



# Reducing the Digital Divide through Capacity Building

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, an organisation advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP's network links and coordinates global and national efforts to achieve the Millennium Goals, including cutting global poverty by half by 2015.

*“We know that information technology, used in the right way, can be harnessed to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We look forward to exploring opportunities with Microsoft to see how technology can be made to deliver on its promise in development.”*

Mark Malloch Brown,  
UNDP Administrator

Microsoft's partnership with UNDP was initiated at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2004 when Bill Gates and former UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown signed a memorandum of understanding.

Microsoft's initiatives with UNDP have focused on fostering IT capacity development by providing IT skills and finding ways to support broad UNDP goals – such as supporting democratic governance, health, disaster relief and the HIV/AIDS crisis – through technology solutions.

## **UNDP Information and Communication Technology for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)**

In the Middle East, the UNDP is working to help foster economic growth, and to provide proper access to healthcare and education, while also partnering with governments to maintain and improve their organisational efficiency in the face of tightly controlled budgets. In order to tackle these objectives, UNDP's Regional Bureau of Arab States is setting up the Regional e-Governance Institute (REGI).





One of the components of REGI is the e-Gov@ASP portal, designed to promote increased reuse of knowledge within government to help reduce cost and time in implementing e-government solutions. This portal is based on Microsoft's Solutions Sharing Network (SSN), a global initiative that provides an online, community-based capability to promote increased communication, deeper information exchange and collaboration between government organisations, academic institutions and other public-sector agencies.

#### **UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centres**

UNDP and Microsoft are also partnering in Asia-Pacific to develop a collaborative portal in support of UNDP's regional work by sharing useful information, policy documents and best practices with development practitioners and stakeholders. This will be achieved through communities of practice whose themes reflect those of the Millennium Goals, and will be accessible to UNDP headquarters, regional and country offices, government officials, NGOs and other stakeholders and advisors.

The integrated portal and knowledge management tool – leveraging Microsoft's Solutions Sharing Network and based on SharePoint 2007 – will be operated from the Regional Centre in Bangkok.

Microsoft applied its Solution Sharing Network (SSN) and SharePoint 2007 tools to develop the portal. The proposal's in-kind value is estimated at over US\$1 million. The portal was launched internally in September 2007.

#### **Education Programmes**

UNDP and Microsoft have signed a three-year agreement to improve educational achievement through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). UNDP's goal is to accelerate the implementation of ICT in schools and for the benefit of the wider communities. Microsoft will support this goal by bringing its experience of implementing ICT in schools through its Pathfinder Blueprint for Schools programme.

The Pathfinder Blueprint – piloted in Namibia – is a step by step guide for governments in countries underserved by technology for the integration of ICT into national educational strategies.

Leveraging the Pathfinder Blueprint, Microsoft and UNDP will work to:

- Increase access to, and improve the quality of educational delivery through ICT
- Support the second Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education
- Provide a flexible blueprint for implementing ICT in schools in a scalable, sustainable way in up to ten African countries



### Community Programmes

By offering skills training and other resources to students, entrepreneurs, and adult men and women at Community Technology Centres (CLCs) in developing countries, Microsoft and UNDP work to help communities acquire IT skills and to encourage the exploration of creative, technology-based solutions to many of the world's most pressing development challenges.

UNDP and Microsoft are partnering on projects worldwide that range from helping citizens access and navigate e-Government services in El Salvador to NGO capacity building work in Kazakhstan and educating disadvantaged youth in Jamaica. In each case, Microsoft has worked with the local UNDP representative to assess how best to complement their efforts at a national level.

Country	UNDP/Microsoft Activity
Afghanistan	Working with the UNDP to provide technology access and skills training at 16 regional centres in Afghanistan, helping to train nearly 12,000 Afghan citizens annually.
Algeria	Building on the AjjalCom project in Morocco, a similar project will be rolled out in Algeria.
Bulgaria	Supporting 160 telecentres established by the national government to provide skills, technology access and e-training to citizens; has already trained 10,000 state employees and 1,000 civil servants.
Egypt	Partnering with the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology to create Technology Clubs – providing opportunities for disadvantaged communities to access IT and skills training; 250 trainers will be provided to support 700 Technology Clubs with a focus on building the sustainability of the centres. An additional CTC has been set up in Siwa, Egypt; this centre has trained 200 trainers and 1,000 community members.
El Salvador	Project to support 40 telecentres across the country, offering 69 training courses; 1,700 people have already been trained.
Ghana	Project to provide access to IT and skills training for underserved community members in 10 community centres; 150 people have already been trained.
Jamaica	Training 700 trainees per /year at 6 CTCs in conjunction with the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica; in just a few months, 210 youth (131 female; 79 male) have been trained in basic computing skills.
Kazakhstan	Project with the International Informatisation Academy (IIA) to train 6,000 people in 7 centres; 2,000 people have already been trained.





Country	UNDP/Microsoft Activity
Macedonia	Skills training for 21,000 trainees in 19 centres focusing on the IT skills needed to access eGovernment services. CTCs in 8 municipalities are used as Citizens Access Points (CAPs) – these centres have trained 4,000 on e-services and 8,000 on using internet, including unemployed citizens and local government officials.
Mauritania	Project focusing on youth training, targeting 750 trainees and 10 trainers.
Morocco	Jointly partnering with the UNDP and the government of Morocco to equip 10 community learning centres located in 'Maison de Jeunes' or 'homes for youth' owned by Morocco's Ministry for Youth; the project has now been extended to 100 CTCs across Morocco.
Mozambique	Microsoft will support two Provincial Digital Resource Centres (CPRDs) established by the Mozambique Government and the UNDP. Support will be focused on a train-the-trainer programme aimed at fostering IT skills development and capacity building for community members. This programme will also focus on job creation, local economic and social development, and community readiness to address the triple threat of HIV/AIDS, poverty, and food security.
South Africa	Established a Solutions Sharing Network in Johannesburg, South Africa; the network extends to offer support to the country offices to enhance the use of IT for improved governance and knowledge-sharing in the sub-region.
Rwanda	Microsoft along with the World Bank, UNDP and other donors has secured an "advisory" role in the development of the next ICT policy for Rwanda; work to-date includes the development of a Knowledge Management solution for the Cabinet.
Turkey	Microsoft has worked with the UNDP and Youth for Habitat to develop a training programme to increase the IT literacy for youth empowerment as part of the National Digital inclusion project for Turkey; 2,640 young people have been trained so far; the IT peer educator team, created during the first phase will train 100,000 young people in 3 years.
Yemen	Project establishing 3 centres focused on training youth and women, targeting 12 trainers and 720 youth per year.

