SECTION 03

The AI Readiness Gap

03

As artificial intelligence reshapes the global economy, the gap in AI use between the Global North and the Global South is not closing. Microsoft reports it is widening.

Dr. Troy Nash Founder and CEO, AGI Affinity

12.6pp

And the gap is still widening.

SECTION 03 / THE AI READINESS GAP

No broadband. No AI. No place in the next economy.

Generative AI use among the working age population, 15 to 64.

GLOBAL USE / MICROSOFT, SEPTEMBER 2026

28.8% Global North

16.2% Global South

12.6pp the gap between them

18.8% worldwide, as of June

THE STAKES / WEF, STANFORD HAI

88% of organizations now use AI

39% of workers' skill sets projected to be transformed or outdated by 2030

92M jobs projected to be displaced by 2030

170M jobs projected to be created by 2030

Microsoft calls this "a continued widening." The gap between North and South widened again this quarter, and Microsoft names infrastructure, connectivity and skills as barriers that remain.

Microsoft On the Issues, "The continued state of global AI diffusion in 2026", Juan Lavista Ferres, September 21, 2026. World Economic Forum, The Future of Jobs Report 2025. Stanford HAI, The 2026 AI Index Report. Pew Research Center, "Americans and AI 2026: Chatbots, Smart Devices and Views on Impact", June 17, 2026, survey February 17 to 23, 2026, n=5,119.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Closing the AI readiness gap

01 **Launch a national AI literacy initiative** aimed at underserved communities, so every American has a baseline understanding of AI tools, risks and opportunities.

02 **Require AI competency in federally funded workforce programs**, building AI readiness into the job training pipelines that already exist.

03 **Create public access AI labs** in libraries, community centers and HBCUs, for people who have no personal access to advanced computing.

04 **Fund AI readiness research** that measures preparedness at the community level and tracks adoption disparities over time.

05 **Incentivize private sector AI equity partnerships** through credits and grants for firms that put AI training and tools into underserved communities.

How AGI Affinity can help

We assess community AI readiness with the TSDOH Assessment Matrix, and help municipalities, workforce boards and institutions build AI strategies that fit local economic conditions. About half of American adults (51 percent) say they do not use AI chatbots, according to Pew Research Center's February 2026 survey. That is the starting line.

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Microsoft On the Issues, "The continued state of global AI diffusion in 2026", Juan Lavista Ferres, September 21, 2026. World Economic Forum, The Future of Jobs Report 2025. Stanford HAI, The 2026 AI Index Report. Pew Research Center, "Americans and AI 2026: Chatbots, Smart Devices and Views on Impact", June 17, 2026, survey February 17 to 23, 2026, n=5,119.