

ACCESS TO EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The development of children and youth yields immense importance to the increase in the quality of human resources and the competitiveness of the country, which in turn help reduce poverty in the long run. Education is an important component of such development. However, evidence shows that poverty itself is an obstacle to the access to education. The study finds that there were approximately 2.9 million poor children and youth in 2002, half of which were in the Northeastern region. Most of these children and youth were from agricultural households. The study also finds that approximately 7.9 percent of children aged 6-14 years and 48.7 percent of youth aged 15-21 years did not have formal schooling. The causes of this absence in the school attendance were from 1) lack of resources 2) the need of child labor to acquire incomes for the family and 3) sickness or disabilities. Even though the Government had launched programs to provide scholarships and loans for schooling as well as provide free food and nutrition supplements in schools, very few proportion of the children and youth actually received the benefits. Many of children and youth were found to enter into labor force before working age. Factors affecting the access to education of poor children and youth were gender, age, household size, education of the household's head, household's socio-economic characteristics, household's debt liabilities, and the migration of the household's head.