



TOGETHER
for a sustainable future

OCCASION

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International Best Practices

Encouraging more female trainees in vocational training in traditionally male-oriented areas: What are we learning?



- messages directly declaring AGEVEC’s readiness and willingness to welcome female trainees;
- relayed news articles related to women and business, or gender-empowerment initiatives in the country.

These messages have turned out to be among the most popular ones, reaching a high number of users and generating a significant amount of “likes” and comments. Even though men still constitute the majority of “fans” of the AGEVEC Facebook page, women are now on the rise. As of today, they represent about 25% of the people who follow AGEVEC’s updates.



Photo: post targeting women taken from AGEVEC's facebook page. To find more information about AGEVEC visit: www.agevec.org or www.facebook.com/agevec

Question 3: Can the mainstream media play a role in encouraging the enrollment of female trainees?

SAT, based in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), has also used the mainstream media for communication. By broadcasting “general” adverts about the training on television, and distributing leaflets. This tactic alone has had notable results: since 2016, women have constituted 16% of the total number of students enrolled.

Mechanics Course - 2012 to 2016 - Totals
 ■ Iraqi Male ■ Iraqi Female

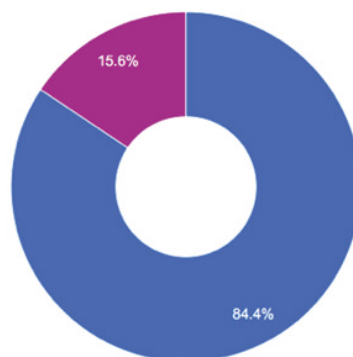


Photo: Statistics collected through goProve - the monitoring and evaluation tool used by the LKDF.

Question 4: In addition to media materials, how important is it to tailor other materials towards women trainees?

Zamita, thinks it is important to **create gender-specific materials**, and that was supported by the results of their survey of 10 high schools. For example, a programme can produce a brochure detailing the courses, with pictures of previous female students in the workplace and motivational quotes about the training and career possibilities. They also learned that it is important to be visual overall: Students that were shown pictures appeared much more interested in the training. As many of the girls are not familiar with this industry, images and videos (interviews with trainers, former students) seem to help young girls get a better grasp of what the job entails.

AGEVEC in Morocco also created gender-specific communication materials such as brochures as a part of their broad plan to increase female recruitment.



Photo: Florence interacting with students from St. Andrews High School in Zambia and showing them pictures from her workshop and her time at Heavy Equipment Repair. To learn more about ZAMITA visit: www.facebook.com/ZAMITA

Question 5: In addition to using traditional and social media to broadcast for recruitment in the community at large, where else can you recruit?

As we have seen above, ZAMITA has been recruiting with a focus on enrolling girls in high schools and secondary schools. Another place to recruit is internally. What does that mean?

- **SAT finds “internal” recruitment to be successful:** It says that the most popular SAT courses among women who join the Academy remain the non-technical ones (i.e. English Language, and Computer Skills). However, SAT specifically targets these women and encourages them to pursue

their studies and join the mechanics training - some of them have, as a result, ended up joining.

- **HDECoVA in Ethiopia also finds “internal” recruitment to be a successful strategy:** HDECoVA is part of a larger school called Selam, which also offers a great variety of non-mechanical courses. As with SAT, these (in particular restaurant, administration, and IT) remain the most popular courses among women who join the school; but in the recent years, HDECOVA has been able to recruit a significant number of women who, unable to join these popular courses, turned to mechanics instead.



Photo: Ashna is one of the students of SAT which has joined their mechanics training. To find more information about SAT visit: www.sat-stories.org

Question 6: Can parents or other family members play a role in supporting girls choosing non-traditional courses in vocational schools?

Yes. In AGEVEC they have included in their broad plan the inclusion of families and other influencers. ZAMITA, also prepares materials for the parents. For example, they can give female students a letter with information about the training to give to their parents, presenting the training and notably addressing the alleged “manliness” and “dangerousness” of the job. In addition to a letter, it can be helpful to invite one parent and their child to a workshop to actually show them the work environment of the job, and convince them that it is a suitable one for women.

Question 7: What can be done from the perspective of the companies and other partners to support female candidates?

In **AGEVEC**, the centre is working towards sensitizing companies through its gender-sensitive communication strategy. **SAT** is currently considering partnerships with locally-based agencies, such as IOM, to increase the screening of female candidates through their own separate programs.

Question 8: What are some other actions the Vocational Centres can take that can make it easier for women and girls to attend their courses?

It has been interesting to understand better some of the barriers to entry for female candidates. SAT has been working on **reducing opportunity costs**: SAT recently purchased a minibus intended to run a shuttle service between the Academy and the nearest city. This will progressively replace the current system of travel allowances. Female trainees have already expressed their comfort in using the service, and the goal is now to scale it up, encouraging more women to consider the courses by arguing that dedicated transport to/from the Academy would be provided for them.

AGEVEC will do a curriculum review and include the adaptation of **training programs** (no stereotypes in classes and materials for example), and will adapt their facilities so that they are more appropriate for female candidates. They will also identify role models in their programmes that can work with the girls. HDECoVA, which since 2012 has had on average 14% of its classes comprised of women, has also encouraged its female trainees to speak out and some have been featured in videos that are available on the LKDF website: www.lkdfacility.org. They have also adopted an **affirmative action approach** in the Ethiopia VTC, with the entry level lower for female applicants than for male applicants. They have found this to be a significant factor helping the participation of women to the program.

Useful Links:

AGEVEC (Morocco): www.agevec.org and www.facebook.com/agevec

HDECoVA (Ethiopia): www.hdecova.org and www.facebook.com/HDECOVA

SAT (Iraq): www.sat-stories.org and www.twitter.com/j_erbil

ZAMITA (Zambia): www.facebook.com/zamita



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