

Microsoft mobilizes to create opportunities for 300 million youth around the world

Microsoft Corp. has announced a new global initiative, Microsoft YouthSpark, that aims to create opportunities for 300 million youth in more than 100 countries during the next three years. This companywide initiative includes citizenship and other company programs — both new and enhanced — that empower youth to imagine and realize their full potential by connecting them with greater opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship.

Through Microsoft YouthSpark, the company will dedicate the majority of its cash contributions to nonprofits that serve the youth population around the world. In addition, Microsoft YouthSpark will include Office 365 for education, free technology tools for all teachers and students to power learning and collaboration, and Skype in the classroom, a free global community for teachers to connect their students with others around the world.

As part of the initiative, Microsoft is also launching a range of new citizenship programs:

- Give for Youth, a global micro-giving marketplace focused on raising funds for nonprofits that support youth causes around the world.
- Microsoft YouthSpark Hub, an online space where people can explore and access all the youth services, programs and resources provided by Microsoft and its nonprofit partners.
- Microsoft Innovate for Good, a global online community enabling youth to collaborate, inspire and support each other while using technology to make a difference in their communities.

Launching the new initiative, **Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Steve Ballmer** said, *“Through Microsoft YouthSpark we are making a commitment to help 300 million young people around the world achieve their dreams by focusing our citizenship efforts and other company resources on connecting young people with opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship. We believe that working with our partners we can help empower young people to change their world, and we are committed to using our technology, talent, time and resources to do that.”*

The company’s youth-focused philanthropy will be conducted in close collaboration with nonprofits around the world. These include worldwide organizations such as GlobalGiving Foundation, TakingITGlobal, Telecentre.org Foundation and the International Youth Foundation, as well as regional nonprofits such as Silatech in the Middle East, The Trust for Americas in Latin America, AIESEC International in Europe, and the ASEAN Foundation in Asia. In the United States, Microsoft is announcing its support of five national nonprofits: Boys & Girls Clubs of America, City Year, Junior Achievement USA, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship and Year Up Inc.

“Our next generation of citizenship will focus on the next generation of people,” said Brad Smith, executive vice president, Microsoft. *“The global unemployment rate for workers under age 25 is 12.7 percent, which is double the rate for the world as a whole. This is indicative of a growing opportunity divide between young people who have the access, skills and opportunities to be successful and those who do not. We must work*

together to close the opportunity divide for youth and help secure the future of this generation and the future of our global economy.”

The [International Youth Foundation Opportunity for Action report](#), published in March 2012, showed that nearly 75 million young people worldwide were unemployed in 2011. As the global youth population continues to grow — there are more than 2.2 billion people between the ages of 6 and 24 today — the opportunity divide is widening.

Microsoft YouthSpark goes beyond philanthropy and brings together a range of global programs that empower young people with access to technology and a better education and inspire young people to imagine the opportunities they have to realize their potential, including previously mentioned Office 365 for education and Skype in the classroom.

A full list of Microsoft YouthSpark programs can be found at the [YouthSpark Hub](#).

(Source: Microsoft)

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