MAKING REMOTE WORK ACCESSIBLE FOR UKRAINE’S VULNERABLE YOUTH IN THE COVID-19 ERA VIA ONLINE TRAINING

ZHENIA V. DALPHOND
ANDRIY PIZHEVSKYY
YURIY MAKSYMCHUK

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HOW IT ALL STARTED
KEY FACTS ABOUT LOCAL YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

- Vinnytsia youth comprise 30.8% of all officially unemployed (national average ~19%, ILO estimates)
- ~2,500 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of them 188 officially registered as unemployed (40% youth)
- No official data on orphans’ employment, but several hundred children age out of Vinnytsia orphanages yearly
- Main employment barriers:
  - Difficulties in finding a job acc. to one’s professional experience and degree
  - Lack of knowledge on how to undertake a successful job search
  - Employer bias against orphans and IDPs
  - Gaps in legislation protecting the rights of IDPs and orphans (lack of special provisions, lack of enforcement mechanisms)
  - IDPs come from industrial regions, but there are no opportunities for them to engage in similar manual jobs
  - Lack of opportunities for job re-training within a short period of time
  - Lack of soft skills and ability to speak foreign languages (English)

Source: https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/603552787535105108/?nic_v2=1a6a7a7z
**INITIAL PILOT DESIGN**

Hire a local project manager and a training provider

**Jan. - Feb. 2020**
Outreach to identify **45** youth (with preference to **IDPs** and **orphans**), of whom **50%** women

**Feb. 2020**
Select through surveys, tests and interviews in English

**Mar. - May 2020**
Train for 3 months in group in front-end web development, graphic design, and digital marketing

**May – Jun. 2020**
Limited job placement support through Upwork and local IT cluster (~50 firms)
FINAL PILOT DESIGN

February - March 2020
Hire of a local project manager and training provider, under a 40% budget cut

March 2020
Selection of 31 youth, of whom 70% women and 40% IDPs and orphans

March 2020 [Start of C-19]
Selection through e-surveys and phone interviews in English

Late March - May 2020 [Lockdown]
Train for 2.5 months virtually in front-end web development (14), graphic design (11), digital marketing (6)

June 2020 - ongoing
Job placement via trainers, additional support via Upwork Foundation
RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

March 2020

Application Submission and Vetting
100+ applied for the project; 31 enrolled; 2 dropped out

March – June 2020

Virtual Training
- 140 academic hours spent on training overall
- 30 hours spent on profile building and project bidding
Partnership with the Upwork Foundation, service is not over yet

Average Online Participation is 86%

June 2020

Online Job Marketplace Presence
- 90% of graduates signed up and set up Freelancer profiles
- 44% started submitting proposals for online jobs
- 15% received offers and/or started earning online

June 2020 – present

Local & Online Job Wins
9 graduates (31%) found an internship/job in the local market or online work marketplace

July 2020 - ongoing

The Upwork Foundation Service
Freelancer outreach and profile/proposal review service delivery, with 2-4 weeks follow-ups
"This program helped me gain knowledge in graphic design. It was very important that we received help in the job search in this field. I got a job very soon after graduation.

I also printed postcards and already agreed to sell them in the shop in the city center."
“For me personally, the program was useful. I learned about graphic design and improved my drawing skills. I also understood how to find a freelance job, but I’m struggling with winning more jobs now.

I think that I have two reasons through which I cannot win projects on Upwork. The first is lack of regular attention, since it takes a lot of time to monitor suitable applications. And the second is the quality of the cover letter writing. I don’t always manage to draft good cover letters. But I will work on improving my proposals [regardless]."
This program was a good chance for me to master a new profession that makes it possible to work online. Thanks to good organization, it was possible to combine study and work.

After finishing the course, I got an internship for more experience and the opportunity to work in the future!

After the course, I got the opportunity to try my hand in a small [IT] company and continue to work on mastering the profession. This is a great chance for me to prove myself, improve my skills, and make new, useful connections.

However, I am struggling with winning online work at this time, as I need to go over multiple jobs to find a project according to my junior level skills.
TRAINNEES’ GRAPHIC DESIGN PORTFOLIO
TRAINEES’ GRAPHIC DESIGN PORTFOLIO
TRAINEES’ FRONT-END WEB DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO
Vinnytsia private gymnasium Delfin was founded in 1994. In 2018 Andriy Pizhevsykyi bought and fully renovated it.

Since 2018 Delfin has been working in cooperation with Artinov creative space on different educational projects and events benefiting hundreds of local youth daily.

Framework for cooperation: Delfin, Artinov creative space, Artinov coworking, Artinov studio, Artinov travel club and from this year - Madagascar kindergarten.

List of major directions of Artinov’s group projects:

- foreign languages (both online and offline classes and speaking clubs)
- IT courses, such as graphic design and 3-D modelling
- psychological workshops on sensitive social issues
- practical workshops on creative hand-made products
- courses on sales marketing
- trainings on self-development and self-awareness
- musical classes
- sport activities
- general education for children
WHAT THIS PROJECT MEANT FOR LOCAL ECOSYSTEM

- Practically no **virtual** upskilling trainings delivered previously: neither by Delfin and Artynov Creative Space, nor by six other major players

- No trainings with linkages to **online job marketplaces**

- Very few trainings with focus on **IDPs or orphans**

- Learnings about the **difficulty to maintain a community spirit post-training** delivered virtually

- Learnings about being a **World Bank contractor**: what this practically requires

- The contract came at a time when negative effects of COVID-19 kicked in, supporting the training provider’s **cashflow**

- Small contracts like this do incentivize local innovation ecosystem players, helping them develop their **training service offering, notoriety, and raise new similar contracts**. This project prompted applications to 2 more grants for much larger projects and generated new ideas for collaboration (e.g. Upwork Foundation)
There is demand from local youth and local innovation ecosystem for this type of projects, esp. in view of limited capacity of local employment centers to support the under/unemployed.

Virtual mode of training delivery worked surprisingly fine, although this required adjustments in curricula and for trainers.

This type of projects is easy to scale up in Ukrainian cities (esp. with virtual mode of delivery).

Local training providers are capable to rapidly regroup during challenging circumstances, even though they typically rely on individual self-entrepreneurs (not staff on payroll).

However, more careful vetting of trainees is needed to make sure the most motivated get in.

More tailored trainings are needed to meet the needs and specific educational gaps of orphans.

Screen fatigue is an important factor to consider, nothing can replace F2F and group interactions.

Interest in online work may be stronger in those places where the labor market capacity to supply jobs is weaker and with a larger share of English-speaking youth.

BROAD LESSONS LEARNT FOR DEVELOPMENT
Thank You / Дякуємо!

Questions?

ceo@artinov.net  Evhenia.v@gmail.com  yuriimaksymchuk@gmail.com