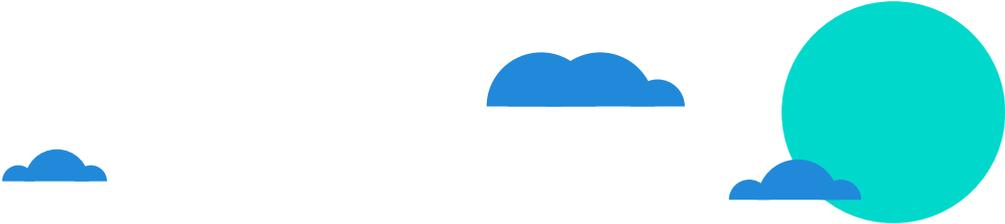




# FOR A BRIGHTER VIETNAM

Empowering young Vietnamese with skills for the digital economy

# Content



- Preface**      Meet Vietnam’s Brightest ----- 2
- Chapter 1**    Creating Rivers of Opportunities ----- 3
- Chapter 2**    Empowering Vietnam’s Youth for the Digital Economy ----- 4  
                  with Future-Ready Skills
- Chapter 3**    Advancing Computer Science Education for All Youth ----- 6
- Chapter 4**    Encouraging Young Women to Pursue Careers in ----- 8  
                  Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Chapter 5**    Upskilling Vietnam’s Workforce for Future-Ready Jobs ----- 10
- Chapter 6**    Building an Inclusive Vietnam with Technology ----- 12
- Chapter 7**    Advancing a Future for Every Person in Vietnam ----- 14



# Meet Vietnam's Brightest



"My dream is to become a computer scientist, but I don't know how to get there. I don't even have a computer at home. The Enabling Boat came to my village, it is helping me to reach my goal."

**Linh**, student from a fishing family

"For a woman like me born in the countryside, IT is not a natural career option. But after learning about the amazing things that technology can do, I decided to pursue a path in computer science."

**Huong**, software engineer



"I wonder how can technology keep our mountain beautiful. I don't know yet but I'm going to find out."

**Thu**, student from the Muong ethnic community



"Friendship is like coding. If you find the right combination of commands, something meaningful happens."

**Tai**, web developer



"Many of my peers worry about securing a job after graduation, and the insecurity can leave them confused about the careers they should pursue. Thanks to Microsoft YouthSpark, I uncovered my passion in technology marketing and managed to receive an excellent job offer."

**Dung**, digital marketer

Areas marked in colour are where Microsoft Vietnam has introduced programs to empower youth for the digital age.



## Creating Rivers of Opportunities

Known as the land of the ascending dragon, Vietnam represents the growth potential of Asia Pacific. The country is set to become one of the top 10 fastest growing economies by 2050, largely due to a young and growing workforce and the ongoing digital revolution.

However, the 60% of Vietnamese living in rural areas lack access to learning opportunities, connectivity and technologies, restricting their potential to participate in the digital age.

For us at Microsoft, our mission is to empower every person and organization to achieve more, including those in very remote locations that the market doesn't reach. We strive to bring the benefits of technology to them to create local economic opportunities and sustainable societal impact everywhere.

This is where I'm personally encouraged by our efforts in making a difference in Vietnam.

In 2015, we committed US\$3 million to help close the digital gap in the country. Through programs run in partnership with local authorities and nonprofits, we aim to equip all youth with digital skills through vocational training and coaching – whether in the cities or in our rural provinces.

Through the Microsoft Philanthropies team, we have trained more than 2,000 educators to teach digital skills and created economic opportunities for more than 200,000 youth.

Our investment does not stop there. Together with our nonprofit and institutional partners, we will continue our joint efforts to scale and sustain the programs to widen the impact in Vietnam.

We recognize that this will be a long and meandering journey, and that collectively, we can create rivers of opportunities for our future generation.



**Pham The Truong**

General Director,  
Microsoft Vietnam

### About Microsoft Philanthropies

We believe technology is a powerful force for good in a rapidly changing world, and we're working to ensure that everyone has access to the economic opportunities it provides.

We're in the midst of unprecedented social and economic transformation. Technology is creating a new digital economy, full of new economic opportunities, but for too many people, those opportunities are simply out of reach.

We have to change the way we educate our kids, train our workers, and prepare our communities for success in this new environment.

These changes will impact every person and every organization, and we believe that corporations like ours have an opportunity and an obligation to make sure the future we're building is for everyone.

At Microsoft Philanthropies, we work to ensure that as we move technology forward, we do not leave people behind.

Visit [www.microsoft.com/philanthropies](http://www.microsoft.com/philanthropies) to find out more.



# Empowering Vietnam's Youth for the Digital Economy with Future-Ready Skills

Rapidly advancing technology is transforming our world. When people are able to use it and create it, they can expect higher paying jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities and a better quality of life. But when they cannot, that same technology has the potential to disrupt established industries and the livelihoods that depend on them.

At Microsoft, we embrace the challenge of ensuring that everyone has access to the power and potential of today's—and tomorrow's—technology.

Our YouthSpark Digital Inclusion program, for example, introduces in-demand skills to get youth future-ready, bridging the skills and employment gap in the labor market. This is important in a country like Vietnam because, despite having a relatively low unemployment rate of 2%, youth accounts for two thirds of job seekers today.

In the YouthSpark program, we partner with local nonprofits and government authorities to ensure that underserved youth have better access to digital skills, from basic digital literacy to advanced computer science.



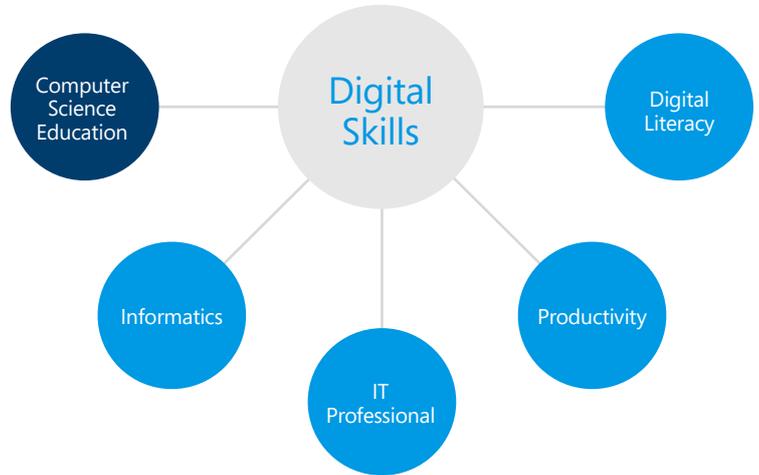
In March 2015, Microsoft Vietnam announced a US\$3 million investment across a three-year period to empower young people with opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship.



# Focusing on Digital Skills

At Microsoft, we define digital skills as a spectrum of functional and specialized skills that is relevant for an individual in the digital age.

Much of our work today focuses on increasing access to **computer science education** because of the transferable skills it provides in terms of creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking.




>150,000  
Youth trained on digital skills



>2,000  
Educators trained to teach digital skills



70-90%  
Employment rate for YouthSpark career programs



>450  
Educational institutions reached



30  
Cities / provinces served



18  
Government agencies engaged



622  
News stories



>3.5m  
Social impressions



## Advancing Computer Science Education for All Youth

For many young Vietnamese living in rural areas, the journey to school is not always easy.

One of the big challenges for the Vietnamese government is to make sure that young Vietnamese who are part of the 53 ethnic minorities in the country are not left behind in the adoption of ICT.

Launched in 2016, the **YouthSpark Digital Inclusion Program** aims to develop computer science skills among young Vietnamese, in particular youth living in disadvantaged areas, by training more teachers to impart high quality digital skills training.



An example of one of those young people is Thu, a Muong ethnic girl, who lives in the mountainous region of Hao Binh, one of the northern provinces in Vietnam. Where

she lives, there is no television or internet at home, and she does not own a smartphone.

Yet, she leaves home at 6 am and walks over a thousand steps to get to school, where she can access computers and is trained on ICT skills.

To reach scale, the program empowers educators like Thu's teachers through train-the-trainer sessions using an ICT curriculum co-developed with the **Ministry of Education** and **Vietnet-ICT**, a nonprofit supported by Microsoft.



In October 2017 at VIFOTECH, the national creative competition for teenagers and children, two students from Hoa Binh province, Pham The Quang and Ha Tuan Dung, were recognized for their game "Dragon-Snake". This was built entirely from Kodu, a simple, visual programming language.

But to even participate in this contest, they had to first overcome the most basic challenge: accessing computers.

With the help of the YouthSpark Digital Inclusion program, they managed to complete the project and even beat 700 other entries to win the award at VIFOTECH.

### Impact as of 2018

14 provinces served

1,587 educators trained

150,887

students in disadvantaged areas trained



## Connecting Rural Vietnam with the Enabling Boat



The **Enabling Boat** was first launched in Halong Bay to connect with youth in coastal Vietnam. Equipped with modern technology, the boat docks in remote villages to provide digital literacy and computer science training to both children and adults. For some, this was their first time ever using a computer or being connected to the Internet.

Among the participant was Vu Thuy Linh, a primary school student from a fishing family in Cua Van, Halong Bay. Although Linh's family cannot afford a computer, she is participating in the program and her excitement is hard to contain. "The first time I stepped on the boat, I was very happy as I saw the computers on the table. I just wished that I could use it all the time," she said.

In April 2018, Microsoft expanded the project in partnership with **Dariu Foundation**. A new boat service was launched in three new provinces: Vinh Long, Tien Giang and Hau Giang. The expanded project will equip 210 teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach computer science education, reaching out to 35,000 students.

### Impact as of 2018

**4** coastal provinces served

**560** educators trained

**11,000** youth reached

"Water means life to Vietnam. It's a bloodline for commerce, it's a bloodline for survival... As water is the lifeblood of the country, I think that there are certain places where the water becomes a challenge.

It stops people from having certain access to technology, school and learning opportunities. So, I think that it's fitting that we use a boat to deliver this project."

Khoa Pham, CELA Lead, Microsoft Vietnam



"The mountainous and rural areas are facing many challenges in development and integration into the digital economy. Digital skills are key for helping young people to change their lives, avoiding the risk of being left behind in this industrial revolution. Thank you, Microsoft, for bringing this program to Vietnam."

Dr. Nguyen Son Hai, Director of ICT Department, Ministry of Education and Training



## Encouraging Young Women to Pursue Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics



Gender and ethnic inequality is a challenge in Vietnam, especially in rural areas. The illiteracy rate among women is twice as high as that of men. Even in the technology sector, they represent only 20% of the workforce.



One of our efforts to bridge this gender gap at scale is Microsoft's **MakeWhatsNext** campaign, which encourages young women to pursue careers in STEM fields.

The lack of female role models in STEM is one important reason for the gender gap. Only one in four girls between 12 to 19 years of age in the region<sup>1</sup> know a female public figure in STEM.

The campaign seeks to raise young women's interest for STEM by letting them envision jobs of the future where they can use technology to solve global societal challenges.

In 2018, Microsoft employees and 80 YouthSpark female scholars conducted **DigiGirlz School Connect** panels in partnership with STEM educators from 35 schools. These panels of female speakers provided young female students an opportunity to discover careers in technology and to engage with potential mentors.

### Impact as of 2018

160

women trained and received scholarship

4,000

girls inspired with STEM careers

Partnership with

35

schools

&

8

universities



<sup>1</sup> Mastercard, Low Confidence Limits Number of Girls Pursuing STEM Careers in Singapore: Inaugural MasterCard Study, 2017



Three years ago, Pham Thu Huong had no email address, no Facebook account, and never even laid her hands on a computer. Recently, she wrapped up her college degree in computer science and got recruited by Toshiba Vietnam.

Before she embarked on her journey in technology, many of her friends, relatives and even neighbors encouraged her to take a more traditional job. “They say it’s hard, possibly, too hard for girls,” she said.

Overcoming the odds, Huong is one of 80 co-eds to have received a **YouthSpark Scholarship** this year. Scholars are selected from the top 8 universities in Vietnam.

The program, managed by the **Center for Education and Development (CED)**, offers scholarships along with mentoring and training for underserved female students majoring in computer science, for them to get ready for impactful careers in the technology sector.

“With Microsoft YouthSpark Scholarship, we want to encourage female students to overcome challenges in life to pursue careers in technology especially in computer science.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is not just for men. There are many great women who are very successful in this field. We hope that all female students who have a passion for STEM won’t hesitate to explore, participate, and be determined to follow their dreams.”

Nhi Le, Microsoft Vietnam, Philanthropies Lead



## Upskilling Vietnam's Workforce for Future-Ready Jobs

Technologies such as cloud computing have levelled the playing field for developing markets like Vietnam. Economic opportunities will be realized if workers are equipped with the right digital and technical skills through vocational training, especially in SMEs that contribute to 40% of the country's GDP and need to compete on an international scale to foster Vietnam's growth.



For many students from the countryside like Mai Anh Dung, Ho Chi Minh City offers a land of opportunities. Yet, the city can be overwhelming, causing many to fall short of their goals.

Dung, through a two-day course conducted as part of the YouthSpark Career Readiness program, was motivated to make a difference for himself.

Picking up skills such as resume writing, interview skills and self-analysis, he was later invited by 16 companies for a job interview. This was beyond what he had imagined.

The program, launched in May 2016, has two key goals:

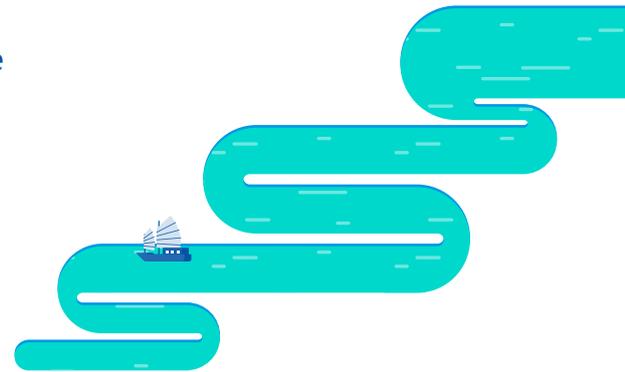
- 1 Increase employability and entrepreneurship skills among students and workers;
- 2 Connect potential talents to small medium enterprises (SMEs) within Vietnam, while scaling their cloud capabilities.



“By organizing competitions, trainings, forums, workshops, we are putting in great effort to provide young people with knowledge, skills, and even real-life experience about the challenges and opportunities in the modern workplace.

I believe these activities are greatly contributing to improving the quality of talent, as well as enhancing public – private partnerships to strengthen the connection of youth and enterprises in the labor market.”

Pham Tran Anh, Director of SMB, Microsoft Vietnam



Partnering closely with the **Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)**, as well as the **US-ASEAN Business Council**, the program provides training opportunities for students in vocational schools and universities, as well as workers currently employed in SMEs.

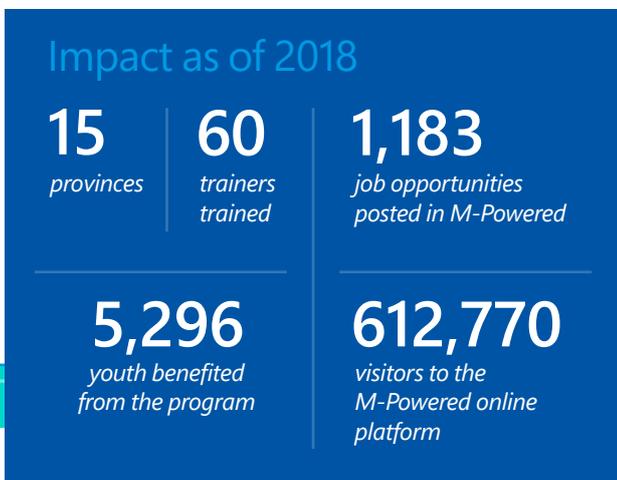
Participants go through formal training courses, forums and start-up contests. They also get access to <https://youthvietnam.vn/> (**M-Powered**), a self-service portal to pick up soft and technical skills to better prepare themselves for the workforce. Additionally, they are coached by Microsoft volunteers, who share advice and insights from the sector.



“With the deployment of YouthSpark Career Readiness in Vietnam, VCCI and Microsoft aim to introduce and equip young Vietnamese with knowledge and skills in a modern environment, and at the same time increase SMEs’ competitiveness through integrating youth within the workforce.

The project also imparts core values, scientific and technical skills and knowledge for young Vietnamese to successfully start a business in the digital era. As Vietnam’s economy is scaling for the global stage, knowledge on entrepreneurship and having the right employment policies for SMEs is critical.”

Mr. Vo Tan Thanh, Vice-President of Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and Director of VCCI – Ho Chi Minh



# Building an Inclusive Vietnam with Technology

Vietnam counts over 5 million people with disabilities, with 75% of them living in rural areas. These individuals are more likely to suffer from poverty and may not have equal opportunities to contribute to the economy. By re-skilling people with disabilities with in-demand certifications, we are unlocking their full potential and creating larger economic benefits for the country as a whole.



Hai and Tai are “brothers in code”. They first met in a training class conducted by REACH and became inseparable study buddies, even staying over in each other’s places during examination periods.

The courses include intensive ICT training covering web, graphic and 3D design, job placement, and six months of coaching to support students during their transition to employment.

Hai has to contend with cerebral palsy but his physical disability has not stopped him from achieving his dream. Overcoming his challenges, Hai is now a programmer at a web development company and has doubled his family’s income.

### Impact as of 2018

**959**  
youth trained

**87%**  
of REACH’s technology students  
employed after graduation





Microsoft also partnered with Audio Book Charity for the Blind to build an ICT program for the blind. In 2017, both parties designed a set of ICT and computer science curriculum for its beneficiaries – a first in the country. This included 12 courses, each stretching for three months. More than 200 visually impaired students have been trained with the support of Microsoft’s employees, who volunteered to develop a center for participants to build their soft and technical skills. Many have graduated and are gainfully employed today.



“People sometimes lose faith in their lives, myself included. I was glad that I had the opportunity to stumble across the Library’s reading program where it has given me confidence. I’m very happy to be part of the Microsoft team to help with this project as volunteer.”

Pham Anh Vu, Partner Strategist,  
Volunteer, Microsoft Vietnam

“The first few days (of recording) was the toughest. I had to read and re-read a lot, and this strained my voice and made it hoarse...but every time I finished a tape of 10 stories, I felt happy and relieved.”

Ms. Huong Duong, Director, Audio Book Library for the Blind



For many, Huong Duong’s story is one of pure grit. Losing both her limbs in an accident when she was just 25, she lost her will to live. Then she met a fellow patient who lost both his arms, who inspired her to relook at her life and make a difference.

Huong later became a volunteer reader at Nguyen Dinh Chieu Blind School in Ho Chi Minh City, where she felt an affinity to the students. She decided to start **Audio Books Charity for the Blind**. Microsoft supported her project with Azure cloud donations.

Today, thousands of visually impaired students have heard her lovingly told stories. Her tapes are distributed free of charge in 54 provinces. There are 1,300 books read and recorded in digital formats.

Impact as of 2018

**1 million** visitors to the  
online library

**> 200** visually impaired people  
receiving training from  
Microsoft-developed courses





## Advancing a Future for Every Person in Vietnam



Our work in Vietnam continues as we strive to upskill and reskill students and workers for the digital economy. Moving forward, we will deepen our existing engagements in three areas:

- Supporting the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to scale computer science education to the whole country**

As the result of Microsoft's partnership, MoET announced the draft decision on making computer science education a compulsory subject for all students from 3rd to 9th grade. This is a key milestone in recognizing the importance of digital skills for social economic development. Microsoft will continue to support MoET by scaling the program to underserved areas via online learning and in-person training.
- Partnering with UNESCO to promote gender-responsive STEM education policy in Vietnam and beyond**

The issue of low female participation in STEM studies and consequently STEM careers persists and represents a challenge that needs to be addressed in Vietnam to achieve inclusive growth. Building on previous campaigns to encourage more young women into STEM, Microsoft is now partnering with UNESCO to develop a regional initiative on gender-responsive STEM curricula.
- Partnering with the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to scale the career readiness program to national level**

After two years of successfully implementing the YouthSpark Career Readiness program in partnership with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce, vocational institutions and SMEs, Microsoft is now working with MoLISA, donors such as ADB and Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) organizations to scale the program to national level, hence directly contributing to the Vietnamese Government's goal of skilling one million IT workers by 2020.

*Together with these partners, we're working to ensure that everyone has the skills and resources they need to participate in the world we're building, and that our impact on individuals and communities gets translated into long-term, systemic change. Because when everyone has the chance to reach his or her full potential, we all prosper.*



