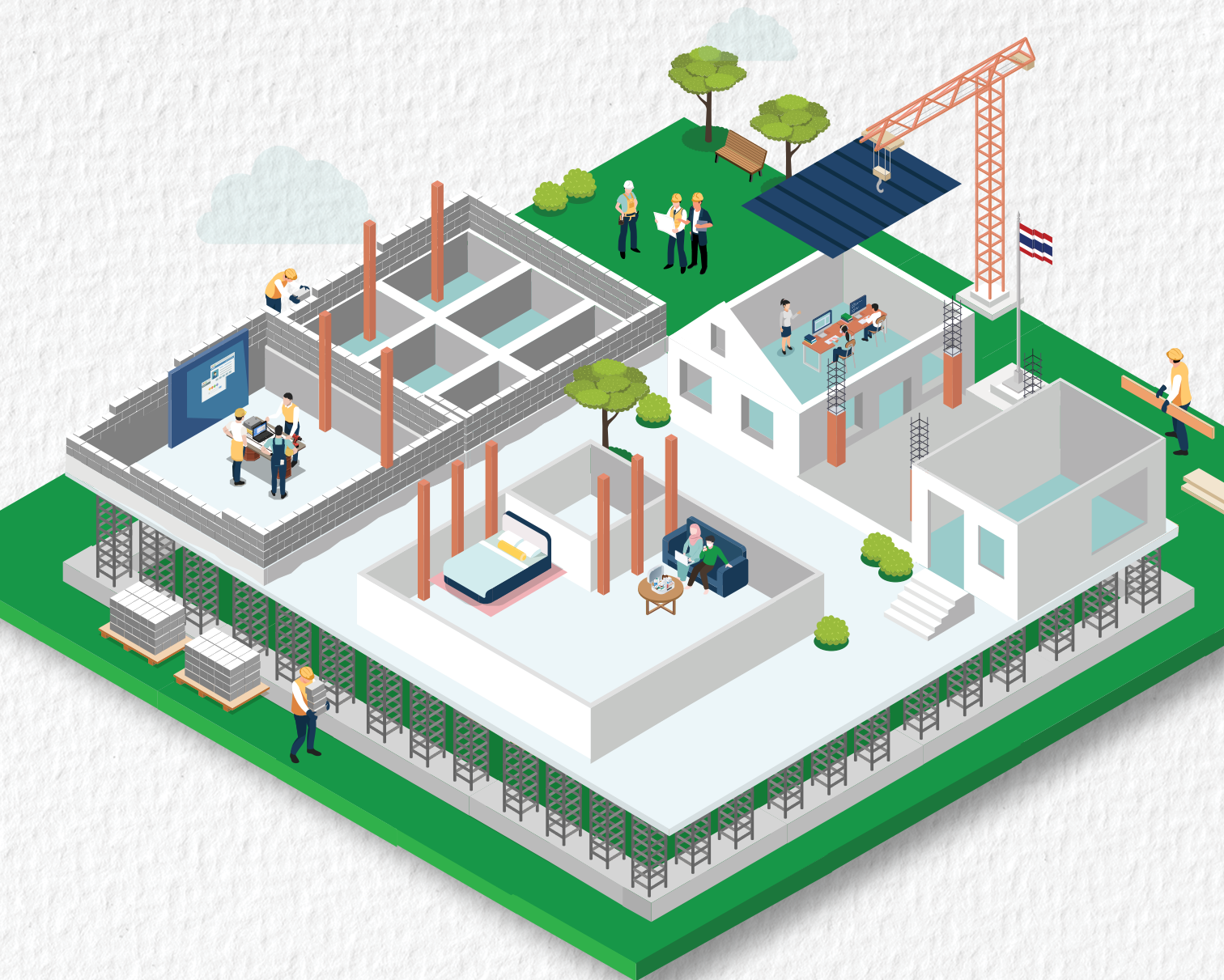


# Fostering Foundational Skills in Thailand

From a **Skills Crisis** to a **Learning Society**



WORLD BANK GROUP



# 'FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS'

are functional abilities that any children, youth, and adults need to face the challenges and leverage opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



**Foundational skills = Functional skills**



## LITERACY

is the ability to understand, evaluate, use, and engage with written texts for learning, employment, and everyday life.



## DIGITAL SKILLS

are abilities to manage, understand, and evaluate the relevance of information appropriately through digital technologies for learning employment, and everyday life.



## SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

are abilities to work with others, care for others, manage emotions, achieve goals, and explore new horizons for learning, employment, and everyday life.

# THAILAND IS FACING A SKILLS CRISIS

A very large proportion of youth and adults do not have the foundational skills, including literacy, digital skills, and socio-emotional skills.

**65%** of youth and adults are below the threshold levels of **foundational literacy**.

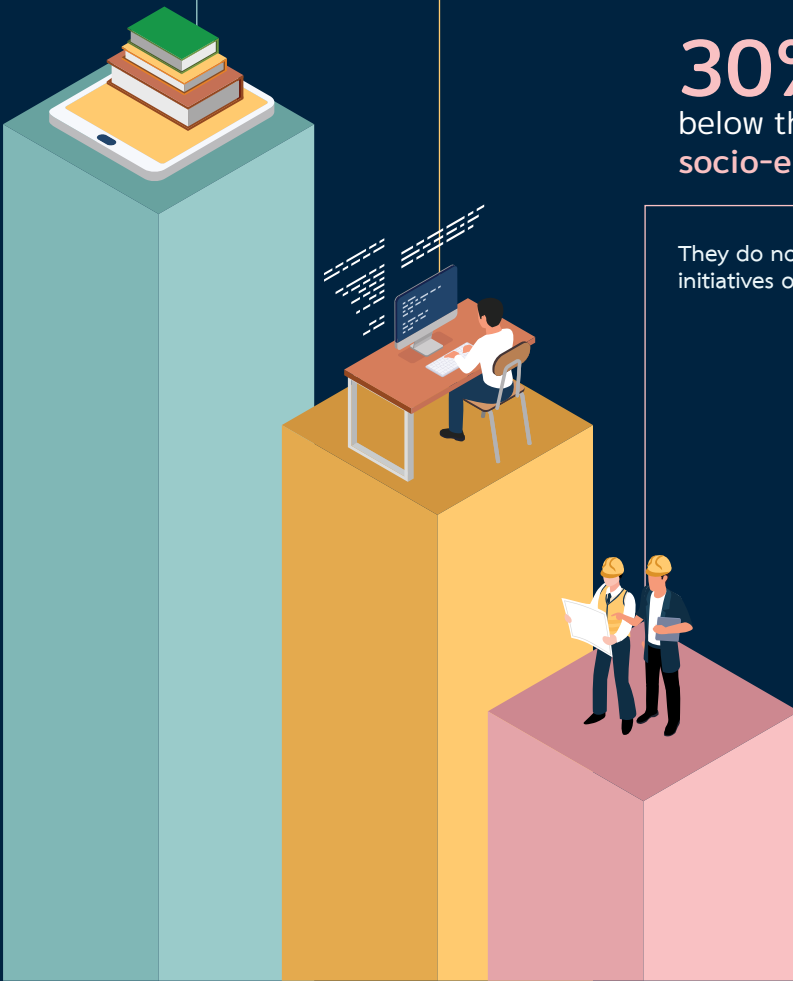
They can barely read and understand short texts to solve a simple problem such as following medical instructions.

**74%** of youth and adults are below the threshold levels of **foundational digital skills**.

They can barely use a laptop and perform simple tasks such as finding the correct price on an internet shopping site.

**30%** of youth and adults report skills below the threshold level of **foundational socio-emotional skills**.

They do not report tendencies to take social initiatives or be curious and imaginative.



# THE SKILLS CRISIS IS CONCENTRATED AMONG THOSE VULNERABLE

The skills crisis is pronounced among those from rural areas, living in **Northern** and **Southern regions**, aged **40+**, and without higher education.

**89%**

of youth and adults in the **Northern region** are below the threshold of foundational literacy

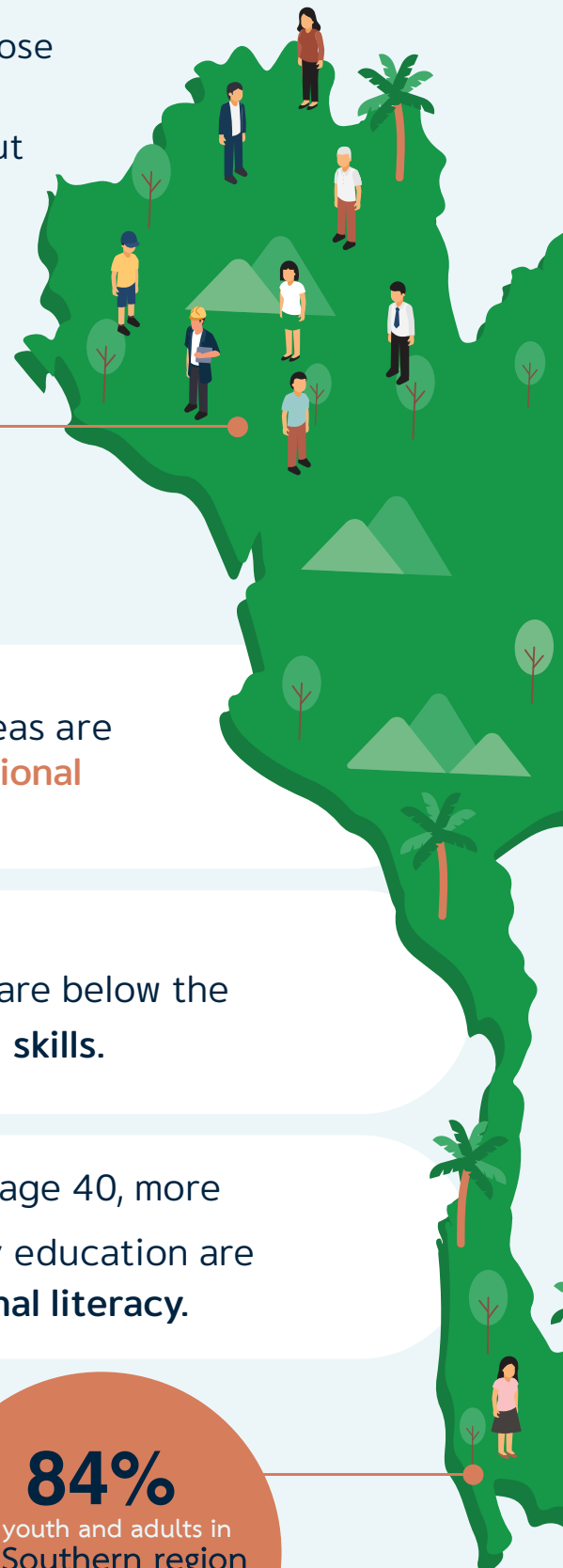
**70%** of youth and adults in rural areas are below the threshold levels of **foundational literacy**.

Over **80%** of adults aged **40+** are below the threshold levels of **foundational digital skills**.

Even among **younger adults** i.e., below age 40, more than **60%** of those without tertiary education are below the threshold level of **foundational literacy**.

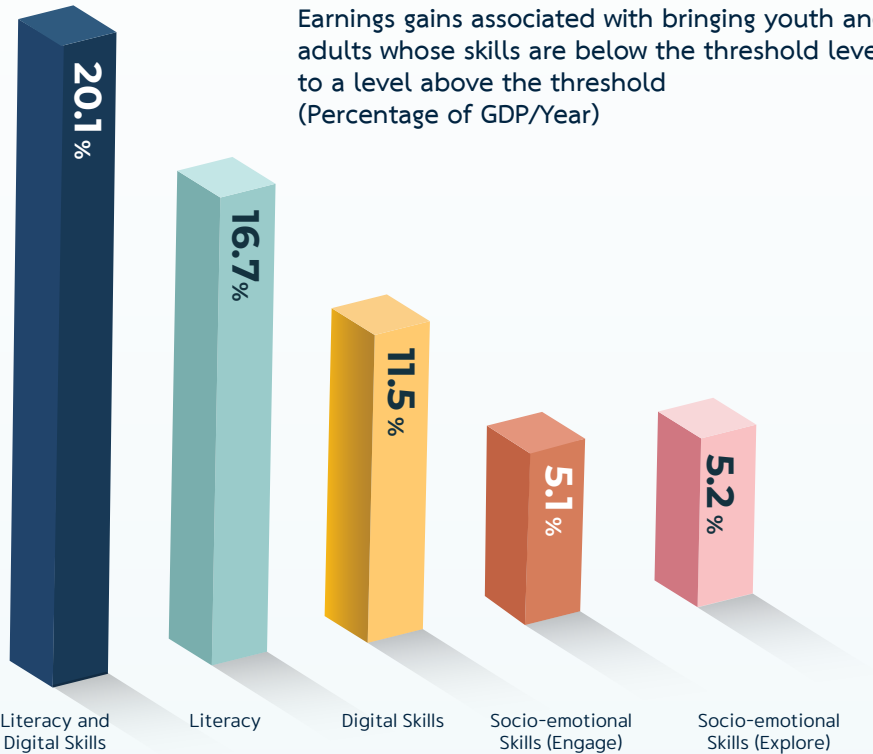
**84%**

of youth and adults in the **Southern region** are below the threshold levels of digital skills



# THE SKILLS CRISIS HAS ENORMOUS ECONOMIC COSTS

The economic loss of the skills crisis amounts to **3.3 Trillion THB** (20% of GDP) in 2022\*. This is more than the government budget in FY2022.



\* taking only into consideration associated losses in income from underperformance in foundational reading literacy and digital skills

## Gap in monthly labor income

between those who have skills below and above the threshold level of foundational literacy.



Gap of **THB 6,300** (USD 200) in monthly income



# THE SKILLS CRISIS DEMANDS GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

1



To improve the ecosystem

2

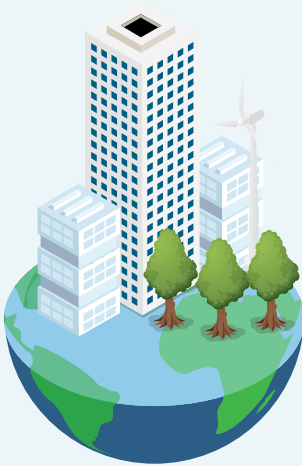


To ensure efficiency, equity, and sustainability in learning delivery

3



To strengthen vertical and horizontal linkages



## THAILAND HAS STRONG INTENTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SKILLS GAPS

Thailand has manifested its intention to foster **foundational skills** through its national strategy, ministry-level plans and curricular frameworks.



Highlighting human capital as drivers of the national strategy  
[oia.coj.go.th](http://oia.coj.go.th)



Emphasizing balanced development of human abilities  
<http://academic.obec.go.th>



Highlighting digital literacy as priority  
<https://onde.go.th>



# THAILAND HAS BEEN WORKING ON ADDRESSING THE SKILLS GAPS



Setting standards for education and occupations

[onec.go.th](http://onec.go.th)



Preparing tools and programs for teachers and learners

[e-training.tpqi.go.th](http://e-training.tpqi.go.th)

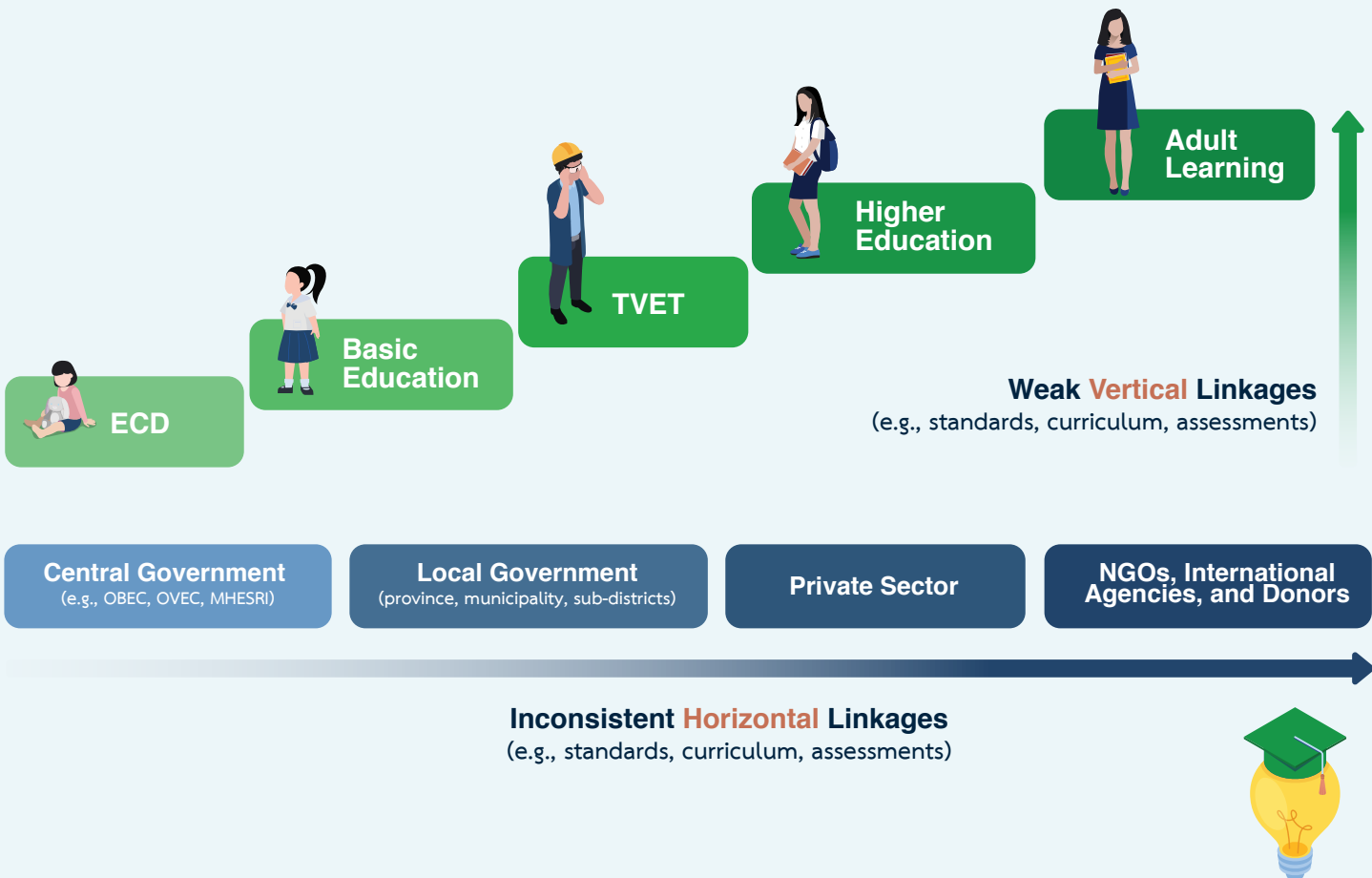


Providing corporate tax incentives to incentivize training

[www.mol.go.th](http://www.mol.go.th)



# HOWEVER, STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS DAMPENS PROGRESS



# THAILAND NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

Thailand can build on prior efforts to ensure all children, youth, and adults acquire foundational skills

## Improve strategic guidance

by demonstrating the skill gaps, encouraging evidence-based programs, and strengthening the learning standards

## Coordinate learning delivery

by establishing a provincial coordination body, leveraging the strength of the private sector, and boosting early childhood development

## Deploy innovative instruments

by accelerating competence-base curriculum, mobilizing classroom observation tools, and introducing individual learning accounts

## Strengthen quality assurance

by developing teachers' capacity to foster learners' digital and socio-emotional skills through required courses and certifications

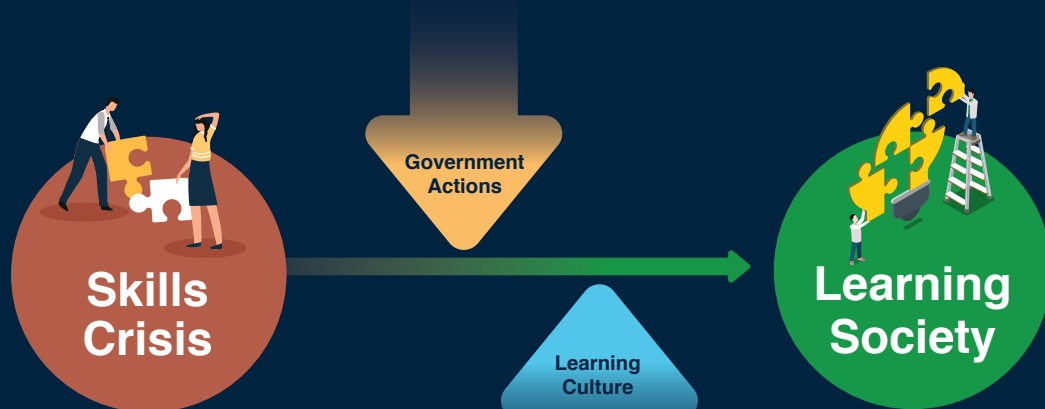
## Mobilize information campaigns

by choosing the right messengers to transmit the right information to incentivize the most vulnerable groups to engage in learning



## THAILAND MUST MOVE FROM A SKILLS-CRISIS TO A LEARNING SOCIETY

Ultimately, Thailand would benefit from building a learning society based on a much stronger, resilient, and sustainable ecosystem of skills development. This requires establishing a learning culture.



A 'Social Pact towards  
a Learning Society'