



**Microsoft Unlimited Potential
Case Study: Equipping African Youth
with Skills and Training to Reach
Their Potential**



Equipping African Youth with Skills and Training to Reach Their Potential

Despite a wealth of human and natural resources, a lack of sustained economic growth in many African countries has diminished the employment prospects available for young people.

A 2005 study by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa stated that the unemployment rate among the African youth was 21 per cent (compared with a rate of 14 per cent for the rest of the world). To help address this shortage, Microsoft is partnering with regional organizations to provide Africa's young people with employment skills and information and communications technology (ICT) training.

As part of Microsoft Unlimited Potential, in May 2007 Microsoft formed a partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF) to equip youth in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania with the skills they needed to find jobs and create their own opportunities for success. Roughly 40,000 Africans between the ages of 16 and 35 will benefit from these efforts.

For its part, Microsoft is providing IYF with training expertise and a \$1 million grant to develop educational solutions that meet the specific needs of each locality. To help deliver the training, IYF is working with the Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI), a grassroots business organization based in Nairobi that provides business training to micro-entrepreneurs.

ISBI project manager Andrew Olea notes his organization's previous training experience as a track record for the success of this new partnership with IYF and Microsoft. "Early in 2006, we worked with Microsoft to open three technology centres through which we could provide business and IT training. Since that time we've trained 300 micro-entrepreneurs and 700 youth."

By working with IYF and Microsoft, Olea hopes that 70 per cent of the graduates from this new partnership will apply their new-found skills in a job, internship, self-employment, or voluntary community service of some kind.



"The SMME sector has a significant impact on economies in East Africa. Our hope is that Enablis can provide these entrepreneurs with necessary tools for success, and that upon that success we can expand our efforts to the rest of African continent."

*—Moses Mwaura
Regional Director,
Enablis East Africa,*

Acquiring a Stake in East Africa's Success

Microsoft Unlimited Potential is also investing in the efforts of Enablis East Africa, a Canadian organisation that fosters social and economic growth in developing markets by providing entrepreneurs with access to financing, networking opportunities, and skills development resources.

Enablis' partnership with Microsoft began in 2004, in South Africa; since then, Enablis has developed a network of 300 entrepreneurs across the country. For the establishment of Enablis East Africa, Microsoft is contributing \$400,000 and has become one of a handful of founding partners that have helped Enablis to raise a total of \$20 million for its work in this region.

Since its establishment in East Africa, Enablis has created a network of 45 entrepreneurs. Moses Mwaura, the regional director of Enablis East Africa, says that inadequate funding and business capacity have been the primary obstacles to economic growth in the region, but his hope is that Enablis can help entrepreneurs to surmount these obstacles and contribute to further development of the East African Economy.

Mwaura's hope is supported by statistics suggesting that approximately 75 per cent of the labour force in Kenya is employed at small, medium-sized, or micro-enterprise (SMME) businesses. Furthermore, those businesses generate 20 per cent of Kenya's gross domestic product.

According to Mwaura, "The SMME sector has a significant impact on economies in East Africa. Our hope is that Enablis can provide these entrepreneurs with necessary tools for success, and that upon that success we can expand our efforts to the rest of African continent."

Fast Facts

Partner: International Youth Foundation (IYF)

Country: South Africa, Tanzania

Website: www.iyfnet.org

Partner: Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI)

Country: Kenya

Website: www.eitkenya.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=46

Partner: Enablis

Country: Kenya

Website: www.enablis.org

Situation

Inadequate training and stagnant growth have led to high unemployment rates among youth in many African nations.

Solution

Microsoft is partnering with IYF, ISBI, and Enablis to provide entrepreneurs with the training and financial support they need to succeed and contribute to economic growth.

Benefits

- Microsoft donated \$1 million in grant money to support IYF/ISBI training of 40,000 in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania.
- With an initial donation of \$400,000, Microsoft became a founding partner of Enablis East Africa.
- Working with a handful of other partners, Microsoft helped Enablis raise \$20 million to support its efforts in East Africa.

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