

17. Social Education

Social education is implemented to all citizens of Taiwan. There are many programs to choose, including supplementary and continuing education, education on-air, adult and life-long learning, national language education, citizen's education, art education, library education, museum education, audio-visual education, family education and guidance in spiritual renewal. The purpose of these programs is to help citizens elevate their general levels of education and culture in Taiwan. The following is a summary of the conditions of social education in Taiwan today.

1. Supplementary and Continuing Schools

Supplementary and Continuing education is designed to supplement regular education, raise education attainment, teach practical skills, and upgrade productivity. The schools mainly offer education to out-of-school citizens as well as on-job youths. In 2004, some 42,720 students attended 2,136 adult education classes; 17,071 students in 326 primary supplementary schools; 12,858 students in 273 junior high supplementary schools; 230 senior high and senior vocational continuing schools with 4,539 students attending in the former and 94,493 students attending in the latter; 57,604 students in 42 junior college continuing schools, and 24,136 students in 34 college continuing schools.

2. Special Education

Special education aims at providing proper education to the students with mental or physical challenges and those who are gifted for the purpose of developing their mental and physical potentials, fostering sound characters and improving the capacities to serve the community. Special individual educational programs shall be made for physically and mentally challenged students in consideration of their specific needs of learning in order to ensure that those students receive education that are really suitable for

them. In 2004, there were three schools for the hearing impaired, with students totaling 1,061; three schools for the blind with 427 students; nine schools for the mentally handicapped with 2,924 students; one school for the physically challenged with 256 students; and seven schools for special education with 1111 students. Further more, there are 3,387 special classes in primary, junior and senior high schools to accept a total of 64,818 students with comparatively less serious disabilities. For gifted students, there are special classes in areas of art, music, dance and physical education in some primary, junior, senior high and senior vocational schools. There are a total of 1,703 such classes accepting 45,577 students.

3. Social Education Institutions

In order to offer multiple learning channels and to establish life-long learning networks, a variety of public/private social educational institutions have been set up to take the responsibility. Such institutions include cultural centers, national libraries, public libraries, various museums, social education halls, scientific exhibition halls, art education centers, fine art museums, memorial halls, concert halls, opera theaters, visual art performance halls, zoos, botanical gardens, and recreation centers for children. In 2004, more than 500 social education institutions exhibit different subjects and education themes depending on their specialization. As far as the private sector is concerned, more than 2,000 cultural and educational foundations and 276 working centers are engaged in promoting social education and conducting relevant activities.

4. Educational Radio Broadcasting & Television Stations

To supplement school education and meet goals on social education, the National Education Radio Broadcasting Station and the UHF System of the Chinese Television Station are established to take on such important tasks. The National Education Radio Broadcasting Station broadcasts

lecture programs ten hours each day. Scheduled programs include classes for high school and college as well as other programs on literature, arts, music and social services. The educational programs are broadcasted to the public eight hours a day on average through the UHF system. These programs include on-air lectures of the curricula and courses for National Open Universities, National Open Colleges and National Open Junior Colleges.

5. Education in the Arts

Extensive effort has gone into the planning and sponsorship of national awards for literary and artistic creations. Meanwhile, the MOE has held art contests for students in the areas of music, dancing, arts, and folk-song singing. It also takes the initiative to provide counseling and subsidy for art-related departments in universities and colleges, performance groups, and social educational agencies, as a way to support art education activities, exhibitions and performances. Moreover, the MOE also provide assistance to the performance programs and traveling shows by the Symphony Orchestra of the National Concert Hall, the National Experimental Chinese Orchestra, the Experimental Choir and the National Kuo-Kuang Chinese Opera Company.

6. Family Education

Since 1986, with the support of the MOE, Family Education & Information Centers have been set up in succession in all counties and cities, and three centers for research in family education have been established respectively at the National Taiwan Normal University, the National Chi Nan University and the National Chiayi University. These centers are responsible for offering educational supports for the public to obtain information needed regarding issues about parenting, gender, marriage, and family ethics as well as to enhance their relevant under-

standings and capacities. In order to advocate the concept of life-long learning and to build a learning community, the MOE draws up projects focused on the promotion of family education which aim to put the concept of life-long learning into the daily life of every family and foster the motives to learn within every family, thus making family a desirable environment for learning and growth of each member. In addition, the promulgation and implementation of the Family Education Law in February 2003 also symbolizes another major accomplishment of our efforts to promote family education. In 2004, law drafting related to the Family Education Law has been promoted.

7. Lifelong Education and Establishment of a Learning Society

The MOE has issued a white paper entitled 'Moving towards A Learning Society'. From 1998 to 2003, the MOE has launched 14 promotional programs outlined in the said white paper. In 2004, a five-year plan of 'Creating a society that values lifelong learning' will continue to be formulated and promoted. This plan will be focused on increasing personal skills, the displaying of one's best potential, increasing citizens' global vision and thus preparing Taiwan move towards the 21st century with an integrated form of competitiveness.

