

CASE REPORT | MARCH 23 2012

Sustaining higher education reforms: Knowledge and policy implications learned from Thailand



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Purpose

The paper aims to share experiences in Thailand's higher educational reforms in which academic excellence cannot be sustained without proper financial and fiscal consideration. The overall goal is to disclose the experiences and future issues facing public universities.

Design/methodology/approach

The paper is based on actual involvement by Kasetsart University in assisting the Commission of Higher Education's (CHE) university reform efforts. In addition to projects supported financially by CHE, Kasetsart University has also participated as a committee member and an invited expert. The paper is narrative in nature. It begins by showing the positive impacts from higher education on a country's level of competitiveness, and the inter-relationship between higher education and innovation. The paper describes the country's recent major reform initiatives to achieve academic excellence and raises concerns over sustainability for public universities.

Findings

The experiences from Thailand can be helpful for many countries as the country is moving from an industrial-based economy towards a knowledge-based economy. The major concern is that academic excellence for public universities cannot be sustained without more effective fiscal management and public-private partnership. Finally, despite the fact that the article is descriptive; the knowledge and lessons learned should be beneficial to



scholars and practitioners who are interested in higher education reforms.

Originality/value

Academic excellence has often been discussed within the context of quality and innovation without explicitly considering fiscal management. The potential use of public-private partnerships, which can improve the effectiveness of fiscal management, is revealed and discussed. The knowledge and lessons learned should be beneficial to scholars and practitioners who are interested in higher education reforms.

Keywords: University classification, Quality assurance, Public-private partnership, Financial and fiscal management, Higher education, Educational innovation, Thailand

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