Social Education

The 21st century is a century of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning means enabling people to gain new knowledge that would help strengthen their individual competitiveness. To spread this concept and to enable more people to enjoy the benefits of lifelong learning, the MOE has established a general learning certification system, organizes adult basic education classes, and encourages foreign spouses to attend some language classes or return to school.

Since 2000, under its Lifelong Learning Train Program, the MOE has organized 1,598 learning programs and over 30,000 events such as workshops, lectures and contests. Over the past six years, about 100,000 people have participated in events aimed to enhance humanistic culture, scientific knowledge, creativity, and artistic skills.

In 2007, the MOE has started sponsoring basic education classes for adults especially those who had to discontinue their schooling (mostly females aged over 55) and the growing population of foreign

spouses who needed to learn Mandarin, Taiwanese, and English. As of June 30, 2007, a total of 2,415 classes were held with 48,300 participants. Such adult education classes have helped Taiwan's illiteracy rate among those over 15 years old to drop from 7.11% of the population in 1989 to 2.52% in 2006 (from 1.3 million to 472,000).

The adult basic education classes that include Chinese, foreign languages, and computer skills attracted students of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds. The classes not only improved skills but also acted as a platform for cultural exchanges. City governments and private institutes now regularly organize big events for students to receive their certificates of attendance to the classes. The events sometimes feature cultural performances by foreign students.

Social education in Taiwan is envisioned to play an important role in transforming Taiwan into a more equitable society. The government is expanding social education programs and plans to partner with private organizations.