



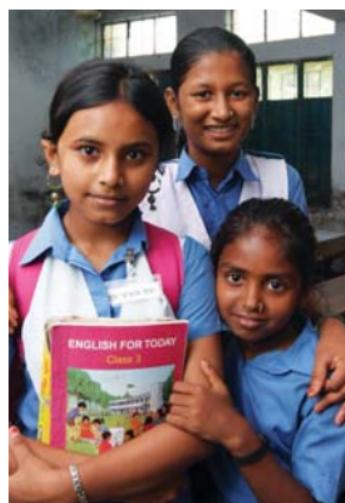
Frequently Asked Questions

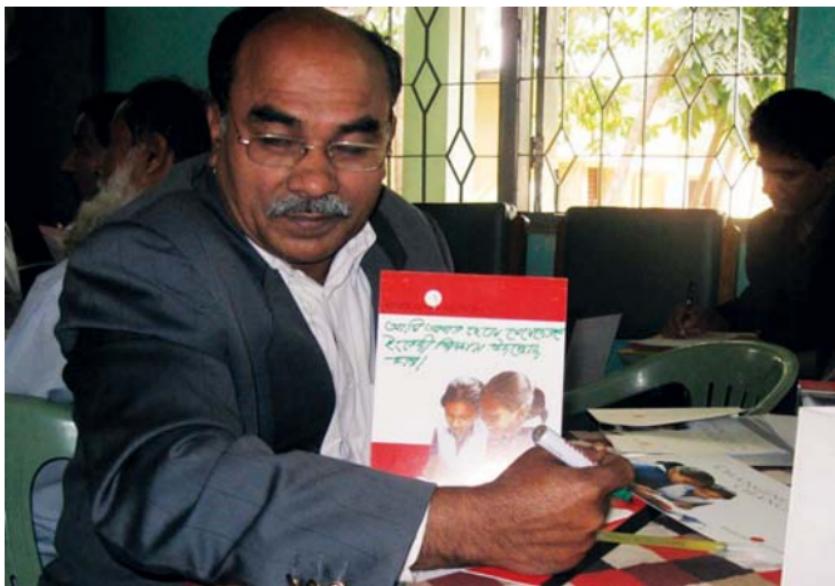
SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WHOLE PROJECT

Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh. So why do Bangladeshis need to learn English?

When communicating among themselves Bangladeshis don't often need to use English – Bangla serves the Bangladeshi people perfectly well. However, when Bangladeshis need to communicate and work with people from other countries English is usually the language they need to use. Many international organisations in important fields like industry, technology and higher education use English as their common language as it is spoken around the world. In fact, knowledge of the English language is often seen as being crucial for successful participation in today's global society. Improved English language skills will help Bangladeshi-based companies promote themselves to foreign markets, bring investors to Bangladesh, and allow the Bangladeshi people to gain higher-skilled employment both at home and abroad.

Bangla will always be the language of the Bangladeshi people, but English will help Bangladeshis share their knowledge and culture with the world and engage with the international community to support their own and their country's development.





Does promoting the teaching of English pose a threat to the status of Bangla as a national language?

No. Wherever English is taught or used in an international context inevitably there is some concern about its impact on local and national languages. But teaching English does not mean the status of Bangla will be weakened. In the context of EIA we promote English as a tool for international development, providing connections and opportunities.

In EIA we recognise that quality education is a major factor in a country's economic development. To achieve quality education, a high level of literacy and learning is required. We believe this should be based on a solid grounding in a nation's mother tongue. It is therefore important that Bangladeshi children learn to read and write in Bangla. This grounding in their mother tongue will help them to learn English or another language, which in turn will improve their job prospects. EIA's goal is not to implement English-medium education in Bangladesh but to ensure access to quality English language education.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES IN SCHOOLS

Why Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), not grammar translation?

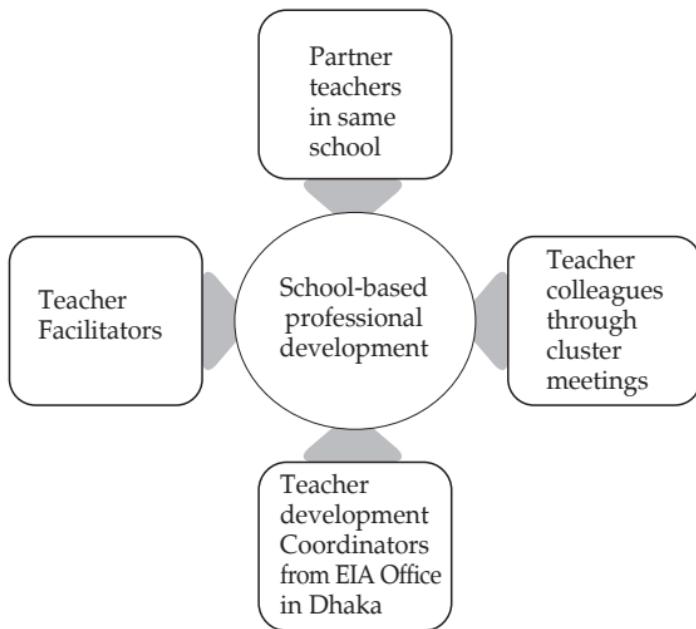
EIA aims to enhance existing English language teaching practices by offering further opportunities to school teachers, students and adult learners to use English communicatively. The fundamental principle underlying CLT is that we learn to communicate by communicating and that language teaching should prepare learners for the situations they may encounter in their lives. For example, most of us need to use language to buy rail tickets, listen to the news, fill out an insurance claim, read a technical manual or negotiate a business deal. Learning the component parts of a sentence or studying a classical poem is not the best preparation for learning to do real life tasks. As Bangladeshis are likely to use English in a wide variety of contexts, emphasis is placed on international communication, not on the mastery of British or American norms.



What is supported school-based learning?

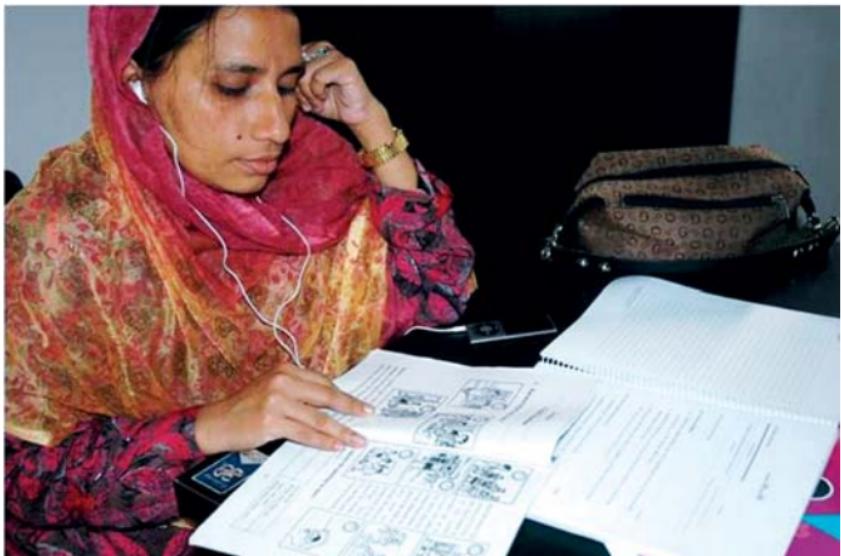
In the EIA programme, teachers pursue professional development by applying their learning to the classrooms, schools and communities in which they work. They receive professional development materials that offer anytime, anywhere learning, conducted at their own pace. But teachers do not study alone with the professional development materials. They also participate in local, national and international professional networks, which help to develop, support and sustain their new practices. EIA teachers receive support from:

- a) a teacher-partner in their school
- b) twenty local teacher colleagues through monthly cluster meetings
- c) local teacher facilitators
- d) teacher development coordinators from the EIA base.



Why is supported school-based learning a good model for teacher training in Bangladesh?

Teacher training in Bangladesh is currently hampered by several issues but a particular difficulty arises in rural areas: teachers cannot easily travel to training centres, and often have large classes and busy schedules so find it difficult to fit professional development into their daily routines. EIA aims to overcome such challenges through its new programme for the professional development of English language teachers, which is based on supported school-based learning. The programme supports teachers wherever they may be and enables them to learn at their own pace when and where they want. Learning is delivered through mobile devices (such as media players), which teachers can also use to enhance their own teaching in classroom and community settings. The flexibility of EIA's programme will, in time, bring about sustainable educational change and promote quality education across Bangladesh.



Why do you use expensive ICTs (information and communication technologies) as part of a teacher training programme in Bangladesh?

The Government of Bangladesh is investing heavily in ICTs. They believe a 'Digital Bangladesh' will transform many sectors, including education, and will improve the country's ability to participate in the global economy. In line with these policies, and in the light of research evidence, EIA is exploring how cost-effective, ICT-enhanced approaches can maximise improvements in English language teaching and learning. In particular, EIA is concentrating on providing mobile devices to bring good examples of spoken English into primary and secondary school classrooms across Bangladesh.

Within EIA, the ICTs are a small part of the cost of a much larger teacher training programme. The main issue is the sustainability of the training outcomes (teachers' knowledge and practice) rather than the tools used during the training period. However, EIA does want the classroom materials to have ongoing use. In EIA, teachers are using a small number of mobile devices, with very much lower total costs than computer suites, to achieve substantial improvements to teaching and learning. These mobile devices are not dependent upon a permanent supply – they can be charged in one location and used in another. They are portable, fit easily into the existing classroom environment and are relatively easy to store safely. The long-term goal is to take advantage of the affordances of existing ICTs (for example smart phones, which are rapidly growing in use in Bangladesh) to use for teachers' professional development.

Does EIA take into account the educational realities in Bangladesh, where many schools are under resourced, with crowded classrooms, and where children are often from poor backgrounds?

Through in-depth research, monitoring and evaluation, EIA has developed a nuanced understanding of the context and challenges of education in Bangladesh, and we have designed our methods of delivery and the content of our materials in response to that. We are aware, for example, that many students and teachers lack opportunities to practice English communicatively, and the methodology of communicative learning may be very new to both teachers and their students. We have, therefore, designed these materials to support teachers to give their students access to spoken English. The materials also provide tips for using communicative methods with large classes. Moreover, the materials are suited to the local context: they contain both English and Bangla, feature local accents and are locally produced and locally relevant. Finally, EIA seeks to change perceptions about language learning: English is something that is possible and affordable within the Bangladeshi context.



What are the differences between the Primary and Secondary school initiatives?

In the pilot phase of EIA, we are trialing various methods of providing Bangladeshi teachers with appropriate professional development that makes a high impact on the quality of their teaching.



In the Primary school initiative, EIA has developed an interactive audio instruction package in which language is contextualised through engaging narratives. These materials, linked to the current Bangladeshi curriculum and textbooks, are delivered through media players with speakers and the language is reinforced through the use of visual aids, such as posters and flash cards. Lesson plans guide the teachers to adopt a more communicative approach to language teaching and learning. The whole package is designed to enhance the English language proficiency of both students and teachers as well as the pedagogic practice of teachers.



The Secondary school initiative encourages teachers to change their classroom practice. Simple communicative language-teaching activities are provided for teachers to try in class with their students, developing into full lessons. Teaching materials include audio and video resources delivered through handheld ICT devices provided by EIA.

Following the pilot phase, EIA will collaborate with Bangladeshi education partners to determine which approach has improved teachers' professional development in communicative English language teaching in a cost-effective way. This approach can then be offered to teachers and schools throughout Bangladesh.

Is EIA involved in English-medium schools?

No. EIA focuses on areas of education where there is the most need, and the need is mainly in Bangla-medium schools.

Does EIA offer any kind of accreditation for teachers?

Yes. An Open University accredited course is available for participants in EIA's Secondary school initiative. 'Make Your Teaching Experience Count' is a voluntary course on the self-reflective aspects of professional development. It is designed to support teachers in working with the pedagogical approaches employed in EIA and their classroom course books. If successful, students can gain 30 OU credit points and an official OU certificate. We are looking into ways of extending this offer to all participating teachers in EIA. In addition, we are looking into ways of offering an internationally recognised ELT qualification for EIA Teacher Facilitators.

How do you plan to embed EIA into Bangladesh?

The Government of Bangladesh requested the UK Government to support the increase of communicative English language skills among Bangladeshi people and to contribute to Bangladesh's economic development. The project has its institutional home in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and EIA works in collaboration with teacher education stakeholders at national and local levels to explore and ensure scalability and sustainability of the programme.

Essentially we want EIA to (eventually) put itself out of business. Our aim is for the teaching and pedagogical practices conveyed through EIA to have a deep and systematic impact on English language teaching and the wider education sector in Bangladesh beyond the life of this nine-year project. In order to do this, we must continue to earn the support of the Bangladeshi government, and work closely with Bangladeshi partners.

In this way we can ensure the right in-country expertise to make EIA sustainable and influential not only in English language teaching in Bangladesh but across subjects and across borders.

We therefore attempt to make everything that we do intimately tied to Bangladeshi cultural and educational realities and the real and practical needs of teachers and learners. We have to continue to identify the most influential Bangladeshi organisations and individuals within the field of English Language Teaching and work closely with them, constantly remembering that it will be up to them in the future to take the EIA legacy forward. Without these partnerships EIA can have only limited success.

How will teachers and educationalists working in other contexts be able to benefit from lessons learnt by EIA?

In addition to the range of baseline studies that will be conducted at the beginning and end of each phase of the EIA project, there will be a number of longitudinal and cohort research studies carried out, together with case studies of teachers, schools and communities, etc. It is envisaged that these studies will be conducted as part of the developmental evaluation process to inform the project outputs. Such studies will also be reported and disseminated through a variety of relevant channels.

ADULT TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH MEDIA



What kinds of people is EIA trying to reach through its Adult initiative?

The ELT materials and lessons in the Adult initiative are aimed at 15-45 year old Bangladeshis from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds in a non classroom environment. The baseline survey, carried out at the beginning of the project, showed that very different kinds of people have a desire to learn English. Some of these include students, young adults seeking employment, job holders in different sectors and women at home. By providing English lessons across different media platforms, EIA is trying to reach significant numbers of adults who can begin and continue to learn English in a self learning media environment regardless of their financial, geographical, social, educational or psychological barriers.

What kinds of media are being used to teach English in the Adult initiative?

Television, mobile, newspapers, CD ROMs and the Internet are all being used because these are the most widespread, accessible and affordable media in Bangladesh. By delivering lessons through these media, significant numbers of adult learners can be reached in both rural and urban Bangladesh. Moreover, EIA recognises that learners have different needs and different levels of language ability and by using a variety of media platforms this diversity can be addressed. For example, the BBC Janala website and the mobile platforms provide lessons for both low level and higher level learners on Essential English, English for Work and Practical Vocabulary. English learning on television, on mobile, on CD ROM, on the Internet and in print also means that it is possible to address the issue of how people learn. For example, visual learners learn more effectively when they see language being used (television), auditory learners prefer to hear language being used (mobile, television, CD ROMs and web) and kinaesthetic learners prefer to learn through doing (web and print).

Why was mobile chosen as a medium for delivery of lessons?

Mobile is one of the most widely accessible media platforms in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh and ownership of mobile phones is increasing rapidly. Through mobile phones it is possible to deliver affordable



English language learning which can be accessed from any location at any time. Mobile learning can never replace the classroom teacher but it has the unique ability to reach those who are unable to access or afford face to face English language learning. This level of flexibility also means that lessons delivered on mobile phone can be integrated into busy schedules.

How can a mobile phone teach English?

The mobile lessons are essentially audio lessons. In language classrooms all over the world, audio is recognised an effective tool for language learning. What we have done is to take this common classroom practice and deliver audio lessons through a new and different medium and in a different format. In the absence of a teacher and a classroom and to aid in their comprehension of the audio lesson, the users are given the guidance and support of a friendly teacher figure and Bangla instructions and translation.

Why was a website developed?

Although the availability and accessibility of the Internet is considerably lower than other media platforms, the percentage of people with access to the Internet is increasing and with government initiatives for a Digital Bangladesh this figure will continue to grow. EIA is using innovative technologies across new media platforms such as mobile and the Internet to deliver cost effective lessons which take into account future trends in media usage.

What is the ratio of English to Bangla in the television shows?

One of the main objectives in the adult initiative has been to break down barriers and change perceptions to learning English. In the initial research phase it was clearly established that two of the main barriers to learning English are fear and a lack of confidence. For this reason Buzz and Bishaash rely heavily on Bangla whilst



providing audiences with small amounts of useful, relevant and communicative English in each programme. These shows attempt to engage members of the audience who may have had negative educational experiences of language learning or may have low self esteem with regards to their ability to learn English. Moreover, through these television shows, the audience may be sufficiently motivated to engage with the more explicit language teaching and learning available in the game show, Mojay Mojay Shekha, and in the lessons on mobile, on web and in print.



How do you motivate people to study in this kind of self learning environment?

It is important to create an environment where adult learners feel at ease and are offered the support and guidance needed to be able to succeed and achieve results. EIA aims to do this by providing extensive mother tongue support and by encouraging people to take an active role in the language learning process. A friendly and supportive ‘voice’ which avoids complex and formal sentences and encourages and praises the learners is provided across all media platforms. There is also teacher face across all the media platforms in order to help people adapt to what might be a new kind of learning for them and to offer them tangible and recognizable support.

The Primary and Secondary initiatives of EIA take a CLT approach. What about the Adult learning initiative?

The content is developed to reflect the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (language learning is learning to communicate) and the materials and lessons contain many of the main features of CLT. For example, relevant and useful language is presented and the importance of practice is emphasised. However, with certain mediums it is necessary to adopt aspects from other ELT approaches. For example, elements of an audiolingual approach are incorporated into the mobile lessons (e.g. drilling and memorizing play a more prominent role in the mobile lessons due to the nature of a solely audio medium and the limitations in lesson duration). Translation is also incorporated into lessons because often this is the easiest and most effective way of explaining meanings or words and phrases in a self learning environment which has no walls, no black board and no teacher.

How does the Adult learning initiative fit into the Primary and Secondary school initiatives?

By enhancing the English language skills of adult learners, EIA aims to have an impact on the English language skills of younger members of families and communities. In the baseline survey one of the main reasons for adults to learn English was to teach their children. This indicates that there could be a significant impact on the children of those adults who are learning English. Feedback and research on the viewing of the television shows Bishaash and Mojay Mojay Shekha indicate that both adults and younger members of the community are watching these programmes. This is significant because it is recognized that what happens outside the classroom (e.g. families practising English together) can have a great effect on what happens inside the classroom and the learning can be mutually reinforced.

How is the learning being measured?

The reach and impact of the television shows, mobile, web and print lessons for the Adult initiative are continuously evaluated and assessed through:

- user testing where content is refined according to audience comprehension
- baseline, midline and endline surveys
- cohort panels which track progress of users across different media platforms and evaluate their language competence

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