

NUBS Impact Academy

Smriti Sharma
Senior Lecturer in Economics

28 September 2022

Enhancing the effectiveness of vocational education in Vietnam (EEVE)

Details

- Funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
- 1 April 2020 – 31 December 2023
- Diverse team of collaborators: University of Copenhagen, Lancaster, Graduate Institute Geneva, World Bank, and Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs (ILSSA) at the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) of Vietnam

Background and motivation

- Findings from a pilot survey in 2018 with 1,200 students from 21 colleges in Hanoi and survey with 69 key employers hiring fresh college graduates suggest:
 - Vocational college students graduate without skills demanded in the labour market
 - Mismatch between students and available jobs; low rates of employment and job retention
- We conduct a randomized control trial (RCT) with vocational colleges in Hanoi and neighbouring Bac Ninh province
- Evaluate effectiveness of two interventions to address these problems and improve students' labour market prospects

Research questions & expected outcomes

- Research questions:
 - i. Does provision of soft skills training to students improve job market outcomes?
 - ii. Does provision of career counselling services to students improve job market outcomes?
 - iii. Are soft skills and career counselling services complementary to each other in improving job market outcomes?
- Expected outcomes:
 - Improving labour market outcomes for vocational college students in Vietnam – important policy agenda for VN government over 2021-30
 - Changing mindset of college students about the importance of skill development

Study features

- 3,352 students enrolled in the final year across 154 disciplines in 31 vocational colleges in Hanoi and Bac Ninh
- Soft skills training and career counselling offered free of charge to students
- Services offered by 2 leading providers in Vietnam
- Timeline:
 - baseline survey and training sessions completed;
 - mid-line phone survey in progress;
 - final survey planned for spring 2023

Envisioned impact

- One of the key impacts we expect to have is the embedding of soft skills training and tailored career counselling into the curriculum of vocational colleges to close identified skills gaps
 - Backing from the Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) which oversees the vocational colleges.
 - Interventions are designed in collaboration with ILSSA

Engagement activities and outputs

- In 2022:
 - Baseline descriptive survey report
 - Presentation of baseline survey findings by the PI to stakeholders in Vietnam
- In 2023:
 - Final survey report for distribution to key stakeholders (e.g., vocational colleges in Hanoi; MoLISA; DVET)
 - Policy brief presenting project-level learning and insights from the baseline survey and the 2 post-intervention surveys
 - Workshop to disseminate project findings to key stakeholders and leading local media in Vietnam

Potential threats

- Our RCT is a rigorous proof-of-concept exercise where the interventions are provided free of cost.
- In scaling-up:
 - full subsidization may not be possible
 - quality of the implementation partners may vary.
- However, we expect to be able to come up with collaborative solutions if needed, given DVET leadership's enthusiastic endorsement.