

# Preface

This book is the product of research collaboration between The Australian National University and Dhurakij Pundit University. It brings together new work—from a conference held in 2008 in Bangkok—on higher education financing by international experts on the issue from around East Asia.

The research collaboration between the ANU and DPU was initiated in August 2007 and involves biannual conferences with broad international participation and research and training exchanges. It aims to build capacity in the region through collaborative research and training and to share experience in the important areas of higher education financing and loans systems. It will encompass other key economic policy issues over time.

This volume addresses important issues to do with access to higher education and different models of its financing, and the analysis spans the East Asian region. It is enriched by diverse perspectives from vastly different starting points and by the historical and institutional settings in the East Asian region. The issues are set out in the context of the value of higher education in economic development and how it contributes to the capacities to adopt and adapt to new technologies and undertake institutional innovation. The established and well-functioning higher education loan and financing systems, such as those in Australia, and the experience of different systems tried—both in East Asia and in the United States—are brought to bear in this volume.

The ongoing research collaboration is led by Bruce Chapman and Peter Drysdale at the Australian end and Boonserm Weesakul in Thailand. We are grateful to Boonserm and his colleagues at DPU in Bangkok who were responsible for hosting the conference that reviewed the original research and to Peter Drysdale at the ANU for coordinating the program of research and the conference organisation. Our gratitude is also extended to the DPU management team including Charles Newton and especially Somsri Lathapipat, without whom this collaboration would not be possible.

The conference drew on the network and administrative work of the East Asian Bureau of Economic Research (EABER) and we are grateful to the member institutes and their researchers who contributed to the conference. The conference was made possible with the professional administrative input and expertise of Marilyn Popp, Aaron Batten, Alisa Maksamphan and Paitoon Sinralat.

We, and the EABER team, are especially grateful to all the contributors—the paper writers, discussants and referees—who collaborated so enthusiastically to bring this research to publication. Our debt to the authors in the volume is obvious. Sippanondha, Norman LaRocque, Aniceto Orbeta and Rangsit Sarachiti made substantial contributions to the chapters in this volume with their clarification of issues and refinement of ideas at the conference and in the process of preparation of the papers for publication. In addition, the volume benefited greatly from the background work and training conducted in Thailand and Australia by Piruna Polsiri, Rangsit Sarachitti and Thitima Sitthipongpanich. Finally, our special thanks to Kiatanantha Lounkaew and Dr Dilaka Lathapipat, who provided extremely valuable input on the training and intellectual aspects critical to the conference.

We are grateful to the *Economics of Education Review* Journal published by Elsevier that gave us permission to produce earlier versions of the three papers on Thailand as Chapters in this volume. The three papers were published in Volume 29, Issue 5, pages 685-721 (October 2010) of the Journal as: Bruce Chapman, Kiatanantha Lounkaew, Piruna Polsiri, Rangsit Sarachitti, Thitima Sitthipongpanich, *Thailand's Student Loans Fund: Interest rate subsidies and repayment burdens*; Bruce Chapman, Kiatanantha Lounkaew, *Income contingent student loans for Thailand: Alternatives compared*; and Somkiat Tangkitvanich, Areeya Manasboonphempool, *Evaluating the Student Loan Fund of Thailand*.

We are indebted to Kay Dancey and Jennifer Sheehan at CAP Cartography–GIS Services for their professional work on the charts. Duncan Beard and Lorena Kanellopoulos at ANU E Press did a fantastic job and we are very grateful for their patience with us throughout the process.

We would also like to thank Denis Cairney for excellent editorial assistance.

Shiro Armstrong and Bruce Chapman

June 2010

Canberra