

The Conversations:

‘Building collaboration’ – The future of higher education and research post Covid-19

Video transcription – English version

Panellist



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Video Transcription – English Version

Recording Time	Speaker	Transcription
00.01-01.55	Andrew Glass	<p>Hi Everyone</p> <p>My name is Andrew Glass from the British Council Thailand. I'm delighted to welcome you today the 'Conversations', a series of online conversations with the people and talents we work with across Thailand, sharing how they're responding in practical way to the challenges raised by Covid-19 and how they keep resilient in tough times.</p> <p>Today our conversation is called 'Higher Education and Research in the Post-Covid World'.</p> <p>The impact of Covid-19 can be felt across all sectors, including the higher education institutions. Universities in the UK, Thailand and globally have been grappling with multiple issues which are critical to ensuring their viability and sustainability.</p> <p>The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation or MHESI has been very active in working with Thai higher education on strategies to respond to Covid-19. Jobs creation programme was initiated where 10,000 jobs will be made available at research institutions and science agencies, and over 3,000 million baht from MHESI was allocated to Covid-19 response including research funding and upskilling and reskilling schemes.</p> <p>Today, I'm joined by Dr Suvit Maecinsee, Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation and my colleague Alison Barrett, Director Education & Society, East Asia.</p> <p>We'll explore the priorities, challenges and future opportunities for Thailand Higher Education and Research post Covid-19 and talk about the future of international collaboration between Thailand and the UK.</p>
02.03 – 2.14		<p>What for you and the Ministry so far, have been the main challenges that Covid-19 has brought and responses have we already seen from your Ministry?</p>

2.15 – 3.13	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	<p>Put it this way. Now, everyone has realised the impacts of Covid-19. We are staying in the world that we call it the world one destiny, so this is a global common that we are facing with. As a Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), we have to do something.</p> <p>First, we have decided to close all the universities and are trying to migrate from the current curriculum into online education. This is the first thing that we did because safety is the priority.</p>
3.14 – 4.48		<p>At the same time, we are also doing R, D, and I (Research Development and Innovation) trying to support the government. Under the Ministry, we have formed the consortiums of the Medical Schools and the Engineering Schools trying to match demand and supply for the medical supply and the medical devices including mini-test kits. This is what we are doing during the peak of the crisis.</p> <p>But now what we are trying to do next step, we co-invest with many strategic partners around the world to develop the vaccines using the ‘mRNA method’. And now, it has some progress. We have successfully applied it to mice, and then applied it to monkey that I have visited the research centre. This was the first dose for the monkey. We hope that we will have some further progress during the next four weeks and after that, we will apply it to human. This is how we deal with the current crisis under the supervision of the ministry.</p>
4.49 – 5.27	Alison Barrett	<p>You talk about the quadruple helix, the importance of industry, academia, government and international collaboration.</p> <p>Have you been collaborating over the last few months? What do you see as the future of international collaboration for Thailand?</p>
6.14 – 7.35	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	<p>I have introduced 2-3 principles that should be applied across national higher education and research policy under the Ministry;</p> <p>1.) Working hand-in-hand under the quadruple helix approach</p>

		<p>Most of the policies and research agendas are driven by the government but I think, this is not the right thing to do during this time and from now on. This is why we are introducing the Quadruple Helix which mean that there are at least 4 major partners; 1) universities and government 2) private sector, and 3) Civil society including people sector, and the most important is 4) the global collaborative network. For example, in the research domain, we work together in the Newton Fund that is very useful. It has contribution from both Thai and UK counterparts. This is the important thing. The first principle is that we should work hand-in-hand under the quadruple helix approach.</p>
<p>7.36 – 8.42</p>		<p>2.) Regional/ Global level policy focus</p> <p>The second one is what should be the thing that we should do not only for the national focus, but at least the regional focus. We are facing global challenges, for example, the climate change. After covid-19, we will face economic challenges such as global depression, and hyperinflation, so no single country can handle it by their own. This is why the research policy under the Ministry should focus on the global challenges and issues like the post-covid-19 economic responses, post-covid-19 politics and how can we work together.</p>
<p>8.43 – 9.50</p>		<p>For example, under my new article, I talked about 2-3 things;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be the New growth engine for Thailand? Now we have to pursuit for the sustainability. Before the crisis, I introduced the BCG model, but for this new economic model, you cannot do it by your own. You need global collaborative networks. This is for the new engine growth in the economic domain. • At the same time, we also think about how we can change from ‘Me society’ to ‘We society’. How can we cultivate sharing and caring culture towards our society? We need lot of research to reshape people’s

		mindset and behaviour, and how to turn it into more collaborative platforms.
9.51 – 10.20		<p>We cannot do it on our own. We still need</p> <p>1) Global Governance 2) Global Collaboration and 3) Global Coordination.</p> <p>Now, everyone has to play in the global platform, not the local or the national platform like in the past.</p>
10.21 – 10.56	Alison Barrett	<p>International collaboration is a very core part of UK HE strategies. The UK is one of the most internationalised HE systems in the world.</p> <p>How are you seeing education policy supporting that vision for greater international collaboration?</p> <p>Are there many changes to higher education policy in Thailand?</p>
10.56 – 12.27	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	<p>There are 2-3 aspects;</p> <p>1). Change HE into life-long education</p> <p>In the past, the previous ministry confined itself supervising on how to develop people for the job market, so it only focused on undergraduate students which are only 2-3 million people in Thailand.</p> <p>Now, we are facing not just a technological disruption, but also social disruption and even from covid-19 disruption, so we have to take care of everyone. It is not just the students, but we have to take care of pole in the productive workforce. Now, it is about 37 million people in Thailand facing a lot of disruptions and challenges. They have to think about how they can maintain their career, so we a campaign so called Career for the future We have a campaign so-called Reskilling, Upskilling, New skilling etc.</p>
12.28 – 13.03		<p>At the same time, like many other countries, Thailand is facing with the ageing society, ageing issues. People aged over 60 years old are more than 11 million people, so we are trying to develop what is called 'Ageing education' to prepare proactive ageing or active ageing. Otherwise we are facing a lot of social burden in the near future.</p>

<p>13.04 – 14.00</p>		<p>Now, under the new education policy, it is about life-long education. It is about career and job creation. It is about how can you enhance and upgrade skills.</p> <p>At the same time, skills are not enough. We need to think about how we can refocus not only from the supply side driven like in this past, but also the demand driven side. This is why we work closely with private sector and many institutions trying to draw requirements from the demand side and then ask universities to readjust themselves to provide real solutions for the job market.</p>
<p>16.30 – 16.45</p>		<p>For Post Covid-19, we should write the new chapter together, not just for 2-3 countries on the bilateral basis, but we should do something for the rest of the world as well especially in this region, CLMV and ASEAN.</p>
<p>16.46 – 17.08</p>	<p>Alison Barrett</p>	<p>We see huge changes in the way that university offer education in this period, shift online teaching and TNE programme.</p> <p>Are these policy in Thailand focusing on encouraging greater collaborations in this?</p>
<p>17.09 – 18.17</p>	<p>Dr. Suvit Maesincee</p>	<p>For education, we have to think about how long Covid-19 will last. We are social animal. It is a balance between what we call social distancing and social gathering. Online is necessary, but not sufficient for learning. I think, most of the classes or the disciplines can go online. You need to think about the new combination between online and offline because for some disciplines, still need social interactions. We are trying to find optimal solution across different subjects and disciplines. So far, the priority is online.</p>
<p>18.21 – 19.07</p>		<p>For online, it is not just for students, but for public at large. We are thinking about at least four literacies that should be introduced to public from now on in order for them to survive in the post-covid-19 world. These four literacies comprise English, Digital, Financial, and Social literacy. These four literacies can be used and applied in the online context not just for students but for Thai people as well.</p>

19.08 – 19.34		Global collaboration is not limited to just politics or academics, but the most important thing is human capital development. How to build people with global mindsets or global skill sets. We should work hand-in-hand with other countries, especially the UK.
20.50 – 21.23	Andrew Glass	Cambridge announce next year from October, all classes will be delivered online. Students are gathering sometimes for exams, debates and discussions. Do you see something similar happening here or is it still early to say?
21.24 – 23.23	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	Some universities, like Chulalongkorn University and Mahidol University, are ready to transfer their education online, but for some professional courses that still require practice physically. In other groups of universities for example the areas-based universities, in terms of readiness, they are still not ready to apply online platforms. One thing is not the university, but about the students and infrastructure e.g. devices. Some students from poor family that cannot afford internet. That is why the ministry are negotiate and work with global companies to enhance our online infrastructure. It will take 1 or 2 months from now. Most of universities in Thailand have gained this kind of experience, but we still have to overcome some kind of physical and financial constraints.
23.24 – 24.10		Global collaboration on online education with international universities like Cambridge in the near future is important. It is time for globalisation of knowledge not just the economic. We have to think about what the new business model to work hand-in-hand among Thai local universities and the UK top universities for example.
24.11 – 26.00	Andrew Glass	You mention there will be a need for people’s mindsets and behaviours to change with Covid-19. What research do you see happening in this area?
25.00- 25.48	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	When we formed the new Ministry, we have to go beyond the domain of Science and Technology. We have integrated all-natural science, humanity and social science. Covid-19 posts a lot of challenges. It is not in just about new healthcare system. Now we

		are setting up new research agenda so called health care reinvention to uplift health care infrastructure making it more world class. At the same time, to connect the dot as we see a lot of missing links during Covid-19.
25.49 – 26.19		I think, Covid-19 is changing mindsets and behaviours of people. This is the reason why research area is going beyond healthcare and is going beyond Science and Technology. We have to think about the new culture of living, the new culture of working and the new culture of learning.
28.14 – 28.50		This is what I mentioned in my book. Covid-19 is a blessing in disguise. No covid10, no opportunity to create the better world. It is the right time for working closely together to create a better world, not just in health care/medicine. We have to go beyond that also in terms of economic, society, and environmental issues as well.
31.59 – 32.25	Alison Barrett	Demand for research has implications on finance. With all the competing priorities that you have for research, how are you ensuring that the right priorities get funding?
32.26 - 33.15	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	2 things; 1.) We try to benchmark against the world etc. amount of R&D in terms of the percentage of GDP. For Thailand, in the past 5 years, we have only 0.49% of our GDP. Now, it has reached 1.1% of the GDP. Compared to UK or OECD, it has average of 4% of GDP, so we are still far behind.
33.16 – 35.36		2.) The second thing is that the crisis reveals some opportunities. It means that now research is very important. And now, I've changed the policy that this Ministry is not just focusing on R, D and I (Research, Development, and Innovation), But we've learnt from the crisis that we have to extend this value chain into R, D, I and M (Research, Development, Innovation and Manufacturing). It makes the research real otherwise; it seems like research is a research. And the real world, the real industry is having a huge gap between research sphere and industrial sphere.

		<p>We are applying Quadruple helix. 75% of research expenditure comes from private sector. This is a good thing, however, this concentratedly coming from 10 big corporations. This is still our problem.</p> <p>From now on, under the Quadruple helix, we need to open our mind for this kind of research agenda, not just confine to the government. The government budget is limited. Thus, you have to use this amount as a catalyse and try to convince private sector, the global investors, global research institutes to join with us on critical research challenges that address global challenges (not just Thailand challenges).</p>
37.32 – 37.42	Andrew Glass	<p>You mention before the importance of life-long learning.</p> <p>How well do you think universities in Thailand are responding to that agenda?</p>
40.08 – 41.31	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	<p>Now, we have applied 10,000 job positions to the people affected by Covid-19, and we will extend it to 15,000 soon. This is not enough. We would like to create jobs under the supervisions of the universities. More than 100,000 students and 200,000 graduate students will engage in this programme. Universities do not just hire these students, but also have to set up reskilling and upskilling to these targeted people i.e. English and Digital literacy. This is what we are trying to do to answer the demand side and also to transform the supply side. This is to reinvent our universities, otherwise they will not survive in the near future.</p>
41.32 – 41.50	Alison Barrett	<p>In your article, you talk about the importance of Growth for Good. How importance is the role of the universities in contributing to these sustainable development goals.</p>
41.51 – 42.36	Dr. Suvit Maesincee	<p>I always believe that the universities are a forefront of the transformative change. The primary target group is the new generation, the student. This is an opportunity for us to embed the right mindsets and skillsets. Focusing on skillset is not enough. Covid-19 has taught us that we need to change our development paradigm to Modernism to Sustainism.</p>

<p>44.13 – 44.54</p>	<p>Alison Barrett</p>	<p>One more about SDG, how you think we can incentivise universities to focus on that transformative model of higher education.</p> <p>In the recent times higher education ranking which look at the contribution that universities make to the sustainable development goals, 39 Thai universities were features rankings are the good way of trying to ring about that transformation or do you have other mechanisms?</p>
<p>44.55 – 46.57</p>	<p>Dr. Suvit Maesincee</p>	<p>There are 2 forms of strategies. The first one is incentives and the second one is inspiring. We have to do both.</p> <p>We have to inspire that universities can do something bigger that they think.</p> <p>To make it real, it is about ranking. This is why I really appreciate that they have a new set of ranking measure such as sustainability index. Now, we need to see the whole picture seriously thinking about how to change towards the new development paradigm (the sultanism). That is why I introduced the BCG economy model as a new growth engine that will create the better world and take care of people inclusiveness. Now, what we already have is a conceptual design about BCG economy model. It is the time for us Mechanism design is something we need to think apart from conceptual design. I will bring professors in the universities and students to engage and involve in the mechanism design to make this thing happen.</p>
<p>47.29- 47.33</p>	<p>Andrew Glass</p>	<p>Is there anything else that you would like to share with the audience today?</p>
<p>47.34- 48.26</p>	<p>Dr. Suvit Maesincee</p>	<p>We are one world one destiny, I think we should go hand-in-hand not only in education, but also in every aspect. This is the message that I would like to share.</p> <p>I also spent some of my time working from home and have come up with a book 'World Changes, Humans Shift'. I'd like to share some ideas from this article, but most of the essence of this article have been discussed today.</p>



48.27-49.22	Andrew Glass	<p>Thank you very much</p> <p>We have heard some fascinating inspiring reflections, ideas and plans. We also heard about global partnerships, the importance of life-long learning, multidisciplinary research, change of paradigms, change of mindsets, how opportunity and innovation can come from the very worse situation, the importance and new chapter of internationalisation.</p> <p>Thank you very much for joining today.</p>
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