



Highlights

- ▶ EIA welcomes new text books
- ▶ USAID adviser visits EIA
- ▶ Games for learning
- ▶ EIA pilot teacher forms a English clubs

Message from the Team Leader

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to announce that EIA has successfully conducted 90 teacher workshops across the country and oriented 4,500 new EIA teachers to their upcoming 16 months training and support programme. Though this was a daunting task, the achievement has been something we can all be very proud of!

However, there was no time for complacency as we started orienting the educational managers at local level to prepare them for their future role as quality assurers of the project. This was kicked off with a central workshop on 16 September, chaired by the MoPME Secretary, who provided great advocacy and support to the project.

We also started working with the head teachers as we realize that EIA's practices at the school level need to become structurally embedded within the mainstream system in order to sustain successful learning outcomes beyond the project time period.

In this light, it is also encouraging to note that we have been invited by the National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB) to contribute to reviewing and commenting on the new Teachers' Editions for the lower grades, enabling us to incorporate some of EIA's tested and proven methods and techniques.

And, finally, EIA has formally been invited to participate in the monthly progress meetings of the primary sector, chaired by the Minister, which provides us a great opportunity to work alongside the nationwide sector programme in the primary sector (PEDP III).

All in all, great news for sustaining the EIA work in schools beyond its project life.

Also good news for the adult learners -preparations for BBC Janala Amar Engreji Course 2 are on track to launch on various platforms in March 2013. Moreover, a second English learning book incorporating the various newspaper lessons in *Prothom Alo* has been completed, while a new innovative TV series on learning English is currently being produced for airing in March 2013.

No doubt there are exciting times ahead! I trust this Newsletter reflects this and I hope you enjoy reading it as well as the photos!

Pieter Feenstra
Team Leader
English in Action

Orientation workshop for Government Education Officers for primary schools a success

'Education Officers participating in the workshops as well as PTI superintendents need to take up the leadership role in supporting and supervising teachers to ensure that this change is sustained.'

- Mr. M. M. Neazuddin, Secretary, MoPME Government of Bangladesh



On 16 September 2012, an Orientation Workshop for Government Education Officers for primary schools was organized by English in Action.

The aim of this workshop was to provide orientation for education officers from divisional, district and upazila level, as well as PTI superintendents. This was followed by a 3 day training workshop for Academic Supervisors, UEOs, AUJEOs and URCLs. The main objectives of these workshops were:

- Advocacy and awareness raising regarding the EIA project.
- Obtaining commitment for support at the divisional, district and upazila level to enable the education officers to undertake monitoring (quality assurance) in the schools within the project.

Mr. Dirk Smits, Deputy Team Leader, English in

Action, in his opening speech highlighted the significance of English in Action project and how it has changed English learning and teaching methods in schools.

Mr. M. M. Neazuddin, Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of Bangladesh, the chief guest of the event, said that EIA's emphasis is more on communicative English rather than just on grammar. Research has shown that the level of spoken English of teachers and students has increased as a result of using EIA materials and techniques. The Secretary urged the Education Officers participating in the workshops as well as PTI superintendents to take up the leadership role in supporting and supervising teachers to ensure that this change is sustained.

Mr. Shyamal Kanti Ghosh, DG, DPE said that "although we are learning English from Grade 1 we still have difficulty explaining ourselves. The

EIA methods are a way to overcome this." He requested all his education officers to work with him and help monitor the activities.

Mr. Md. Faruque Jaill, Director Policy and Operation, DPE, said that learning English is crucial for us in Bangladesh if we are to compete in the world. "We have found that the way that English in Action works to improve English learning has been effective and we are proud of our teachers who have worked so hard to make this happen. However the education officers need to support these efforts." He urged them to take up this role and make it part of their daily routine.

The orientation workshop will be followed by 3 days training workshops for Academic Supervisors, UEOs, AUJEOs and URCLs around Bangladesh. These workshops will provide training on the project and the quality assurance procedures being adopted.

[Workshop pictures at page-3]

Continuing to share and learn: Pilot teachers instigate language club

Change does not always come spontaneously; it needs inspiration and motivation. English in Action (EIA) has generated enthusiasm among the teachers of Lalmonirhat, one of the most remote areas of EIA's implementation during the pilot phase.

This is the story of a group of teachers who, with inspiration from the EIA strap line 'Changing learning, changing lives', have ignited themselves to do something for their personal and professional development, as well as for their learners. After successfully completing the EIA pilot phase work, 16 English teachers from 12 different High schools have formed an 'English Language Club' with the aphorism 'Sharing learning and teaching'. According to one club member, "...from cluster meetings, now we know how important it is to reflect on our work with our peers... in fact, through sharing our teaching experiences we can enrich ourselves as teachers and this will help our students, too." This peer support group meets



Members from the newly formed club at a meeting in Lalmonirhat upazila.

every alternative Friday each month. In the club, the teachers are now engaged in different kinds of activities, such as practicing language games, discussing challenges and successes, and so on. The Head Teacher of Collectorate Collegiate School supports the initiative and has encouraged the group to use a classroom in a school for the club. It is important to mention the person who first dreamt of the Language club and has continuously kept in touch with me to make it happen. He is Mr. Probrir Kumar Biswas, Senior Teacher of Bangladesh Railway Govt. C P High

School, Lalmonirhat, whose constant endeavor has inspired not only EIA teachers but also non-EIA English teachers to get together for this club.

I'm happy and very proud to be connected with this initiative and to be a part of a group of teachers who are motivated learners. Together, the members of this new English Language Club are now dreaming creating successful English classrooms in as many

schools as they can in Lalmonirhat upazila. As EIA has finished the two-year implementation period of the pilot phase, the scaffolding has been done. It is now time to see how much of the concrete has been reshaped. Let's hope for the best! Let sharing, learning and classroom change continue to change lives.

Mostan Zida Alnoor
Sr. Core Trainer, English in Action
BMB Mott MacDonald

A project with a huge scale: how can we continue to reach the required number of teachers and positively affect their classroom practices?

Professional development projects aimed at reaching large numbers of English teachers are not new, and frankly, they are not always very effective. English in Action is now getting a lot of positive attention in the English teaching field and, significantly, beyond, as a very large scale project that is producing results. So what makes EIA different from other large scale projects?

Traditionally professional development projects have followed one of two models: the intensive learning workshop model, or the cascade training model. The first generally involves bringing teachers together perhaps for a week or two, and maybe on more than one occasion, and introducing them, through the use of "experts" (often from outside teachers own authentic contexts and frequently from outside the country) and, through intensive training introducing teachers to new methods, techniques and materials. After the workshop, which often have the advantage of immersing teachers professionally and socially in a world away from ordinary classroom reality, teachers return to their ordinary classrooms and the effects of the workshop begin to diminish as the routines and demands of the curriculum click back in place. The second model, cascade training, attempts to overcome the need to reach large numbers with training by making some (or all) of the participants future trainers who themselves deliver the training to other groups (who may also become trainers of the programme etc.). A recognised problem with this method of training is that the initial training can become so diluted that any positive effects can be entirely lost further down the line. This is not to say that either of these two traditional methods of teacher development cannot reap positive outcomes. But experience and the literature show that projects using such methods rarely achieve what was originally hoped for.

The success of EIA, we believe, depends on another factor. While incorporating some aspects of both the traditional models (a number of expert led workshops and the use of peers in



EIA classroom activities ensuring participation of students.

facilitating professional development meetings - but not in "training") what is at the centre of EIA is a school based model of development. This means that all the activities of EIA are based around the reality of teachers' classrooms, coursebooks and curriculum, and that successfully becoming an EIA teacher does not depend on "doing a course" so much as putting into practice on a daily basis (and in a realistically gradual, supported and integrated way) the ideas and techniques that are introduced both in workshops, but most particularly on video examples viewable on a mobile phone and using real Bangladeshi teachers in their real classrooms.

This authenticity of materials and the flexibility to watch these clips that are introduced and deconstructed by a video "guide" is what teachers are finding really powerful - and continually accessible. The frequently heard complaint from teachers of so many Teacher Development projects of "this is lovely, but we can't do that here" is not heard with EIA teachers as there is no separation between the project and the teaching life of the teacher..... teachers take part in English in Action as they teach their classes. The materials, techniques and face to face meetings are constructed around the reality of the daily classroom situations and instead of offering

something totally different to teachers, EIA works with the realities of real schools and of Bangladeshi English teachers and helps to provide techniques and models of those techniques that can make daily teaching more effective and enjoyable. This is what students and teachers are both telling us.

Mike Solly
English in Action,
Senior Lecturer in Education, The Open University

"Creative classrooms: transforming learning"

"Is memorization the only way to teach paragraph construction? Can't my students follow some other methods?" This turmoil forced Mr. Nurul Islam to adopt a fantastic technique of writing paragraphs. Mr. Islam is a secondary school teacher at Palashbari High School, Gangni, Meherpur. He has been teaching English for the last 25 years. The school stands just beside a market and a river.

That day the lesson was "A Village Market". Mr. Islam asked four of his students to visit the market and write down what they could see there. He also provided them with some questions which they needed to answer while walking in the market. The explorers came back within five minutes with lots of information. Then he asked some questions about the village market. Students smartly answered those from their fresh and real experience. After that the teacher asked his students to write a paragraph on the mentioned topic. He walked around the class while they were creating their own paragraphs. Finally he checked their copies and gave some tips on the errors they had made.

After few days, a Govt. high official came to visit

his class. He asked the students some questions and they responded in English. They even asked a few questions to the visitor in English! The visitor went to another class and Mr. Islam called a student to the front to act as the recent visitor. He then asked rest of the class to ask him something about him.

This was not all. On another day, there was an accident on the road. Some of the students went to the teacher and requested, "Sir, can we go there to see the accident?"

Why?

We will write another paragraph. "A Road Accident" is in our syllabus!

That doesn't seem the right thing to do if it is a serious accident. But you can write from your imagination. I can help you where you need it.

This engaging way of teaching is how teachers can bring about changes.

Sudeb Kumar Biswas
Sr. Core Trainer, English in Action
BMB Mott MacDonald

Clubs kick off in Khulna

BBC Media Action's ELT Materials Developer for English in Action, Mabruka Toaha, reports on a visit to some of BBC Janaka's Amar Engreji Clubs in different remote corners of Bagerhat:

On day one, a mile's walk from the highway through muddy ups and downs took us to a nice two roomed tin shade cottage and the Jagorani Juba Shangha. A year ago, the all-male club was running out of a dirty hut but, thanks to the encouragement of a local NGO, women have been encouraged to join in with activities including English learning and outdoor games and the club has a bright new home. The villagers now know the club as positive ground for the youth and parents are not worried about sending their daughters to the club anymore.

Another club, the Solakura Juba Shangha, stands in a small thatched hut, in an area severely affected by cyclone Sidr in 2007. Here, acres of once cultivable land are still under polluted saline water and the nearest pure drinking water is more than half an hour's walk away. Members meet on two evenings each week with kerosene lamps and their laptop computer (charged at the local market) to practice lessons from the Amar

Engreji Club book. Tazma Yasmin Nodi, a young lady from the club said, "I want to get out of this miserable life. So I need English more than anyone else does."

The tea stall at Rampal bus stand is always crowded in the evenings - except on Thursdays when the members of Ranshen Juba Shangha sit together to practice English. The large gathering of bus drivers and helpers shift from the tea stall into the club house, bringing lots of eager faces waiting for their turns to practice English with the club members.

In our quick tour, we also found the clubs don't blindly follow the instructions in the books and on the CDs. They customize the materials according to their needs and also have specific requests for things that could help them more. Each club operated in a unique way, yet an eagerness towards language was clearly visible everywhere. The Amar Engreji Club books and CDs were helping members to improve their English and helping to develop leadership skills too, with many clubs nominating a new leader every week.

Pictures from the Orientation workshop



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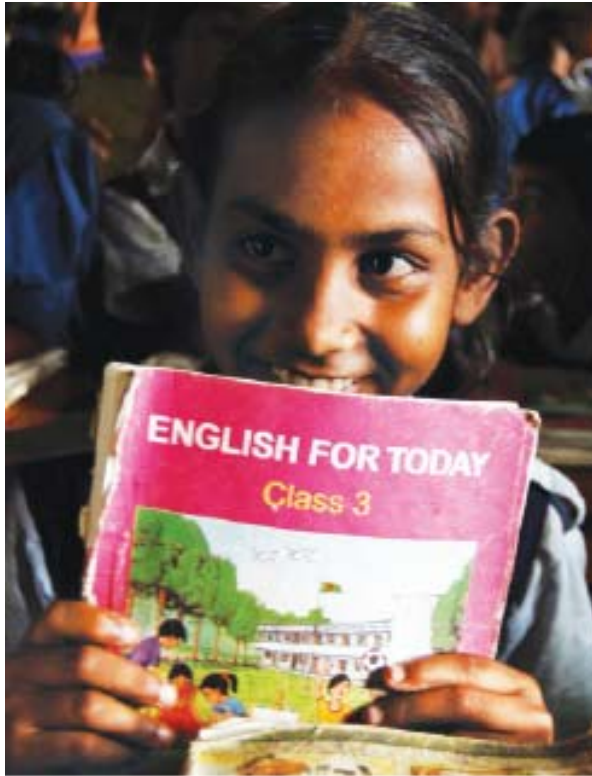


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1. Left to right: Mr. Dirk Smits, Deputy Team Leader, EIA, Mr. M.M Neazuddin, Secretary, MoPME, Government of Bangladesh, Mr. Shyamal Kanti Ghosh, DG, DPE, GoB and Mr. Md. Faruque Jalil, Director Policy & Operations, DPE at the EIA orientation workshop.

2 to 12: Education Managers from Primary Education sector (Deputy Directors, Upazila Education Officers, Assistant Upazila Education Officers, PTI Superintendents and URICs) across Bangladesh took part in the day long workshop aimed at increasing supervision and effective implementation of the project methods in the schools.

English in Action welcomes new textbooks



Schools in Bangladesh are very fortunate to have a reliable supply of textbooks for all their students and English in Action has always appreciated the value of this resource. In fact, the Government textbook *English for Today* has been central in the project's planning and materials, especially for primary schools.

We were very pleased to be given an early view of the latest editions of *English for Today* for the primary years by the National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB). It has given us the opportunity to start revising EIA Audio lessons and Activity Guides to be used alongside the new textbooks next year. We were also delighted to be invited to contribute directly to preparing the Teachers' Editions for the lower grades.

English in Action has developed several sets of lesson plans for class one, two and three Teachers' Editions of *English for Today*, so bringing EIA and the primary textbooks even closer together. We are also supporting the classroom trials of the new materials by developing the research and assessment instruments, as well as orienting teachers and analysing the findings jointly with NCTB and JICA.

English in Action has never seen itself as simply an 'add-on' to the school curriculum as our prime objective is to sustain the tested methods and materials by embedding these within the existing government institutions. In this endeavour, we hope that this is only the beginning of our collaboration with NCTB.

USAID Adviser visits EIA office

On 31 July 2012, Mitch Kirby the Senior Education Advisor for Asia and Middle East Bureau for USAID met the English in Action team. Mr. Kirby was delighted to know about the project and its activities. The project has gained popularity throughout the world due to its innovative approaches and sustainable impacts; this visit was an outcome of EIA's credibility as a unique education project in the international arena.

Dirk Smits, Deputy Team Leader, Mourie Nishad, Head of Teachers Training and Support Unit, Richard Lace, Head of Project, BBC Media Action for EIA, Dr. Robina Shaheen, Head of Research and QA and Shahidul Islam, Education Adviser of USAID Bangladesh were part of this introduction meeting.

"Change is always difficult..."

- EIA Principal Core Trainer shares his experience

Professor Shahidul Amin Chowdhury is one of EIA's Principal Core Trainers and has been part of the EIA family since 2008. Since joining EIA he has facilitated over 200 training workshops, including UCEP, FIVDB and government teachers in EIA's approach to teaching communicative English.

Chowdhury has a wealth of teaching experience – he worked for over 30 years as a Teacher Educator in Chittagong Teacher Training College in various capacities, from lecturer to principal, in both pre-service and in-service training programmes.

Chowdhury knows what 'real life' is like in the classroom and appreciates the problems that teachers face, like large classes and cramped conditions. He also understands the innovative approach to teaching English promoted by EIA and that this requires teachers to change what they do in the classroom. In doing so, teachers change their ideas about teaching. Chowdhury recognises that change is hard, "Change is always difficult; the most challenging part for teachers is changing their beliefs and ideas". Despite being hard, it is possible. Chowdhury remembers a teacher from Rangamati, "Ismael" was very cross about the EIA training from day one. He boasted that he was an expert in English and that he had nothing to learn... but after just a few days of training he started to realize he could learn from the EIA training workshop. From the second cluster meeting onwards he became a fan of EIA's techniques. This was a great moment for me – it gave me a sense of achievement."

Chowdhury adds, "EIA's innovative teacher training approach has begun to change teachers'



Professor Shahidul Amin Chowdhury, Principal Core Trainer, EIA

mind sets. Now teachers really believe that English can be taught in interactive ways which allow students to join in."

EIA's Core Trainers come from many walks of life. They encourage teachers to adopt the EIA approach in their classrooms, changing the lives of thousands of teachers and millions of students as they do so. Happy learning and happy teaching goes on...

- **Faysal Abbas & Sonia Burton**
English in Action

Games for Learning



Ms Haris, Outreach Officer at BBC Media Action for EIA, reflects on the latest set of BBC Janala Creative Workshops:

Two dozen creative minds gathered together for a week in late September to brainstorm and develop ideas for learning English through Games. Young English language teaching professionals joined up with people working in creative industries - including film, online, mobile and journalism - to develop and pitch ideas for media projects that develop English language skills. The BBC Janala Creative Workshop week didn't end with participants' learning the theory of games for language learning; the ideas developed

by the participants were pitched in front of a panel of experts from development and donor organisations alongside media and telecom operators.

The ideas generated varied from sophisticated mobile and website apps and games to CD-based games that could help people of different ages to learn English with fun through games. The pitches were highly appreciated by the panelists and some of the ideas are now under further development alongside BBC Janala and other partners. So watch out for some new ELT-gaming products coming your way soon from the participants of the BBC Janala Creative Workshop.

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