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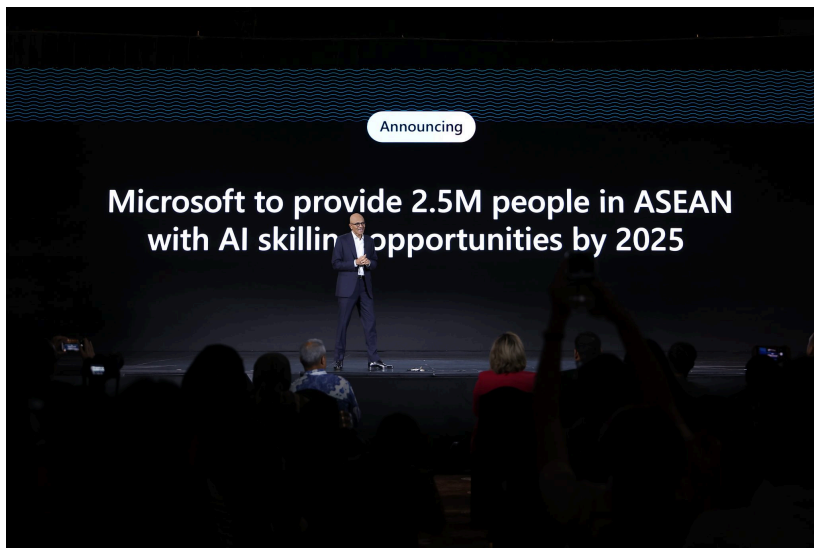
Microsoft announces AI skilling opportunities for 2.5 million people in the ASEAN region by 2025

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Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella announces a new initiative aimed at equipping 2.5 million people with AI skills by 2025 across ASEAN during the Microsoft Build: AI Day on April 30, 2024 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Photo by Annice Lyn/Getty Images for Microsoft.

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Jakarta, April 30, 2024 – Today, Microsoft announced a commitment to equip 2.5 million people in member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with AI skills by 2025. The skilling initiatives will be implemented in partnership with governments, nonprofit and corporate organizations, and communities across Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Microsoft's commitment aligns with the [*ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025* (https://asean.org/book/asean-digital-masterplan-2025/)](https://asean.org/book/asean-digital-masterplan-2025/) to build an AI-ready talent pool in the region. It is also part of the company's broader goal to empower individuals, organizations, and communities in ASEAN countries to harness the potential of AI to drive innovation and economic growth.

Dr Piti Srisangnam, executive director of the ASEAN Foundation, said: "We appreciate Microsoft's commitment to upskilling ASEAN youth in AI, a pivotal step aligning with the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025. By fostering a sustainable digital talent ecosystem, it will contribute significantly to our regional development."

Microsoft's skilling commitment will focus on four areas: building an inclusive, AI-ready workforce; bridging the cybersecurity talent gap; enhancing developers' AI skills; and empowering nonprofit organizations to maximize their social impact.

These initiatives will build on Microsoft's long history of helping to close the digital skills gap in ASEAN countries. Over the past two years, around 1.7 million people have participated in its Skills4Jobs program.

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"What's truly exciting is the innovation mindset already prevalent in ASEAN. Investing in AI skills is investing in a future where economic growth is inclusive, giving every person a chance to contribute and benefit. With a robust pool of talent skilled in disruptive technologies, ASEAN is well positioned for the global tech race," said Andrea Della Mattea, president of ASEAN at Microsoft.

Building an inclusive, AI-ready workforce

The digital age demands skilled workers, and vocational institutes will be critical in providing practical training for industry-aligned needs and roles. Microsoft will help strengthen vocational education systems across the ASEAN region to provide AI skills in partnership with the ASEAN Foundation and education ministries in the 10 member states, which will benefit an estimated 644,000 vocational students.

Through the AI TEACH for Indonesia (https://news.microsoft.com/id-id/2024/02/06/plan-indonesia-and-microsoft-launch-ai-teach-for-indonesia-program-targeting-ai-training-for-300000-vocational-school-students-in-indonesia/) and AI TEACH Malaysia (https://news.microsoft.com/en-my/2024/02/08/asean-foundation-biji-biji-initiative-and-microsoft-collaborate-to-shape-an-ai-enabled-economy-for-malaysia-through-ai-teach-malaysia-program/) programs, Microsoft and the ASEAN Foundation will provide technical and vocational education and training students with AI skills. Microsoft is also training and educating (https://news.microsoft.com/id-id/2023/09/14/prakerja-and-microsoft-launch-talenta-ai-program-to-empower-100000-indonesian-youths-with-ai-skills/) 100,000 underserved youths and job seekers in AI, data, and security through its existing partnership with Kartu Prakerja, the largest pre-employment program in Indonesia.

In addition, Microsoft is launching the **AI Skills for the AI-enabled Tourism Industry** program in partnership with Thailand's Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Ministry of Labour, and the nation's Technology Vocational Education Training Institute. The initiative will skill 100,000 young entrepreneurs involved in tourism businesses across minor-tier geographic provinces in all five regions of Thailand.

In the Philippines, Microsoft is committed to equipping 1 million Department of Education learners from kindergarten to grade 12 with AI and cybersecurity skills, ensuring their readiness for future careers and employment opportunities. Furthermore, Microsoft will strengthen its collaboration with the nation's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) by investing in a new initiative to equip 100,000 TESDA female learners with AI and cybersecurity skills. This will help foster a diverse talent pipeline for the country's digital transformation.

Microsoft will also expand its partnership with the United Nations Development Programme Asia Pacific in Indonesia to Malaysia and Vietnam, helping 570,000 youth from underserved communities enhance their employability and work readiness through access to AI fluency skills.

Helping bridge the cybersecurity talent gap

The Asia-Pacific region is experiencing the largest skills gap in its cybersecurity workforce globally, with a shortfall of [2.7 million people (https://www.isc2.org/Insights/2023/11/ISC2-Cybersecurity-Workforce-Study-Looking-Deeper-into-the-Workforce-Gap)](https://www.isc2.org/Insights/2023/11/ISC2-Cybersecurity-Workforce-Study-Looking-Deeper-into-the-Workforce-Gap) in 2023. At the same time, AI-powered security capabilities are becoming a necessity in the fight against modern-day cyber threats.

As part of its global Cybersecurity Skilling Initiative, Microsoft has designed and curated training programs with nonprofit organizations to help create alternative pathways for underrepresented youths into the cybersecurity industry.

Microsoft's Ready4AI&Security program will train 15,000 young individuals in [Indonesia (https://news.microsoft.com/id-id/2023/05/31/microsoft-luncurkan-ready4security-untuk-siapkan-lebih-banyak-pakar-keamanan-siber-di-indonesia/)](https://news.microsoft.com/id-id/2023/05/31/microsoft-luncurkan-ready4security-untuk-siapkan-lebih-banyak-pakar-keamanan-siber-di-indonesia/) and Malaysia, focusing on providing opportunities for women to build cybersecurity careers. This will include access to Microsoft's Security training and certifications.

Enhancing developers' AI skills to foster innovation

To support the ASEAN region's 7 million-strong developer community, Microsoft has launched the Asia AI Odyssey (https://nam06.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Faka.ms%2FAIOdysseySG&data=05%7C02% campaign, which highlights how Microsoft's AI Applied Skills validate the specific technical competencies required to build transformative AI applications. The campaign is running across Asia and aims to train 30,000 developers in ASEAN countries, encouraging greater use of AI services in the digital economy.

Empowering nonprofit organizations to maximize their social impact

In June 2024, Microsoft will host its first Nonprofit Leaders' Summit to equip 1,500 nonprofit employees with knowledge and skills in AI and digital technologies.

Microsoft will also provide nonprofits in ASEAN countries with access to the Microsoft Resources Hub (https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/corporate-responsibility/digital-skills?activetab=pivot1:primaryr5) and the LinkedIn for Nonprofits Resource Hub (https://nonprofit.linkedin.com/resource-hub) to help maximize their social impact and lead change in the AI era.

About Microsoft

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Tags: AI (https://news.microsoft.com/apac/tag/ai/), digital skills (https://news.microsoft.com/apac/tag/digital-skills/)