

# Open and Distance Learning for Teachers' Professional Development: The English in Action (EIA) Model for the Global South

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## 1. Introduction

Emerging technologies have been changing everything from the way people work to the way they communicate with each other or even spend their leisure time. For expanding Education for All (EFA) and achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), new technologies in education are a crucial new area for policy makers and practitioners at all levels (UNESCO, 2005a). MDG 8 Target 5 is very precise - to develop a global partnership for development by making 'available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies' (United Nations, 2010). Across the world, most countries have policies in place to promote effective expansion of the use of new technologies in education. As a developing country, new technologies have significant potential for the development of Bangladesh. However, in this chapter Bangladesh is presented as an example of such a country in the Global South.

Teachers are at the core of attempts to expand, improve and reform the education systems of any country. Over the last decade the global commitments to achieve EFA and MDGs have resulted in a marked expansion of school systems. However, there is a sense of crisis around the future of the teaching profession across the globe. Reports suggest that at least 18 million teachers are needed globally for achieving EFA and MDGs within the timeframe (UNESCO, 2007, 2008). Teacher education and training is therefore a burning issue in the countries of the Global South, such as Bangladesh, where the State has largely failed to provide basic education for its citizens. Evidences around the globe show, 'Countries that have achieved high learning standards have invested heavily in the teaching profession' (UNESCO, 2005b, 3).

Teachers' professional development is a career long process which involves going through a major transformation. Open and distance learning (ODL) systems are making an increasing contribution to the professional development of teachers as 'school standards and professional standards are inextricably linked, and the need for a teaching force that is flexible and adaptable to the impact of rapidly changing structures of work and leisure' (Moon, 1997, 8). Building on the opportunities offered by emerging technologies, open and distance learning has a potentially valuable role to play in teachers' professional development.

## 2. Teachers' professional development: The contexts of the Global South

In the Global South, millions of children have no access to schooling and no opportunity to engage with any teacher at all. Teachers' professional development has become a policy priority for all nations across the globe. For most countries in the Global South there is an acknowledgement that the quality of teacher education and extent of the provision of training will need to be increased. In many countries explicit policies to improve the level of qualification, to establish meaningful forms of career long professional development and to enhance the status and education level of teachers are being put in place. The institutional structures and capacities are completely inadequate for providing quality teacher education as well as overcoming the challenges for the scale required of this century.

The provision of a high quality professional development programme for teachers in the Global South represents one of the critical educational challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For instance, in Bangladesh, 1 in 5 teachers have no teaching qualification (UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS], 2006). The quality of education and training of teachers is central to the success of the EFA campaign worldwide and 'schools and teachers remain central to the achievement of a quality education process' (Yates, 2007, 2). Millions of unqualified teachers are already working in schools in the Global South. They need professional training and access to qualifications to improve their skills and knowledge. There is a pressing need for continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers who are already qualified. If that is to be school based, then it follows that some form of supported self-study seems the only feasible and appropriate way forward (Moon, 2003).

The emerging technology is going to be a solution for teachers' professional development in meeting the crisis of inadequate teacher supply in the Global South. By using school-based training, the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) project is working for teachers and student teachers in 12 African countries. Led by the Open University (OU) UK, the TESSA project brings together 20 universities and organisations across those countries involved, giving teachers access to high-quality resources which they can use to develop their own practices without leaving the school. As a result, TESSA's open educational resources (OER) provide ODL opportunities for disadvantaged teachers in remote areas, this way of training and developing their own skills and gaining resources is invaluable. The OU is also working in the South Asian countries, specially in Bangladesh to develop teaching and learning materials as well as teachers' professional development programmes. Teachers as specialists in learning recognise that the new technology which they will be exploiting in their own teaching have the potential to be an important means of their own professional development (Shohel and Banks, 2010). Therefore, the OU is creating opportunities of open and distance learning for teachers' by introducing mobile technologies for enhancing teaching and learning in resource constrained contexts.

School-based supported ODL provides a more effective way for the in-service teachers to put into practice compared to face-to-face traditional training away from their schools. Since supported ODL for teachers' professional development programme provides opportunities for teachers to apply and experiment with the pedagogical techniques that they are learning, rather than waiting until after the training period to do so. Similarly, case studies of teachers' professional development in the Global South show that open and distance learning can be used for all four components of teacher education such as for general education, to strengthen teachers' knowledge of the subject, in teaching pedagogy and child development, and as a guide towards good classroom practice (Perraton, 2007).

### **3. Definition of open and distance learning**

Open and distance learning (ODL) is defined as an educational process in which a significant proportion of learning takes place remotely and flexibly beyond the formal learning environment. Therefore it is organised educational activities, based on the use of learning materials, in which constraints on learning are minimised in terms of access, time and place as well as pace and method of study or any of these. However, open and distance learning is used as an umbrella term to include both concepts of distance education and open learning. Supported open and distance learning improves the potential for teachers to develop better links between new teaching practices, their own subject expertise and the application of the new methods in their own classrooms (Perraton et al., 2002) as well as becoming competent in using emerging technologies for teaching and learning purposes (Shohel & Power, 2010).

According to the European Commission (1995):

'Open and distance learning (ODL) is concerned with the use of new resources (technical and/or non-technical) for rendering the learning process more flexible in terms of space, time, content, selection, access qualifications and teaching resources and/or for improving distance access to education systems. In this way, educational opportunities are extended to people who, because of their geographical, economic or socio-professional situation or because of a handicap, do not readily have access to the mainstream system of education. Open and distance learning can help overcome barriers to transnational mobility and develop a kind of virtual mobility.'

Open and distance learning involves a conceptual shift from the teacher to the learner and emphasises the importance of student-centred learning that means a 'shift in research and practitioner interest from teaching and instructional design towards learning and the particularity of individual student response' (Thorpe & Grugeon, 1987). Therefore, open and distance learning focuses more on what the learner wants to learn, how the learner approaches learning and the socio-physical conditions for learning than what the learner should learn. To engage individuals in their learning processes, open and distance learning tries to motivate and empower for professional growth of individual teachers. However, supported open and distance learning is also preferable for other reasons such as scalability, sustainability and cost effectiveness compared with the traditional 'face to face' centre-based training approaches (Oliveira & Orivel, 2003).

### **4. Teacher development through open and distance learning**

Teachers across the globe have pursued the opportunities offered by open and distance learning. For example, in 1990s about 130,000 South African teachers which was one third of the total workforce were studying through the use of different open and distance learning courses (SAIDE, 1995). Also 200,000 Chinese teachers were supported by the Television Teachers College in upgrading their qualifications (McCormick, 1992). From 1970s to 1980s in the UK, tens of thousands of teachers upgraded their qualification to graduate level through the Open University (Moon, 1997).

In many countries where higher qualifications of teachers lead them to career opportunities and salary increases, teachers have been attracted to the access, flexibilities and low cost of open and distance learning opportunities. However, according to Perraton (2010:6):

'open and distance learning has been widely used for initial teacher training, for students who enter the profession with a background in primary, secondary or tertiary education, but has often been organised on a one-off basis rather than as part of the established structure of teacher education'.

For example, an early ODL programme in Kenya was given the highest priority to raise teachers' own educational background to a certain level. A much more recent programme in Chile was designed to support the increasing use of information technologies in schools. It was entirely concerned with reorienting teachers for the changed curriculum. The current trend is to strengthen teachers' practical classroom skills; however, it is administratively difficult and likely to be costly to achieve (Perraton, 2010).

Open and distance learning has gone through a rapid evolution and embraced a changing trend of mobile technologies. These have been used for two purposes: to distribute teaching material to learners, and to allow interaction between learners and facilitators or among learners. Open and distance learning has also been used to support changes in the curriculum for each subject. It has played an important role in making teachers familiar with information and communication technologies. It has also been used to support teachers' professional development through structured programmes designed for specific groups of teachers, as well as provide opportunities for teachers to upgrade their skills. However, open and distance learning solutions have the advantages of interactive and non-interactive technological application, and it is recognised that in-school learning rather than out of school is the key to improvement for teaching and learning in the classroom.

In this era of technology, all forms of teacher education programmes are exploring the possibilities of using technology in context. By utilising new interactive forms of technology, open and distance learning has a great role to play in the process of teachers' professional development. New methodologies and technological tools are increasingly being integrated with new theoretical perceptions about the importance of combining the theoretical and practical elements in teachers' professional development at all levels.

Open and distance learning for teachers' professional development needs an integrated support system and according to Leach (1996) where:

1. Support should provide model learning environments;
2. Support should build on existing frameworks as far as possible and be consonant with the culture in which it is developed;
3. Support should be developmental and exploratory providing experience of a wide variety of teaching and learning opportunities;
4. Support should recognise and build on the variety of professional experiences of its participants;
5. Support should acknowledge both the private and professional aspects of learners' experiences and their interconnectedness in the development of learning; and
6. Support should have a firm base in schools and classrooms; it should be seen as an ongoing process across initial, induction and ongoing phases of teacher education.

The school is increasingly seen as a place for learning within new models of teachers' professional development programmes. Therefore, the development of new models of teachers' professional development programmes incorporate school contexts within the model. Supported open and distance learning is a successful and well-established teaching

and learning strategy (Robinson & Latchem, 2003) which has not been widely adopted yet in Bangladesh. The model which is the focus of this chapter is called the English in Action (EIA) Model and is currently being implemented in Bangladesh. The application of this supported open and distance learning model is distinctly different from the typical teacher training strategies which have been applied previously in Bangladesh.

## 5. The Bangladeshi context

Since the passing of the Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1990, considerable changes have been made to the formal education system in Bangladesh. As a result of legislation and government efforts, the enrolment rate increased from 60% to almost 91% in 2008 (UNICEF, 2009). But universal primary education, the second MDG of the UN has still to be achieved. The increase in numbers of newly enrolled students has made necessary the construction of more primary schools and the employment of many additional teachers. According to the government agency, between 1990 and 2008 the number of primary schools rose from 47,000 to over 82,000; primary teacher numbers increased from 189,500 to 366,000 (BANBEIS, 2010).

Despite the fact that secondary education is neither compulsory nor free, there was also significant growth in the secondary education sector over the period 1990 to 2008. Again the number of schools rose from almost 10,500 to 18,750 with student enrolments more than doubling from 3 million to 6.8 million in 2008. Similarly secondary teacher numbers increased significantly from 123,000 to more than 219,500 (BANBEIS, 2009). With such a concentration of newly appointed teachers in both primary and secondary education sectors, the provision of adequate and appropriate training became a key issue for teachers' professional development in Bangladesh.

Poor qualifications and lack of teacher motivation are major challenges for Bangladesh to provide a well-equipped teaching workforce. However, there have been a series of government's and non-state providers' initiatives aimed at significantly improving the quality of teaching and learning through both curriculum and pedagogic reforms in all sectors. The traditional and dominant way of teaching and learning in most schools in Bangladesh tends to focus on memorising facts.

In the primary education sector, the Second Primary Education Development Programme (widely known as PEDP II) resulted in the availability of the training being revised and extended for newly appointed teachers to improve quality. Approximately 24% teachers of the government primary schools and registered non-government primary schools are untrained (UNICEF, 2009).

In the secondary education sector, there has been a recent shift in emphasis from increasing quantity to increasing quality. There have been a number of developmental projects; and reforms have been made to improve educational quality with the help of international development partners of the country. Since 1999, the initiatives such as the Secondary Education Sector Improvement Plan (SESIP), the Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDP) and the Teaching Quality Improvement Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) have been implemented. Through these initiatives, changes have been made to both pre-service and in-service teacher training for the secondary education sector (UNESCO, 2007).

## 6. English in Action (EIA) in Bangladesh

The English in Action programme in Bangladesh is aimed at significantly improving the teaching of English in all sectors and is offering alternative forms of support including integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into different aspects of the school-based support systems.

The English in Action (EIA) programme is a major nine-year (2008-2017) development programme initiated at the request of the Government of Bangladesh and funded by the Department for International Development (DfID) for the Government of United Kingdom. It aims to equip twenty five million Bangladeshis with the skills to communicate in English to levels that enable them to participate fully in national economic and social activities and global opportunities (EIA, 2008). The project uses supported open and distance learning (sODL), media and mobile technologies to supplement and enhance the learning and teaching of communicative English among school students, teachers and adults in Bangladesh (Shohel & Banks, 2010; Shohel & Power, 2010).

There are four major strands to the EIA programme in Bangladesh: *a). Primary Education*: engaging students and teachers through innovative classroom resources. *b). Secondary Education*: empowering teachers to change their classroom practice. These interventions are school-based, delivered through supported distance learning and enhanced by mobile technologies. *c). Adult Learning*: enabling lifelong learning via interactive and digital media and *d). Research, monitoring and evaluation (RME)*: evaluating on going projects and researching impacts of interventions. As a partner in the EIA programme, the Open University UK is involved in teachers' professional development programmes in Bangladesh.

There are three operational phases in the EIA project:

- *Developmental research (2008-2011)*: to identify the most effective, scalable and sustainable model of supported open and distance learning for English-language teachers in Bangladesh, and the most appropriate forms of mobile technology to support this. Working with 400 teachers, 80% of whom will be teaching in rural schools.
- *Upscaling (2011-2014)*: taking the most effective and cost-effective model of teachers' professional development forward at scale. Working with at least 12,500 teachers, from six national administrative divisions in Bangladesh. 80% teachers will be teaching in rural areas.
- *Embedding (2014-2017)*: making the teachers professional development programmes available across bangladesh, through locally supported open and distance learning. The final phase of the project will require public-private partnership to provide a 'teachers' toolkit' of mobile technology, classroom resources and teachers professional development materials.

Before piloting the EIA intervention in main stream Bangladeshi school system, the pre-pilot study of the project was carried out at the Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) schools as a test-bed in the capital city Dhaka. The pre-pilot phase was carried out for one year (July 2009 to June 2010).

## 7. Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) Bangladesh

The Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) is a leading non-government organization (NGO) in Bangladesh which provides general education and vocational training for working children. Currently over 30 thousand poor working children who have generally missed out on their primary education are studying in UCEP schools. Students are accepted into the programme no younger than age 10 for girls and 11 for boys. UCEP schools operate 3 shifts per day, each of 3 hours duration. As the children continue to work and earn while they attend school, this allows a child to choose a shift of his/her convenience, in consultation with their parents, to minimise the economic loss to the family for the children attending school. Each 3 hour shift is focused on general education but where possible examples are drawn from a technical context. For example, the English alphabet is taught through naming of craft tools – D for dividers, H for hammer. Stories in Bangla are linked to the discovery of inventions and the use of agricultural and other devices. After grade 8 UCEP continues Technical Education training on 16 professional trades (see UCEP, 2008 for more detail about these trades).

Students basically follow the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) curriculum, both at primary and lower secondary level (grades 1 to 8). However, the curriculum has been abridged in a careful manner so that it remains comparable with that of national mainstream curriculum. The curriculum consists of Bangla (mother tongue), English, mathematics, vocational, social environment and hygiene. The students learn in a highly vocational and practical way using English where necessary as technical vocabulary (EIA, 2009). At the end of their training they are guaranteed a job. In contrast to the formal government system, these poor working children attend school regularly and complete their education. The attendance rate is over 94% and the drop-out rate is very low (UCEP 2008).

### 7.1 UCEP teacher training

After recruitment UCEP arranges training for the teachers. Most of the training is led by resource personnel from outside as well as some of the trainers from the organisation (who are from the field, who are normally divisional coordinators and School Administrators). Table-1 shows the in-service training provided by UCEP and their duration.

|    | <i>Training</i>   | <i>Duration</i> |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Teachers' Basic Training  | 7-10 days       |
| 2. | Effective Social Work Training                                    | 3-5 days        |
| 3. | Teaching and Learning Methodology Training                        | 3-5 days        |
| 4. | Subject-based Training (Mathematics, English, Bangla and Science) | 3-5 days        |
| 5. | Teaching Aid Training   | 1-2 days        |
| 6. | Children's Right and Child Psychology Training                    | 3-5 days        |
| 7. | Gender and Development  | 1-2 days        |
| 8. | Others:   |                 |
|    | Interactive Teaching Training                                     | 1 day           |
|    | Child Participation Training                                      | 1 day           |

Table 1. In-service trainings for the UCEP teachers

The training programmes are arranged on the basis of availability of the teacher at a convenient time for the head office. Teachers attend the *basic training* after joining the organisation but not necessarily immediately after recruitment. After each training teachers go back to their respective schools to carry on with their job. There is no given time schedule for the next training, however teachers then attend the *effective social work training*, which is mainly concerned with relationships with children and interaction with their families to strengthen social activities. This training includes issues, such as what would be the strategy to work with the guardians, how the teacher will behave with the students, how to liaise with the community, and how to run the follow-up programme for the students. At some point teachers need to attend *teaching and learning methodology training*, which is mainly focused on pedagogy. *Subject based training on Mathematics, English and Bangla* follows, where a SA or an experienced teacher could be the trainer. Sometimes they arrange subject based training in science too depending on need. Sometimes UCEP arranges training on *teaching aids*- supplementary teaching and learning materials focusing on teaching material development and techniques for their use. Sometimes teachers are called for other training such as *children's right training; gender and development training*.

Sometimes teachers attend training outside their organisational setting. For instance, they were previously sent to the English language training programmes run by the British Council, as well as training abroad in India. In the beginning these kinds of trainings were for the School Administrators (SAs), but now teachers are also sent abroad for training, such as in India. Apart from these, the organisation also gives scope to the teachers to pursue their further education such as BEd, MEd or BBA, MBA programmes run by different universities in the evening shift or distance learning mode. According to the respondents of the pre-pilot study, many teachers were enrolled for further education programmes. The organisation does not provide any financial support for teaching qualifications but does not object to teachers achieving one. There is no obligation for the teacher to achieve teaching qualifications as UCEP provides trainings internally. In mainstream government schools there is an obligation for the teacher to achieve their teaching qualification in a certain time. There is no refresher training for UCEP teachers in terms of continuous professional development (CPD).

## 8. School-based model for teachers' professional development

Professional development is the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce an excellent education for students (Hassel 1999). The teachers are always the centerpiece of educational change, being the active and powerful change agents who have the power to make a difference, both individually and collectively (Castellano & Datnow 2000; Hurst 1999). As reform efforts need to place at the core of the processes of teaching and learning, they change significantly what happens in the schools. Yet teacher beliefs and attitudes about an innovation are the important consequences, concerns and context variables associated in determining new and different teacher behavior (Burke, Harste & Short 1996; Kennedy & Kennedy 1996; Laine & Otto 2000; Ros & van den Berg, 1999). Ultimately, the individual teacher determines the extent to which each innovation occurs.

Professional development sparks curiosity, motivation and new ways of thinking (Kent 2004). It is most effective when there is an ongoing process, which includes proper, well-designed training and an individual follow-up. It can deliver a purpose, cooperation, commitment and community (Langer 2000). It is about change and renewal. The focus must move from a



location being primarily outside the school through training by experts to being in school where learning is embedded in the classroom, and from ad hoc development of skills to the production of content-specific skills and knowledge (Hutchens 1998). Successful professional development must be sustainable and overtime directly related to everyday teaching.

The EiA school-based support model for teachers' professional development (TPD) is a spectrum of carefully prepared information and communication technology (ICT) interventions for Bangladeshi teachers to empower them to change their classroom practice in schools. The pre-pilot phase was designed to encourage and support communicative language teaching (CLT). Media players were provided to the English language teachers, preloaded with video and audio language learning resources, along with battery-powered speakers for use in the classroom. The programme structure involved 12 modules, each centred on a particular activity designed to be taught in a secondary classroom. Each module demonstrated the activity, explored the principles underlying the activity, and encouraged teachers to use, adapt and extend this and similar activities. During the pre-pilot phase, (July 2009 - June 2010), the Secondary Teaching and Learning Programme (STLP) intervention was implemented in UCEP schools. This STLP was based on a range of 'blended' support systems (see Figure-1) for teachers such as an orientation workshop, a teacher guide, a multi-media player (iPod), cluster meetings of teachers on the programme, a pair of EiA teachers from each school, school visits from EiA staff giving feedback, and technical assistance. It was an experiential learning process for the implementing workforce as well as the teachers. However, pre-piloting in the UCEP schools were treated as a 'test-bed' for the main stream piloting phase (Shohel & Power, 2010).

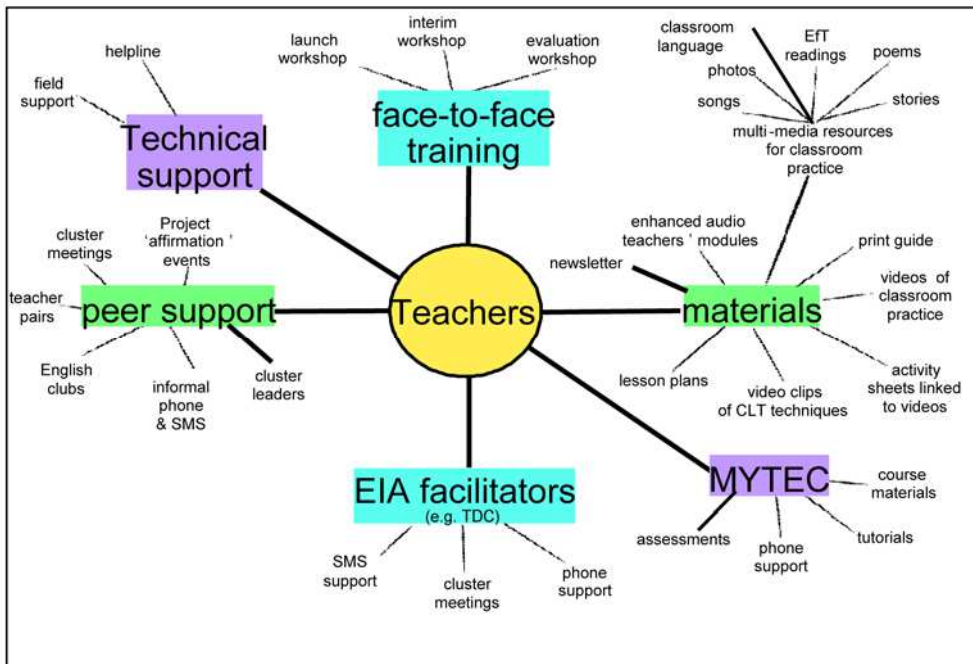


Fig. 1. School-Based Supported ODL Model for TPD (Shohel & Banks, 2010)

Looking at some aspects of the 'blended' TPD approach shown in Fig 1:

The *orientation workshop* was a part of the support systems in providing an induction by the EIA workforce to participating teachers. It was designed for introducing EIA itself and features of communicative language teaching (CLT). This workshop was not considered as a training session because it was just a get together for teachers with EIA people, to know each other. Basically it was the stepping stone for teachers to understand what was required for the success of the project.

The teachers were given a *Teacher Guide* which includes twelve modules of different CLT teaching and learning methods. This guide book also explained how to use the different audio and video materials stored on the multi-media player. This guide book always remained with the teachers so that whenever, they got time, they could skim through it. There was a section in this guide for classroom language; English phrases which they could easily use during their lessons.

*Pair support* was another key feature of the support model. Two teachers from each intervention school joined the EIA STLP and they were supporting each other and working together towards their joint professional development. Some new points evolved when they discuss in a pair regarding how they could organise their class, how they could engage students in the class or how they could make the lessons more attractive. It was a very effective way to quickly solve practical problems. For example, they could watch a micro-teaching lesson from the audio-visual resources on the iPod and discuss together which method could have been better for the specific lesson in their school contexts. Sometimes both of them discussed what kind of teaching aid they could have developed and they could also discuss how to deliver a lesson or use methods for a lesson which is not available in the iPod.

Teachers had regularly attended fortnightly *cluster meetings* for formal training on different modules from the teacher guide for helping them to develop their English language skills as well as to boost their confidence, keep up their motivation and support each other in using communicative English language practices in their classrooms. Teachers had to plan and demonstrate lessons in different groups in the cluster meeting. One group may miss something in the demonstration and the next groups could identify what could have been added to perform better. By way of preparation, teachers listen to modules from the iPod or read the module from the teacher guide before attending the cluster meeting. During feedback sessions in the cluster meeting, they could listen to others and share their own experience. It was important for experience sharing and reflecting on practice. Reflection was enhanced by the opportunity for teachers to engage in an Open University course based on the production of a teacher 'reflective diary'. The course, *Make Your Teaching Experience Count (MYTEC)* provided understanding of teaching and learning as well as additional motivation to engage in the EIA teacher development programme.

A series of *School visits with feedback* was arranged for keeping the teachers' focused on classroom practice and supporting the training implemented in classrooms. This process increased critical thinking of the teachers and it put a level of expectation on them to strive to improve their practice as suggested in the cluster meeting. The main advantage of the school visit was that teachers get face-to-face feedback, encouragement and support from the EIA resource persons. It also provided the EIA project staff with information regarding

progress and the ability of the teachers to cope with the face-to-face training in the cluster meeting and how much they were achieving from the blended training programme. Another positive side of school visit was that it established better communication between the teachers and the trainers as a result teachers got solutions to their problems immediately. They could share their problems with the trainers instantly as they strive to implement CLT practice in their English language classroom. During this pre-pilot phase, the EIA model helped teachers to develop their English language skills in a different way through the school-based support systems so that they could use English confidently in the classroom.

In summary, during the orientation workshop teachers were briefed about the EIA intervention, strategies and materials. Teachers were given training on how to use the media player (iPod) and supporting materials. The teacher guide contained twelve modules on different pedagogical techniques including a section on classroom English explaining how those techniques could be used in their classroom contexts. Teachers were implicitly trained in the cluster meetings in how to use those modules in their classroom. At the heart of the EIA support model was the notion that teachers will achieve most of their professional development, not in face-to-face training workshops but back at home and at school; by working with new tools and materials, on their own and with their partner.

## **9. Lessons learned from the UCEP intervention**

A key to successful educational change is the provision of appropriate 'incentives' in their context for teachers to improve their practice in the classroom. But it is also true that many features of the school system are maintained and supported by the institutional culture and socio-political context of the school (Shohel & Howes, 2008). EIA as a major educational development programme in Bangladesh is creating a space for teachers to raise their voice and to be empowered. Therefore, EIA authority needs to be clear about what EIA can offer them as incentives for being an active EIA participating teacher apart from training and technological tools.

In the case of UCEP schools, teachers have many duties including delivering 5 to 6 lessons per day in 3 shifts schooling and following up 10 to 15 students per month if any student is absent from the lessons. Though the teachers enjoy taking part in the EIA intervention, according to the pre-pilot study respondents, it was very demanding for their time as well as very rewarding for them. Eventually they became heavily involved in the training activities and practicing their learning in schools (Shohel & Banks, 2010).

With in the EIA support model, the use of innovative materials and tools enabled and supported the teachers' professional development activities at home and school. Teachers described repeatedly watching and listening to the materials, in quite a purposeful manner. Teachers particularly emphasised the value of this for developing their own pedagogic knowledge, as well as contributing directly to their own perceived English language proficiency, perhaps most notably in relation to pronunciation. Teachers attached a high value to the emphasis on classroom practice within the programme; this was seen to be a key aspect of support that the materials focus not just on ideas, but on how teachers could put ideas into practice (Shohel & Power, 2010).

## 10. Policy recommendations for Bangladesh

If the school achievement levels are to rise up to a certain standard then appropriate teacher education and training must be available for all teachers. It seems clear that there should be some sort of school-based professional development programme through technology enhanced open and distance learning such as multi-media player. However, children's 'cognitive achievement [...] increases as school expenditure, teacher education and school facilities are enhanced' (UNESCO 2005b, 228). Therefore, Bangladesh needs to invest more on teacher education including school-based technology enhanced teacher training, to provide quality education for its citizens.

The status of teachers in the community as well as the professional world and their involvement in policy development and implementation are as important as their academic qualification and training. Countries which perform well in offering quality education to their citizens have placed a high value on teacher education and CPD as well as social networking (UNESCO, 2005b). Teachers also enjoy high status in those countries.

In the context of Bangladeshi educational culture where education is seen as 'simple memorisation for an examination by both teachers and parents' (Banks 2009, 7) it is very difficult to bring changes in practice without making changes in policy and curriculum. As an emergent economy, 'the relevance of education to everyday life is paramount' (Banks 2009, 7) in Bangladesh. So Bangladesh needs to focus on these issues to achieve the EFA and MDGs targets as well as strengthening its economy by developing its human resources. The lessons learned in Bangladesh can be adapted to language education in both global southern and northern countries alike.

## 11. Implications for the Global South

General concern and trends around teacher education and training relate to 'the resolution of the balance between theory and practice; the attempts to match the demand for and supply of teachers; the degree of central control of teacher education; the status, recruitment and output of teachers' (Morris and Williamson, 2000, 281). Successful teacher education and training could happen in the context of school, though there is no evidence of this happening in the Global South. Considering the urgency of teacher education and training, teachers' professional development should be school-based and it is essential to provide a stable policy basis for continuous development.

'Training models for teachers should be reconsidered in many countries to strengthen the school-based pre- and in-service training rather than rely on lengthy traditional, institutional pre-service training' (UNESCO, 2005b, 3). This kind of suggestion has been resistant by traditional teacher training institutes and sometimes supported by teachers themselves and their unions. However, 'It is only now that people are starting to listen to those who saw the shortage of qualified teachers as a major impediment to national development and that national and international authorities are beginning to realize that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All objectives depends on the training of professionals capable of the long-term effort to promote education effectively, in particular through the training of teachers and managerial staff in the education system' (UNESCO, 2005b, 2).

For doing so, school-based forms of open and distance learning using new communication technologies are the only viable way forward (Banks et al, 2009). 'Increasingly new modes of open and distance learning, including new information and communication technology application are seen as vital to new approaches to training provision on a large scale' (UNESCO, 2008, 2). School-based modes of supported open and distance learning, exploring ICTs are the only feasible way to make such provision widely available (Shohel & Power, 2010).

## 12. Conclusion

The crisis of trained and qualified teachers in the Global South requires urgent responses from the national governments as well as the international development partners of the developing countries. The rapid expansion of education systems is creating difficulties in establishing coherent teacher supply policies. Investment in high quality teacher training programme design and implementation is necessary to realise the potential of new models of teachers' professional development programmes through open and distance learning such as the EIA Secondary Teaching and Learning Programme (STLP). Therefore, in response to the Government of Bangladesh, the Government of the United Kingdom came forward to help the country to train and develop the English language teachers as well as to provide opportunities and resources to access English language learning.

The pre-pilot EIA intervention in UCEP schools is a very fruitful initiative 'to secure a professionally trained, well-supported and highly motivated teacher workforce' in Bangladesh. The EIA intervention gives cause for optimism that the secondary education sub-sector in Bangladesh could be developed from current low quality teaching by putting resources in place through 'short term interventions completed by longer term institutionalisation and sustainable societal interaction' (Yates, 2007, 12) that will ensure the continuity of quality education which EIA is aiming for.

The future development of open and distance learning for teachers' professional development requires greater clarification of terms and purposes of learning. In a study of eleven distance teacher education projects, Perraton (1993, 385) suggests that 'two broad conclusions to emerge from the studies... where it has been possible to measure effectiveness, teacher training at a distance can be effective and that its costs tend to be lower than conventional education... where we have detailed figures it is reasonable to conclude that distance education programmes can be designed for teachers at a cost of between one third and two thirds of conventional programmes'.

The move towards more school-based, particularly technology-oriented and integrated open and distance learning courses calls for a greater level of support from experienced teachers locally as their mentors. A range of new courses are now appearing that integrate the school experience into the course frame work, for instance, Bangladeshi secondary school teachers were offered a course entitled 'Making Your Teaching Experience Count (MYTEC)' by the Open University, UK. The first cohort of this teachers group has been awarded their course completion certificate in 2011.

Advantages and disadvantages of open and distance learning models certainly provide more important basis for further comparative studies on those models in their own terms as well as in comparison with more conventional models. It has been suggested that school-

based support systems through open and distance learning for enhancing teachers' professional knowledge which have implications in developing countries such as Bangladesh for language learning (Shohel and Shrestha, 2010). However, it remains still unclear to many practitioners whether the increasing power, affordability and availability of mobile technologies can be harness to enhance effective open and distance learning activities based on the classrooms of the resource constrained Global South contexts.

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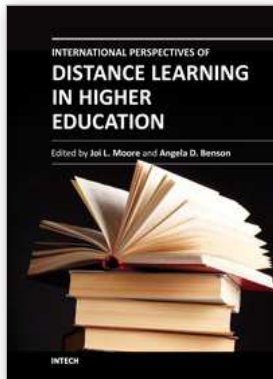
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## **International Perspectives of Distance Learning in Higher Education**

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