



**The Open
University**

The Open University's winning entry in the International Impact Award category is a programme aimed at improving the English-language skills of teachers and children across Bangladesh.

English in Action (EIA), a UK government-backed project that works closely with Bangladesh's government, has achieved fantastic results.

The OU developed teaching materials specifically for use on low-cost mobile phones to provide educators with techniques and activities to help millions more Bangladeshis benefit from the social and economic opportunities that require communication in English.

The materials have been adopted by more than 50,000 educators and are now available to 7 million teachers and children across Bangladesh. This means that there is now a pool of local teachers available for future English teacher-training programmes.

More than 95 per cent of teachers said that the project had improved their own English and in excess of 90 per cent reported incorporating the materials into their teaching. Children in primary schools increasingly speak in English, and within 12 months of EIA's launch, 59 per cent had passed an international test.

Replica programmes have followed in India, Nigeria and South Sudan, and future development is planned in Myanmar, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The judges said that the programme was a "clear winner for its global impact on English communication abilities in difficult-to-access regions". They commended staff at the OU for their "innovative and pragmatic solution as well as their collaborative approach, working with intergovernmental agencies and in-country partners".

"The OU's development of teaching materials specifically designed for use on low-cost mobile phones has had a transformative impact on the regions in which they have been deployed," the panel said.