

EIA teacher facilitators' training - A huge leap forward

December 2009 and a group of primary and secondary teachers from all over Bangladesh come to a selection process to be teacher facilitators (TF) of English in Action (EIA). There was quite a lot of nervousness – perhaps, not least because no one was really too sure, at that stage, what a TF was! Words like “supporter” and “peer” were used. Soon, the work was done and an essential part of the support structure of EIA was in place – 40 primary and 20 secondary TFs had been successfully appointed!

In April 2010, just 2 months after the field intervention had started; we met again at the first TF training workshop run by the Teacher Development Coordinators (TDCs), and colleagues from The Open University in the UK including myself. The tremendous sense of enthusiasm that were seen in the selection workshops was even more present in these three day workshops, and while it was clear that the project and the role presented much that was challenging – not least the necessity to use much more English and to bravely demonstrate techniques in front of colleagues – there was a determination to try that impressed us all. Yet, understandably, there was also a strong sense of uncertainty and some nervousness in the room. We think, while it had not disappeared by the end of the workshop, much progress had been made and there was more understanding of what was expected.



Then in September and October 2010 the second round of workshops took place. This time largely led and run by the TDCs, and we were amazed at what had happened! The initial enthusiasm that was witnessed just six months earlier had not diminished at all now that the project was deep into its pilot phase. However, much of the reticence had been replaced by confidence, and much of the Bangla had been replaced by a far more fluent and confident use of English. TFs were now looking at ideas being modelled, using them and adding their own (sometimes better) ones!



What was this big leap forward down to? We believe that many of the TFs have moved so quickly and so well partly because of the excellent cooperation of the teaching peers (it couldn't have happened without that); partly because of the support they have received from TDCs and EIA materials, but mainly because of individual determination and motivation.

During March-April 2011, as the project reaches the end of pilot phase, there will be another round of workshops with the TFs and their teaching colleagues to see how things have moved now.

Mike Solly

Head of Secondary Intervention
English in Action