

## Milestone workshops 2011

After one year of successful piloting in some government and two NGO schools, EIA recently organised and conducted a series of milestone workshops for teachers between 20<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011, in seven regions across Bangladesh. The objectives of those workshops were to:

- i) share good practice and challenges (pedagogical and technological)
- ii) address challenges in classroom practice, and
- iii) strengthen skills in specific language teaching techniques.

Approximately 750 Teachers and Teacher Facilitators (TF) from all over the country participated in these two and a half days workshops, which were facilitated by the ELT experts from the Open University UK, and the EIA Teacher Development Coordinators (TDC).



The objectives of the workshops were achieved successfully. Significant improvement was noticed in teachers' performance (in relation to their communicative language teaching techniques) and their ability to speak English. A great deal of enthusiasm and motivation was observed among the teachers during the workshops. Further to this, a strong need and demand was expressed for continuing support from the project.

The content of the workshops was determined based on a needs assessment exercise with the teachers, teacher facilitators and teacher development coordinators prior to the workshops. Of all the sessions it seemed that the 'skills development sessions' – where the OU UK ELT experts demonstrated lessons using different techniques – were highly appreciated by all teachers. The main focus of the skills development sessions were to develop teachers' skills, particularly in the areas of: integrating language skills in an English for Today (EfT) lesson, error correction, controlled and free practice of grammar-in-context, elicitation and using posters.



Interestingly, several participants suggested that having experienced an integrated skills lesson with EfT they did not feel completely ready to apply the same approach themselves. This was due to many practical reasons including large classroom sizes, limited language skills of the teachers and students, lack of supportive environment in the schools, and so on. However, the teachers found the practical demonstrations very useful and convincing. There was a very positive buzz at all the primary and secondary workshops across the country.

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