

ENGLISH  ACTION

Newsletter

Issue 2 | April - September 2010



**CHANGING LEARNING
CHANGING LIVES**

Welcome to the latest newsletter from English in Action (EIA). We come to you with an expanding team of people working on the Programme and a period of enormous activity.

Our development of materials to provide training for teachers, and for use in the classroom, as we work in an initial number of primary and secondary schools from the government and non-government sectors, has intensified. Encouragingly we have begun to see this yielding the most positive results.

For the adult community the television series BUZZ reaching up to five million people, and website and mobile telephone platform BBC Janala have been launched, and with early success where the mobile number 3000 has been and is being used by ever-increasing numbers of people. We are all now looking forward to the screening of an exciting new drama series in October and accompanying language support programme.

As a nine year Programme, EIA's challenge has been to try to find out what can work to help lower the barriers to learning English and significantly improve the communicative language skills of 25 million people, both children and adults. With teachers and in schools the focus has been on introducing appropriate technology for training, and to bring audio into the classroom, supported by additional teaching and learning materials. For adults it has been a case of exploring what can be done through television, the internet and with mobile telephony. Research in schools and with the adult community continues to be critical. It has helped us to adjust what we do, and we now look forward to seeing that research finalised in the next six months to fully inform the development of the Programme.

EIA will look to 2011 and the next three years to take the Programme to scale working with significantly more schools, teachers and children, and adult learners. This will be a challenge in itself, but the most significant test will be to institutionalise the Programme inside local structures and organisations in such a way that any gains of the Programme can be fully sustained.

We look forward to keeping you informed regarding the progress of the programme in the hope that we can also solicit your support. Please take the opportunity to look at our Programme website <http://www.eiabd.com>, and at BBC Janala at <http://www.bbcjanala.com>.

Best wishes,

John Shotton
Project Director
English in Action



Formal Launch of English in Action – 11 March 2010

English in Action (EIA) was formally launched at the Westin Hotel on 11 March 2010. The launch event was a confirmation of the partnership between the Bangladesh Government and the UK Government, which aims to help 25 million people in Bangladesh develop their English language skills and to change the way in which English is acquired by children, young people and adults in Bangladesh. As the British High Commissioner stated, 'EIA will help Bangladeshis acquire and enhance their English language skills, create new learning opportunities and help Bangladesh grow as a regional and global competitor'.



We look back at a very successful event, in which a large number of education stakeholders participated. The launch was chaired by Mr. Abu Alam Md. Shahid Khan, Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) with Dr. Afsarul Ameen, the MOPME Minister, as Chief Guest. Other speakers were Mr. Stephen Evans, British High Commissioner, Md. Sirazul Islam, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ms. Mahbubun Nahar (EIA Project Director on behalf of the Government) and the EIA Team Leader Mr. Marc van der Stouwe.

The presence of EIA stalls gave visitors the opportunity to get to know more about the project in an attractive and interactive way. One of the stalls showcased EIA materials, including the content on the iPods, charts, posters, flash cards, teachers' guides and others. The next stall showed BBC Janala's media and adult learning



products. There was also a stall where a live demonstration of the classroom context was given by EIA teachers and students. The young students were excited to exchange greetings and chat informally in English with the visitors. This brought a very lively atmosphere to the event. EIA Teacher Development Coordinators answered visitors' queries at the stalls and tried to convey the vision, mission and objectives of the Project.

Mr. Abu Alam Md. Shahid Khan, MOPME Secretary, expressed the general feeling, saying: 'I am delighted that EIA has started its work in our schools. The materials that have been produced by EIA look really promising and I am confident that the Programme will change the way learning takes place in classrooms all over Bangladesh'.

EIA launches Teacher Support Activities

English in Action programme launched its Teacher Training and Support Activities by organising initial Teacher Development Workshops in 6 regions across Bangladesh. 7 primary and 5 secondary workshops were conducted between 23 February and 4 March 2010.



688 teachers and 61 Teacher Facilitators from 21 upazilas covering both primary and secondary sectors actively participated in the workshops. With a duration of 2.5 days each, 4 teams comprised of Teacher Development Coordinators, academics and experts from The Open University in the UK and IT support members simultaneously facilitated the workshops in different locations.

Aims of the first Teacher Development Workshops were twofold:

- familiarise the teachers with the EIA approach, materials and teacher support programme and
- build their confidence in using the MP3 players and other EIA teaching learning materials inside their classrooms



The workshops generated great enthusiasm and excitement among all the participating teachers. In Mostaq Ahmed Khan's (Asst. Teacher, Adarsha Shamaj Govt. High School, Laxmipur) words, *"I feel jubilant and agile by the beautiful posters and flash cards EIA provided, the kind of training we are receiving here and also the iPods!it is like exploring new horizons!"*

Teacher Facilitators' Orientation Workshop

Teacher Facilitators (TFs) are the local level support mechanism in English in Action (EIA) and thus one of the most important stakeholders of the project. The key role of the TFs in EIA is to provide peer support to the teachers as a critical friend and a guide in trialling different Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) techniques using EIA materials inside teacher's own classrooms. EIA TFs are none other than practicing teachers and selected from the intervention areas. Currently, 43 TFs from primary and 18 TFs from secondary are working with EIA and providing support to the teachers under EIA pilot intervention.



To build TFs' capacity to understand and model EIA methods and materials in a real classroom situation and to enable them to guide and motivate teachers to practice CLT techniques using EIA materials, a 5 day orientation programme was designed and conducted separately for primary and secondary. With the focus of the workshop on CLT, the TFs were introduced to EIA materials and its use through in-depth discussion, demonstration and practice. Colleagues from The Open University in the UK together with Teacher Development Coordinators (TDCs) conducted the workshop.

Make Your Teaching Experience Count (MYTEC)

Most Secondary and Underprivileged Children's Educational Programme (UCEP) teachers involved in the English in Action project have been invited to undertake the MYTEC module presented by The Open University in the UK. This module, set at Level 1 of UK Higher Education, requires the EIA teachers to reflect upon their work involved in the project, and to consider how it is enhancing and impacting upon their professional activity in English Language teaching and learning.

For their studies, EIA teachers work through printed materials, attend tutorial sessions and submit assignments. Study of the module takes place in parallel with participation on the project. The EIA teachers are supported by tutors, who are appointed and managed by BRAC University. Time has been allocated during the regular cluster meetings for the tutors to discuss with the EIA teachers aspects of the module including how to present their assignments for assessment. Upon successful completion of the module the teachers will be presented with a formal certificate from The Open University.

Advocacy Workshops with local level Government Education Managers

EIA recently conducted two advocacy workshops with 101 local level education managers/administrators both from Primary and Secondary Sectors. The workshops were held in BRAC CDM, Rajendrapur on 14 and 15 July 2010. Joint Secretary - MOPME, Mr. Rupan Kanti Sheel and Joint Secretary - MOE, Md. Ashraful Islam inaugurated the primary schools and secondary schools workshops respectively. All the Divisional Directors (primary and secondary), selected District Primary and Secondary Education Officers, Upazila Primary and Secondary Education Officers, Upazila Resource Centre Instructors (primary) and Academic Supervisors (secondary) participated in their respective workshop on the aforementioned dates.

The aims of these workshops were

- to orient and inform the participants about English in Action Programme, its materials and field activities and progress so far, and
- to seek support from the education managers for successful implementation of the project activities in the field.



We received a huge response from the participants who highly appreciated the project and the effort to bring the education managers into the loop, to share their experiences about the changes they noticed already in teachers' practice in the intervention schools and also to commit to support the project within and even beyond their professional responsibilities.

EIA – IER – OU Research Partnership

One of the main objectives for the English in Action Project is to develop the capacity of existing national and local institutions and organisations. Throughout the nine year project span EIA hopes to build regional as well as national level capacity in order to sustain the projects interventions and ideologies. Various partnerships are already underway to work together with other key stakeholders in Bangladesh.

For example, with the academic and technical support of The Open University in the UK (OU), the EIA project initiated a research partnership with the Institute of Educational Research (IER) of Dhaka University, Bangladesh. This tripartite agreement between the three entities – IER, OU and Mott MacDonald, the management consultant for the EIA Project, was initiated on June 1st 2010 and will continue up to the 30th of April 2011.

Through a competitive process 15 IER researchers and a coordinator were selected through this partnership. All those recruited have a research background, are young and enthusiastic learners and already have some orientation and knowledge of the rural context of Bangladesh.



EIA is offering these researchers an in-depth knowledge and hands on training on the qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Each researcher has been given the responsibility for specific upazilas where they are gathering data by conducting classroom observations for EIA. The Open University and IER resource persons are imparting training on research methodology, data entry and analysis as well as familiarising on specific research software. It is interesting to see that the researchers, after receiving net books and video cameras through the project, are eager to use technology in their research processes.

EIA won an Award on the first National e-Content and ICT4D Award 2010

The first National e-Content and ICT for Development Award 2010 was held on August 9 and jointly organised by the Ministry of Science and ICT and D.Net (Development Research Network). The purpose of the awards was to promote the best ICT initiatives and products related to the development of livelihood and society. The contest awarded 32 organisations in 14 categories both for on-line and off-line content products and ICT interventions and applications. English in Action won an award in the e-learning and education category for its innovative ICT initiatives in the primary, secondary and adult learning sectors in Bangladesh. Honourable Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith attended as the chief guest while State Minister for Science and ICT Architect Yeafesh Osman was the special guest in the ceremony.



Marc van der Stouwe, the Team Leader of EIA is receiving the award.

EIA launching materials for class 2, 4 and 5

The English in Action Primary Teaching Learning Programme (PTLP) is a new programme for supporting primary teachers and their pupils. It aims to make teaching easier and more effective, and to enable pupils to use and understand English in a way which is active, communicative and fun!

The PTLP develops and produces materials to support innovative teaching and learning methods, including audio lessons, audio scripts, teacher guides, activity guides, posters, alphabet charts, flashcards and figurines. EIA has already developed and launched materials for class 1 and 3, while materials for class 2, 4 and 5 are underway and planned to be launched by October 2010.

Audio Lessons

The audio lessons for class 2, 4 and 5, like the previously produced lessons for class 1 and 3, are in fact the audio version of the scripts which are in a way based on the NCTB English textbooks for primary schools. These are obviously not the exact audios on the textbook stories. The vocabulary used in the audio lessons is almost the same as in the textbooks, though sometimes additional words or phrases are introduced so that an interesting story can be told, and pupils get used to hearing English in a meaningful context. The audio stories help the students to learn and develop their skill of speaking as well as listening.

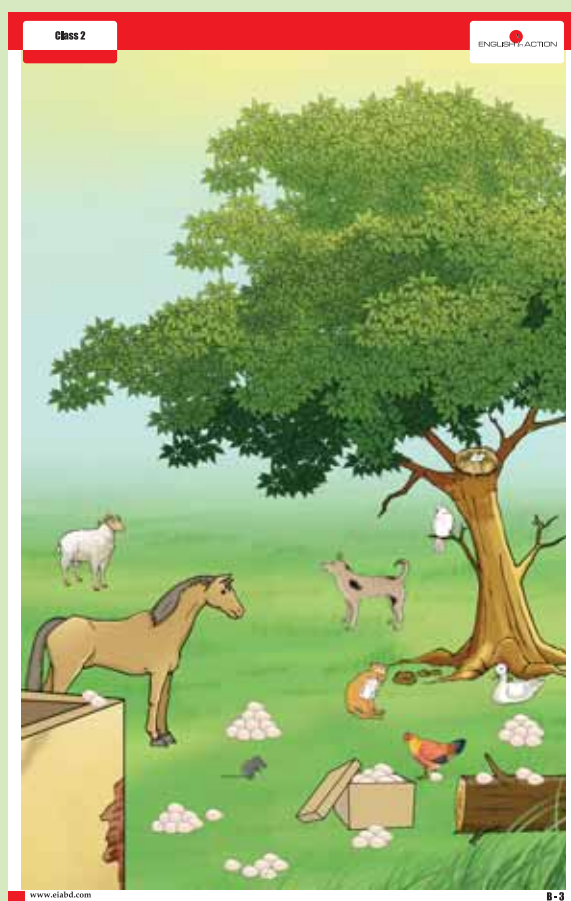
The main components of the audio lessons are the instructions (for students listening live to the audio), the main story in dialogues, songs or rhymes and sports competition or games—all leading to achieving the learning objectives inherent in the English for Today (EfT) lessons. The instructions are generally told by two narrators, Shapla Apu and Suman Bhaiya, who play the key role in linking the students with the live proceedings of the audio or to let them interact or respond to the audio instructions.

Pause signals are used in the audio so that teachers can put a pause whenever s/he may think it necessary to explain actions and/or ask some comprehension questions about the texts in order to check students' understanding.

The audio stories take place either in classroom or playground or elsewhere depicting an environment conducive to learning the material. Characters in the audio stories are taken mainly from the textbook, while some minor characters like father, mother, sister, brother, grandfather or grandmother appear to help raise the audio story to the height of imparting the particular words, language structures and more.

Posters

EIA has developed posters for class 2, 4 and 5 based on the audio lessons of these classes, mainly to support ingress to the story on the recordings and to



support practice of the language pattern of the textbook lessons. Compositions of the posters are rooted in the characters and their milieus of the audio stories of these classes which can serve as prompts for students and teachers to conceptualise the content of the audio, develop some broader ideas beyond what is in the textbook and express them through practice with the set language structures.

Activity Guides

Activity guides for class 2, 4 and 5 are designed to conduct the class within a total duration of 35 minutes, each with two-day sessions marked as Day 01 and Day 02, as was the case for class 1 and 3. The activity guides contain some general instructions for teachers on how to follow them, and introduce certain methods of conducting the class such as eliciting, concept checking, pair work, whole class communication activities, monitoring, feedback etc.

The day sessions are textured with activities based on the textbooks, audio lessons, posters, flashcards, alphabet charts, various games, role-plays and practice of exercises of the textbook lessons.

In the activity guides, planning of any new day-sessions is optional, as teachers can design new lesson plans if required reflecting their creativity and innovations with use of some relevant songs and rhymes on the recording, posters and flashcards and any other appropriate games.

Audio Scripts

EIA has produced the audio scripts for class 2, 4 and 5 for dissemination to the teachers. These are to support the teachers in their understanding of words in the rhymes, songs or dialogues or any part on the recording that they might feel difficult to recognise in the recordings. Teachers can also refer to the audio script to clarify correct pronunciation of any particular words or intonations of the sentences.

A sample of EIA poster used in the primary sector

English lessons on every television

English in Action is about to launch a new phase of the project which has the potential to bring families in Bangladesh together for the first time to learn English.

The ambition is to use the most widely adopted and cheapest media available – television – to reach out to the many millions of everyday people who have weak or non-existent English language skills and lack confidence to learn.

From the 16th of October, children and adults of all ages will be able to watch a brand new drama series **Bishaash** accompanied by a linked English language learning show **BBC Janala: Mojay Mojay Shekha** ('Learning is Fun').

Broadcast on BTV every week, with two further weekly repeats, the back-to-back primetime programmes will transform people's experience of learning English through a never used before approach to teaching English.



The main characters of Bishaash

Bishaash is a drama based in Bangladesh and the UK, which as the first supernatural detective series in Asia will mesmerise audiences whilst providing an introduction to beginners English. Largely in Bangla to attract a mainstream audience, it includes functional English woven into the storylines.

It is followed by BBC Janala: Mojay Mojay Shekha, a compelling game show and comedy which then builds on the English used in the drama, providing viewers with a fun, accessible and free way for families to learn English together.



Alex and Kamal on Mojay Mojay Shekha

But it does not just stop there. Learners can follow up on lessons in national newspaper Prothom Alo or on mobile and web through BBC Janala. Put together, people will have a complete learning package worth more than four hours of English language study every week.

This is a landmark moment in the project's vision to raise the English language skills of 25 million people in Bangladesh by 2017 by bringing together the learning experience of project's two essential audiences – children and adults.

Teachers involved in the English in Action school based project are being encouraged to draw pupil's attention to both shows and integrate related activities within their own teaching. A launch special is on BTV and BTV World at 2.15 pm on Saturday, 16th October. Thereafter programmes will be broadcast every week on Fridays at 7.00 pm and repeated on Saturday at 2.15 pm and Tuesday at 3.00 pm.

Findings from the field

EIA has just completed a substantial study into the changes in teachers' classroom practices. This study suggests that the use of mobile technology for teacher professional development and classroom practice within EIA is producing substantial classroom impacts, even in the first few months of teachers' participation.

Impact 1: There has been a substantial increase in spoken English in EIA teachers' classrooms.

70% of all observed teacher talk, and 85% of all observed student talk, is now taking place in English.

Impact 2: There has been a substantial increase in student participation in lessons: on average, over 1/3 of all observed lesson time now given to student talk, compared to minimal student talk in baseline studies. There is also evidence of increased individual, pair, group and choral speaking by students.

For example, in just the first 15 minutes of one observed lesson, all students had sung a song and read a passage in chorus, in English. And exactly half of the students (18 of 36), individually or in pairs, had participated in English language activities, involving leading the whole class, from the front.



In a small rural primary school with no electricity, the teacher begins the lesson with the 'good morning' song, played on the iPod and rechargeable speaker.

The teacher then uses the warm-up poster activity, where several individual students are called out to lead from the front. This is followed by the teacher asking three pairs of students to model a set dialogue (What's your name? My name is...). This is followed in turn by the class reading in chorus a passage from the textbook, with three more pairs of students reading the passage aloud to the class.



A primary student taking part in 'warm-up' activity from EIA guide. The student is speaking in English, to ask her classmates 'Who is this?' as she points to different characters on the poster. Other students respond in chorus 'This is...'

When interviewed after the lesson, the teacher summed up his impression of how language use had changed in his English lessons, during the first few months of his participation in EIA:

"Before there was no difference... no distinction... the English class was the same as the Bangla class. If you walked in, you would not have been able to tell which was which. But now we can differentiate... we are speaking English much more now... The students are using English with their families too, outside school... Their pronunciation has improved... they are using English confidently".

Through the use of audio resources linked to English for Today (EfT) and associated classroom activities, flexibly delivered by mobile technology (media players and speakers), teachers have been able to introduce substantial changes in their practice, which are striking in:

- **Breadth:** the changes in practice are evidenced in the vast majority of the 490 EIA teachers whose lessons were observed, and
- **Depth:** the extent of change in practice (teachers' use of English language; students' active participation in lessons through speaking, particularly in English).

This is a remarkable achievement in the first 3 to 4 months of the EIA school-based teacher professional development interventions, using mobile technologies to bring English to the classroom.

A story from the field

It happened at the 5th cluster meeting in Ullapara, Sirajganj. In the reflective session of the cluster meeting, teachers usually share the challenges they face in their classrooms while using EIA materials and/or techniques. Ms. Ummul Hasin, one of the teachers of Jogjibonpur Government Primary School, Ullapara, Sirajganj shared something different, which touched me immensely and I want to share it with you.

One day, Ms. Hasin was teaching Class 3 and she started the lesson by using the EIA poster. I know we all agree that the EIA posters all look really beautiful. The students also love to talk about the posters and get engaged with them very quickly. During the poster presentation, suddenly a student came to the front of the classroom and requested Ms. Hasin to sit on a student bench. Initially, the teacher thought there might be some problem with the student: he probably did not



understand what she was trying to say or maybe he could not see the picture from the back? The reason she thought her student had a problem was that he had always been a 'back bencher' who hardly paid attention to the lessons. He was also labeled a weak student by other teachers at her school. Yet, it turned out she had jumped to the conclusion too fast. When Ms. Hasin asked the student what his problem was, the student said there was no problem at all. He just wanted his teacher to take a seat with the other students.

Ms. Hasin became really curious to know what the student wanted to do. So she decided to give him space. To her great surprise, she found that the little boy intended to take the role of the teacher. He started asking the class by pointing at the posters 'What is this?', 'What is the colour?', 'How many...?' and all sorts of similar questions. According to Ms. Hasin, the student was so excited to do this that he took the whole poster reading session and led the other students without any help from the teacher. After that, other students also felt encouraged to do the same. In fact, it became a competition among the students in this class to play the role of the teacher on a regular basis.

While telling her story, the teacher got emotional as she never saw such enthusiasm among her students about the English lessons. She always felt it was difficult for her to make the students understand the lessons, which she mainly tried to do by practicing vocabulary in chorus, with a strong focus memorisation in order to make her life easier. Now she felt comfortable to try new things out in the classroom. She said that a few months ago she could simply not have imagined that anything would change students' performance so much. And that even the weakest students seem to be taken on board. She is surprised to see that the students do not only actively participate in the class in a more creative way, but also feel confident to take the teachers' role and speak English in front of the teacher and the other students. And this all happened in such a short period of time!

I really feel encouraged by this story from Ms. Hasin. I will leave the pedagogical analysis up to other people, but for me personally it gives me a profound sense of satisfaction and pride that EIA is making significant positive changes in the teaching and learning situation in Bangladesh. And that I am contributing to this success!

Mostan Zida Al Noor

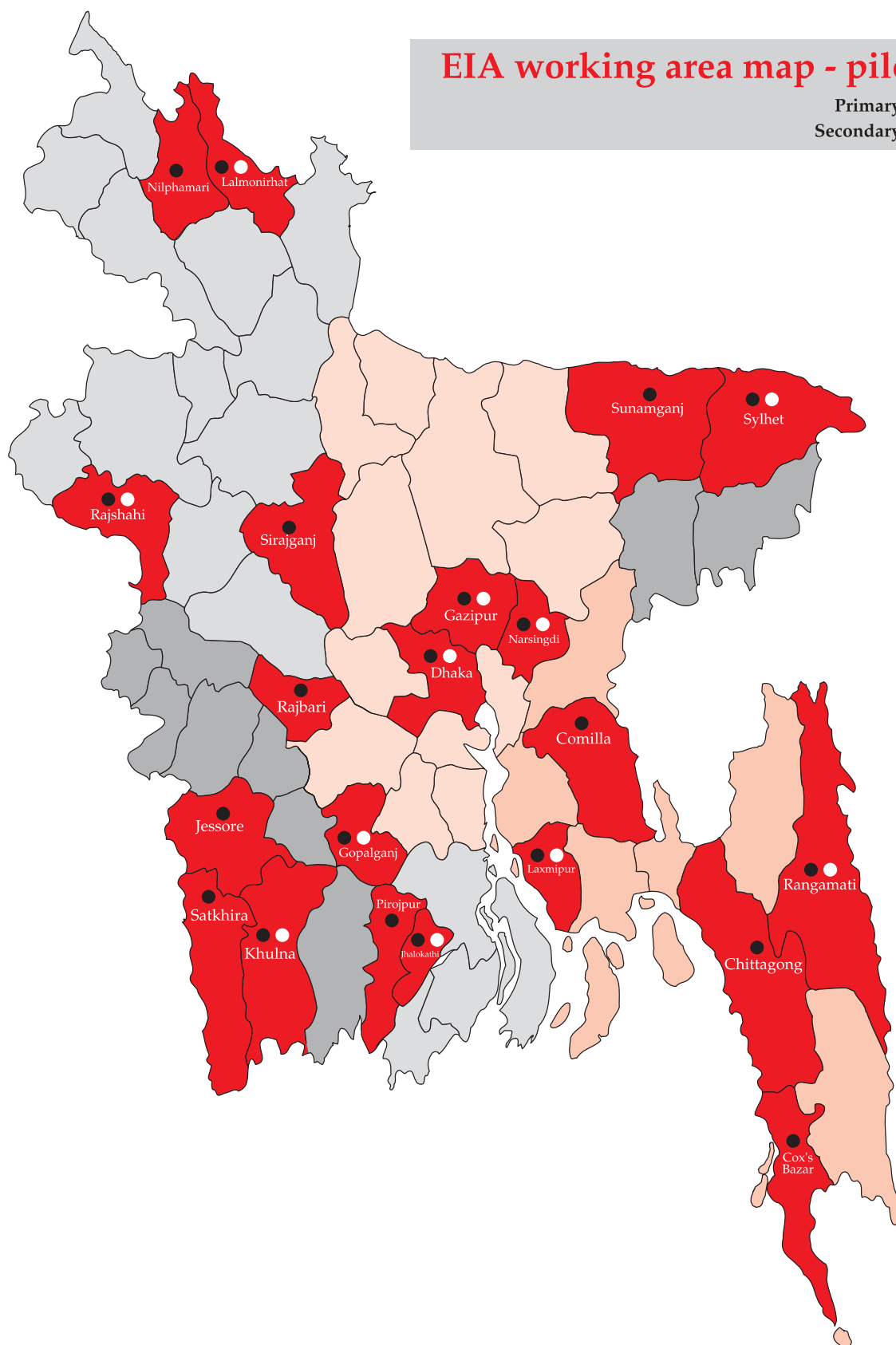
Teacher Development Coordinator
English in Action

EIA working areas - pilot phase

Division	District	Upazila	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Dhaka	Dhaka	Sadar	●	●
	Gazipur	Kapasia	●	●
	Narsingdi	Monohordi	●	●
	Gopalganj	Tungi Para	●	●
	Rajbari	Pangsha	●	
Rajshahi	Rajshahi	Paba	●	●
	Lalmonirhat	Sadar	●	●
	Nilphamari	Saidpur	●	
	Sirajganj	Ulla Para	●	
Khulna	Khulna	Dumuria	●	●
	Jessore	Chougacha	●	
	Satkhira	Shyamnagar	●	
Chittagong	Chittagong	Sadar	●	
	Chittagong	Chandanish	●	
	Cox's Bazar	Ramu	●	
	Comilla	Burichang	●	
	Rangamati	Sadar	●	●
	Laxmipur	Sadar	●	●
Sylhet	Sylhet	Sadar	●	
	Sylhet	Golapganj	●	
	Sunamganj	Chatak	●	
	Sylhet	Bianibazar		●
Barisal	Jhalokathi	Nolchiti	●	●
	Pirojpur	Bhandaria	●	

EIA working area map - pilot phase

Primary schools (230) ●
Secondary schools (115) ○



Implemented by :



Supported by :



Consortium Partners :



B B C WORLD SERVICE TRUST



Design : Expressions Ltd


ENGLISH *in* ACTION

English in Action

House 17 (C) Rd 118

Gulshan Dhaka-1212

Phone: 88-02 8822234

88-02 8822161

Fax: 88-02 8822663

Email: info@eiabd.com

Web: www.eiabd.com