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Final Reflections: Lessons Learnt

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Final reflections: lessons learnt

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Introduction

Our intention in this final chapter is both to draw out some of the over-arching lessons from the EIA experience, and to use this experience to reflect on what may be the future for educational interventions in developing countries such as Bangladesh.

Thus, first we will look back at the experience, by drawing on some general themes that have emerged through the chapters of the book, but also distilling some of our experience gained from playing a leading part in the Programme for significant periods and in one case (Marc van der Stouwe) throughout its life. We will, in particular, reflect on the Programme's focus on four key themes, identified below. In the final part of the chapter we will then consider implications for the future, some of which stem from new opportunities and some from new insights, while others arise from the changing priorities of governments and funding organisations working in the field of education in developing countries. We start, therefore, with hindsight.

Looking back

The four themes addressed in this reflection on the EIA experience, each of which features in several of the preceding chapters, will be: English language teaching (ELT), empowerment; flexibility, adaptability and the allocation of sufficient time; and partnerships.

ELT or not ELT – that is the question

Although the focus on a single subject may well have been a significant factor in the Programme's success, the strategy has risked some disadvantages, certainly in the context of upscaling and institutionalisation. It is more difficult, for example, to effect change at whole-school level when only a relatively small proportion of the school's teachers are directly involved, or to persuade head teachers that a whole-school approach is needed. As Chapter 7 argued, this limits the depth of

change that can be achieved. Students also have to adopt new habits and ways of responding and working in English lessons that are at variance to expectations in lessons in other subjects (which take up the other four-fifths of curriculum time). The relatively small number of English teachers in any school limits the scope for mutual support. Most Bangladeshi primary schools, for example, are unlikely to have more than two English teachers and there may be personal or practical reasons for some pairings to be unproductive, even in schools with five or six English teachers. At the level of local facilitation, not all education officers will feel confident to support and make judgments about English teaching, and the pool from which teacher facilitators can be drawn in each upazila is relatively small. While the Programme has no evidence that any of the foregoing were, in the event, significant negative factors, at the institutionalisation level, as Chapter 12 points out, it has been difficult to integrate single-subject training into the government's cross-curricular continuing professional development programme. Moreover, as Fauzia Shamim argues in Chapter 3, any wider benefits of English language learning depend on the development of other essential skills, in particular, literacy and numeracy.

In addition, Chapter 2 raises the question (picked up again in Chapter 3) of whether English is the right subject to develop if the motivation is to promote economic development. Beth Erling and Masuda Khatoon present an array of evidence to support the proposition, but counsel caution in respect both of the partial nature of some sources and their scarcity, and are surely right to consider the case not proven. The research done by EIA on the link between English and economic development is adequate for a development project, though not what is needed for academic research. While further (and better) research is certainly needed, it must also be acknowledged that educational progress can never, on its own, engender economic development; put bluntly, jobs do not appear just because there are people with the skills to do them. In 1965 Foster coined the phrase the 'vocational education fallacy in development', when he questioned the use of schools to

produce an economic effect when their students enter the workforce.[1] However, workforces with

the appropriate skills must surely be better placed to compete for investment and employment

when new opportunities do arise.

All that said, the single-subject focus on English language teaching has proven to offer

distinct practical advantages, especially, but by no means exclusively, in the earliest days of the

Programme. Whereas a programme attempting to improve general pedagogy would necessarily deal

at a certain level of generality, EIA was able to demonstrate pedagogic principles through very

precise examples of practice that all the participating teachers would be able to try out in their own

classroom without the need for a high degree of interpretation or modification. It was also possible

to design teacher professional development (TPD) activities and classroom materials which could

closely scaffold the Programme's pedagogical approach. Moreover, this capacity, to give teachers

clear messages in very concrete terms, facilitated discussion and shared reflection at cluster

meetings and between paired teachers in their own school. Through reflecting on, and discussing,

specific activities grounded in subject-based principles, participant teachers were able to arrive at

shared understandings and a common professional perspective. Given that the Programme's

capacity to engage teachers at the level of classroom realities is a major feature differentiating EIA

from earlier, less successful projects, it is quite plausible to argue that without this ELT focus (or

without the funding to support similarly highly-focused TPD across the curriculum) there would have

been no later successes to integrate into the government system.

Throughout the Programme's life there has been some – mostly anecdotal – evidence of

teachers applying strategies learnt from EIA in the teaching of other subjects, and this is perhaps not

surprising when one considers the similarities between communicative language teaching (CLT) and

the dialogic pedagogies (Alexander 2017) promoted in many comparable projects focusing on other

subjects (Westbrook et al. 2013). Moreover, given the lack of evidence of the kind of cultural

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[1] King and Martin (2000) reaffirmed the complexity of this link more recently.

resistance to such pedagogies reported by Westbrook, it seems that English (perhaps because it is unavoidably 'alien') provides an effective Trojan horse through which effective practices can gain acceptance in classrooms. As Chapter 12 relates, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) was keen to draw on EIA's cross-curricular potential, which it wished to build into Primary Education Development Project III. EIA appears to have had at least some positive consequences for the wider curriculum, and lessons learnt from its implementation offer a firm foundation for further cross-curricular teacher development initiatives.

The empowering nature of EIA

Chapter 8 characterises the Programme's approach to teacher development as 'Empowering teachers and learners' and sets out how EIA teachers have developed their practice through taking control of teaching and learning in their own classrooms. Indeed, Chapter 4 makes the idea of teacher agency a central theme in considering TPD. Chapter 14, argues that the highly centralised and directive nature of the national education system makes it very difficult for teachers to adopt innovative practices, and the experience of the Programme, certainly in its early days, was that the culture in and around schools was similarly conservative. This left teachers with no expectation that they should exercise any agency or choice in the way they taught (and, if anecdotal reports are to be believed, open to humiliating rebuke if they did choose to try something new). Looking in a different direction, Chapter 5 alerts us that, through their adoption of a transmission model, many past teacher development programmes (TDPs), have been similarly limiting. Both perspectives underestimate the value of teachers' commitment to their students and to achieving high quality in their own teaching.

Underpinning the CLT pedagogy espoused by the Programme is a welcoming of the place of active and purposeful participation to enable effective learning. Similarly, the Programme's TDP has, from the outset, sought to equip teachers not simply with a repertoire of techniques to 'deliver' to their classes, but an experiential understanding of effective pedagogies (Chapter 5). A key element to support this aim was the decision to make each teacher's classroom the primary location of their

learning, so that participation in EIA meant the making of professional decisions and choices both in the planning and execution of lessons. This professional agency was amplified by teachers' own reflections and in discussions with both colleagues in school and in cluster meetings in which these reflections were shared. One noticeable outcome was the growth in confidence felt by teachers who could see their contribution as something needed by their school and encouraged by the Programme. This confidence enabled them to take risks with both imperfect English and new techniques and underpinned improvements in their pedagogy and their students' learning.

The case study of Shamima (Box 8.2, Chapter 8) shows how far her practice has advanced from the methods based on repetition and translation found in the baseline study (EIA 2009c), and the role of her self-evaluation in that progression.

Time and adaptiveness

From the outset, the Department for International Development (DFID) demonstrated a long-term perspective in planning for a nine-year programme (Chapter 12). DFID chose to allow the development of a purpose-designed model and to give it time to prove itself, rather than opting for a ready-made solution with the intention of immediately embedding it within government policy. We believe that two core factors explain EIA's success in achieving its objectives: it was given *time for implementation*, 10 years in total, and it was given *space to adjust* the interventions as necessary. In respect of *time*, the 10-years duration of the Programme meant that EIA had the opportunity to go through all stages of the innovation process, as outlined in Figure R.1. Many educational initiatives focus on pilot testing innovative ideas and practices, collecting evidence on these interventions and producing convincing case studies. Rarely, however, do we find international development programmes that take an innovation through the next stages, i.e. replicating a pilot at scale and ensuring sustainability of an intervention through embedding and wider adoption.

[Insert Figure R.1 here]

EIA was exceptional in being designed as a programme that would move through all six stages of the innovation process. Thus, it moved from problem definition and the development of a

concept that is translated into a practical solution in Phase 1, to pilot testing with a strong focus on evidence collection in Phase 2, to scaling up a proven model in Phase 3. EIA went through these stages during its implementation period, while in the final stage (Phase 4) in particular, there was a shift to influencing the wider system and to advocating EIA approaches, not just in the area of ELT, but in more general pedagogic and TPD contexts. This was combined with building the capacity of institutions and individuals within the government system to help them to sustain EIA-initiated methods and practices at decreasing levels of Programme support. This focus on the entire process in one single project, not often seen in development programmes, can be considered a major factor in EIA's success.

The issue of duration cannot be seen in isolation from the issue of programmatic *adaptiveness.* Such adaptations to the Programme were made in response to (i) evidence from programme implementation, (ii) changes in the local context and (iii) adaptation to the government system as EIA was embedded. In relation to *evidence*, EIA's RME activities generated information that fed into continuous programme adjustment (Chapter 11), thus enhancing the effectiveness of delivery and increasing the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes. In other words, evidence was used to inform action. At the same time, and partly because of its long duration, the Programme experienced sometimes unpredictable *changes of the context* to which it needed to respond flexibly and rapidly. This did not mean that the Programme had not been planned carefully. Rather, it accepted that the complex of challenges and opportunities surrounding the Programme would change over time and require shifts in Programme design and implementation. An example is the move from the use of *iPods* (Phase 2) to mobile phones provided by the Programme (Phase 3), to the use of teachers' own mobile phones (Phase 4), enabled by beneficial changes in the technology landscape in Bangladesh. Another example of adaptation is provided by the changes made to the implementation model due to the increase in scale of implementation and EIA's improved understanding on how to work effectively with government and ensure 'political acceptability'. Thus, though there was a desire to retain some of the early features of the TPD model (e.g. 6-8 cluster

meetings), later this had to be reduced and eventually absorbed into the government sub-cluster meetings programme (as Chapter 13 explains from the value for money perspective). This change in the implementation model also resulted in lightening the Programme's central-level technical support function and a compensating increase in the technical support being provided through the digital TPD materials as well as through the decentralised support structures of the government rather than EIA as a Programme. Adaptive programming in EIA meant it 'designed and implemented a programme in a way that allowed change to be incorporated into what we were doing as we were doing it, within the framework of our overall impact and outcome goals within agreed timeframes'.[2]

Partnerships

Chapter 12 has already shown that building strong partnerships between Programme staff on the one hand and government and NGO staff on the other was important to develop the EIA approach and materials, and in institutionalising these at various levels within the education system. Building long-term, respectful relationships, based on the demands and needs of the system rather than the needs of the Programme, was key to being effective.

Behind this relationship building was EIA's own partnership, its implementing consortium of Cambridge Education, The Open University and the BBC Media Action. A particular example of this collaboration's contribution to the Programme's success relates to the beneficial combination of Cambridge Education's managerial strength and understanding of contextual development processes and the Open University's (OU) specialised technical knowledge and leadership. A salient dimension to the success of this partnership was the creative tension between the focus on change (and the need for change) brought by OU academics and the understanding on the part of Cambridge Education's Dhaka-based national staff of what is possible and what simply cannot be changed in this particular context. The international Cambridge Education staff had an important facilitation role to play, often manifested as a bridging function between these two parties. EIA was,

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[2] EQUIP-Tanzania Adaptive Programming Reflections: Mid-Term Review January 2016 http://www.heart-resources.org/assignment/equip-tanzania-adaptive-programming-reflections-mid-term-review-january-2016/ (accessed 30 October 2017).

therefore, able to combine this focus and belief in change with realism and respect for the local

perspective, based on a thorough understanding of local learning.

The commitment to change extended to changing minds within the EIA team. Early in the

Programme, for example, some of the newly-recruited Bangladeshi staff needed convincing that any

change was possible, while later on members of the OU team needed to adjust their views on how

to involve government institutions and officials in delivery, and accept the limitations set by the

GoB's institutional set-up and absorption capacity. The processes of reflection and decision-making

in this regard have been very thorough and constructive.

Looking forward

In this final section we wish to draw on EIA's lessons in order to look forward, sometimes

considering initiatives that were only just emerging during the time of EIA and sometimes

anticipating future developments in keeping with EIA's principles and practices. Our thoughts are

themed as: empowerment into the future, embedding innovations; the role of technology; and out-

of-school children and other marginalised groups.

Empowering into the future

In the first half of this chapter we looked at how EIA had fostered a sense of professional agency

among teachers, and we see this as an essential factor in the embedding of effective practice within

the school system. Further evidence of a growing and collective sense of professional agency can be

found in the work of the EIA-supported Teachers' Voices project[3], which enabled teachers to

undertake small classroom-based action-research studies. Over the course of a year, continuous

support was provided by EIA staff both face-to-face and online.

The concluding two-day conference[4] gave the participants an opportunity to share their

findings with other professionals, and the talk of 'action', 'reflection', 'observation', 'evidence',

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[3] This is the project in which Shamima (Chapter 8) takes part.
[4] http://eiabd.com/tvc.html (accessed 21 October 2017).

'findings', 'unanswered questions' and so on signalled a marked change for teachers who had once thought only in terms of following and repeating the text book.

Tempting as it is to hark back to a golden age of 'teacher-as-researcher', where curriculum development was a central concern and mainly located in the classroom (Stenhouse 1975), it seems optimistic to hope that this kind of 'teacher voice' activity can be maintained within existing education budgets. More significant, perhaps, is the evidence of the many teachers who, like Shamima (Chapter 8 and earlier in this chapter) are now much more self-critical and reflexive in changing their practice. Teachers across the Programme, like Shamima feel empowered to experiment with different communicative approaches, and through reflection continue to adapt and improve. Teachers have been empowered by being shown practically (for example, through the use of MAV – Chapter 6) how such things could be done and through having the opportunity to work with colleagues to find the ways most suitable to their own classes. This allowed them to overcome the forces that led them to believe that innovative practice was impossible in the context of their schools (Kraft et al. 2009). It is this sense of agency and empowerment that will put teachers at the centre of a changed educational landscape.

School learning

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed how the Programme prepared head teachers (HTs) to support teachers in their learning, thus recognising the school as an important arena for change. The evidence examined in Chapter 4, in particular, indicated a variety of functions for the HT from general support to teachers, to changing the culture of the school. Nevertheless, as Chapter 5 points out, while the role of the HTs within the Programme grew, it remained limited in its scope. This was in part for practical reasons, as only two teachers were involved in EIA from any one school (and in addition, with those head teachers who teach, in many primary schools, also fully participating as their teachers did). The discussion of ELT above (*ELT or not ELT – that is the question*), examined the limitations of the single-subject focus. It was a concern of EIA that its schools, as well as the individual teachers based in them, should be learning. This was the challenge articulated by David

Pedder in his critical review of the EIA TPD model (Chapter 7): how to enable a school to learn in such a way that profound and lasting change is possible? Although EIA's head teacher development programme included training on leadership and providing support for EIA teachers, Pedder's 'Leadership and organisational learning capacity-building' goes further, in calling on schools to 'look critically at their organisational cultures and systems and prioritise in the life of the school the cultivation of supportive ecologies for innovation' (Chapter 7: p. [82 in manuscript]). He goes on to argue for attention to be given to the 'influence of school-level beliefs and values on teachers' learning' (Chapter 7: p. [83 in manuscript]), with the radical suggestion that schools should be self-evaluative, with staff examining the practice-value differences that exist within their collective experience and views.

This has important implications for future approaches that seek to address systemic change and particularly where there are several curriculum subjects involved (e.g. the Teacher Development Programme in Nigeria[5]) or where a whole-school approach is attempted (e.g. ZEST in Zambia[6]). The Nigerian project was aimed at primary and junior-secondary school teachers covering four subjects, using the same conception of TPD as EIA (indeed some staff on the project were drawn from EIA), with a number of teachers involved in a school and over a period of time. The plans up to 2015 envisaged a two-year engagement in a school with four teachers being involved in the following way:

Year 1 – Two new teachers for English and two new teachers for Mathematics from Primary 1-3 enrol into the Programme.

Y2 – Same pair of teachers for English language and pair of teachers for Mathematics receive materials on the next three grades (P4-6) in their respective subjects.

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[5] https://www.mottmac.com/article/9615/teacher-development-programme-nigeria (accessed 30 October 2017)
[6] http://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/news/funding-ou-teacher-development-project-zambia (accessed 30 October 2017)

Y2 – Two of the four teachers are selected, on the basis of performance, interest

and experience, to receive P4-6 Science and Technology materials and training.

(Teacher Development Programme 2014: 13)

The HTs are also involved for the two years and undertake training on leadership and on classroom

observation (but not to establish a school-wide approach to this). At the time of writing it is too early

to know how this will work in practice, but even this cross-curricular approach is limited, since not all

of the school's teachers are involved.

If in such projects, a larger number of (or, better still, all) teachers could be involved there is

potential for impact to be felt across the curriculum. Work on such whole-school approaches needs

school-level strategies for implementation, for example, does the school start with a few 'champion'

teachers or departments, or take all the teachers along at the same time?

The Zambian Education School-based Training (ZEST) has been required to undertake the

latter approach, as the involvement of all teachers in a school in developing their practice of

student-centred approaches, on the basis of their own assessment of needs, is mandated by the

Zambian government. Such approaches have been tried in the developed world, for example with

the Learning How to Learn project in the UK (James et al. 2007), which recognised the need to work

at the classroom, school and network levels to improve the practice of assessment for learning in

schools. But no particular model of how a school would take this forward was advocated, though

schools were supported by project staff to develop suitable approaches for their individual

circumstances. UK schools, and especially their HTs, have the autonomy and hence agency to take

individual approaches, something not always found in education systems in the developing world. As

we have already stressed, EIA took teacher empowerment seriously and we have argued that this

contributed to its success. It seems logical to extend this empowerment to whole schools, so that

TPD is not just located in the school, but truly *school-based* as opposed to simply *based in a school*.

Investment in scale up and embedding of innovations

Chapter 12 makes the case that if a project is serious about embedding change, continuing time and resources are needed to do this successfully. Before even being able to address the embedding of successful innovations, there is a need to address the identified problem that an insufficient number of successful pilots makes the transition to working successfully at scale. The positive news is that this situation is changing: international development agencies are increasingly focusing funding and support onto the scale-up phase of interventions that have proven to work in their pilot stage (ESRC/DFID 2013). As mentioned above, we welcome this development as scale-up needs time as well as resources. It is important to stress that the current willingness to invest in scale-up also makes business sense for funders: continuing the investment in initiatives that have proven to work and are in demand by governments and other stakeholders, will have greater chances for impact at scale, while at the same time unit costs are likely to be lower as initial investment costs have been made already.

If such scale-up support is provided, it is important to take into account that firstly, pilot models need adjustment to work at scale: the model tested during the pilot will in most cases not be the same model used during scale up, as Chapter 13 illustrated. This has affordability as well as delivery reasons, including the fact that a range of other institutions and stakeholders may get involved (and take ownership) during scale up. Secondly, testing doesn't end at the pilot stage. There is a continued need to collect evidence about whether the intervention really does work at this larger scale too, while at the same time operating at scale comes with a different set of contextual factors, which also impact on the intervention. This could result in different outcomes. We make the case that investment in scale-up should include funding for continued research and evaluation as well, and that such evaluation should include a focus on the impact of contextual factors on an intervention (something pointed out in Chapter 11 in relation to randomised control trials), and not only on whether an intervention achieves its intended objectives (e.g. an improvement in learning outcomes).

However, it is imperative for the success of innovation in development to go a step further: in line with the discussion in Chapter 12, we stress that creating an intervention that proves itself to work at scale is a major achievement that deserves recognition. However, it is not the end of the story. Change will not be sustained by itself. It will need consistent and long-term support, especially in terms of technical assistance and system strengthening, with specific reference to Stage 6 of the innovation process outlined above (Figure R.1). Our observation is that such long-term work on systems capacity building is often not given the attention and resources it requires. There are general systems strengthening and education reform programmes in many countries, but what is insufficiently supported are the specific system-strengthening interventions that build systemic capacity to embed a *specific innovation* within government systems, i.e. as a logical next stage in the innovation process, rather than as a general system-wide reform approach. One of the reasons for this lacuna may be that innovation and system strengthening are seen as two rather different things, perhaps because the development of new ideas and the testing of innovations are often undertaken by different groups of people or even separate organisations. Another reason may be that capacity building and system strengthening are seen as the 'boring stuff', happening long after the initial excitement is over. Related to this is the above-mentioned donor tendency to fund short term and then move on to the next things, rather than to continue and deepen the investment of successful initiatives. This is a serious issue that donors must confront. A final explanation is that while, at earlier stages, an innovation could be given substantial freedom to 'run on its own', the process of embedding within systems, by definition, involves strong government involvement and buy-in, and dealing with the political and bureaucratic structures to which they are linked. Often external support to such processes may either not be welcomed by governments, or be blocked by politically circumspect donor agencies, or because of the latter's perceptions of a lack of immediate return on their investment.

In the case of EIA, the importance of embedding and institutionalisation was recognised by DFID in their funding of EIA's long timescale. However, there was potential to do more. At later

stages in the Programme, despite EIA's achievements in improving learning outcomes at scale, strong demand from the GoB for support to embed EIA's methods and practices within its systems, and the concerted efforts of DFID's Dhaka office, DFID did not take the opportunity to capitalise on the Programme's proven success; the decision was taken not to provide additional investment to support the technical assistance and capacity-building work necessary for fully embedding and sustaining the work of EIA. We believe that an additional and longer-term investment would have allowed the Programme to find better opportunities to address the issues and challenges of embedding a tangible and specific innovation in the area of English and TDP within a wider systems environment. Such embedding implies a multi-subject approach (not unproblematic as indicated earlier), and needs to include 'surrounding' areas such as assessment, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation and school support and supervision.

The role of technology

EIA had originally intended to use an increasingly sophisticated range of technologies to support more sophisticated professional development and pedagogic practices. The initial Programme design began with relatively simple devices for playing audio and video, but envisaged progressing onto using smartphones to build professional networks and laptops and digital cameras to support the creation of digital media by students undertaking photo-journalism, audio podcasting and participatory video projects, and teachers using video recording as part of their self-evaluation. However, these sophisticated and expensive technologies would have required correspondingly extensive training and support. After the initial workshops, the project accepted the need to 'keep it simple', in order to achieve affordable impact at scale, in keeping with the principles articulated in Chapter 13. Instead, EIA decided to focus upon targeted use of low-cost, widely available technology that by the final phase of the Programme most teachers would already own and use every day. This was effective, but relatively limited in its pedagogic affordances.

The Programmes' use of such available technology to improve classroom practice and learning outcomes rebuts two widely held views: (i) that technology must be expensive and

therefore is not an appropriate investment in poor-country contexts and, (ii) that digital

technologies requires major investment for people to learn how to understand and use them. The

Programme demonstrates what is possible when technologies that people already own and are

familiar with are used, rather than making large-scale investment in technologies that are complex

and unfamiliar.

To reach an affordable solution that would bring technology within reach of teachers with an

extremely modest salary, and of schools that had little budget of their own, EIA went through a

number of iterations of the model and its technology, and benefitted from developments in the

technology environment, not least reducing prices. There were also school developments that

allowed them to use their school block grant for the purchase of hardware. Thus the technologies

were within reach of the majority of schools and teachers, without further support from EIA, and so

were sustainable.

With some of the common reservations about the use of technology addressed, there are

three major points we wish to make in relation to the future of the use of technology in education

interventions in an international development context. Firstly, when designing future TPD

interventions, technology should be seen as one element within a wider package of support, and not

as a stand-alone solution capable of replacing all other forms of support. This book describes and

advocates a technology-enhanced approach not technology as a panacea.

Secondly, using technology does more than simply provide content and support to teachers,

it also has the potential to challenge and re-define 'cultures of learning'. In a context where people

are used to learning (i) face-to-face, (ii) in groups and (iii) for defined time periods in selected

training venues, it is a ground-breaking change to introduce technology-based learning, which is

individualised, and designed in such a way (see Chapter 6) that it is accessible without the constant

presence of a human trainer and can be done 'anytime, anywhere'. As we have just said, we do not

believe that technology can 'deliver training' without other forms of support. However, successive

generations are experiencing quite different digital cultures from those currently assumed, and

imaginative ways to harness them need to be developed. The challenge for TPD and other education development programmes is to build on these developing learning cultures and styles, all the while challenging existing practices and introducing ways of learning. Digital technologies can provide excellent tools to enable such developments.

Thirdly and finally, just as EIA tried within its adaptive programme design to second guess the future with regard to technology, so any future development in education should similarly *look forward*. Technology developments often move extremely fast: the way EIA was able to use technology at the end of the project was simply impossible to foresee at the pilot stage. New developments in relation to the next generations of smartphones, tablet technology, audio transmission and solar power all provide major opportunities in international development contexts, and the challenge for development interventions will be to look forward and be quick and flexible to grasp opportunities as they come along. For example, early research by colleagues working on the IGATE project (in Zimbabwe) suggests that all teachers already have smartphones and that they routinely access the internet on these devices (OU 2017). This provides technological opportunities well beyond our experience in Bangladesh (where, at the time of writing, many teachers still have no internet access) which the programme team will be wise to exploit.

Out-of-school children and other marginalised groups

The original programme design for the secondary sector included the deployment of boat schools to reach marginalised and out-of-school children, especially those in areas where schools were often not available owing to limited community access to land for building, or to schools being washed away by flooding. (At the time of project design, some 2-3,000 schools per year were being washed away in these areas.) It became clear, however, that such an ambitious initiative would be too demanding in terms of the Programme's human and financial resources.

EIA reached representatives of marginalised groups in Bangladesh in two different ways: (i) through the selection of locations in which EIA had its interventions, and (ii) by working with specific groups. On the first, EIA used the UNICEF composite deprivation index to select a high

representation of remote and socio-economically disadvantaged areas[7]. Rather than having a separate intervention for marginalised groups, EIA thus reached a disproportionally high number of teachers and students from such groups through their high degree of inclusion in the EIA programme and (ii) at the request of UNICEF Bangladesh, EIA piloted materials and trained master trainers and teachers in the Ability Based Learning[8] non-formal education programme that reaches 200,000 working and street children, aged 10 to 14 years, in urban areas. Moreover, throughout the lifetime of EIA, the Programme reached many more working children through its partnership with the Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs[9] (UCEP) Bangladesh (see e.g. Shohel and Banks 2010).

However, although EIA schools component did include some marginalised groups during its implementation, out-of-school children and young people were not part of its core agenda. Addressing their needs would have been difficult to do within an approach to improving quality of learning which focused on working with teachers rather than directly with students. Yet, there is a clear and urgent need to address the learning needs of these children: there are high numbers of out-of-school children in Bangladesh (Chapters 1 and 4), as is the case in many other parts of the world, and improving the learning opportunities of these children should be seen as a key priority, in line with both the SDGs and the 'Leave No One Behind' agenda.[10] Reaching out-of-school children and young people would obviously require distinct strategies and different delivery modalities from those used in the EIA's schools component.

The EIA experience may, however, provide some useful pointers in terms of how to open up learning opportunities for such new groups of learners. First of all, the way mobile phones provided an opportunity for individualised, 'anytime, anywhere' learning offers a model that could work for

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[7] As noted in Chapter 11, this may have had unwanted consequences for the assessment of teacher and student progress when results were compared to a baseline established before this bias towards disadvantaged areas.

[8] https://www.unicefusa.org/mission/protect/education/let-us-learn/bangladesh (accessed 30 October 2017)

[9] http://www.ucepbd.org/ (accessed 30 October 2017)

[10] https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/aug/03/ban-ki-moon-hails-sdgs-agreed-by-193-nations-as-leaving-no-one-behind (accessed 21 October 2017).

learning outside schools. These groups are expected to particularly benefit from a more flexible learning approach, as the reason they are out of school is often that they are working and unable to engage in scheduled activities.

Moreover, we see opportunities to use the EIA materials development experience to provide guidance for the development of new content. The technology may be suitable for use by community members who have no formal teaching role, but who could be supported to facilitate learning through educational materials. The materials could also be presented on a mobile device, but one that would need to require only minimal mediation by a community-based facilitator. The technology would have to be ubiquitous in the way that the mobile phone currently is, or cheap enough to supply to learners (or groups of learners). A new generation of technology (and associated learning materials) could provide ways of reaching these children.

Finally, the experience of using mass media as well as community English learning clubs in the adult learning component of EIA, may provide promising ways to support the learning of out-of-school children in more informal settings, with individual learning through technology integrated with new forms of community-based learning.

Lessons learnt

Constructing this chapter on the ideas of looking forward and looking back illustrates how learning lessons is a continuing process. The Programme's original team members brought together a great deal of past learning and experience in fields which included teacher development, international development, English language teaching, bilingual classrooms, general pedagogy, project planning and management, RME, financial management and many more. It was perhaps this diversity of hinterland that resulted in a Programme that was imaginative and innovative in many ways, even though very little was wholly new. As EIA progressed and grew to reach and engage with many thousands of teachers, it continued to learn from other projects as well as from its own experience. It also began to contribute to learning, and so develop understanding of the elements which can make ELT and TPD programmes successful. This learning will inform new initiatives, some of them

already emerging, which will in turn take the learning further. This book is an attempt to summarise

some of the more important lessons learnt within English in Action. We trust that it is not the last

word.