Empowering Citizens, Businesses and Governments to Achieve More
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Crime, population growth, economic downturn, poverty, gender inequality, environmental concerns — all of these factors and more make the business of running a country challenging for leaders in ways large and small. While no two countries are exactly alike, every nation on Earth — whether it’s considered developed or developing — shares a common desire to achieve economic growth and create an environment in which its people can thrive in an increasingly global economy.

In September 2015, the United Nations outlined 17 "sustainable development goals," which provided a vision for development that world leaders formally adopted and committed to address over the next 15 years. Among the goals laid out are: quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all; good jobs for everyone and sustainable economic growth; making cities sustainable, resilient and safe; promoting peaceful and inclusive societies; and ending poverty, in all its forms, everywhere.

While daunting, these challenges are surmountable. However, success won’t come easy. Overcoming these challenges and achieving these lofty goals will require a concerted effort on the part of government leaders and the private sector — particularly technology companies that can offer tools and training government leaders can use to empower their people and move their economies forward.

To help country leaders tackle these goals, we’re focusing our efforts on three key area that we consistently see as priorities for all nations — Education, Innovation and Jobs, and Public Safety. By partnering with Microsoft, government leaders can leverage and promote technology tools and trainings that spur innovation and generate economic growth, capture and analyze data for better decision-making, help keep citizens safe and empower countries to thrive in a competitive global marketplace.

Microsoft empowers governments, institutions and citizens around the world to create and use technology that fosters education, public safety and economic growth.
Microsoft firmly believes that education is the single most important investment we can make in people and the future. We also believe that every young person needs the skills and opportunity to unlock their potential. When you consider the fact that, by the end of this decade, 77 percent of jobs will require some technology skills, it’s easy to see the need to equip the next-generation workforce with skills they’ll need to compete in the 21st century.

To address this, three years ago we launched Microsoft YouthSpark — an initiative that, through partnerships with governments, nonprofit organizations and businesses, seeks to increase access to computing for all young people and empowers them achieve more for themselves, their families and their communities. To date, YouthSpark has impacted more than 300 million young people in over 100 countries around the world. The goal is not for everyone to become a computer scientist or a software engineer. Rather, our aim is to increase basic computer skills and thinking that we hope will be beneficial in a future that is powered by technology.

One young person that has benefited from Microsoft YouthSpark is Josinaldo da Silva Batista. Josinaldo was raised in Acuiraz, Brazil, which is a rural part of the country that is difficult to access and therefore doesn’t offer young people the same opportunities for growth and development that are found in other parts of the world. When he was 15-years old, Josinaldo helped his family make ends meets by working at a local co-op, earning $50 per month scraping chestnuts from their shells by hand.

Knowing that he wanted more for his life, Josinaldo applied to and was accepted to a free two-year digital communications course offered by Microsoft YouthSpark and a nonprofit Microsoft partner called Advanced Technical and Vocational Institute (ITVEA). Thanks to YouthSpark and ITEVA, Josinaldo became an expert in 3D animation and video editing, as well as completed college-level courses through Microsoft training programs in Brazil.

Now 22, Josinaldo coordinates the IT section at ITEVA, teaching and mentoring students who have backgrounds similar to his own. He’s attending university, married, is able to build a house, and is in a much better position to provide a comfortable life for his young daughter. He says that knowing he can offer a more hopeful future for his family means the world to him.

Our Programs
Empower Young People

Going forward, Microsoft will focus YouthSpark on creating opportunities for all youth to learn computing — with a priority on increasing access to computer science education.
on a global scale. We recently announced an expansion of YouthSpark with a $75 million commitment in community investments over the next three years. We’ll also do all we can to inspire young people, in a fun and familiar environment, to pursue a career that uses technology.

One such program is with Code.org. Recently, we announced that we’re bringing a Minecraft-inspired coding tutorial to students and educators that is created specifically for Hour of Code — a global campaign that is held each year during Computer Science Education Week. Created by Minecraft game designers, the tutorial has two main objectives: First, it introduces students to basic coding. Perhaps even more importantly, the tutorial gives students an opportunity to create and advance in a virtual world. As a result, young people can learn digital citizenship, empathy, social skills and even improve literacy — all while getting real-time feedback on their problem solving skills from an experienced instructor.

Other fun programs that help with future career opportunities are competitions like Imagine Cup, events such as DigiGirlz, which empowers girls to consider a career in technology, and YouthSpark Live. This is in addition to the comprehensive set of free software tools available through our Imagine Access offering.

Every day we help educators, students and academic staff learn how to benefit from digital curriculum and certifications. Our globally recognized Microsoft Imagine Academy (ITA) provides training on fundamental technology skills, as well as technical courses for students interested in pursuing a sustainable technology career after graduation.

8.5 million students and educators have been tech certified through our Microsoft Imagine Academy.

Microsoft has a long history of supporting educators. And we remain committed to providing teachers with the tools and training they need to redefine learning. Over the years we’ve trained more than 11 million educators. Last year alone, nearly 500,000 educators attended Microsoft trainings and workshops online, in our stores and at events.

We also recently announced that we will reach more than 2 million educators in the next three years with these resources — all available on the new Microsoft Educator Community, launched in November 2015. The online community provides educators around the world with access to lesson plans, trainings, and Skype virtual field trips. It also connects educators around the world so that they can share best practices and learn from one another.

To help improve dropout rates, we’re empowering schools with predictive analytic tools that are based on Microsoft cloud technologies and provide comprehensive data snapshots of student success indicators. For instance, it wasn’t long ago that Tacoma Public Schools had the unenviable reputation of being “dropout factories.” As recently as 2010, only 55 percent of students in this system earned diplomas on time — a figure that is well below the 81 percent average seen nationwide.

To address this serious challenge, school administrators turned to Microsoft and embarked on a data-driven journey. Their goal was to develop a solution that captures various data points and reports that contribute to "measuring the whole child." In being able to analyze trends of student success, 2014 graduation rates in Tacoma Public System jumped up to 78 percent. Today, the school district is looking forward to near-real-time indicators that will help them intervene and provide immediate support for students who are at risk for not graduating on time.

1.6 million student developers received the tools, resources and experiences they need through Microsoft Imagine to turn their innovative ideas into reality.
Our range of learning solutions and industry certifications give young people and educators — as well as government and school leaders — access to learning opportunities that have the power to boost employability and grow the future qualified workforce in an increasingly competitive and technical environment.

What You Can Do

Prepare Students for a 21st Century Economy

When you consider the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals mentioned earlier, you’ll see that Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills are central to addressing many of these challenges. Furthermore, workplaces today demand not only technology skills, but soft skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, global awareness and self-learning. It’s not enough to get technology into the hands of young people. We must also provide teacher training, assessments, and develop high-quality curricula to ensure technology is used in the best-possible ways.

We need government and education leaders to commit to investing in education systems that enable students to gain a solid foundation in STEM subjects as well as in STEM-related disciplines such as computer science. Further, we need a strong pipeline of educators who are effective at teaching STEM subjects and are skilled at using technology.

How You Can Partner With Microsoft

1. Microsoft Office 365 is free for faculty and students all over the world. It also includes teacher training on how to effectively use technology in the classroom. Leveraged appropriately, this offering can have a direct result on improving local economies.

2. Policy workshops are helpful for building long-term strategies. We’ve worked with UNESCO and the British Council and Ministers of Education to conduct workshops that address challenges around jobs and employability and relevancy for students to determine skills needed to be the entrepreneurs of the future.

3. The Microsoft Innovative Schools Program provides an example framework called the 6i Process for leaders and policy makers. The Innovative Schools Toolkit is an accessible and practical guide for schools to begin the journey of innovation. It is intended to be a starting point rather than a complete solution and it offers a process that can be customized based on your unique needs. For more information, visit the Microsoft Educator Network and explore the Innovative School Toolkit.
The U.N.’s sustainable development goal of, "decent work and economic growth" highlights the need for achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification and technological upgrading and innovation. However, equipping young people with 21st century technology skills for employment is just the beginning. It’s also important to create a landscape that unleashes innovative entrepreneurs to create businesses that will establish stable, good-paying jobs for this more-skilled workforce.

Thanks to increased access to funding, and the connected power of cloud computing, smart devices and accessible data, new ideas and startups emerge regularly all over the world. And startups can now go from ideation to execution faster than ever. To unleash competition among startups in local markets, many need help scaling their business.

One example can be seen in Cape Town, South Africa. Here, poorer citizens spend a large amount of their income on public transportation. Wealthier people, on the other hand, drive their cars, adding to traffic congestion. Born out of the Microsoft Imagine Cup, and empowered through the Microsoft BizSpark program, a local startup called WhereIsMyTransport developed an app that built ground-breaking technology focused on enabling inclusive transport ecosystems, resulting in increased public transportation use, congestion reductions and made it easier for all people to move around the city.

More than 100 Microsoft Innovation Centers in over 30 countries exist to create real opportunities for entrepreneurs and startups — as well as to develop IT skills — strengthening the vitality of the local ecosystem so that it can successfully empower job creators and enable job seekers. These centers provide state-of-the art technology facilities for practical collaboration among students, software developers, IT professionals, entrepreneurs and academic researchers. They also serve as hubs that help nurture promising technology initiatives, enable innovators to bring their solutions to market, launch new local startups and raise the competitiveness in the international arena.

Microsoft empowers entrepreneurs to do just that with technologies and services like cloud computing, developer tools, software and open-source technologies. For instance, our BizSpark program provides new startups with access to full-featured Microsoft development tools. So far, we’ve supported more than 100,000 startups with free resources and expertise.
Recently, the Microsoft Innovation Centers empowered:

• Startup Modisar to develop an app to help farmers in Botswana take better care of their livestock
• Cloud-based Raw Shorts to help businesses market themselves through animated video building
• Students in Thailand to help families improve the soil through the LenDin project — an Azure and Windows phone app

Innovation Centers are also used by our global partner ecosystem. With more than 400,000 Microsoft partners, including small, medium-sized and women- and minority-owned businesses, our partners are committed to helping our customers succeed in the fast-changing world of cloud and mobile technology.

Microsoft Ventures Accelerators in Bangalore, Beijing, Berlin, London, Paris, Seattle and Tel-Aviv help entrepreneurs launch their company, find customers and expand to global markets.

Microsoft is dedicated to supporting small businesses by providing training and development tools. Through our people, partners, presence and programs, we empower entrepreneurs and leaders with technological expertise and resources to solve local and global challenges.

What You Can Do

Nurture new businesses and innovators with resources and support.

Make sure startups in your country know about the free Microsoft resources that will help them become more competitive. By introducing entrepreneurs to useful programs and partnerships, government leaders can help people turn great ideas into thriving enterprises.

1. Entrepreneurs in your area can take advantage of the free software, support, visibility, and community through Microsoft BizSpark.

2. Your local accredited academic institutions can also draw on our Microsoft Imagine Academy digital curriculum and certifications to provide their students with the technology skills necessary to acquire technical certification for today’s rapidly evolving workplace.

3. Visit a Microsoft Innovation Center near you to learn more, or contact our Innovation Center team at micinfo@microsoft.com.

Innovation stimulates economic growth, and new technologies such as cloud computing can expand economic opportunity and strengthen national competitiveness.
Every citizen has the right to basic safety and security. Today, governments and citizens alike face an ever-growing number of increasingly complex threats. From crime to terrorism to natural disasters, public safety organizations often struggle to keep pace with these issues — especially when faced with limited financial, physical and human resources.

The combined impact of these challenges requires that ministries, agencies, and departments transform their operations and take better advantage of the efficiencies that technology solutions offer. The cloud, and all that it enables, represents the next frontier in innovation, growth and competition. For example, our public safety solutions improve and reduce spending by streamlining emergency response systems and providing real-time visibility into rapidly evolving emergency situations.

By modernizing infrastructure and taking advantage of trusted cloud technology, public safety and national security organizations can implement technologies that effectively provides access to real-time data, enables cross-agency collaboration and anytime, anywhere productivity.

For example, the Orleans Parish Communication District (OPCD) in New Orleans is drawing on the potential of the Internet of Things to make a big impact in 911 responses. As every second counts, OPCD’s new Microsoft and Motorola solution connects formerly disparate emergency services applications, a 911 call system, mobile terminals, tablets and a data warehouse into one intelligent system. This streamlines operations and enables faster emergency response times and real-time visibility into emergency situations. By building on devices and datasets that already exist, the new system helps OPCD transform emergency services, shorten response times, improve safety and eliminate error-prone manual processes.

In New York City, the goal of making the New York Police Department (NYPD) the world’s most sophisticated counterterrorism and crime-fighting force is well underway. Using a “domain awareness system,” NYPD can instantly show officers interactive neighborhood maps, security camera footage, arrest records and portable radiation detectors. These capabilities help create a system that is revolutionizing how police officers in the field can access data, which drives more informed decision making and planning. With increased mobile capabilities, teams can collaborate and communicate more quickly and effectively, as well as make real-time decisions in the field.
Safety in the Digital World

Threats to public safety go beyond the physical world as major cyber-attacks, data losses and compromised networks make headlines daily. In fact, every day, more than 1 million people are victims of cybercrime. And the cost of cybercrime to the global economy is roughly $500 billion a year.

Microsoft is dedicated to creating a safer digital world by tackling immediate cyber threats and preparing against future ones. We continually iterate and invest our learnings from operating as a global enterprise back into our products. We also deliver world-class expertise to our customers through services that help enterprises protect, detect and respond to security challenges. The Microsoft Security Response Center, which is led by some of the world’s most experienced security experts, identifies, monitors and responds to security breaches.

Microsoft programs have disrupted and rooted out international cybercrime operations, botnets and malware. Our Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit took down 15 massive malware disruptions tied to criminal organizations, and we’ve worked with government agencies to help identify and take down more than 20,000 illegal pharmacies selling dangerous counterfeit drugs. We’ve also invested more than any other technology company to create a cybercrime center that is dedicated to protecting children from child exploitation and protecting senior citizens from the risks of fraud.

As governments deal with these issues, they also struggle with questions around how to improve cybersecurity while balancing privacy, civil liberties and cost. Microsoft takes privacy concerns very seriously. And we greatly value the privacy of our customers. Among major cloud service providers, Microsoft is unique in having privacy contractual commitments that provide strong privacy protection.

We believe that our customers own and should retain control of their content at all times, and we work around the clock to keep their data private. We encrypt all of our customers’ data in transit — both between customers and Microsoft data centers, as well as between different data centers to ensure the highest privacy standards for your data. Our security and compliance frameworks and cloud infrastructure security programs help to meet the varying, complex and sophisticated needs of our customers. As of October 2014, we are the first and only vendor in the world to meet the European Union’s stringent privacy requirements as set out in Article 29.

Mobile devices and cloud productivity and platform solutions can empower both citizens and public agencies, making use of the wealth of information available today. Tools that identify, gather and analyze relevant data, and then put it into the hands of those who need it can become force multipliers, enabling the delivery of faster, more efficient citizen services.

What You Can Do

• Read our Public Safety and National Security blog to learn more from thought leaders as they discuss and explore the latest technology trends and opportunities in Public Safety and National Security.
• Stay on top of the latest discussions on trust in technology at the Cyber Trust blog
• Check out the Microsoft on the Issues blog for perspectives on security and cybercrime from a legal and public policy perspective
Empowering
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Microsoft is ideally positioned to provide governments with solutions to issues large and small. No other technology provider in the world can offer as broad a portfolio of software, devices and services. No other company can offer such an extensive network of global and local partners. And we believe no other company can look back on such a long and successful history of fostering individual, organizational and community empowerment through our education and social program implementations.

With a proven track record of working with government leaders, institutions and businesses, we can help country leaders expand opportunity for the next-generation workforce, foster local innovation, and improve digital and physical citizen safety. Together, these strides forward can help every country achieve its goals, compete on a global stage and get us all one step closer to meeting the U.N.’s sustainable development goals.

To learn more about how we empower governments, citizens and businesses to achieve more, please contact us at Empowering@microsoft.com and subscribe to Corporate Vice President of Public Sector Toni Townes-Whitley’s blog.