness.

In addition, CEDC is supported in terms of cooperation, resources, knowledge, and volunteers outsourced from other agencies, i.e. sub-district and provincial authorities, educational institutes, organizations with public interests, charity organizations, including the business sector, such as hospitals, offices of the Thai Red Cross Society, colleges, universities, elderly networks, companies and various business entities, etc.

### **3.4 The Elderly Social Welfare Development Centers**

The Elderly Social Welfare Development Centers provide services in supporting and caring for the elderly. It is modification of the previous services in admitting the poor and vulnerable elderly without caregivers into the centers serving as homes to support and care for them. Presently, the services thereof are widened to include the following activities:-

1. Collation and preparation of data and information about the elderly social welfare;
2. Organizing training to develop the elderly caregiving personnel;
3. Encouraging learning about the elderly welfare provision;

4. Providing the institutional care for the elderly;
5. Providing social welfare services for the elderly in communities; and
6. Providing counsel on the elderly

Now there are 12 Elderly Social Welfare Development Centers and there are 13 old people's homes transferred from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to the supervision of sub-district administrative organizations in all regions of Thailand.

### 3.5 Abandonment, Abuse and Exploitation of the Elderly

#### Assistance for the Elderly on Social Problems

The government provides various assistance for those elderly encountering social problems both temporary and long-term assistance such as financial support on a case-by-case basis, emergency homes, foods, clothing, medical treatments, care and rehabilitation, counseling and help in legal proceedings, counseling including admitting them to old people's homes in case of no family or no caregiver. The agencies responsible for providing services and assistance for the elderly who face difficulties are **the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security** in collaboration with **the Ministry of Public Health** and **the Ministry of Justice**.

For the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, there issued the Ministerial Notifications Re: **"Stipulation of Guidelines, Methodologies and Conditions of Aid, Facilitation and Provision of Housing, Food and Clothing for All Elderly Persons in Need, 2005"** and Re: **"Stipulation of Guidelines, Methodologies and Conditions of Aid, Facilitation and Provision of Support for Elderly Persons Who Are Illegally Abused or Exploited or Abandoned as well as Counseling Service, 2005"** with the aim of counseling and helping those elderly persons who are abandoned and facing difficulties. Additionally, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has published handbooks on how to provide assistance for the abused elderly as the guidelines for the relevant agencies on care and assistance to be provided for the illegally exploited elderly.

For **the Ministry of Justice** by **the Rights and Liberties Protection Department**, it has set up the **“Justice Clinic”** in every province nationwide therein the volunteers join to provide counseling service on rights protection stipulated under the law and to coordinate with the Lawyers Council of Thailand and other agencies involved in order to seek lawyers for elderly persons who have to take legal proceedings or to support expenses funded by the agencies involved in case of legal proceedings as well as to educate elderly persons correct knowledge of rights and liberties as stipulated by law.

### 3.6 The Elderly Image

#### Organizing the National Day of Older Persons

Since 1982 the Cabinet has proclaimed the 13<sup>th</sup> April in each year, which is the Thai New Year’s Day, the National Day of Older Persons. In that connection, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is designated as the agency to coordinate with the public and the private sectors nationwide to organize the Older Persons’ Week Fair under the specified theme each year for the purpose of campaigning for and stimulating the public awareness of the elderly importance. Therefore, during the week of the 13<sup>th</sup> April every year, varieties of activities are conducted for the National Day of Older Persons, namely the elderly health enhancement, sports and recreations, an exhibition of elderly wisdom, religious, cultural and traditional activities, and an inventions contest. That is to express gratitude, respect and realization of the elderly great contribution to the Thai society. Additionally, in each year there arranged to seek, select and award the **‘Elderly Person of the Year’**, who sets a good example to the society.

The activities on the National Day of Older Persons are arranged nationwide in the mutual collaboration of all sectors therein elderly persons and people of all ages participate. Those activities will stimulate the pride in the elderly themselves, so that they recognize their valuable contribution to family, community and society and are improved their morale through the extolling as the elderly.

### 3.7. The Elderly Brain Bank

On the occasion of HM the Queen’s Birthday in 2000, HM the Queen gave royal words that Thailand should encourage and support any elderly persons with

expertise who had retired from their service in public agencies, state enterprises, and private entities to contribute their knowledge, capacity and experience to development of the Country. Some of those elderly persons were still healthy and willing to use their knowledge and experience to join in social and national development. The concept based on HM the Queen's royal words leads to the establishment of Brain Bank to serve as the center to access those retired elderly persons through the collation of information about their expertise set up as the database to disseminate and publicize to agencies, organizations involved; so that they can use in approaching those elderly persons for counsels according to their areas of skill, knowledge and capacity. Presently, there are about 5,000 names of elderly persons who possess expertise in all regions nationwide listed in the Brain Bank in various fields of knowledge such as medicine and public health, community-based welfare, education, agriculture, handicrafts, arts, culture, history, religion including their invented innovation. Most of these elderly persons of about 80 percent are those who have retired from the government sector. The Cabinet designates the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board to take charge of the Brain Bank with the duties to compile the register of members of the Elderly Brain Bank to disseminate and publicize to the public and simultaneously support establishment of provincial brain bank networks in all 77 provinces to deal in encouragement, support and coordination in compilation of the provincial databases of skillful elderly persons to connect with the central database.

In the meantime, since 2004 the Project of Community Elderly Brain Bank has been launched with the objectives to search, collate and compile registers of elderly persons who own expertise and local wisdom in various fields in communities in order to set up as the community brain bank database aiming at transferring wisdom of those elderly persons for use in community and society development. The community elderly brain bank is contributed by many parts and sectors and in the process of extension to various communities throughout the Country. Now there are more than 23,000 elderly persons registered in the community elderly brain bank system.

Additionally, in each year the Department of Older Persons organizes ‘**the Wisdom Flea Market for Job Placement**’ by displaying pieces of work created through the elderly wisdom in various fields, transmitting the elderly wisdom to any interested persons attending such event, publication of the elderly wisdom via several public media, including organizing the mobile wisdom podium where elderly experts access chance to transmit their knowledge, capacity and wisdom to the public with the objectives to widen occupations for generating income or supplemental income for people. The mobile wisdom podium has been organized both in Bangkok and every province throughout the Country.

### 3.8 The Elderly Entitlement to Use of the Public Transport Services

The Ministry of Transport and the state enterprises in charge of public transport entitle elderly persons aged 60 years and more to special reduction of fares for travel. For example, in case of domestic air travel via any Thai airliners, the elderly are entitled to 15% discount of fare, and are provided with special seats in the buildings during waiting for going on board. The elderly are deemed privileged passengers in all flights. For the land travel, the State Railway of Thailand, public buses, the Metropolitan Rapid Transit (MRT), and the Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand entitle the elderly to 50% discount fares. In addition, the Marine Department and the travel by sea services such as ferries and passenger boats also privilege the elderly, i.e. exemption from fare. These are to grant benefits to the elderly under the Act on the Elderly, B.E. 2546 (2003) and to provide convenience for the elderly as well as reduce their transport expenditure.

Moreover, in 2013 the Ministry of Transport particularly issued the Ministerial Rules to specify the aspects or provision of assistive devices and facilities or services in buildings, in vehicles or transport services in order to make them accessible to and usable for elderly persons and disabled persons. It is focused on the facilities outside buildings such as the public mass transport, footpaths, crosswalks, etc., on encouragement to set the trend in inducing the business and the service sectors to arrange facilities for elderly persons and disabled persons, i.e. provision of wheelchairs, seats, restrooms, ramps, parking specifically for elderly persons and disabled persons within business buildings including shopping centers, tourist attractions, and entertainment venues, etc.

## 4. Implementation and Follow-up



## 4. Implementation and Follow-up

### 4.1 Monitoring and Assessment of the Implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly (NPE)\*

Monitoring to assess implementation of policies and plans is the necessary instrument to see effectiveness and achievement as well as to know any problems, obstacles and limitations thereof. The monitoring and assessment is performed in each 5 years of the implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly: the 1<sup>st</sup> monitoring was performed in 2007, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2012. The academics of the College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University has followed up to monitor the progress done in implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan on the Elderly (2002 – 2021). The way and process of the said monitoring is to study the implementation both quantitatively and qualitatively either for policy or practice in the areas and with the sampling nationwide.

Based on the assessment, it shows that Thailand holds strong points or advantages of the policy on the elderly because its national plan on the elderly serves as the master plan to orientate the Country's action on the elderly. Additionally, the Act on the Elderly has been promulgated to reflect intention of the government to protect the elderly. However, the integration of work on the elderly is still the issue to take into account and to subsequently further the effective implementation in collaboration with all sectors. Moreover, change of the governments for many times has resulted in discontinuance and non-sustainability of the policy on the elderly. Apart from this, politicians at either the local or the national level do not pay enthusiastic attention to upgrading the elderly well-being and the elderly networks themselves still are not strengthened enough to approach the government and the entities involved for protection and enhancement of their rights. In this connection, **to encourage the elderly issue as the national agenda may be a probable measure to enable and upgrade the work on the elderly.**

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Base on the findings from monitoring the implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> NPE for its previous 10 years term, the following significant issues are proposed to take into action for the subsequent stage, namely setting up the economic security, enhancing the income security by encouraging saving for old age and the national old age pension system, preparing readiness for quality ageing especially juvenile and working age persons, and modifying public facilities to properly and safely suit the elderly, as well as preparing for long-term elderly caregiving.

The monitoring of implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> NPE for the third time/the next time will be performed in 2016.

#### 4.2 Compilation of 'the Situation of the Thai Elderly'

In each year, the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute budgeted by the Elderly Fund compiles the report on the Situation of the Thai Elderly to present various statistical data of the elderly such as health, education and learning, economic condition, income and work, caregiving, social participation, findings of gerontology researches and the remarkable situation of the elderly in each year as well as recommendations involving policies.

The Situation of the Thai Elderly which is compiled every year is not only presented to the National Committee on the Elderly and the Cabinet, but it also serves as reference documentation for the analysis and decision of policies on the elderly as well as for dissemination of the useful information to the public.

#### 4.3 The National Survey of the Elderly

The National Statistical Office has conducted the national surveys of the elderly in every 5 years (the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 1997, the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 2002, the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 2007, the 4<sup>th</sup> time in 2011 and the 5<sup>th</sup> time in 2014). In that connection, the National Statistical Office in collaboration with the relevant government agencies and educational institutes will organize meetings to jointly discuss in order to know the required information about the elderly and then to design the survey format and sampling for collation of the elderly data and information nationwide. These surveys are focused on exploration of the data and information required by the government agencies for the purpose of analyzing, planning and deciding the subsequent policies.

## Challenging issues for the subsequent implementation of action on the elderly

### 1. Building Income Security for Old Age

As Thailand has very short time to turn the complete aged society and the super aged society, it is important to prepare the working age people to access the stable income security, so that they can lead their quality retirement life. To this end, it should promote correct knowledge and understanding to ensure their financial literacy under the appropriate savings system. Although Thailand has established the National Saving Fund to serve as the government fund to encourage the income security for working age people at their old age (where members of the Fund shall make monthly contributions thereto jointly with the government monthly contributions), since most of the elderly live their longer life, it comes the period necessary for the elderly to generate more income to spend at retirement age through varieties of saving options which are necessary and important to set up the stable income security for the elderly.

### 2. Promotion and Extension of Occupational Chance for the Elderly

On the threshold of the complete aged society from now on parallel to the continual reduction of the birth rate, these have directly resulted in the decrease in proportions of the working age persons in Thailand, while number of the elderly is rapidly increasing. The insufficiency of labour in Thailand becomes the challenging fact toward its economic system. For the preceding reasons, to encourage the elderly to access occupational chance will be the solution to the shortage of labour both in the present and in the future for Thailand. In addition, the elderly especially those who are in the 60-70 age group, mostly are still healthy, capable with efficiency, experience and expertise. Therefore, providing chance for those elderly persons to apply their knowledge and capacity to contribution and productivity of the economic system of the Country can enhance the active ageing where they can use their capacity and experience to serve as a contribution to the manufacture, the service and the academic sectors, and can give counsels as well as act as volunteers. Moreover, transmission of wisdom by the elderly can

provide them with chance to remain in workforce either as full-timers, freelancers or consultants, etc.

### 3. Building and Developing the Long-term Elderly Caregiving

In preparation of readiness for the ageing society, Thailand through the cooperation among the relevant government agencies and the educational institutes carries out researches to develop the long-term elderly caregiving with the aim of encouraging all sectors to readily cope with the need of long-term elderly care in both urban and rural zones. Since the National Committee on the Elderly (NCE)\* realizes the necessity of the long-term elderly care; therefore, NCE designates the subcommittee to bear responsibility for studies and researches to upgrade and subsequently launch the efficient long-term elderly caregiving project in compliance with the Thai social context. It is to manage responsively to the rapidly increasing quantity and requirement of the long-term elderly caregiving proportionally to the increasing number of the elderly who lives their longer life, including those who also need long-term care, i.e. elderly persons ill of chronic disease. The Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Ministry of Interior are the main agencies to interact to provide knowledge, resources and cooperation in setting and upgrading the system responsively to the need of long-term elderly care. It is focused on building and developing various existing mechanisms at both policy and practice levels in urban and rural areas especially professional or volunteer personnel and any parties involved to jointly perform the elderly caregiving, i.e. the interdisciplinary family care teams which proactively perform their duties in servicing the elderly in communities whether the services for those who are bedridden or restricted to movement. Additionally, it is expedited to extend the personnel training to upgrade and update their knowledge and skill of elderly care, namely the training of professional personnel to act as care managers and various volunteers to act as care workers, so that these personnel can professionally perform the long-term elderly caregiving and enhance the elderly wellness with more coverage.

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#### **4. Provision of Appropriate and Safe Facilities in Public Places for the Elderly**

To provide appropriate and safe facilities in public places for the elderly is deemed important and necessary to enhance and upgrade the elderly well-being, so that the elderly can be ensured to access and use public services in communities. The concept of the Age-friendly Environment is the significant issue that the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations determine as the significant practice and realize that it is necessary to request the international cooperation in enabling the elderly participation as well as ensuring their daily wellness.

Thailand through the collaboration of all sectors has promoted knowledge and conducted the campaign via public media for the facilities in the public places in order to ease the accessibility and usability to the elderly taking account of their convenience, properness and safety by focusing on education of knowledge, understanding and encouraging recognition of the public and all agencies and entities on the Universal Design (UD) for mutual safety and usefulness of all people. In that connection, a variety of media has been published to provide knowledge and understanding of UD. The model friendly areas for the elderly are arranged and in the process of being subsequently extended to other areas, and there are contests to extol the provision of facilities for the elderly as incentive thereto.

#### **5. Strengthening the Sub-district Administrative Organizations (SAO) in Work on the Elderly**

The government has policy to decentralize to local administration with objectives that people of all age groups shall closely be cared by the sub-district administrative organizations in each area because the sub-district administrative organizations are the agencies working closely with people and understanding well the people's problems. To enable the elderly to be cared for all terms of their life quality, it is necessary to strengthen the officers in charge through the support of resources, knowledge, educating or training in the situations and various knowledge on the elderly, so that those officers and staff of the sub-district administrative organizations can improve their capacity to professionally perform their duty on the elderly.

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