

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 21st 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**.

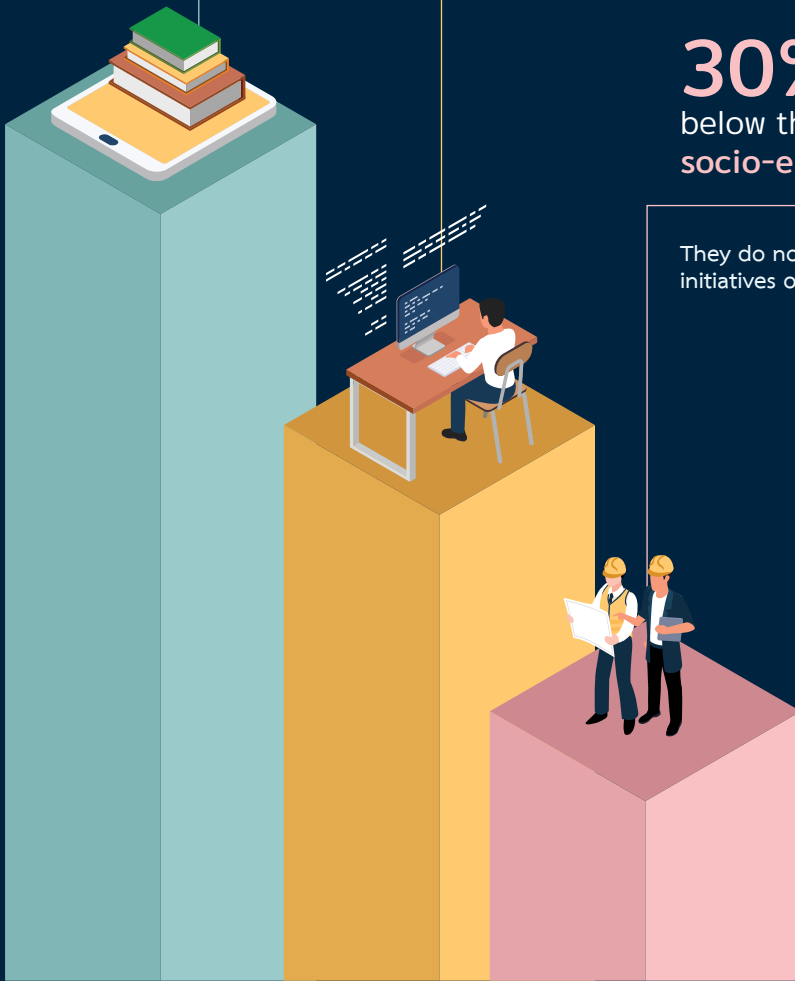
They can barely read and understand short texts to solve a simple problem such as following medical instructions.

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**.

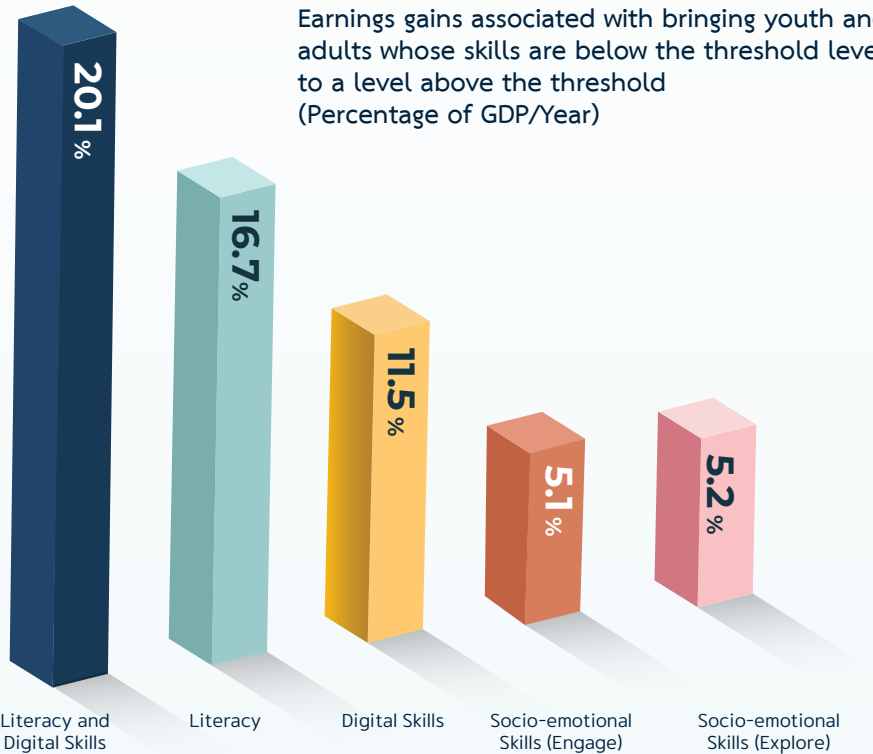
84%

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



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



Preparing tools and programs for teachers and learners

e-training.tpqi.go.th

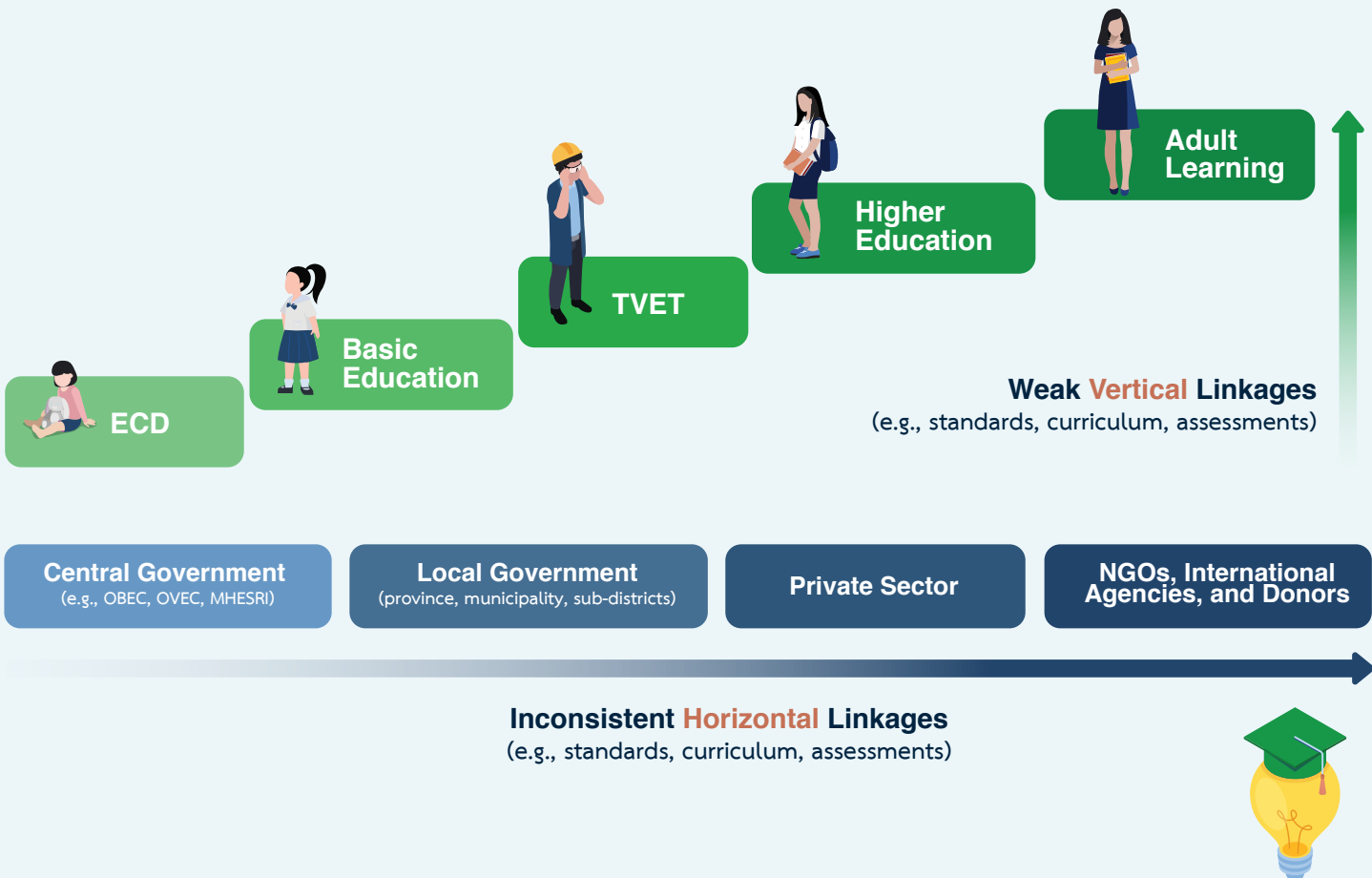


Providing corporate tax incentives to incentivize training

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

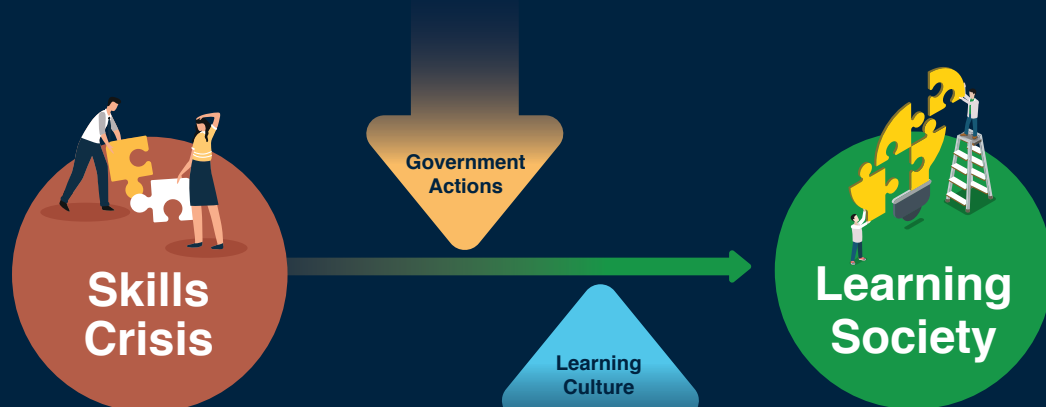
Mobilize information campaigns

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'