

ICT and English for a better life in river basin areas

Shoma (14) and Rita (18) are two sisters who regularly make use of one of the mobile boat libraries on the Attray River in the North-East of Bangladesh. The mobile library is only one of many projects of Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha [SSS], an NGO which supports people living in the North-Eastern river basin areas as they learn to cope with climate change and the increased risk and frequency of flooding (for more information: <http://www.shidhulai.org>). The boat library is the only means that the people in this area have to access books and reading materials. The boat library also provides people with the unique opportunity to learn how to use computers and to access the internet.



Shoma and Rita both go to the secondary government school in their village and want to continue their studies at college to improve their chances of a better life and job. Both girls are highly aware of the relevance of education, but particularly the importance of computer literacy as well as English in order to pursue their dreams. The boat library gave them the opportunity to learn how to use computers, how to access and search the internet and be connected to the world through the use of modern information and communication technology. Arif, a computer trainer on the library boat, who works as a volunteer, explains that people in the remote villages are very eager to learn everything about computers and to get access to ICT. They are aware of the relevance of modern technology and are keen to use it in order to improve their lives, get better jobs and move out of poverty. Shoma and Rita explain further that in addition to education and computer literacy, the knowledge of English is another essential skill. Both girls learned English in school, however the quality of their teacher was not good, according to them, and they never got the chance to develop good English skills. English in Action is acknowledging not simply the need but also the right of people all over Bangladesh, including the remote and hard to reach areas, to learn English in order to improve their economic living situations. Not only will English in Action work together with government schools all over the country to improve the quality of English teaching by introducing modern pedagogical approaches, but in addition EIA will introduce teachers as well as students to modern information and communication technology. EIA strongly believes that giving all people the opportunity to access the world through modern ICT and English will make a real difference in their lives. In order to reach those remote and hard to reach areas, EIA is committed to thinking outside the box, being innovative and partnering with local, established NGOs. This way EIA will be able to effectively include socially excluded groups into its interventions and give them the chance to improve their lives through English.



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