



# Policy Brief

## Free and easy access to condoms for young people in Thailand

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# Background

- Ways of living of Thai people have changed according to modernization.
- After AIDS epidemic, sexual lifestyles of young men have changed from having sex with sex workers to having sex with friends or girlfriends.
- As a researcher in Chiang Mai, I conducted the research in Northern Thailand.



**My research** (as one of several studies conducted in the area of young people's sexual and reproductive health in Thailand)

**Title: Sexual practices of young people in Northern Thailand**

- To study sexual experiences of in-school and out-of-school 17-20 year-olds in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand
- To investigate health consequences of sexually active young people

# Sexual experience among 1750 young people in Chiang Mai (2006)

<b>Social-education group</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>I have had sexual intercourse (%)</b>
Out-of-school adolescent group	Male	81.1
	Female	52.7
Vocational school student group	Male	69.6
	Female	63.2
General school & university student group	Male	35.5
	Female	14.8
Total	Male	62.7
	Female	34.5

## Respondents who reported having had sexual intercourse (self report)

- Mean numbers of lifetime sexual partners
  - Males: 6.6 (median 4.0)
  - Females: 3.5 (median 2.0)
- Condom use at first sex
  - Males: 52.0%
  - Females: 30.2%
- Condom use at most recent sex
  - Males: 52.7%
  - Females: 28.0%

# Sexual health consequences

- Less than 10 % reported abnormal genital discharge, genital infections or STDs (gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia, genital herpes, etc.)
  
- More than one-third reported
  - Itching around the opening of the penis/vagina,
  - A painful or burning sensation when urinating,
  - An ulcer or sore in their genital area

# Pregnancy

- Among sexually active female respondents:
  - 40.2 % of those from out-of-school group
  - 32.0 % among vocational school student group
  - 14.7 % among general school/university student group

# Abortion

- Two-thirds of those who got pregnant reported them ending in abortion.



# **My Problem Tree Analysis**

**on**

# **Unprotected Sex among Young People in Thailand**





Effects

Increased burden of health services

Socio-economic problems

Loss of national Economic and Human resources

HIV

STDs

Pregnancy

Abortion

Unprotected sex among young people in Thailand

Problem

Individual-level causes

Structural-level causes

Causes

Cultural Factors

Social Factors

Economic Factors

Problem

Unprotected sex among young people in Thailand

Individual-level causes

- ✓ Poor knowledge on safe sex
- ✓ Bad attitudes towards condom/other protections
- ✓ Unplanned sex / unintentional sex / coercive sex
- ✓ Poor access to condom or other protections

Structural-level causes

Cultural Factors

- ✓ Gender issues
- ✓ Power relations
- Norms, values and beliefs
- Social expectations

Social Factors

- Modernization, New technology
- Urbanization, urban/rural migration
- ✓ Mass Media
- ✓ Family background
- ✓ Environment (school/workplace/community)
- ✓ Health services
- State / government policy

Economic Factors

- Family income
- Personal income/expense
- Country's economic expansion

Causes

# Unprotected sex among young people in Thailand

## Individual-level causes

- Poor knowledge on safe sex
- Bad attitudes towards condom/other protections
- Unplanned sex / unintentional sex / coercive sex
- ✓ Poor access to condom or other protections

## Comprehensive sex education

- Contemporary lifestyles
- Love and relationships
- Gender issues
- Individual empowerment
- Safe sex

## Free materials

- ✓ Free condom
- ✓ Free contraceptive devices

## Easy access

- ✓ Vending machine
- ✓ Peer network
- ✓ Social network
- ✓ Youth clinic

Problem

Causes

Solution

# Unprotected sex among young people in Thailand

## Individual-level causes

## Structural-level causes

### Cultural Factors

- ✓ Gender issues
- ✓ Power relations
- Norms, values and beliefs
- Social expectations

- Sex education
- Discussion/debate in communities, academic areas
- Use of media, social network

### Social Factors

- Modernization, New technology
- Urbanization, urban/rural migration
- ✓ Family background
- ✓ Environment (school/workplace/community)
- ✓ Mass Media
- ✓ Health services
- State / government policy

- Programs to work with parents, teachers, community leaders
- Work with media
- Youth-friendly services

### Economic Factors

- Family income
- Personal income/expense
- Country's economic expansion

- Increase incomes among working-class families
- Decrease national economic gaps

Problem

Causes

Solutions

## My policy objective

A policy that will make condoms available for young people (free condoms & easy access)

## Outcomes

- Greater protection for young people when they have sex
- Lower rates of HIV/STD infections, unwanted pregnancy among this group
- Bring to the decrease of health burden, socio-economic problems, and loss of national economic and human resource

List of stakeholders	Decision makers	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Ministry of Public Health	X			
Ministry of education			X	
Related ministries				X
Health staff		X		
Teachers			X	
Local government staff				X
Researchers/academic staff		X		
NGOs		X		
Parents			X	
Communities			X	
Mass media			X	
Young people		X		

## For change

Sexually active young people have safe sex

Lead to more healthy lifestyles

Lessen health burden

- MOPH
- Health providers
- Researchers/academic staff
- NGOs
- Young people

Free condoms  
&  
Easy access to  
condoms  
for young  
people

## Force field analysis

## Against change

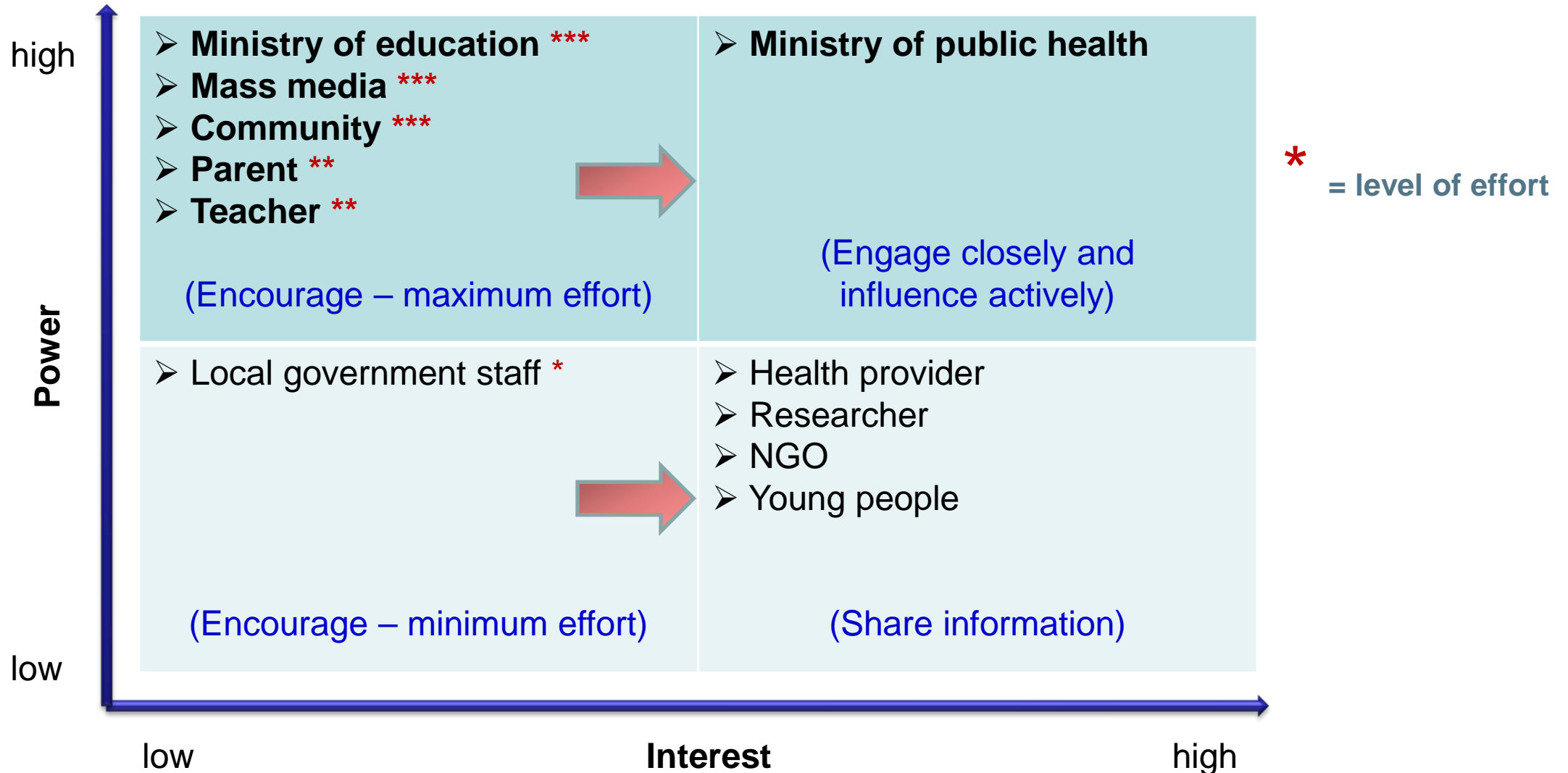
Encourage people to have sex at early age

Destroy Thai traditional ways of thinking

Rates of HIV/STD infections and pregnancy will not decrease

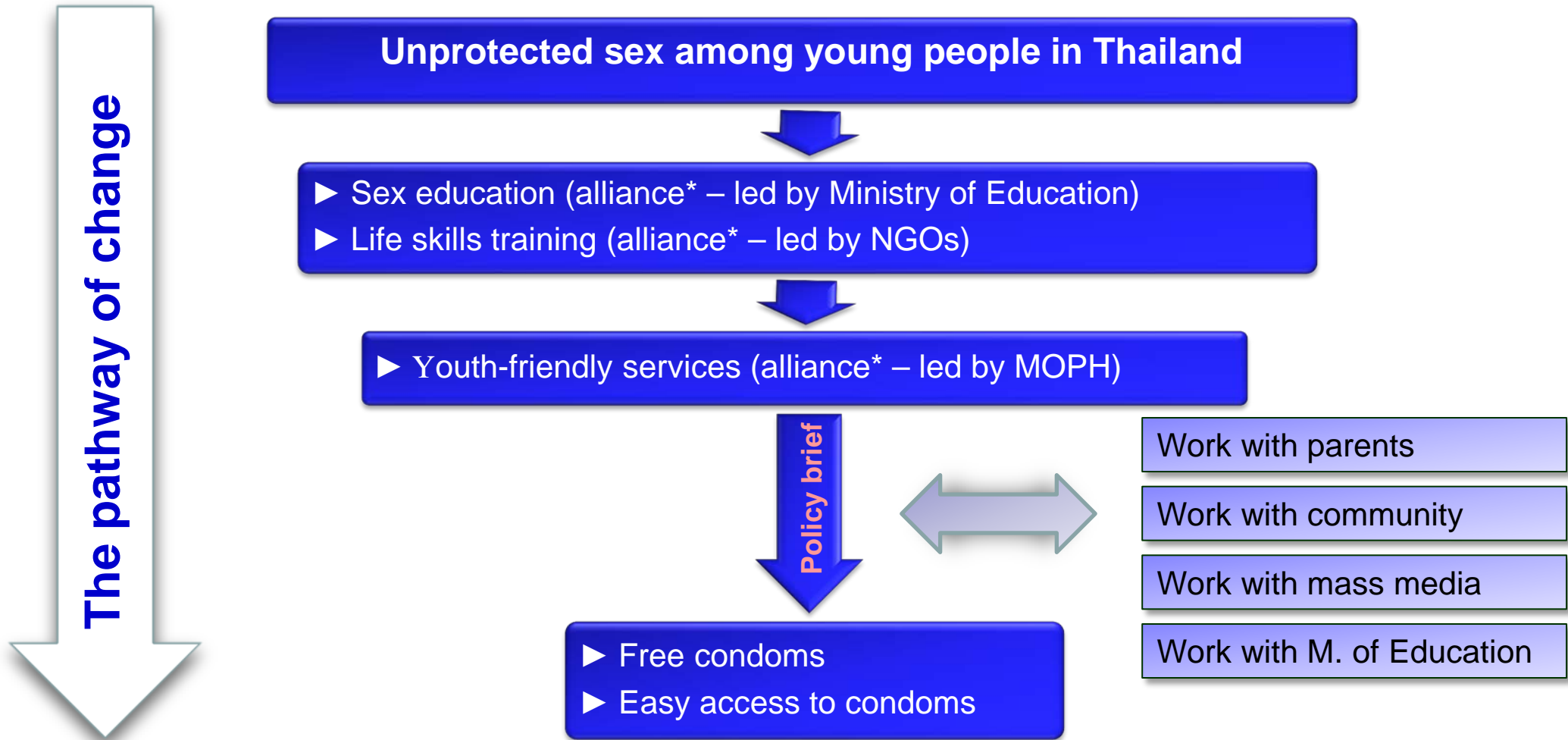
- Ministry of education
- Parents
- Teachers
- Communities
- Mass media

# Stakeholder analysis





## My theory of change



\* Alliance is a group of people from different sources that works on young people's sexual and reproductive health

## **Goal: To get approval of the policy brief on free and easy access to condoms for young people**

### **Objectives**

1. To raise awareness among the alliance on this policy brief
2. To make people or organizations that may oppose this idea (the target audience) understand the situation of young people's life
3. To make all groups of people agree with the idea of free and easy access to condoms
4. To get approval of the policy brief

## Objective 1: To raise awareness among the alliance on this policy brief

Activity	With whom	Time	Output indicator	Risk
- Consult this idea with the executives of my research institute	- The director, deputy directors of the RIHES - Head of the department	Late 2012	Approval from the executives	
- Talk to people I have worked with before in the alliance about this idea	- Health staff in local and regional levels - NGO staff	Early 2013	A group of people who will work to promote the policy process	
- Set up meetings to review research results / any reports related to young people's S&R health, and to review the progress of the programs and services provided	- The alliance (a working group from MOPH, M of education, NGO, researchers, academic staff, youth peer leader, etc.)	Early to mid 2013	Appropriate conclusions are drawn from new information presented.	
- Have the sessions of brain storming to find choices for young people to better have protected sex	- The alliance	Mid 2013	- Clear outputs from the brain storming - Alternative choices are prioritized and "free and easy access to condoms" is identified as a high priority.	Some people in the alliance may think this idea (free and easy access to condoms) is not practical / acceptable by general Thais.

Objective 2: To make people or organizations that may oppose this idea (the target audience) understand the situation of young people's life

Activity	With whom	Time	Output indicator	Risk
- Identify the groups that may oppose to this idea.	- The alliance	Mid 2013	Groups that may oppose to this idea are identified.	
- Prepare with the alliance on how to communicate and work with these groups.	- The alliance	Mid 2013	Having a plan to work with the target audience	- It may take time to find good ways to communicate with these groups
- Communicate and share data / research findings / evidence of young people's life with these groups.	- The target audience (community leaders, local authority groups, school teachers, parents, media, etc.)	Mid to late 2013	Number of groups of target audience who understand the situation of young people's life	- It may take time. - Some target audiences still misinterpret the data/findings or evidence provided

Objective 3: To make all groups of people agree with the idea of free and easy access to condoms

Objective 4: To get approval of the policy brief

Activity	With whom	Time	Output indicator	Risk
- Work with all groups to find out the optimal ways on protected sex among young people	- The alliance - The target audience	Mid to late 2013	Number of groups of target audience who work well with the alliance	- Take time - Lack of skilled facilitators - Lack of good management - Different opinions - Budget concerns to conduct the activities
- Propose the idea of free and easy access to condoms and ask for their views/opinions.	- The target audience	Mid to late 2013	Number of the target audience who agree with this idea	- Some of the target audiences may still oppose the idea or think this idea will not be practical.
- Provide a policy brief on free and easy access to condoms for young people to the government	- Decision makers (MOPH, Office of the Prim Minister)	2014	- Approval of the policy brief - Having a new policy - This new policy is successfully implemented.	- Decision makers may not want to take risks to launch a new policy like this.

## Impact in the next 5 years

- Having condoms available for young people (and for all Thais)
- Rates of HIV/STD infections, and rates of unwanted pregnancies and abortions will decrease.
- Views on young people's sexuality among general Thais will change.



***Thank you***