



NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from Dek Noi Pattana Foundation

VOLUME 17 | MARCH 2026



Ian Porter with the DPNF team working behind the scenes at the Korat event

Ian Porter
DNPf Chair



We are devoting this edition of the DNPf newsletter to the event titled: **“Igniting Early Childhood Development, Transforming Isaan’s Future”** that was held in Korat from 28-30 January 2026. The event was co-hosted by the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), UNICEF and the World Bank in partnership with the Department of Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior (the agency responsible for early childhood centers) and with financial and technical support from the Khon Thai Foundation and DNPf.

The event was attended by more than 200 representatives from 18 of the 20 provinces in NE Thailand (Isaan) as well as national government and non-government and international organizations was a huge success – with “inspiring” being the most frequently used description. The report on the event’s presentations, discussions and recommendations is published in full below.

The event represents a significant milestone in DNPf’s efforts to strengthen understanding at both regional and national levels on the huge opportunity that Thailand has to improve the quality of early childhood development (ECD) and how specifically that opportunity can be realized. In that regard, the event was structured around case studies from 5 provinces, (including Roi-Et and Surin where DNPf has been providing support) that demonstrated in a very practical way what can be done to turn day-care centers into high quality early learning centers.

While many institutions were involved, DNPf took the lead in the design of the event and the identification of speakers and case studies as well as in the event’s organization. To ensure that this work did not impact on our ability to continue supporting activities in Surin and Roi-Et we added additional support to our team and I am delighted to report that the team did a truly outstanding

job, as well reflected in the compliments the team has received.

We now need to make sure that the momentum generated by the event is sustained. In that regard, UNICEF has kindly agreed to take over from DNPf in organizing subsequent events, including in other regions where DNPf is not engaged. But DNPf will continue to be engaged on some of the specific follow up work where we have experience to share. This will include undertaking a more in-depth review of the commonalities and differences across the 5 case studies to help improve policy makers and implementers’ understanding of how to initiate and/or scale up high quality ECD. Building on our experience partnering with two Rajabhat Universities, we will also be facilitating the sharing of knowledge across Rajabhats in Isaan on how they can much more effectively support high quality ECD in the region, and in line with their overall mandate to work closely with local communities.



Finally, as the National Economic and Social Development Council and other organizations prepare Thailand's next five-year plan, DNPf will continue to input on the importance of ECD and on the opportunity Thailand has to rapidly

improve its quality by turning the existing day-care centers into high quality early learning centers. In that regard, we will also be highlighting the process we are piloting in both Surin and Roi-Et for participatory action planning.

In sum, an inspiring event that DNPf played a huge part in organizing and that has generated a lot of momentum that we intend to help build on, starting right now!

Igniting Early Childhood Potential: Transforming Isaan's Future

28-30 January 2026 | Kantary Hotel Korat



The "Igniting Early Childhood Potential: Transforming Isaan's Future" event represented a significant gathering of partner networks, co-hosted by **the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), UNICEF Thailand, and the World Bank**, in partnership with **the Department of Local Administration (DLA)**, and with financial and technical support from **the Khon Thai Foundation, and the Dek Noi Pattana Foundation**. Participants included teachers, local education officers and personnel from local administrative organisations, faculty

from Rajabhat Universities, district, provincial and national officials, as well as early childhood experts and civil society members.

It takes a whole village to raise a child



The event began with the articulation of a shared international and national vision, affirming a collective commitment to promote early childhood potential. **The primary goal is to elevate the 17,000 child development centres nation-wide** (including 7,700 in Isaan) into high-quality centres. This transformation is to be achieved through strengthening the effectiveness of national policy implementation across all levels of government and the upgrading of day care centres into high quality early learning centres.

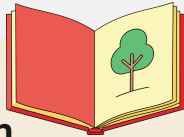
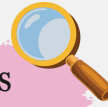
During the event, area-based lessons were extracted and group brainstorming sessions were conducted. These sessions brought together:

1. teachers and education officials;
2. local-level, district and provincial officials; and;
3. national policy-level operators,

who unitedly emphasised the need for a **mindset change among leaders at all levels**, to leverage the infrastructural readiness and pave the way for early childhood education and development (ECED) scale-up, once prioritised nationally.

The change is further supported by try-and-true example cases from 5 provinces in Isaan, whose outstanding performance not only highlight key enabling factors for effective early childhood development (ECD) implementation, but also present strong possibilities for systemic expansion of ECED.

Case Studies



Khon Kaen

Under the Integrated Child-Centered Active Learning Project (ICAP) model, teachers at the **Ban Kham Chan Child Development Center** focus more on play-based learning and family participation. Activities such as "Take a Storybook Home" helped children become more disciplined and expressive. The program plans to maintain model classroom quality and is expanding across many centers.

The ICAP Model transforms a day-care centre's environment and way of teaching into a learning playground, encouraging child-centric active learning.

Nakhon Ratchasima

As a UNICEF ECD demonstration centre, the **Kheha Pracha Samakhi Child Development Center** has built a strong foundation in holistic child development, parental engagement, and inquiry-based learning through the Little Scientist's House project. It later expanded its practices to align with National ECD Centre Standards using the 366 Q-Kids approach and enhanced its coaching quality through the STARS model. The centre now excels in strengthening children's competencies and fostering meaningful parental engagement. Its integrated expertise provides a strong platform for supporting the scale-up of quality early learning nationwide.

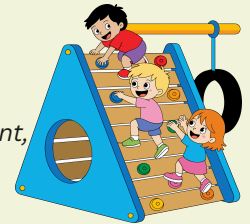
The 366 Q-Kids program scales child development through 3 key elements: 3 types of support, 6 types of learning activities, spanning 6 months of development.



Kalasin

Through the Reducing Inequality through Early Childhood Education (RIECE) Thailand's HighScope curriculum, the **Nong Tok Pan Child Development Center** focuses on an active learning environment and centre-family interaction, supported by the DLA and DSPM evaluation models. Using the plan-do-review process, the centre enabled children to develop systematic thinking skills. It has now been elevated to serve as a training hub.

The curriculum emphasises on the child's learning through interactivities, environment, daily routine, and effective assessment.



The Development Surveillance and Promotion Manual (DSPM) is developed by the Department of Health to help monitor child physical, mental, social and learning developments.

Roi Et

With support of the local authority, **Ban Non Sa-nga** and **Ban Non Chan Child Development Centers**, families and teachers came together to elevate ECED. Paired with Roi-Et Rajabhat University and DPNF support, including in-service training and coaching of teachers and caretakers, children in supported centers made major progress in developing their skills compared with neighboring centres. The program is expanding to more centers in Roi-Et in 2026.








Surin

With support from DPNF and Surindra Rajabhat University, Surin has strengthened the quality of early childhood development (ECD) across many centers. Provincial, district and local leaders have set the direction, while DPNF and Surindra Rajabhat University have provided in-service training, regular coaching and support in monitoring the development of children's skills.



Key Lessons from Group Discussions

Group discussions of the case studies identified bottlenecks, such as administrative burdens amongst teachers and lack of continuity when local leadership changes. To counter that, several shared lessons emerged:

-  Family engagement with centres are crucial for children’s development. Encouraging centres and local bodies to involve parents increases the children’s learning and development significantly.
-  Active and play-based learning models work best for child development.
-  Systematic monitoring, evaluation and process revision are important for quality maintenance and to support expansion.
-  Multi-sector partnerships and academic support from local universities (e.g., Rajabhat) and partners such as UNICEF, ICAP, RIECE ThaiHealth, and DNPf, alongside provincial leadership were central to progress.
-  Continuous professional development for teachers and transforming high-performing centres into knowledge hubs are crucial to scaling up and long-term sustainability.



Recommendations

From the event, the following recommendations can be concluded. Generally, the enabling framework for systemic expansion of ECD consists of leadership, support systems, community participation, resource prioritisation, and public awareness.

Local Level

- Local leaders are encouraged to set ECED as a core mission, and involve the community, centres, schools and families to work toward the same goal.
- Teachers should be relieved of excessive administrative responsibilities and focus much more on facilitating children’s development potential.
- Best practices can be combined into “SuperMenu” which can be adapted to local contexts.

Provincial Level

- A provincial agenda for early childhood development should be established and prioritised among leaders, academic bodies (universities and schools) and community members. District and sub-district officials should be made aware of the importance of ECED and the role they can play in scaling up high quality ECED.
- Provincial Early Childhood Development Sub-committees should be activated to take the lead in scaling up high quality ECED.
- Provincial Coaching Network can be created, spearheaded by Rajabhats or other educational and civil society organizations, who can be mobilised to provide training and coaching support to teachers and caretakers.

National level

- The general public should be made more aware of the necessity of ECED as a national agenda. Parents, grandparents and the broader public should be made aware of the importance of ECED and what can be done to improve the quality of ECED for the benefit of children, their families, communities and the country as a whole.
- Budget and resources should be prioritised to support early development centres nation-wide, ensuring quality childhood development.
- Knowledge should be exchanged amongst all concerned groups from practitioners to policymakers to drive scaling up on high quality ECED. This can be done through seminars or discussion panels, organised by key governmental bodies such as the Office of the Education Council (OEC).

“
*Investing in early
 childhood
 is the smartest and
 most worthwhile
 investment.*
 ”