



Biography

Apichai 'Bank' Chaiwinij

Among minority and disadvantaged students in northern Thailand, Dr. Apichai Chaiwinij is called simply “Teacher Bank.” Dr. Chaiwinij is a scholar-practitioner, social entrepreneur, and educational leader focused on leadership development in non-Western cultures. He weaves research and practice to build learning ecosystems that connect classrooms, schools, families, communities, and universities so that more people—including underprivileged youth—can learn, lead, and thrive.

Growing Role Models, Changing Futures—Sustainably

Dr. Chaiwinij is the Founder of the Hill Tribe Education Foundation, established with alumni from Chulalongkorn University and Columbia University, which has supported more than 10,000 underprivileged and minority students in the Golden Triangle—the border region of Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos and one of the world’s largest hubs of human and drug trafficking. The foundation’s mission is to cultivate role models who inspire peers to believe in brighter futures through personal growth, professional pathways, and turning away from the cycle of trafficking. Each year, scholarship recipients are equipped with leadership skills and supported to return to their hometowns, leading roadshows that spark hope among youth to dream, work hard, and resist the lure of dark paths. The foundation advances its mission through three strategies: Educator Development—training principals, teachers, and staff in disadvantaged schools; Youth Leadership Development—providing scholarships and training that prepare young people as role models; and School Outreach & Mentoring Roadshows—traveling workshops that bring inspiration and guidance across northern Thailand, supported by Admiral Pongthep Nhuthep, Privy Councillor and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation under Royal Patronage.



Experiential & Transformative Learning (Theory) + Action Learning (Practice)—Teachers College, Columbia University Foundations, Applied in Non-Western Contexts

Dr. Chaiwinij's research and teaching in leadership development are grounded in three foundational learning traditions at Columbia University–Teachers College, The Graduate School of Education (TC): Experiential Learning (John Dewey), Transformative Learning (Jack Mezirow), and Organizational & Incidental Learning (Victoria Marsick). *Prof. Victoria Marsick*—who has extended Mezirow's work on transformative learning and is widely recognized for pioneering organizational and incidental learning—has been a mentor, collaborator, and visionary leader who has profoundly shaped his academic and professional path.

He earned both an M.A. and an M.Ed. in Instructional Technology & Media at TC, integrating professional experience with advanced study in innovative learning and adult education. He later returned to TC to pursue doctoral studies in Adult Learning & Leadership (Organization & Leadership Department). During his doctoral years, he served as Graduate Assistant to Prof. Marsick (2016–2020), working closely on applied projects and international workshops—co-presenting in New York, Barcelona (Spain), and Bergamo (Italy)—which deepened his insights into leadership, leadership development and organizational learning in diverse cultural contexts.



Building on this scholarly lineage, his ongoing research applies principles of Experiential, Transformative, and Action Learning to foster transformational leadership among school leaders and senior teachers in schools for disadvantaged and minority students in the Golden Triangle. This work is implemented through the *Visionary Leadership Academy*, funded by the John F. Kennedy Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Education of Thailand in partnership with TC. He completed his doctorate with the dissertation, “Nurturing School Leadership for At-Risk Schools at the Golden Triangle through Action Learning.”

Professional Experience in Asia—A Bridge to Global Leadership Development

Before his master's and doctoral studies, Dr. Chaiwinij built a decade of experience across East and Southeast Asia in marketing consulting and education entrepreneurship. After earning a B.A. in Communications (Advertising) from Chulalongkorn University, he began at PTT PLC, Thailand's leading energy company, then moved into top marketing consulting firms serving

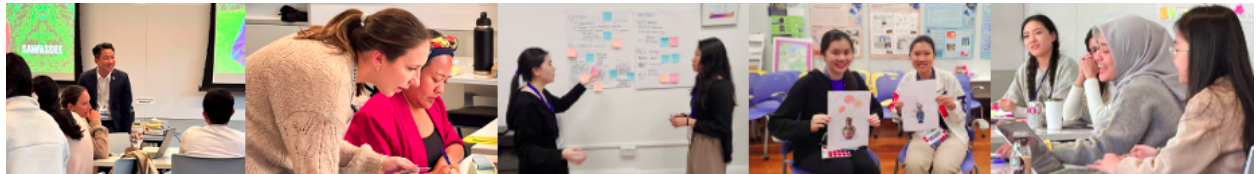


major local and global brands—including Bangkok Bank, Colgate-Palmolive Indochina, Coca-Cola Asia Pacific, BMW Asia, etc.

He later joined the co-founding team of Wall Street English as Head of Regional Marketing, helping launch the company’s first online and multimedia learning platforms in Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Thailand. This regional work inspired him to pursue advanced study at TC. Together with his brother

Kriangsak Chaiwinij, he co-founded Warwick Institute in Bangkok—an educational guidance and consultation community that mentors students while helping them navigate pathways to international programs at Chulalongkorn and Thammasat Universities; more than 6,000 students have benefited.

Continuing The Journey—Scholar, Educator, and Leader between New York and Asia



Since 2022, Dr. Chaiwinij has served as Adjunct Faculty at Columbia University—Teachers College, The Graduate School of Education, where he co-designed and co-teaches Experiential-Learning Professional & Leadership Development in Non-Western Cultures with his mentor and dissertation advisor, Dr. Judy O’Neil. The course examines leadership development across cultures and how socio-cultural contexts shape both theory and practice. Drawing on his field research in Asia, he regularly brings live case studies to class, inviting students to interrogate and reframe Western leadership development theories and practices through non-Western lenses.

Lately, he expanded his teaching in Asia, for example, in Summer 2025 at the University of Hong Kong, and now divides his academic year between New York and Asia.

Today, he continues to lead the Hill Tribe Education Foundation & Warwick Institute while advancing research, teaching, and applied projects in leadership and leadership development in non-Western cultures. His roles span educator, mentor, researcher, and social entrepreneur—investing time in people, so communities take the lead in their own futures in the Golden Triangle, across Asia, and beyond.

