



VIRTUALAHAN (PHILIPPINES)_ GOOD PRACTICE

Title of the good practice	<i>Breaking Down Employment Barriers</i>
Name of organization or coalition that implemented the good practice	<i>Virtualahan</i>
When is/was the good practice implemented?	<i>January 2017-June 2019</i>
Where is/was the good practice implemented?	<i>54 Provinces all over The Philippines</i>
Total budget of the good practice	<i>EUR 39,416.28</i>
Central theme of the good practice	<i>Skills Development and Economic Empowerment for disadvantaged people who are vulnerable to employment discrimination</i>
Target group of the good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>People with Disability</i> ✓ <i>Former Drug Dependents</i> ✓ <i>Persons Deprived of Liberty/Former Prisoners</i> ✓ <i>Elderly Persons/Senior Citizens</i> ✓ <i>Out of School Youth</i> ✓ <i>Solo Parents</i>

A. General description

Why did you initiate the project? Describe the context in which the good practice takes/took place. What problem does it address? (75 words)

Our community members experience high rates of unemployment and economic inactivity and are at greater risk of insufficient social protection that is key to reducing extreme poverty. We are solving the main root cause of their high unemployment rate, and that is the lack of up to date skills and mindset to qualify for employment. We are also future-proofing them from the risk of automation by using technology as the core of our model.

Goal and Objective?

What is/was the goal, and what are/were the objectives of the good practice? What change did you aim to see? (50 words)

Our goal is to break down employment barriers for our community using the equalizing power of technology. We want to create a new approach to skills development that will result in long-term employment and influence positive system change in our labor system.

What were the activities?

What did you really do? With whom? (100 words)

Virtualahan uses a very holistic approach in our execution through our award-winning impact formula that combines:

- a. A six-week digital skills training using a life-long learning approach. The curriculum is co-created with our community and delivered 100% online;



- b. Three months of employment support and/or one year of business mentorship depending on which track a graduate decides to take at the end the 6-weeks training;
- c. Life-coaching with a strong focus on well-being, career guidance, patient education, community-based therapy, and restoring human dignity, and;
- d. Community-building programs through awareness drive, events, policymaking, partnership with other NGOs, and other advocacy campaigns.

What were the results?

Describe the main results of the good practice? (100 words)

We have graduated 227 scholars with 65% employment rate. Our scholars also earn significantly higher than their peers. They earn an average daily salary of 1, 053.80 PHP (20.12 USD) compared to the national wage average of 414.64 PHP (7.91 USD). Our graduates reported that their self-confidence increased by 78%, a common struggle is acceptance of condition; 92% of graduates reported that the program helped them accept their condition. 84% of those who couldn't be self-sufficient (couldn't make decisions) reported that the program helped them in this area, 98% felt a strong sense of belonging in the community, 99% of alumni consider Virtualahan positively contributing to their lives.

A. Detailed description

This section is to be completed after the exchange visits. During those visits you will have discussed and enriched your understanding of the good practice.

B.1 LOBBY AND ADVOCACY (MAX. 100 WORDS)

Describe per question below what you did relating to L&A.

To whom did you lobby?

What did you lobby and advocate for?

Did you change your plan/activities during the process?

Any unexpected L&A results?

We initiated the creation of the City Ordinance in Davao City to establish a dedicated Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO) to improve the state of PWDs, particularly in training and employment. We submitted a policy recommendation to the Chairman of the Social Services Committee of the City Council. We gathered several disability champions and advocates in the city to have dialogue with the policymakers. The draft was presented in the regular council session. We then had a committee hearing where all concern agencies discussed the structure, budget, and potential outcome. Our goal is to have the ordinance approved before this year ends.

Validate	Whom
Describe the main outcomes of the project related to advocacy , resulting from your project? <i>Specify who did what, when and where.</i>	<i>The national government through the Department of Information and Communications Technology contracted us to do a dedicated training for PWDs as part of their national project starting Q4 of last year. They have been actively promoting and advocating our project in various local government all around the country.</i>
Describe how your organisation contributed to this change, as described above.	<i>We have changed how organizations conduct training from a traditional classroom type of setting to a virtual environment producing better learning outcome and higher employment rate.</i>



<p>Which organisation or persons could validate the change described above?</p>	<p><i>We work with several community partners who are organizations supporting Persons with Disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. Examples are Associations of Differently-Abled Persons, Hemophilia Advocate Philippines, and Solo Parents Federation. They refer their members to undergo the training with us. We conduct an impact survey to the members of these organizations who became our scholars which we then publish and present to our partners including the government. The results of several impact reports create the influencing agenda which convinces our partners to support us in scaling our impact.</i></p>
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B.2 INTERSECTIONALITY (MAX. 50 WORDS)

Describe per question below what you did relating to intersectionality.

To what extent did you pay attention to intersectionality?

Give one concrete example?

Our impact formula is holistic to cater to intersectionality by design. We intentionally did not limit ourselves to a specific type of disability, conditions, or former life. One of our graduates is an orphan, who is also a former drug dependent, incarcerated, and was diagnosed with HIV. We embraced this challenge and reality upon inception.

Validate	Whom
<p>Describe the main outcomes related to intersectionality, resulting from your project? Specify who did what, when and where.</p>	<p><i>Our community is producing Virtualahan TV since November of last year. It is an online talk show live-streamed via Facebook that introduces intersectionality to the general audience through stories of our scholars from the lens of their own lived experiences.</i></p>
<p>Describe how your organisation contributed to this change, as described above.</p>	<p><i>We brought these diverse people together and created a safe space where they can discover, appreciate, and celebrate their intersectionality.</i></p>
<p>Which organisation or persons could validate the change described above?</p>	<p><i>We have thousands of audience who watched our episodes which can validate the impact of Virtualahan TV. We gather feedback and do impact assessment to the families of our community members which is our main target market to educate and onboard as allies. We also engage several support groups like the Autism Society of the Philippines to help us make people understand that intersectionality is in itself a spectrum.</i></p>



B. Learning

What did your organisation learn from this good practice? (50 words)

Describe what your organization learned especially regarding L&A and intersectionality.

The major learning that we have is using a very holistic approach and integrating well-being and psychosocial support improves the overall outcome of the project. We also embrace co-creation and intersectionality in our community which created deep sense of ownership and motivated our members to contribute and pay it forward.

What are 3 tips you would give to other organisations?

Tip 1: Leverage technology and maximize its equalizing potential.

Tip 2: Embrace co-creation with your community #NAUWU. Our community at Virtualahan is involved in the creation of the program and in decision making. It's a community effort.

Tip 3: Use a holistic approach and integrate well-being as one of the pillars of your model

What makes this project a good practice? (max. 50 words)

Please describe what made this project special and more successful than other projects you have done before?

We started with classroom-type of training focusing only to people with chronic conditions which limited our potential. When we decided to move everything online and expand the demographics we serve. We achieved results that we thought was impossible. Now our model is now being studied for replication in many parts of the country and also overseas.

C. Award

If your organisation would win the award of €5.000- , how would you use this prize? (100 words).

€5.000 would be our one-year budget for Virtualahan TV to produce 25 episodes for 2020 and educate more people about the value of intersectionality.

Are we allowed to use this good practice in a publication on good advocacy practices?

- Yes, we give permission to include **both** the name of the organisation and the good practice
- Yes, we give permission, but **ONLY** for including the good practice (organisation will be anonymous)
- No, we **do not** give permission to use this good practice in any publication