

EXPLAINER

Seven Ways to Popularize Technical Education



Students attending vocational schools in Karakol, Kyrgyz Republic. Photo credit: ADB.

One way to counter negative perceptions about technical and vocation education and training (TVET) programs is to promote them through better communications.

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Introduction

In recent decades, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs have successfully helped raise millions of people out of poverty. Despite efforts by policymakers and education practitioners to promote the programs, these continue to suffer from a range of negative perceptions, in particular that they cater to less fortunate or less intelligent students who do not qualify for university admission.

Here are 7 ways to communicate better and counter misconceptions about TVET.

Have consistent messaging



HAVE CONSISTENT MESSAGING

- Develop a communication plan. Work with experts to help create your message.
- Use one message so it would be easily remembered by your target market/audience.
- "Brand" your message.

Sell the job, not the course



SELL THE JOB, NOT THE COURSE

- Campaign about employment and career opportunities.
- Highlight the benefits. Show the rewards. (eg. Put a face on the rewards of TVET whom your target audience can relate to such as testimonials from credible influences or spokespersons/role models/endorsers).
- Talk about TVET in terms of the benefits they can get (eg. how fast one can land a job, the salaries they can earn, how TVET is open to everyone – men or women).
- Show job opportunities for TVET graduates versus university graduates.

Understand the local context and language



UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE

- Hire a good specialist versed in local languages/dialects to make sure you get the message right.
- Be careful and be specific with words used in promotional materials.
- Ask government officials and industry pillars to endorse TVET.

Segment and target a specific market/audience



SEGMENT AND TARGET A SPECIFIC MARKET/AUDIENCE

- Study your market well. Choose a specific target. "Talk" to that market.
- Conduct research and surveys to make sure you are addressing their interests, needs and aspirations.
- Appeal to your targets' interests. (eg. Tell your market that they can choose a career based on their skills and interests. Show them that women and men can do any job they want.)

Expand access to TVET



EXPAND ACCESS TO TVET

- Go to where your market is – go to the high schools or the malls.
- Provide incentives such as scholarships or on-the-job trainings.
- Open internship opportunities with private companies.
- Sponsor skills competitions.
- Spread the word that TVET is accredited by government and accepted by industries.

Use different communication tools and channels



USE DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND CHANNELS

- Study which tools and channels would appeal to your target market.
- Tools and channels can range from social marketing such as Facebook groups and posts and viral videos to traditional forms as such TV ads, short films, movie ads, radio spots, comic strips, posters, signage, roadshows, village loudspeaker system, peer ambassadors, newspaper ads.

Educate employers and other stakeholders



EDUCATE EMPLOYERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- Conduct a campaign among employers and stakeholders that TVET graduates could help boost their companies' profits and productivity.
- Educate employers and stakeholders that TVET is relevant and responsive to labor market needs.
- TVET helps in lowering unemployment and underemployment.

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Resources

Communicating TVET. 2016. ADB Department of External Relations Project Communication Group Knowledge Sharing Series co-organized with the Education Sector Group.

Promoting What to Whom?

Communicating Technical and Vocational Education and Training: A View from the Field



Karina Veal

International Expert in Vocational and Higher Education

Karina Veal served most recently as a senior education specialist for the Asian Development Bank (ADB), where she provided strategic advice and technical expertise to governments across Asia. She also advocated new approaches for ADB's \$2.7 billion TVET portfolio. Prior to joining ADB in 2012, she provided consulting services in skills for development, advising UN and bilateral agencies; and held public policy roles in the Australian TVET system.



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Karin Schelzig focuses on poverty analysis, social protection, gender equality, and civil society participation. In nearly 10 years with ADB, she has managed projects and policy dialogue with governments and development partners across the Southeast Asia region to improve early childhood development, education and training, health and nutrition, social safety nets, access to rural basic services, and women's economic empowerment.

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