

# Compulsory Education



## A

### General Information

The infrastructure of a country and the development of its economy are a function of the country's cultivation of manpower and talent. This requires long term, continued investment and needs to start from the very bottom. The government set the length of compulsory education at 9 years in SY 1968, and further extended it to 12-year Basic Education in SY 2014, which helped to nurture and develop the manpower needed for economic growth.

Ensuring that all toddlers receive proper preschool education is a major objective of our educational policy. Kindergartens are preschool institutions set up in accordance with relevant legislation for children aged 4 and above up until the eligible age for elementary school, and

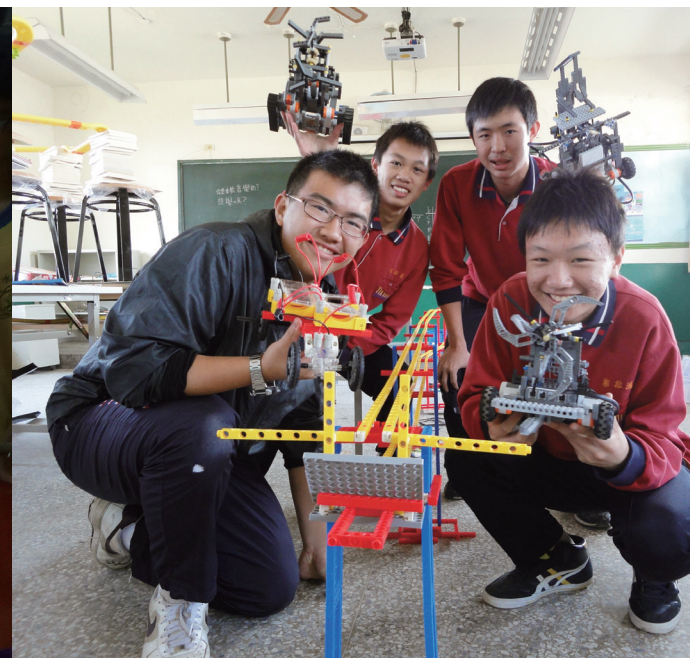
are supervised by education administrative authorities, whereas nurseries are welfare organizations set up in accord with Children and Youth Welfare Act that accept toddlers aged 2 to 6 and are supervised by social administrative authorities. The talks and negotiations for merging nurseries and kindergartens started in 1997, and culminated in the Early Childhood Education and Care Act passed on June 29, 2011, to be put in place beginning Jan 1, 2012.

## B

### Preschool and Compulsory Education Structure

The Early Childhood Education and Care Act is a revolutionary move in our preschool system. After the bill was enacted on Jan 1, 2012, nurseries and kindergartens were redesignated





“preschools,” in which toddlers from the age of 2 onwards are given complete and thorough education and care in the preschool until they enter elementary school. This bill consolidated the education and care of toddlers under a single administrative system, putting into practice a toddler-centered strategy that focuses on the toddler’s best interests. Taiwan is also the first country in Asia to consolidate the two systems.

According to statistics by UNESCO, there are over 40 countries in the world that have a basic education system that exceeds 10 years. The main reason for this is that many non-developed countries have noticed that basic education is directly connected to national competitiveness.

Put into practice in SY 1968, Taiwan’s 9-year Compulsory Education system is compulsory, free and obligatory. Legislation states that citizens from the age of 6 to 15 should receive compulsory education; which is divided into two stages – the first 6 years at the elementary school level, and the latter 3 in junior high school. However, this system has been in place for over 4 decades.

When first put in place, there were fewer than 10 countries worldwide with more than 9 years of

compulsory education in place, making us one of the forerunners. Compared with developed countries, however, the number of years was not that high. To solve the current educational conundrum and enhance the development of national manpower, a 12-year Basic Education system was adopted in SY 2014, a new landmark for our education system.

## C Preschool and Compulsory Education Policies

Under Taiwan’s educational setup, preschool education is not compulsory. The education and care of preschool-aged toddlers was originally provided by, respectively, kindergartens and nurseries, largely consisting of privately-established institutions. As the two systems were separate and had different supervisory administrative units, they evolved different set-up standards and have different regulations regarding personnel and curriculum. Thus toddlers of the same age often received inconsistent education and care at different

institutions. Also, internationally, the trend of offering edu-care service has become a common scene. We thus started to promote the integration of early childhood education and care. The integration is aimed to be completed within 14 years.

To stimulate the development of junior high and elementary school education and improve its quality, and lay the groundwork for course planning, fundamental research in the development of elementary and junior high school curricula was carried out and added to the project “Establish the K-12 Curriculum System,” an accompanying measure to the 12-year Basic Education policy strategic plan, in 2012 to allow the National Academy for Educational Research to complete the “Proposal for 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Development” and “Guidance for 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Development” to ensure consistency. In November, 2014, “Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education (General Curriculum Guidelines)” were promulgated, and curriculum guidelines for different subjects have been promulgated in phases since February, 2016 and starting in SY2018 in phases.

Social development has caused population to move into cities and industries and people to move out of rural areas, resulting in the withering of local industries, difficulties in making a living and grandparenting. In order for each and every child to have his / her chances to adaptive development , and embody the fair and just social values of education, the Ministry of Education has promulgated respectively on April-28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and October-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 the “Rural Education Development Project” and the “Stabilizing Rural Education Program” and included highlights for balancing urban and rural development into the “5-year-to Improve the 12-Year Basic Education Program” in order to offer an enriching learning environment, stabilize teaching manpower as well as introducing outside resources to ensure the students’ rights to learn in rural areas.

Another key strategy is the idea of “social care” and assisting in the safe education of children from economically disadvantaged families. Currently there are 3,662 schools participating in the “School Education Savings Account” project nationwide, which authorizes the schools to receive charitable donations. Many philanthropists in both business and society have been long-term donors to the economically disadvantaged children on the website of the program, a testament to the generosity of the people of Taiwan. ■





Interviewee /

**Huang An-cheng**

Teacher from the Office  
of Academic Affairs at  
Taipei Municipal Yong-Chun  
Primary School

## “We Are There to Support and Assist Our Students”



“They worked on the project mostly on their own,” said Huang An-cheng, teacher from the Office of Academic Affairs at Taipei Municipal Yong-Chun Primary School. Leading a team of seven students and winning the platinum prize in the 2016 International CyberFair, he said he was just there to guide and assist them.

The students from Yong-Chun Primary School formed a team to participate in the International CyberFair with their self-made website, “Taipei Railway Workshop Marches Forward.” It introduced the history of Taipei Railway Workshop, where the school located, and how the place can be used in the future.

Huang said it's a result of team work. Students have their own interests and are good at computer, writing or drawing respectively. They worked together and were responsible for various parts of the project.

In the beginning, the group did research around the school to explore and discover topics related to the community or the history of the region. Eventually they decided to go deep on the railway workshop.

“It's new to them. To learn the history and think about what they can do about the place; how they can design the future of a historic place,” said Huang.

As a national historical site, Taipei Railway Workshop once served as a base for maintaining and manufacturing railway vehicles. After almost eight decades, it was closed in 2012 and the operation was transferred to another workshop.

“We want to do a research on it to bring it back so as for it to march forward to the future, so that when tourists come to Taiwan, the first landmark they will want to visit is Taipei Railway Workshop,” wrote the students on the website.

They came up with a variety of ideas, including combining trains and B&B, building recreational facilities and making space for Songshan Cultural and Creative Park. The students have a clear map of what can be done and they know clearly how to renovate the place.

“They got very interested in the project and also knowing the community better,” said Huang. Most of the students also took part in the same competition after they went up to junior high school. “But this time they really work independently,” added the teacher.

The students' outstanding performance surprised Huang and he said the final work was beyond what he had expected. “They knew what to do and found ways to do it,” he said. ■

