

TECHNOLOGY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ACCESS, INTEREST AND OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SOUTH ASIA

Research report 2015

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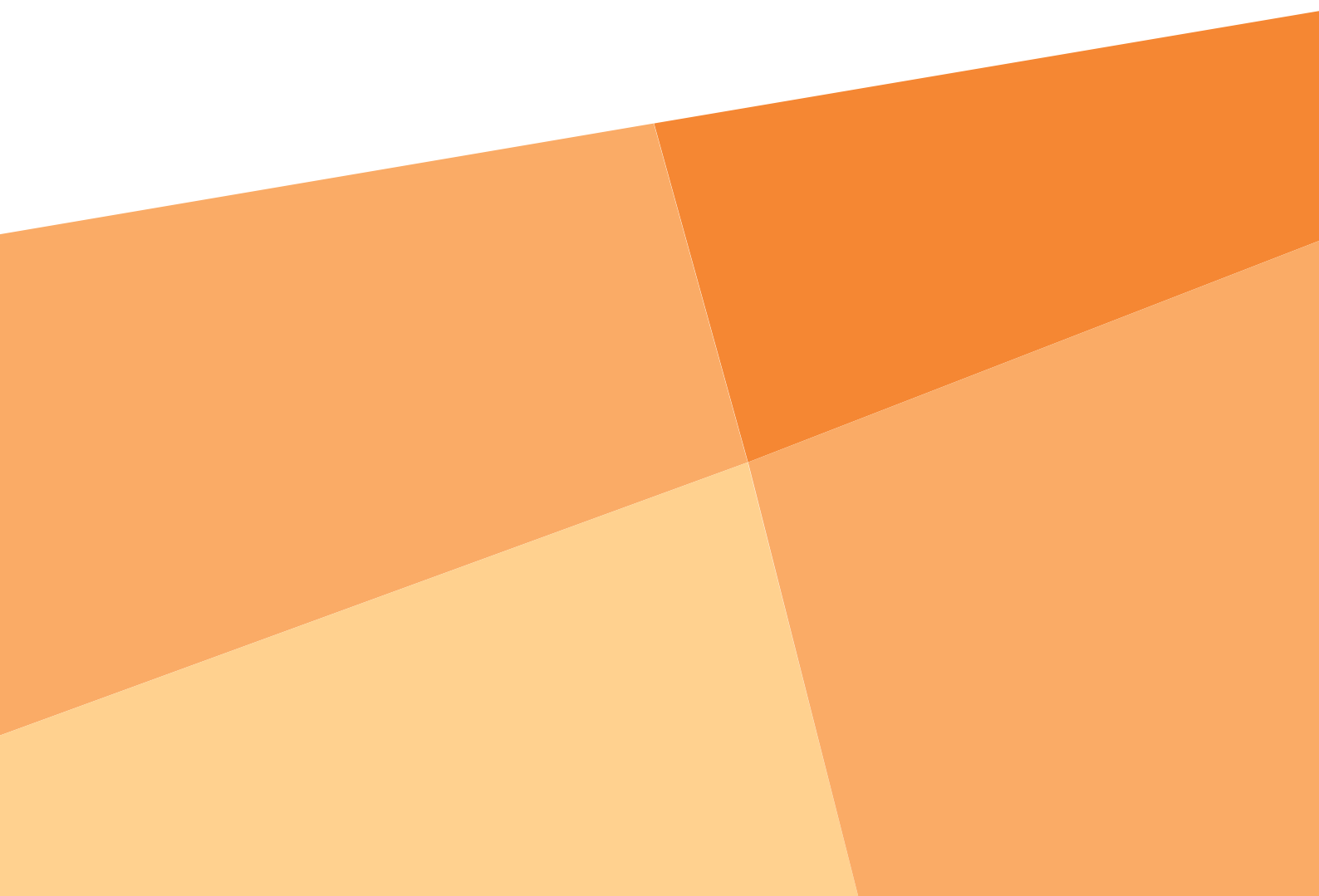


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Cover photo: teachers in Mumbai participate in an orientation workshop for a new digital resource

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FOREWORD

From the globally competitive IT powerhouses of India to contextualised innovations such as mobile finance projects in Bangladesh, South Asia has shown that it is serious about harnessing technology for development and progress. The governments of all six of the countries covered in this report – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – have made serious commitments to reducing the digital divide and bringing the benefits of information and communications technology to all.

The new Global Goals for Sustainable Development, launched this month, outline 17 areas of focus to help us move towards a fairer, safer and more balanced world. Goal 4 calls for quality education for all to be achieved by 2030. The targets highlight the need for more qualified teachers and improved teacher education and development programmes to ensure that more students receive higher quality education. Technology can play a significant role in achieving this target by reaching larger numbers of teachers more easily and providing platforms for high quality resources, available to all. This is not to say that technology is always appropriate or necessary, but there is no doubt that prudent integration can have many advantages.

The British Council is committed to contributing our knowledge and experience to debates around the benefits and challenges associated with integrating technology into education systems. We do this through focused policy dialogues where we bring representatives from UK and local institutions together to share their learning and by working in partnership with others to deliver innovative projects exploiting digital channels to achieve our shared objectives. We also commission and publish research such as the study covered in this report to help inform decision making around project design and content development on the ground.

Our teaching centres around the world showcase quality resources for English language learning and teaching using a variety of forms of technology. In South Asia, our work has included a number of creative approaches to help us realise our vision of raising English language standards for all. For example, in Bangladesh we have worked together with the NGO BRAC to develop the English and ICT skills of young adolescent girls using tablet-based audio-visual content – a project which is currently being extended to both India and Nepal. In India we have mapped some of the content available on our LearningEnglish websites to the national curriculum, producing an easily navigated DVD which can be used offline. A project in the state of Maharashtra is

working closely with teachers to help them integrate the resource into their classes in a contextually appropriate way. These teachers are further supported through social media platforms including Whatsapp and Facebook.

Increasingly, we are also exploring ways of working with technology at scale within our teacher education projects. In Sri Lanka, an ICT research project is underway to demonstrate the impact of the inclusion of technology into the work of ten Regional English Support Centres. These centres assist with the development of in-service English teachers across the country. In Pakistan, our Punjab Education and English Language Initiative is using Skype to deliver online training sessions to groups of government teacher educators at six training centres around Punjab province. This enables remote training of teachers who might otherwise be difficult to reach because of logistical and security constraints. Using technology in Afghanistan has similar benefits and our team is currently exploring the development of an online professional network for teachers.

Further afield, the British Council is working with the Uruguayan government to support English language teaching in primary classrooms through video conferencing as part of the Plan Ceibal programme. In Malaysia we are working with the Ministry of Education to raise teachers' English proficiency levels and improve skills in classroom methodology using a blended learning model. Through all of our projects we aim to experiment and innovate, using technology in creative and appropriate ways to contribute to achieving quality in the classroom.

We aim to work in partnership with others wherever we can, to build capacity in education systems and raise standards. In India, we provide administrative support to the DfID-funded TESS-India project, led by The Open University from the UK. In partnership with Futurelearn, the British Council has launched a series of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The most recent, Professional Practices for English Language



Stephan Roman
Regional Director
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Teaching, has attracted over 76,000 participants from around the world, with over 14,500 from South Asia.

Across the region, access to technology is increasing day by day and excellent work is being done on the ground by a range of organisations to develop people's skills to be able to exploit new digital tools as effectively as possible. At the same time, the evidence base for what works in practice is growing. Research into teachers' use of technology for professional development in the region is limited but of great interest – the potential for its exploitation becomes even more relevant as access increases.

This report aims to highlight many of the existing initiatives around South Asia and provide the reader with a clearer understanding of the regional digital context. We focus specifically on English language teachers and their current access to technology, summarising the results of our recent research across six countries. Using what we have learned, we aim to continue working in partnership with UK and South Asian organisations and institutions towards our common goals for teachers' professional development and education as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

South Asia* is a vibrant and diverse region from all perspectives: political, economic, cultural and linguistic. Across the region, English is seen as a language of opportunity, enabling greater employment prospects and easier communication with others around the region and the world.

English is often the language of tertiary level instruction and increasingly parents and learners are opting for English-medium schooling, despite reports of varying quality, and research which demonstrates the value of mother tongue instruction.¹ The national and state governments of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka have all identified the key role that English can play in the development of young people's lives and are also looking to improve the provision of English language teaching within government sector schools.

To support this surge of interest and need, the number of English teachers in the region has grown considerably in recent years. Conservative estimates drawing on a range of sources suggest there are approximately 3.4 million recognised English language teachers across the region, with close to the same number working within the unorganised sector, including in private tuition centres.

The role of good teachers in the achievement of learning outcomes is well documented. According to UNESCO (2013/4:30),² 'all children must have teachers who are trained, motivated and enjoy teaching, who can identify and support weak learners, and who are backed by well-managed systems.' In their systematic review of existing research, Cordingley et al. (2003)³ show that a focus on collaborative professional development has been found to have a positive effect on learning in the classroom.

Such collaborative professional development is increasingly being facilitated by technology around the world, and involves both access to digital resources and content, facilitating interaction between teachers and communities of practice. Recent studies have shown that the way that teachers consume and deliver content using digital platforms is quickly evolving. Access is becoming more ubiquitous; however, keeping up with the pace of

this evolution can be difficult for teachers who lack basic digital literacy or Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills. Patterns of ICT usage can stagnate or become obsolete if these areas are not addressed both by individuals and on an institutional and national level.

In South Asia, the greatest changes with regard to ICT adoption have taken place over the last decade. Driving this change is an increase in the penetration of television and radio, a shift to cable and direct-to-home (DTH) provision, greater access to personal computers, laptops and broadband and an exponential growth in the adoption of mobile phones and mobile internet. These changes affect much of the population, including teachers. There is clear potential for technology to facilitate teachers' professional development and augment existing systems of teacher education. This report aims to explore how teachers can access these media for this purpose and their related habits and preferences.

* For the purposes of this report, South Asia comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

¹ Save the Children (2009) *Language and education – the missing link: how the language used in schools threatens the achievement of education for all*. [online]

<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/language-and-education-missing-link-how-language-used-schools-threatens-achievement>.

² UNESCO (2013/14) *Education for All: global monitoring report –Teaching and learning: achieving quality for all*. [online]

http://unesco.nl/sites/default/files/dossier/gmr_2013-4.pdf?download=1

³ Cordingley P, Bell M, Rundell B, Evans D (2003) The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning. In: *Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

RESEARCH APPROACH

To explore the potential impact of these reported shifts in technology usage for English teachers in South Asia, the British Council commissioned a research project in 2014 with Zinger Labs and their field research partner EZ Vidya. The specific objectives of the project were to gain a better understanding of the teachers' levels of access to different digital technologies (radio, television, computers and mobile phones) and their willingness to use these technologies to utilise English language training materials and resources to support their continuing professional development as teachers.

In the first section, the report describes how the team identified the geographic scope of the project, the demographic sample and the research methodology undertaken. This drew on both quantitative and qualitative methods to derive insights from teachers, head teachers, school administrators, industry experts, existing documentation and reports.

The surveyed teachers' access to and usage of each digital medium is discussed in turn, prefaced by a short overview of the wider context including existing related initiatives. This is followed by a discussion on teachers' use of social media as a means of developing or participating in a community of practice, along with insights into their attitudes towards their continuing professional development (CPD) in general. The report concludes with recommendations for how teachers could most benefit from the use of technology for their CPD in future and how policy makers and content developers can best meet their needs.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This report is primarily intended for those involved in the framing and implementation of English language digital policy or content development within the South Asian region. However, it will have relevance for anyone interested in how technology can be leveraged in similar contexts around the world. The challenges faced by teachers in accessing content are explored, as are projections for if or how these might be overcome in future. The findings described in this report will therefore benefit individuals, organisations and government bodies looking to harness the power of technology to improve pathways for teacher development and therefore the achievement of positive learning outcomes in English language classrooms around the world.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This report hopes to contribute to the small but growing body of evidence around South Asian teachers' use of technology for their professional development and the potential that this presents for further engagement. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study, but rather a snapshot of the current scenario which can assist with informed, evidence-based decision making, alongside the results of other relevant studies.

Specifically, our research aims to shed light on three important areas:

- to understand English teachers' access to digital technologies (radio, television, computers, mobile phones, the internet and social media) in the South Asian region
- to understand English teachers' general habits with regard to the above media and provide some insights into how these habits might be harnessed and/or developed for the benefit of both the teachers and their learners
- to understand English teachers' willingness to use these digital technologies to access English language training material and opportunities and resources for their continuing professional development.

SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 Access to digital channels and preferences around access for English language and professional development opportunities are similar across the region and among the various segments of the sample population.
- 2 The environment is largely conducive for developing holistic CPD interventions. The English teachers surveyed were positive about the opportunities that greater digital engagement could yield.
- 3 However, digital literacy and ICT skills are relatively low among the group surveyed and there is a lack of confidence in utilising technology to its full potential – training, guidance and support are necessary.
- 4 Computers and mobile phones are the primary channels teachers believe they can use to access resources and content for their CPD. This includes recognition of the access that technology can provide to experts in the field and the wider teaching community.
- 5 Radio and television are not preferred media for professional development. This is largely because radio and television do not provide teachers with access to a community and because these are considered to be shared resources within the home over which the teachers have limited control. However, radio and television can be powerful media for creating awareness of other existing opportunities employing different channels.
- 6 The teachers surveyed show considerable interest in the use of technology to foster what is termed communities of practice – they demonstrate preferences for professional development opportunities which involve interactivity, collaboration and engagement with other professionals as opposed to one-way transactions. They also indicate that they would prefer more regular development opportunities which are clearly linked to their needs – self-access digital resources could facilitate this more easily than standard face-to-face training sessions.
- 7 Digital channels in South Asia are not adequately established to support effective user payment models. This means that teachers looking to develop their language or teaching skills will be reluctant to pay for services online or via mobile. Alternative monetisation models must therefore be explored.



A teacher in Bangladesh participates in a Skype session

TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH ASIA

All six South Asian countries have clear aspirations in terms of growing their economies and upgrading their infrastructure to provide better access to information and services to their population via technology. In 2015 India's Prime Minister Modi launched the high-profile Digital India campaign,⁴ which alongside the development of infrastructure aims to streamline the delivery of government services and increase the digital literacy of the whole population. Policy frameworks for the integration of technology into the education systems are in place in all six countries, including Pakistan's National Information and Communication Technology Strategy for Education (NICTE) and Nepal's Information Technology Policy (2000). According to the Ambient Insight report (2014), Sri Lanka is indicated as having the highest predicted growth in digital English language learning in Asia for the period 2013-2015 at 43 per cent. Pakistan and Bangladesh feature at third and seventh place respectively, with 41 and 32 per cent.⁵

Access to mobile, computer and television technologies has increased

significantly in the region over the last decade. In Bangladesh, the government has committed to bringing internet connectivity to all villages, under the Digital Bangladesh initiative launched in 2009. Donors and development agencies have also invested in infrastructure and the development of ICT skills and digital literacy across the region. For example in Sri Lanka, the World Bank has provided \$83 million to fund the e-Sri Lanka programme, aiming for both social and economic development.⁶ Further factors driving this development include reductions in hardware costs, increased competition between device and service providers, government outreach schemes and the increased availability of credit and financing options.

There are numerous education-focused ICT initiatives across the region which have variously:

- provided virtual classrooms to support access to education
- used online training to support teacher education
- provided channels for knowledge sharing, e.g. the National Research

and Education Networks initiative, in use across multiple countries

- supported education administration.

However, on the ground there is wide variation in the use of technology within educational settings, depending on factors including availability of electricity and network connectivity, the ICT skills of teachers and whether the school is funded privately or by the government. However, both our primary and secondary research has shown that each of these areas is in a state of flux. Electricity provision is increasing and becoming more stable. Connectivity is growing due to national initiatives but also potentially through the work of global giants such as Google and Facebook who aim to launch their respective Project Loon and Aquila initiatives in the near future. Teachers across the private and government school sectors are showing interest in developing their own skills and in using technology as an additional medium for transacting learning. There is a general recognition of the need for young people to develop their digital skills, alongside English, in order to improve their employability and prospects in life,

⁴ www.digitalindia.gov.in/

⁵ www.ambientinsight.com/Resources/Documents/AmbientInsight-2013-2018-Asia-Digital-English-Language-Learning-Market-Abstract.pdf

⁶ <https://gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=131003-sri-lanka.pdf&download>

further evidenced through additional research currently being undertaken by the British Council in partnership with BRAC in Bangladesh, Equal Access Nepal and the Naandi Foundation in India.

At the same time, concerns about a growing digital divide are clear: typically, urban males from middle to upper socio-economic backgrounds, and attending or working in high-fee-paying private schools, have greater access to ICT than those from other groups.⁷ There is a clear need for further development of digital skills and literacy to ensure that this divide does not continue to widen.

Growth in teaching and learning using mobile devices — m-learning — is one way that this divide might be addressed. Launched in Asia in 2009, m-learning 'value add services' were being subscribed to by over 250 million users by the end of 2013.⁸ Low unit profit margins but high numbers of subscribers typically translate into healthy revenue streams for m-learning carriers and therefore there is considerable interest among providers for further development in this area, particularly in the highly populated South Asian region.

Evidence around the impact of these value added services and other m-learning-based initiatives on specified learning outcomes is relatively rare, but concerted efforts have been made over the last decade to improve how this is reported. For example, the English in Action project in Bangladesh has shown that providing content on mobile phones for teachers has favourable results for the classroom.⁹

⁷ Ed Tech India (2013) *Education technology in India: designing ed-tech for affordable private schools*. [online] <https://edtechindia.wordpress.com/report/>

⁸ www.ambientinsight.com/Resources/Documents/AmbientInsight-2014-2019-Asia-Mobile-Learning-Market-Overview.pdf

⁹ Walsh, Christopher and Shaheen, Robina (2013) English in Action (EIA): mobile phones as an agent of change for large-scale teacher professional development and English language learning in Bangladesh. *American Educational Research Association Annual Conference 2013*, 27 April — 01 May 2013, San Francisco, USA.



Teachers in Afghanistan participate in the research survey

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study drew on both primary and secondary data, with participants ranging from teachers to key industry experts and government policy makers. Data was gathered from private and public sector educational institutions and organisations in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Afghanistan.

Primary data was gathered in 2014, through the use of a detailed questionnaire, focus group discussions and interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data sets were generated and a detailed analysis was conducted to identify emerging themes, similarities and differences across the countries and contexts. A pilot study was conducted to test the tools ahead of the main research activity.

Questionnaires and interview schedules were translated into 14 local languages (see Table 1) as well as being provided in English. Participants were able to choose their response language (see related discussion on this on page 12). British Council project teams were responsible for distributing questionnaires to the government school teachers, while the research partner EZ Vidya took responsibility for distribution to identified private school teachers. Focus groups were jointly arranged and conducted by EZ Vidya in four locations in India (Aurangabad, Coimbatore, Delhi and

Patna), Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. Logistical factors prevented the research team from conducting focus groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The focus groups were conducted in a mixture of English and local languages, depending on the preferences of the participants.

Interviews with representatives from industry and government officials were conducted by the research team, resulting in qualitative data that was used both to triangulate the findings from the teachers, where relevant, and to provide further contextual information and insights to inform recommendations for future initiatives.

Secondary research was done using published reports and other academic research. These include the Ambient

Insight (2014) and GSMA reports (2014-15) for an analysis of industry trends, published papers from peer reviewed journals and reports generated by bodies including UNESCO, the World Bank and InfoDev.

Following collation, the data was analysed at regional and country levels, exploring similarities and differences between respondents living in rural, semi-urban and urban areas and those working in the private and government school sectors. Reporting focuses primarily on comparing teachers across the countries and by school sector as this was felt to show the most interesting results. Where relevant, data split according to location (urban, semi-urban or rural) is also discussed.

Country	Survey languages
Afghanistan	Dari, Pashto, English
Bangladesh	Bangla, English
India	Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, English
Nepal	Nepali, English
Pakistan	Urdu, English
Sri Lanka	Sinhala, Tamil, English

Table 1: Survey languages

RESPONDENT PROFILE AND SAMPLING

A total of 892 teachers from across South Asia were surveyed as part of this research. The stratification of the overall sample is shown in Table 2.

	Afghanistan (n=80)	Bangladesh (n=80)	India (n=482)	Nepal (n=90)	Pakistan (n=80)	Sri Lanka (n=80)
% female teachers	61%	60%	67%	58%	58%	91%
% male teachers	38%	39%	29%	39%	34%	5%
% teachers working in government sector schools	50%	50%	49%	44%	51%	50%
% teachers working in private sector schools	50%	50%	51%	56%	49%	50%
% teachers working in urban schools	50%	71%	45%	47%	75%	79%
% teachers working in semi-urban schools	8%	19%	25%	29%	1%	8%
% teachers working in rural schools	43%	10%	16%	24%	19%	13%

Note: for some questions, the participants did not provide a response (e.g. for location of school in India, 13 per cent did not answer the question). To avoid misrepresentation, only those providing the information have been counted in results here as a proportion of the overall total survey population for each country. Therefore, percentages are slightly lower than if all had provided a response.

Table 2: Survey sample stratification

Teachers from the private school sector were drawn primarily from low- to mid-fee paying schools, with a small number participating from schools from higher-fee brackets. Because of the small numbers involved, it was not considered appropriate to analyse the data against these different groups. While we have focused on the lower end of the scale in our sample, the research team recognises that there is a need for further research into the differences in access to technology for teachers from the varied private school landscape across the region.

There was some overlap of teachers working in the primary, upper primary or secondary grades – a considerable number of teachers reported that they taught more than one of these groups. In all countries, a small majority taught primary only. The total numbers of teachers reporting for each grade group is illustrated in Figure 1.

As can be seen in Table 2, there was a larger number of teachers participating from India, with a relatively even split across the other countries. Therefore,

data is expressed as percentages within each of these country groups throughout the report, with an average percentage taken where it was felt appropriate to comment on a regional trend (i.e. where there were only minor differences between the percentages for each country).

While every attempt was made to gain as balanced a sample as possible, logistical constraints and challenges gaining access to groups of English language teachers necessitated the use of non-probabilistic convenience sampling in the establishment of the cohort to participate in the research. This has two implications. First, the urban/semi-urban/rural split was not even – at least 54 per cent of teachers across the region teach in urban environments, but this proportion ranges from 75 per cent in Pakistan to 46 per cent in Nepal. Eight per cent of the

teachers did not provide information to enable us to analyse their answers against this parameter. Similarly, the data according to gender is uneven, with 66 per cent female respondents. Again, this split ranges from 91 per cent in Sri Lanka to 58 per cent in both Pakistan and Nepal. Four per cent of the teachers did not specify their gender.

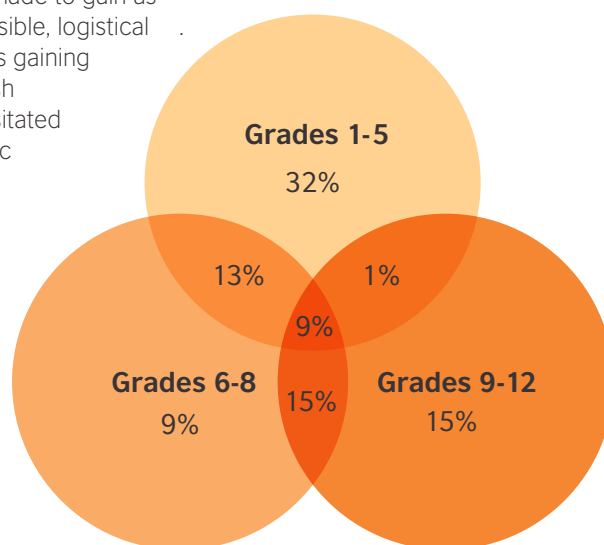


Figure 1: Grades taught by surveyed teachers

Sixty-nine per cent of the surveyed teachers were between the ages of 20 and 40, with a fairly even split across this range. Only 13 per cent of the teachers reported being 41-45 years old, falling to just 12 per cent between the age ranges of 46 and 60. A similar pattern was found in each of the countries within the sample.

It was decided that the analysis would focus on the largely even split between government and private sector teachers as the key area of focus for our research (overall 49 per cent of respondents work in government schools, with a narrow range from 44 per cent in Nepal to 51 per cent in Pakistan).

This split was maintained in the focus groups that were conducted in seven locations (described further on page 9) – one each for teachers from the government and private school sectors. The total number of teachers participating in focus groups was 91, with a slightly higher number of participating teachers from the government schools, as shown in Table 3.

	Government school teachers	Private school teachers
Dhaka – Bangladesh	8	4
Aurangabad – West India	8	6
Coimbatore – South India	8	8
Delhi – North India	6	4
Patna – East India	9	4
Kathmandu – Nepal	8	4
Colombo – Sri Lanka	6	8
Total:	53	38

Table 3: Teachers participating in focus group discussions by location and school sector



LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It was beyond the scope of this research to collect a sample that is statistically representative of all private and government school English teachers across the six South Asian countries. However, by researching a range of male and female teachers from different South Asian countries, locations and school types, it is intended that the results will provide a contribution to what is a growing body of evidence relating to teachers and their uses of technology, particularly for professional development. As with any research of a similar scope and scale, there are several limitations which need to be highlighted to further contextualise the results of the study. In addition to the discussion around sampling above, it is important to highlight that the government school teachers participating in this study were drawn from existing British Council teacher education projects. This means that they may have had greater exposure to opportunities for continuing

professional development (including the concept as a whole) compared to other teachers who had not participated in our projects. This may also include the use of some forms of technology for this purpose.

- The research is based on self-reporting which is known to have limitations in terms of the accuracy of the data collected. To mitigate this concern, the researchers clearly explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and the need for accurate answers, as well as offering anonymity to all who participated.
- Although the questionnaire was available in 14 regional languages, 87 per cent of the teachers chose to answer the survey in English. We know through experience that the English language levels of teachers within government sector schools in the six South Asian countries tend to

be relatively low (often A2 or lower on the CEFR¹⁰). It is therefore surprising that such a large proportion chose the English survey over a local language and this may have had some bearing on the accuracy of the results. Teachers may have felt pressured to choose the English language version because of associations they have with British Council programmes, because they had been told that the study was specifically focusing on English teachers, or they may have felt more comfortable using English in the written form over a local language. However, it is equally possible that any confusion due to low proficiency levels was mitigated by the support available from the researchers who were on hand to answer questions from the participants as the data was collected in mediated groups in all cases.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The following sections of the report outline the key findings related to the following digital channels: mobile, personal computers, television and radio. The report then goes on to explore teachers' access to social media across the channels and their attitudes towards

opportunities for continuing professional development. The final section of the report identifies recommendations for both implementation and further research, summarising the key insights from the research study.

¹⁰ The Common European Framework of Reference is an internationally recognised system for describing language competency www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp



MOBILE

UNIQUE SUBSCRIBERS IN SOUTH ASIA

According to the GSMA,¹¹ the Asia Pacific region has the largest number of mobile subscribers in the world. The figures here show unique subscription rates for South Asia.

	Unique subscribers	Total population	Percentage
Afghanistan	11.5 million	31 million	37%
Bangladesh	67 million	160 million	42%
India	468 million	1279 million	37%
Nepal	11 million	28 million	39%
Pakistan	59 million	187 million	32%
Sri Lanka	10 million	23 million	43%
Total:	626.5 million	1708 million	37%

Sources: Afghanistan – GSMA (2013) *GPM Vendor Landscape – Afghanistan and Pakistan*. [online] www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GPM_Vendor-Landscape_Afghanistan_Pakistan_2013.pdf
 All other countries – GSMA (2015) *The Mobile Economy: Asia Pacific Region*. [online] <http://asiapacific.gsmmobileeconomy.com/>

BACKGROUND

Access to mobile phones has rapidly increased over the past few years in the South Asia region. Mobile phone penetration is considered to be high in all six countries and it is not uncommon for people to have more than one mobile connection. Conversely, there is also significant evidence to show that individuals from lower socio-economic groups may share a single mobile connection with several members of a family or within a small community. This suggests that accurate measurement of mobile phone penetration across large populations is difficult, but it is widely recognised that mobile phone ownership is growing, along with the quality and quantity of services available through the medium.¹²

Network operators have indicated that voice and text revenues have plateaued and there is an aggressive push to grow their income from the use of mobile internet. This sector is set for rapid growth and transformation in the next few years. 2G connectivity is already near nationwide (in more populated regions) and the growth of 3G (and now 4G) is being heavily promoted by network operators in all countries across the region. The cost of handsets,

including smartphones, is also decreasing.

Network operators are investing heavily in next-generation networks, network quality and coverage is improving, and larger numbers of individuals are able to subscribe to mobile services. It would therefore appear sensible to focus on this channel for reaching teachers and providing access to a range of content. This expected development is based on industry statistics and is largely borne out through the current research results.

Several projects within the region have already shown positive results from the utilisation of mobile to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. These include the small-scale Asian Development Bank funded project Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) and the English in Action project¹³ – both in Bangladesh.¹⁴ Both projects involved content uploaded onto mobiles, with some two-way communication via SMS and voice with remote trainers. In addition, the British Council has explored the usage of classroom video clips uploaded onto micro-SD cards in the state of Maharashtra, India, and distributed to primary school teachers

with an accompanying print workbook. British Council teams across the region have also used mobile to communicate with trainers and teachers within large-scale teacher education projects, both through SMS and more recently Whatsapp groups.

A detailed analysis of how much teachers would be willing to pay for specific products linked to their professional development was beyond the scope of this research. However, a variety of models for payment exist – some of which involve direct payment by the end user and others which would enable either government bodies or individual institutions to subscribe to services and content on their teachers' behalf, with passwords issued for individual access. A related finding in this regard is that the South Asia region is currently a predominantly pre-paid market (although teachers in Sri Lanka reported a high number of post-paid connections), which means the ability to bill for Value Added Service has a high rate of failure given low account balances. In any case, further research is needed to identify the degree to which teachers would be willing to invest financially in professional development through digital (or other) media.

¹¹ Groupe Speciale Mobile Association

¹² <https://gsmaintelligence.com/research/2014/05/measuring-mobile-penetration/430/>

¹³ www.eiabd.com/eia/

¹⁴ InfoDev (2010) *ICT4E in India and South Asia – Bangladesh country report* [online] www.infodev.org/infodev-files/resource/InfodevDocuments_877.pdf

'We have given laptops to teachers, but because they are more comfortable with mobile phones, we have also created mobile applications for attendance, GPS tracking of student ID cards and leave tracking.'

School director – Bangladesh



KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

There is widespread access to mobile phones and frequent use of mobile internet among English language teachers across the region. In most cases, teachers have personal devices and connections and they appear to be prolific users of mobile internet as part of their daily life.

Teachers report a high level of familiarity with using their mobile phones, unlike with personal computers.

Among the respondents, there is a clear positive sentiment associated with using mobile applications as a medium for English language learning and other forms of continuing professional development. The teachers reported that mobile can be an effective medium to a) access learning and teaching material on demand, b) interact with experts and other teachers and c) be part of a social community with common CPD goals (e.g. through the use of social media).

'We are allowed to use our mobiles in the classroom for teaching purposes. When I don't know the meaning of a word, I use the mobile to search on the spot.'

Private school teacher – India

'The broadband internet has a lot of problems. It does not work many times. So, I use my phone to access Facebook.'

Private school teacher – India

KEY FINDINGS

Ninety-one per cent of the English language teachers surveyed across the region said they have access to a personal mobile phone. The remaining nine per cent of the teachers surveyed appear to have access to a shared mobile phone within their family.

There is some use of smartphones among the group surveyed – across the region, 55 per cent of the teachers reported using either a touch or touch-and-type handset. While variation between private and government sector teachers does not appear to be high, there are some country level differences. Teachers surveyed in Nepal and Pakistan report the highest levels of smartphone usage (65 and 50 per cent respectively), while Sri Lanka reports the lowest level at 48 per cent.

Of 815 respondents, just under 80 per cent claimed to know the cost of their mobile phone, averaging to approximately 80 GBP (ranging from around 56 GBP in Afghanistan and Pakistan to 110 GBP in Bangladesh). In all countries, these averages are well above the low-end price point.

It is interesting to note that, despite high levels of phone ownership and usage, the teachers surveyed showed relatively low awareness of the specifications of their phone or use of terminology to describe differences in the technology. Thirty-five per cent of those surveyed reported that they did not know which operating

system their phone supported, with a further 15 per cent not responding to the question. Of the 85 per cent who did respond, 36 per cent use Android-supporting handsets, 10 per cent Windows and just 3 per cent iOS. These figures are consistent across the region.

In terms of accessing information via mobile, four of the most relevant areas to consider when considering the creating and dissemination of content to teachers are connection type, use of mobile internet, use of micro-SD cards and use of educational mobile applications.

Connection type

In line with industry reports, 77 per cent of the teachers surveyed indicated that they are on a pre-paid connection. This

rose to 95 per cent for teachers from Bangladesh but dropped to 59 per cent in Sri Lanka. This may have some implications for how they can access subscriber-based services, and whether their phones are fully operational all the time.

Use of mobile internet

Fifty-five per cent of respondents report having access to the internet on their mobile phones (ranging from 46 per cent in Bangladesh to 74 per cent in Nepal). With the exception of Bangladesh, where just 33 per cent of government sector teachers reported mobile internet usage, there did not appear to be large differences between access for teachers working in the government versus private sectors.



Figure 2: Teachers reporting using mobile phones to access social media

'Unlike a computer, with mobile phone I do not need to first learn how to use it. Plus it is always with me wherever I go.'
Private school teacher – Nepal

Fifty-six per cent of the teachers surveyed report that they use their mobiles for social media, and in the focus group discussions it was clear that teachers use mobiles for engaging with social media more than personal computers. Here there were some differences between teachers from private schools and those from the government sector, as illustrated in Figure 2. Only teachers from Afghanistan showed a reverse trend, with more government school teachers than private using social media on their phones.

It is interesting to note that teachers in Nepal report the highest levels of engagement with their mobiles, for example with 77 per cent of teachers reporting that they access Facebook on their phones, compared to a regional average of just 48 per cent. Similarly, 66 per cent of the Nepalese teachers surveyed use their phones for email against a regional average of 50 per cent.

As discussed above, an in-depth examination of willingness to pay for content was not conducted as part of this survey (although see page 38); however, it is worth highlighting that while app usage is high, only 13 per cent of the teachers surveyed report ever paying for content via an app store. This has some implications for how they might be prepared to consume content for professional development purposes, although it is possible that this habit may increase over time as more contextualised and relevant content becomes available for this audience.

Use of micro-SD cards

Micro-SD cards can be a useful medium for disseminating information to teachers, incorporating audio visual and text-based content. A number of programmes aimed at developing teacher skills have had success with the sharing of data using this medium (e.g. the English in Action project in Bangladesh). This appears to be a viable channel in all countries, with an overall average of 69 per cent of teachers reporting that their phone can incorporate a micro-SD card (ranging from 55 per cent in Afghanistan to 90 per cent in Nepal). However, it is important to note that not all mobile phones will accept micro-SD cards and that there are a variety of formats.

Figure 3 summarises the access of mobile phones and mobile internet among the respondents.

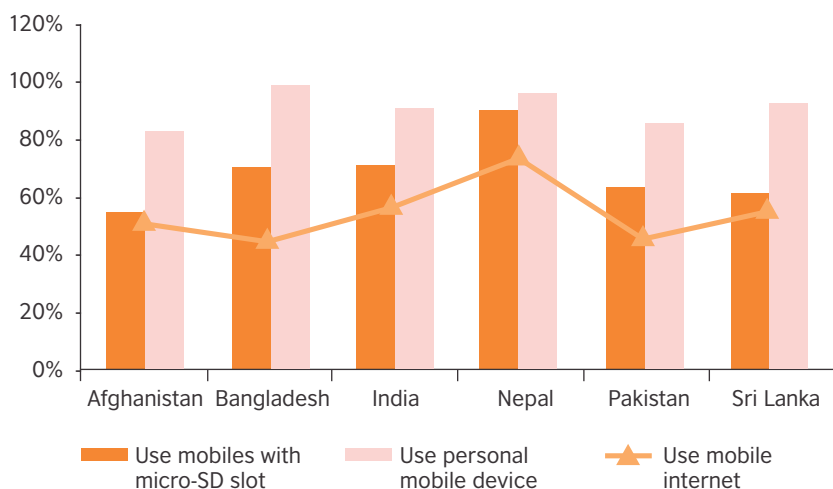


Figure 3: Teachers reporting using personal mobile phones and access to micro-SD cards and mobile internet

'With my new phone I do not have to wait to get to a computer for many things. I see and reply to emails, Facebook, Whatsapp from anywhere.'
Private school teacher – India

Use of educational mobile applications

Thirty-six per cent of the respondents report that they have downloaded educational mobile apps. Of those who have, the majority were downloaded for their own learning (74 per cent) but more than half of this group reported that they also use them in the classroom. The word cloud below (Figure 4) shows the type of responses given when asked which types of educational apps are downloaded, with the larger words indicating a greater number of mentions. English is the most popular category but this should not be surprising given that the respondents are all English teachers and they are aware that the survey is being conducted to find out about their use of technology in relation to their teaching of the language.

Overall, the teachers demonstrated an awareness of the value of mobile phones in terms of providing greater access to information than they have had previously.

The percentage of teachers with smartphones currently able to access mobile internet is substantial, and will increase assuming current trends continue. The rate at which English teachers change their phones also seems to be high and increasing, with the possible exception of Bangladesh where 91 per cent of the teachers surveyed had owned the same mobile phone for more than seven years. However, aspiration is high across the region: during the focus group discussions, teachers indicated they want to have the

best phone they can afford at any given point in time and that they are eager to keep pace with advances in the technology.

Insights from the focus groups also indicated that the teachers are more familiar and comfortable with using their mobiles over personal computers and that they believe mobile can be an effective channel for CPD, alongside providing a platform for collaboration and the development of teaching communities (e.g. through social media). This interest in linking up and sharing with other teaching professionals was one of the key findings of interest from the research. This is explored further later in the report.

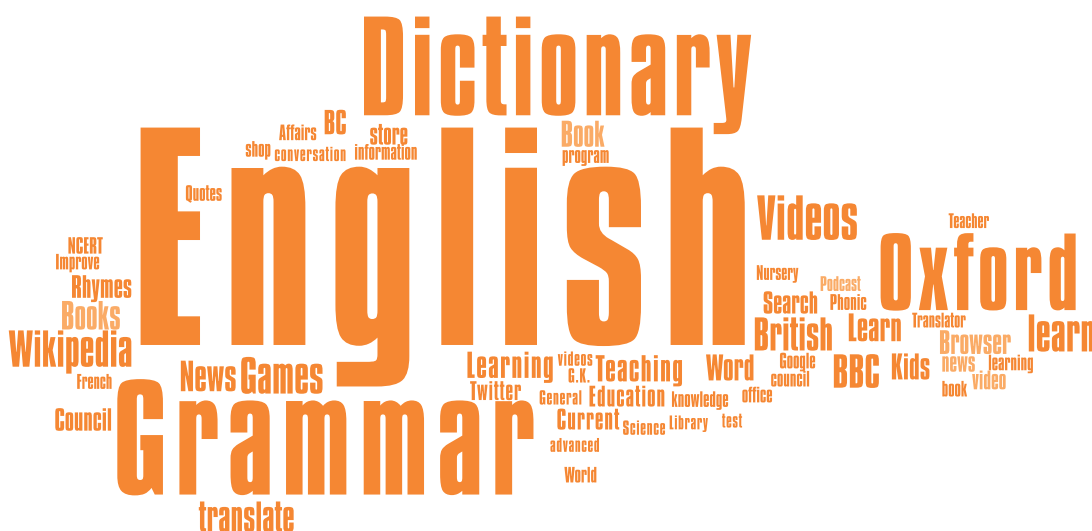


Figure 4: Types of educational mobile applications accessed

'I listen to the radio during the time I am cooking. That way my housework doesn't get affected.'

Government school teacher – India

RADIO

Estimates of radio usage in South Asia are available but varied, although coverage levels are high. However, it appears that the popularity of radio ownership is declining, with many listeners using their mobile phones as alternative devices.

The number of community radio stations has increased in recent years, facilitated by a decrease in government regulation in some countries. Community radio allows for more targeted content to be broadcast to smaller audiences, but conversely also means that overall reach is reduced, in comparison to commercial and nationalised radio broadcasters.

BACKGROUND

According to UNESCO, radio has historically played a significant role in the dissemination of information to communities around the world, both urban and rural: more than 75 per cent of households in non-OECD¹⁵ countries are reported to have access to a radio device.¹⁶ However, the use and relevance of radio as a channel for communication has undergone significant transformation over the last few decades as the internet, satellite and mobile technology have opened up new opportunities for the receipt of audio programmes and content.

The use of radio as a medium for educational purposes and for connecting with teachers in particular is not new. A report from the UNESCO Institute for

Statistics outlines several South Asian initiatives which involve the use of community radio to spread messages related to education and to achieve specific learning outcomes. These include Radio Sagarmatha in Nepal and Radio Kothmale in Sri Lanka.¹⁷ India has a dedicated radio station focusing on educational programming, Gyanvani, overseen by the Ministry of Education.¹⁸

In Pakistan, USAID has conducted a programme utilising Interactive Radio Instruction – an approach which has also seen success in sub-Saharan Africa. USAID's 'Time for English' series was aimed at young primary students, with activity-based content based on Pakistan's national curriculum.¹⁹ Both the BBC and the British Council have

undertaken projects in Afghanistan to develop English skills in learners who are unable to otherwise access quality language training.

In addition to content for learners, the British Council has developed and launched the TeachingEnglish Radio series, aimed at developing teachers' classroom skills. This has been broadcast in Pakistan and Afghanistan, with an adapted version created specifically for teachers of English in India and broadcast to teachers across Maharashtra in 2014.²⁰

As a channel for education, radio has a number of benefits, including low cost to the end user, reduced need for reliable electricity supply through the use of

¹⁵ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development comprises economically advanced countries with a mission to develop policies and programmes which improve economic stability and opportunity around the world.

¹⁶ www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-radio-day-2013/statistics-on-radio/

¹⁷ www.uis.unesco.org/Communication/Documents/ICT-asia-en.pdf

¹⁸ www.ignou.ac.in/ignou/aboutignou/broadcast/3

¹⁹ InfoDev (2010) ICT4E in India and South Asia – Pakistan country report [online] www.infodev.org/infodev-files/resource/InfodevDocuments_882.pdf

²⁰ www.britishcouncil.in/teach/teachingenglish-radio-india



batteries and reach into rural areas. However, many also acknowledge the limitations with the use of traditional radio for educational purposes. These include the lack of flexibility in terms of access to programming (although this has been mitigated in some cases with recordings being made available as podcasts or other recordings), the lack of

interactivity, the need for a 'one size fits all' approach and difficulties in accurately monitoring the number of listeners. Additionally, radio stations can be reluctant to agree to transmit content for niche audiences, such as English language teachers, due to concerns that they might risk alienating their general audience.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

Despite reports which suggest that usage of radio is declining globally and the relatively low penetration figures for South Asia cited above, a majority of the teachers surveyed (78 per cent) indicated that they have access to a device and that they listen to radio programmes. This figure ranged from 68 per cent in Bangladesh to 90 per cent or more in Nepal and Sri Lanka. However, of all the teachers who listen, just 27 per cent report listening to radio every day and 32 per cent rarely engage with the medium.

High levels of access is encouraging; however, in both the survey and the focus group discussions, teachers indicated that they do not see the medium as a viable channel for their continuing professional development, for a number of reasons as outlined below. However, it should be noted that radio can have a function in terms of awareness-raising and promotion of opportunities available through other media.



'Most often, I listen to whatever is being played.'
Government school teacher – Nepal

KEY FINDINGS

As can be seen from Table 4 below, there is some variation between the number of teachers from the private school sector and those from the government sector who report listening to the radio, although there does not seem to be a single trend across the region.

In addition, as shown in Figure 5, teachers in Afghanistan and India report listening to the radio the least frequently, compared to teachers in Nepal who are the most active users of radio content.

Questions exploring preferred days of the week or time of day for listening were

inconclusive, with a majority of the respondents indicating that it was 'not fixed'. This correlates with the findings from the focus group discussions where it was clear that most teachers see radio as something that forms the background to other activities, rather than a specific use of time in its own right.

Afghanistan		Bangladesh		India		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
Gov	Pri	Gov	Pri	Gov	Pri	Gov	Pri	Gov	Pri	Gov	Pri
68%	85%	58%	78%	83%	76%	98%	92%	54%	64%	93%	88%

Table 4: Teachers who report listening to the radio

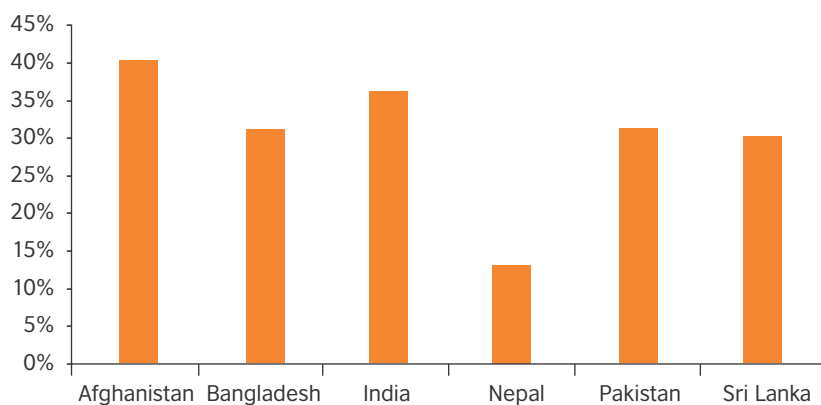


Figure 5: Teachers reporting that they listen to the radio 'rarely' or 'never'

'We are very cautious of doing anything purely educational as it will appeal just to a tiny portion of our audience. However, we are more open to consider anything in the form of edutainment.'

**Head of Programming,
FM Radio broadcaster – India**

In line with global trends, 57 per cent of the teachers who report listening to the radio stated that they predominantly listen to radio on their mobile phones – further underlining the centrality of these devices to their lives. This trend was slightly less evident in the responses from teachers from Sri Lanka, but greater

for those from Nepal (see Figure 6 below). A very small number (5 per cent) reported listening to internet-based radio, with a small majority preferring to listen to terrestrial private radio stations (55 per cent – ranging from 28 per cent in Pakistan to 77 per cent in Nepal) as opposed to government or community

radio. Listening to community radio stations is most popular among the teachers from Nepal, with 40 per cent of respondents reporting listening to these providers, compared to an average of just 16 per cent across the region (see Figure 7).

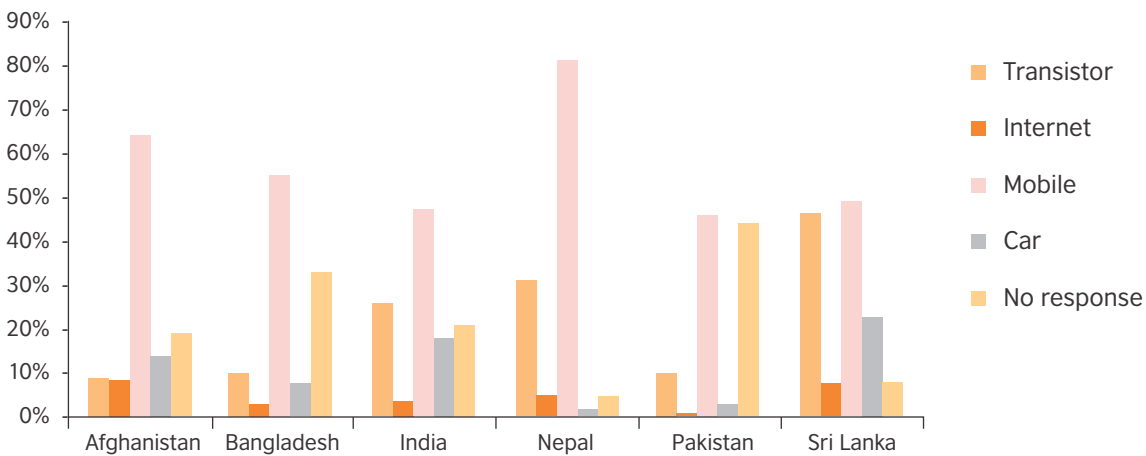


Figure 6: Type of radio usage for teachers who listen to the radio

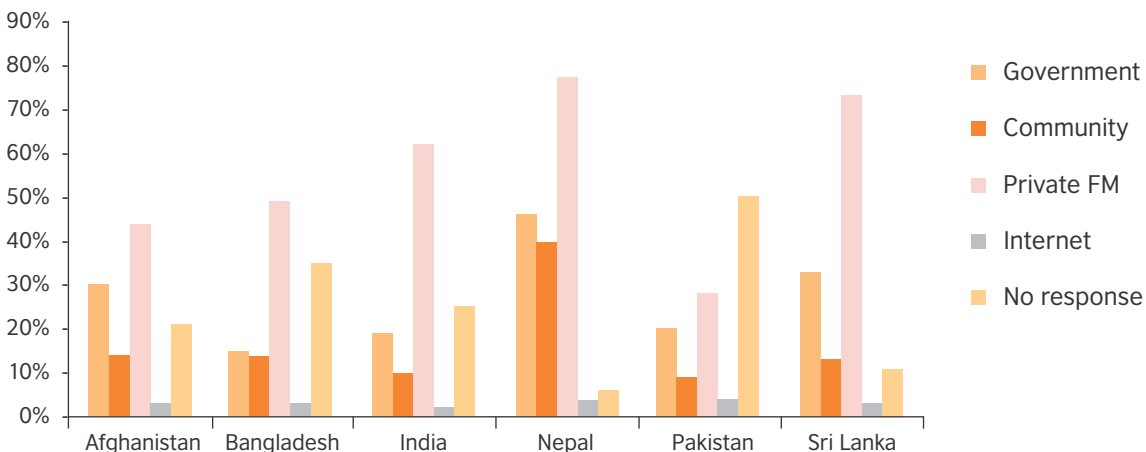


Figure 7: Type of radio station accessed by teachers who listen to the radio



Teachers in Nepal with a Lifepayer radio device

'I only listen to the radio when I travel in our car or by public transport.'

Private school teacher – Bangladesh

'Learning via radio is difficult. I can't be sure to catch the programme on time. Also it is too much effort to take notes and it is one way.'

Private school teacher – Sri Lanka

Two areas are of particular interest when considering the future development of content for teachers: language of consumption and engagement with educational content or channels.

Language of consumption

Of those teachers who listen to the radio, 25 per cent report listening only to local language channels, 30 per cent report listening to both English and local language and 17 per cent claim to listen to English channels only (most commonly BBC news). The high number of teachers reporting that they listen to English language content may be an effect of the known focus of this research on the respondents.

In most countries in the region, with the possible exception of India, the amount of English language radio content that is produced within country is likely to be quite low. It is interesting to see that teachers report accessing BBC radio in English, however, as the World Service continues to broadcast in seven South

Asian languages. Further research could examine the reasons for this (e.g. using the opportunity to develop their English).

Engagement with educational content

In both the results of the survey and comments made during the focus group discussions, there was a strong sense that teachers view radio as mainly providing entertainment. It is seen as something which is played as the background to other activity, rather than being listened to intently for information. This has clear implications for how ready teachers would be to adopting the medium for professional development opportunities.

Just 24 per cent of the teachers surveyed reported listening to educational programmes. This was highest in Afghanistan (42 per cent), perhaps because greater air time is given to this type of content, but this has not been verified. In contrast, surprisingly low numbers of teachers in Pakistan reported

listening to educational content (13 per cent).

While some projects have in the past had considerable success with the use of radio as a channel for education, it would appear from the results of our research that developing content purely for this medium would not be the best use of resources. However, in some South Asian contexts it may still be a viable way of reaching teachers working in rural locations without reliable power or access to more sophisticated technology. This could be done through community radio stations, which may be more likely to broadcast specialist content (although note that these stations may not be accessible via mobile phones if not broadcast on an FM channel). A pragmatic approach may therefore be to consider the development of audio content which can be repurposed for different media, including radio, and shared using the appropriate channel depending on the specific target audience.

TELEVISION

HOUSEHOLD TV OWNERSHIP

Our secondary research shows that television ownership is steadily rising throughout the South Asia region, although urban markets are slowly shifting to new viewing habits as more content moves online and viewing options increase.

Afghanistan	52%
Bangladesh	32%
India	65%
Nepal	39%
Pakistan	68%
Sri Lanka	76%

Sources: <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Surveybook2012web1.pdf>
<https://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-India/Local%20Assets/Documents/TMT%20predictions%202014/Media/Distribution%20Networks.pdf>
<http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/5.12>

BACKGROUND

Around the world, television as a channel for both formal and non-formal education is not uncommon, with many initiatives aiming to harness the medium for increasing access to, and the quality of, educational provision. This is done both through common access channels, in collaboration with private or government providers, and through closed networks utilising similar technology.

In Bangladesh, the BBC Janala strand of the larger English in Action project used TV as a means to raise awareness of the larger project as well as teaching English in an entertaining and motivating way. This included a soap opera, *Bishaash* (Believe) and a game show *Mojay Mojay Shekha* (Learning With Fun).²¹ In India, the Ministry of Education has been working with the national broadcaster Doordashan and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to transmit educational programmes on four dedicated channels aimed at children, teenagers and young adults. Meanwhile in Pakistan, the Virtual University combines broadcast through two TV channels with content loaded onto CD-Roms to provide affordable tertiary level

education for students across the country.

Elsewhere, in Mexico the national government began the Telesecundaria project in the 1970s to use an existing TV network to improve learning outcomes for children in rural areas who did not have access to other quality education. The programme has had impressive results and has since been shifted onto a dedicated satellite system for transmission. A similar project exists in Brazil.

In 2009, the Gujarat state government in India allocated \$127 million to develop a satellite link to primary schools, equipping them with state-of-the-art televisions. This *Virtual Classroom* project is ongoing and has had some success with reaching large numbers of young learners to improve their skills in English, maths and science. The British Council has also partnered with privately owned Tata Sky in the development of the Active English channel which aims to help housewives learn conversational English skills through its interactive features.²²

Other projects have used TV simply as a screen through which to display content channeled through other media. For example, the BridgeIT project in India, Tanzania and elsewhere encourages teachers to show their learners videos received on their mobile phones via a cable linked to the TV.²³

Several countries have also implemented TV-based programmes where teachers are trained via TV programming. For example, in the 1980s and 90s, the Chinese government initiated the China Television Teachers College (CTVTC)²⁴ which utilised television to train over two million primary and lower secondary teachers, significantly reducing the number of unqualified teachers practising in schools.

There is limited evidence to show that similar initiatives have been tried in South Asia. Where television has been used as a medium for professional development, it has tended to be focused on closed networks such as through the use of EDUSAT technology directly into schools in India. One exception is a project launched in Afghanistan in 2010, funded

²¹ www.eiabd.com/eia_oldsite/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=152:bishaash-and-bbc-janala-mojay-mojay-shekha-launched&catid=252:news-2010&Itemid=57

²² www.tatasky.com/wps/portal/TataSky/valueaddedservices/actveservices/activeenglish and www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XVgsbNod74

²³ www.educationalalliance.org/content/bridgeit

²⁴ http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnach453.pdf



Production team editing classroom-based films of teachers in Bihar, India

'No day passes by without the TV being switched on. If we are not watching it, the children definitely turn it on.'
Private school teacher – Bangladesh

by UNESCO and the Italian government. The project aimed to provide audio-visual training for teachers through the existing Educational Radio and Television service. In Nepal, videoed content (not broadcast) has shown to be very successful in improving standards of teaching, through the Asian Development Bank funded Teacher Education project.²⁵ Multimedia resource centres were established within teacher training institutes for primary level teachers and run by a mobile team of trainers.

Production costs for the development of content to be disseminated through TV are high – perhaps higher than for any other digital channel. Additionally, while view-on-demand services are growing, these remain relatively inaccessible for much of the population who are also unlikely to be able to record TV programmes in any other way to allow for flexible viewing. Therefore, creating TV content aimed at a specific audience faces similar problems as the use of radio: English language teaching content, particularly if it were to be aimed predominantly for teachers' own development, would focus on a niche

audience which for-profit broadcasters may be reluctant to target.

As with radio, much of the content which may previously have needed television for broadcast is now being disseminated more cheaply and more flexibly through the internet. While this does not favour teachers who have limited access to computers (or mobile packages which allow high data internet content to be viewed), it is likely that this trend will also play out in South Asia as connectivity and smartphones become more ubiquitous. As will be explored later in the report, it appears that this prediction is also true for English language teachers across South Asia.

TV editing suite of Gujarat Institute of Educational Technology, India



²⁵ www.adb.org/documents/nepal-teacher-education-project

'We are very focused on entertainment. Educational content is not very exciting for us. However, some of our content providers do at times have educational and health placements in their content.'

Senior Leader – International Media Agency

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

This research has found similarities between teachers' access to and use of television and radio, described on page 18–23. Almost all the teachers have access to a television and around three-quarters report watching TV every day. However, the reasons for watching are largely based around entertainment, leisure and relaxation.

Despite high levels of access, there appears to be a similar lack of

enthusiasm for the use of television as a medium for professional development. Less than half of the teachers across the region report watching TV for educational purposes and comments in the focus group discussions suggested that access to the device was generally shared with or dominated by the children in the family, leaving little opportunity for more serious or focused viewing on topics that are not of interest to others. This suggests that developing content

which focuses on general English language development may be the only viable option to explore and that this would need to be done using a format which is at least on the surface more focused on entertainment than education. Perhaps it is necessary to heed the advice of the philosopher Marshall McLuhan who famously stated, 'anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know the first thing about either.'

'Some of the tele-series may be addictive; but we are used to watching it. They are mostly things we are able to relate to, and we don't have to think much.'

Government school teacher – India

'We are focused on entertainment first, but we also carry some educational channels. We are also able to offer educational channel subscriptions.'

Chief Operating Officer – a large DTH (Satellite TV) Operator in India

'We have decided to minimise watching television at home. If we turn it on, the kids get tempted and it is unfair to expect them to study while we watch TV.'

Private school teacher – Sri Lanka

KEY FINDINGS

Ninety-seven per cent of teachers surveyed across the region report that they watch TV, with this number dipping to a low of 85 per cent for government school teachers in Afghanistan (see Figure 8 below). Just 32 per cent of teachers report having access to satellite television, and 59 per cent to cable. This varies across countries, however, with only 9 per cent and 13 per cent of teachers indicating they have access to satellite TV in Pakistan and Nepal, compared to highs of 55 per cent and 45 per cent in Bangladesh and India respectively.

The majority of teachers in most countries watch every day – 66 per cent of the regional total. However, this is lower in Afghanistan where just 36 per cent watch every day: 53 per cent watch either only on the weekends or rarely.

It is interesting to note that almost a fifth of the teachers surveyed report watching TV 'only in English' – the greatest number of these teachers being from Sri Lanka at 30% of the respondents surveyed. In all countries except India and Pakistan, most teachers watch both in English and in other regional languages. In India and Pakistan, the preference instead appears to be for local language broadcasts. Issues around use of language here may be related to those in the earlier discussion on page 23.

For government school teachers in India, the survey also asked about their awareness of EDUSAT – a satellite TV service which brings educational content of various types into government

schools, aimed at both learners and teachers. Launched in 2004, it has had considerable publicity and significant usage according to some reports. It is therefore noteworthy that relatively low numbers of teachers in our survey reported that they were aware of its existence: just 54 per cent of this government school teacher group. Of the teachers who are aware of its existence, only about a third of them have used it for teaching purposes and just over 10 per cent for professional development. The use of EDUSAT as a method for reaching large numbers of teachers has potential in terms of the infrastructure available, but it appears that awareness levels, current usage and possibly on-the-ground access or maintenance may be more limited than previously assumed.

In terms of the type of programmes that the teachers tend to watch, the data suggests that relatively few of the respondents frequently watch programmes of an educational nature (just 17 per cent of the regional total,

with little variation across the countries). Slightly more teachers report watching them 'sometimes', but it is interesting to note that almost half of the teachers across the region did not respond to this question. This suggests that there may be some confusion about what 'educational programmes' refers to. However, other data on viewing preferences, including information gathered from the focus group discussions, suggests that, as with radio, the teachers surveyed generally view television as a medium for entertainment and leisure. As such, it would appear that as a medium for serious engagement with professional development opportunities, regular television broadcast is unlikely to be a sensible choice for investment in content development, particularly when considering the extent of the investment required. Similar conclusions have been drawn by others working in the field of ICT and education, as described on page 36.

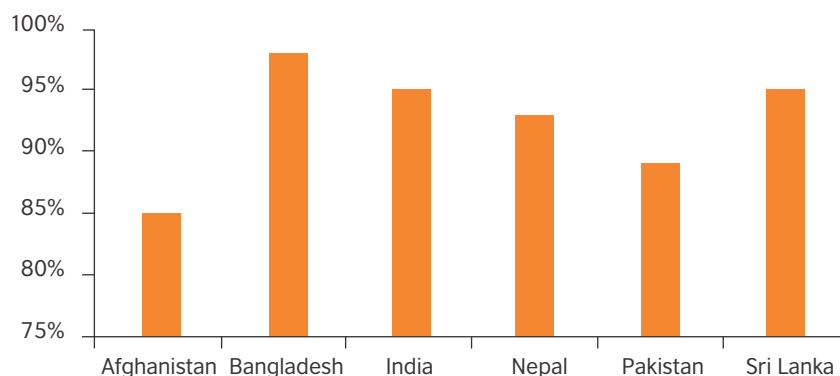


Figure 8: Teachers who report watching TV

COMPUTERS (PCS, LAPTOPS AND TABLETS)

HOUSEHOLDS WITH A COMPUTER

According to the World Bank development indicator data from 2013, the number of households with a computer is still low. However, digital development programmes across South Asia means that access to computers through community-based initiatives is increasing and set to grow further in the near future.

Afghanistan	2.5%
Bangladesh	5.7%
India	11.9%
Nepal	7.8%
Pakistan	14.1%
Sri Lanka	16.4%

Source: <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/5.12>

BACKGROUND

Computers have increasingly been integrated into day-to-day classroom activity in most OECD countries and their use is also gathering momentum in the developing world. However, using computers effectively to augment education and improve learning outcomes is not as straightforward as perhaps the global drive to buy hardware for schools would suggest. Research recently published by OECD reports that learning outcomes are not improved by the use of computers and tablets in schools.²⁶ Similarly, the One Laptop Per Child programme has been criticised for spending large amounts of money on hardware with little evidence of sustainable return on investment.²⁷ The Aakash project in India which aimed to give low-cost tablets to students is also reported to be disappointing in terms of its impact and the quality of the devices.²⁸

However, there have also been multiple cases of learners and teachers using computers in ways that are beneficial for learning, both in improving life skills in

ICT and digital literacy and also to boost learning in literacy, maths and other school subjects. A project in Malawi where young children were given iPads loaded with maths training apps has shown very positive gains in learning compared to a control group.²⁹

In Pakistan, the Punjab IT Labs project aimed to bridge the digital divide between government and private sector schools by installing desktop PCs in over 4000 state-funded schools across the province, beginning in 2008. This was done in conjunction with several IT companies including New Horizon and Siemens to provide training, software and hardware. Similar initiatives have been undertaken in Sri Lanka, India and elsewhere.

Countries in the South Asia region have also participated in a variety of global programmes aiming to link teachers and learners through online platforms. For example, the Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education has an MOU with the Global Learning Portal which gives

institutions, teachers and learners access to a wide variety of content, including for the development of English language skills and other professional development initiatives for teachers.

There has recently been a shift in the rhetoric around technology and whose hands it should be placed in for it to have positive effects on learning: originally, it was assumed that the technology should be used directly by learners for greatest impact. However there have been calls to experiment with teachers being given primary access, with the idea that 'one laptop per teacher' may prove more effective.

Teachers' access to computers is growing, but research has shown that there is insufficient investment in the maintenance of hardware supplied for teachers' use and inadequate training to ensure that they are able to use them to maximum effect. This is true in South Asia as elsewhere.³⁰ There have been several projects where IT companies have collaborated with national and state level

²⁶ OECD (2015), *Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection*, PISA, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264239555-en>

²⁷ www.iadb.org/en/research-and-data/publication-details,3169.html?pub_id=IDB-WP-304

²⁸ <http://tech.firstpost.com/news-analysis/did-you-pay-for-an-aakash-tablet-heres-the-inconvenient-truth-35177.html>

²⁹ <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00485/full>

³⁰ Central Square Foundation (2015) *Teaching with technology: early EdTech adoption by Indian school teachers*. [online] <http://www.centraisquarefoundation.org/pdf/Teaching-with-Technology-Early-EdTech-Adoption-by-Indian-School-Teachers.pdf>

'There is too much on the Internet. It is hard to decide which content is good and correct.'

Government school teacher – Sri Lanka



Teachers in Mumbai, India are introduced to a new digital resource

governments to deliver training in ICT to teachers (e.g. Microsoft's Project Shiksha in India, the Intel Teach Program in Pakistan and Sri Lanka and the Next Generation of Teachers project in Sri Lanka), but it is fair to say that high-quality standardised training for teachers on how best to exploit technology either for their own professional development or for use in the classroom is still rare – particularly for teachers working in the government or low-fee private school sectors.

As opportunities increase for teachers to further develop their skills through technology, there is a danger that teachers in South Asia may be left behind because they lack basic digital literacy. For example, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have become very popular, but anecdotal evidence from teachers in South Asia suggests that they are unable to benefit as access requires a familiarity with using the internet and discussion forums, etc.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

Around half of the teachers surveyed appear to have access to a computer or tablet, although there is some differentiation across the region. There are also differences across the teacher groups from private and government school sectors. We would expect this difference to be greater still for teachers working in higher-fee-paying schools. As with all of the data in this report, it is important to bear in mind the limitations around sampling when considering the generalisability of the findings (see page 10).

Access to computers is most likely higher than ever before, with trends suggesting that it will continue to grow. However, there continues to be a variety of issues around maintenance, access, trust and teachers' own skills in using the equipment. It appears that both

functional and pedagogical skills are in need of improvement to assist teachers with using technology more effectively both for their own development and with their learners.

A good proportion of the teachers who have access to computers also have access to the internet, although it is interesting to note that this translates to a lower number of teachers than for those who have access to the internet via their mobile phone. However, only some of these teachers report engaging with professional development opportunities. Insights from the focus group discussions suggest that this may be because of a lack of awareness about what is available and also a lack of skills to be able to navigate through large amounts of content to identify quality resources.

'In our town we often have power cuts. We cannot rely on computers here.'
Government school teacher – Bangladesh

'We give laptops to all teachers. They are expected to submit lesson plans and classroom resources online, on a daily basis. We have tried to make all admin tasks computer-based.'
School Director – Bangladesh



KEY FINDINGS

Across the region, 40 per cent of teachers report that they have access to desktop computers, with slightly higher (50 per cent) having access to laptops and 16 per cent to tablets. This pattern of usage, particularly the low proliferation of tablets, mirrors results of other research recently conducted in the region.³¹

However, these regional totals hide some differentiation across the different countries and for those working in the government and private sectors. Overall, private school teachers appear to be more likely to use any of these types of devices. Teachers surveyed from Sri Lanka report the highest levels of access to desktops (56 per cent) and/or laptops (63 per cent), with Afghanistan

considerably lower at just 16 per cent (desktops) and 46 per cent (laptops). Twenty per cent of teachers in Afghanistan report having no access at all to desktops, laptops or tablets, as do 33 per cent of government school teachers in Nepal (see Figure 9).

The patterns outlined above largely continue when looking at the remaining data for teachers and their access to and usage of computers. Just under half of the teachers who use computers report using them every day (42 per cent) and this is slightly higher in Sri Lanka. Similarly, 85 per cent of the teachers surveyed in Sri Lanka report access to computers at home, compared to an

average of 69 per cent across the region (with a low of 58 per cent in Afghanistan). In all countries except Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, higher numbers of private school teachers report using computers at home than government school teachers.

In contrast, just 33 per cent of teachers report using computers at school (ranging from 21 per cent in Afghanistan and Pakistan to 44 per cent in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh). This is interesting given that in most countries there have been a number of large-scale projects to improve computer availability in schools. The findings mirror concerns elsewhere in the literature that, while schools are

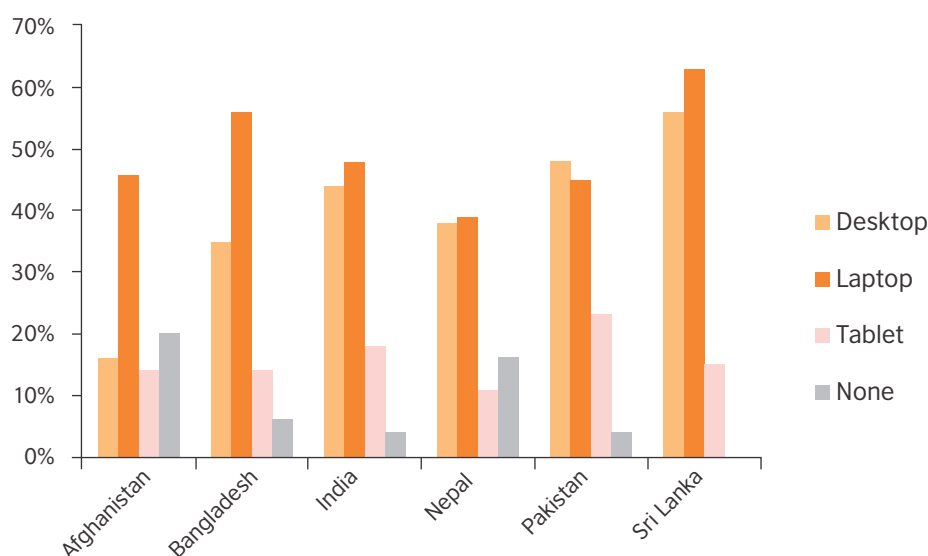


Figure 9: Teachers' reported access to desktops, laptops and tablets

³¹ Central Square Foundation (2015) *Teaching with technology: early EdTech adoption by Indian school teachers*. [online] <http://www.centalsquarefoundation.org/pdf/Teaching-with-Technology-Early-EdTech-Adoption-by-Indian-School-Teachers.pdf>



A teacher in Sri Lanka prepares a lesson

'If I am not able to access computer at school, I use my personal computer to prepare materials for classroom.'

Government school teacher – Sri Lanka

'It takes time and effort to learn how to use the computer and internet.'

Government school teacher – India

equipped with hardware, actual usage rates are low due to a variety of factors including poor maintenance, lack of training for teachers and concerns in school administration that students (or teachers) will misuse the equipment.³² Interestingly, there does not appear to be much difference between those teachers who were surveyed from the private sector versus those working in government schools. India is perhaps an exception, with 23 per cent of government school teachers reporting that they use computers at school, compared to 54 per cent in private schools. In Nepal, this is reversed at 38 per cent (government) compared to 22 per cent (private). However, it is possible that if the private sector sample included more high-fee schools these findings might be quite different.

For the teachers surveyed who do have access to a computer at home, an average of 63 per cent report that they have an internet connection. This varies from 48 per cent in Pakistan to 84 per cent in Sri Lanka, but perhaps reflects the largely urban or semi-urban sample in the latter. However, there does appear to be a lack of awareness about the type of internet connection (broadband or dial-up), with 50 per cent of these teachers either answering 'don't know' or not responding to this question. This is again perhaps evidence that while there may be access, ICT skills and levels of digital literacy are likely to be low.

Finally, usage of computers for teaching-related activities is mixed, but there are some key trends (see Table 5). 'Preparing materials for teaching' and 'sourcing

materials for students' are the most common uses. Relatively few teachers use computers directly in the classroom, for participating in webinars or online courses or to store student assessment results. Interestingly, data from the focus group discussions suggests that teachers tend to stick to materials available through other routes (i.e. their textbooks, school-produced resources or their own content) and secondly that there may also be a lack of knowledge and awareness about where and how they can access resources which they can use to effectively supplement their teaching. Printing costs for large classes are also high and this may be a further deterrent for teachers creating or locating teaching materials online.

	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	All
Preparing materials for teaching	48%	60%	61%	58%	64%	83%	62%
Sourcing materials for students	45%	46%	53%	51%	45%	74%	52%
Webinars	9%	1%	6%	7%	11%	4%	6%
Online courses	18%	25%	17%	19%	21%	14%	19%
Using it in classrooms	21%	31%	29%	23%	25%	34%	27%
Storing student assessment results	28%	28%	32%	30%	21%	53%	32%

Table 5: Teachers' reported computer usage for professional purposes

³² InfoDev / Price Waterhouse Cooper (2010) Survey of ICT for education in India and South Asia [online] http://euindiacoop.org/ei/survey_of_ict_for_education_in_india_and_south_asia.htm



A teacher in Bangladesh accessing his Facebook account

SOCIAL MEDIA

According to research in 2015, social media engagement across the Asia Pacific region stands at 25 per cent of total population, who make up 52 per cent of the world's social media users. However, while these figures are impressive, further analysis reveals that South Asia only accounts for 7 per cent of these users in the wider Asia Pacific region – despite its huge population.

Source: www.go-globe.com/blog/social-media-asia/

BACKGROUND

The use of social media in South Asia has been growing steadily over the last decade, particularly with the use of Facebook. Some research suggests that it is the desire to communicate and share with others through social media which has driven people towards the internet, more than any other motivation. As is borne out by the results of the current research, the majority of users of social media in South Asia appear to access it predominantly via their mobile phones as opposed to through desktop computers or laptops.

In 2013, the Digital Empowerment Foundation in India held the first South Asia Summit on Social Media for Digital Empowerment, demonstrating that platforms such as Facebook and Twitter enable people who previously had little opportunity to voice their opinions to join debates and become part of a community beyond their physical location.³³ It is clear that the different forms of social media present invaluable opportunities for teachers in particular, as a channel for their CPD.

The use of social media as a method for teacher communication is a relatively new area with a growing body of evidence to demonstrate the positive benefits of engagement. A report published in 2011 by the Pearson Centre for Policy and Learning explores the use of social media by teachers in the UK as a self-directed form of development. Teachers and other professionals working in education participating in the study report using it in a variety of ways to learn and collaborate. Their participation inspires them to try new ideas which they believe lead to better quality education provision for their learners.³⁴

British Council project teams have also increasingly integrated social media into their teacher education programmes in recent years. In Sri Lanka, teachers and their trainers join a Facebook group for the English Teachers in Action project to share learning, ask questions and provide peer support both during and after face-to-face delivery of the programme. In India, a project aimed at secondary school English teachers has had

considerable success with creating communities of practice using Whatsapp. The Teacher Educator Conference in 2014, co-hosted by the British Council and the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad, India, showcased several presenters speaking about the use of social media platforms and the impact they have had on teachers' professional development. Papers from two of these were published in the TEC14 conference papers publication.³⁵

Educators describe the creation of a Personal Learning Network (PLN), which utilises social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp to create and access communities of practice through which to share ideas and information. While it is likely that those who establish their own online Personal Learning Network benefit the most, it is also probable that the gains are transferred beyond as these individuals share what they have learned in other more local and face-to-face interactions.

³³ <http://defindia.org/circ-2/social-media-summit/>

³⁴ McCulloch, J., McIntosh, E. and Barrett, T. (2011) *Tweeting for teachers: how can social media support teacher professional development*. Pearson Centre for Policy and Learning. [online] www.itte.org.uk/sites/default/files/Tweetingforteachers.pdf.

³⁵ www.britishcouncil.in/teacher-educator-conferences-0



'With my new phone I do not have to wait to get to a computer for many things. I see and reply to emails, Facebook, Whatsapp from anywhere.'
Private school teacher – India

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

There is clearly a need for further research into the role of social media as a facilitator for teachers' development, but early signs are positive and anecdotal evidence also suggests there is great potential. The current research demonstrates that a majority of the English language teachers that we surveyed use social media in one form or another, with access predominantly through mobile.

There is some variation across the countries, for example in the use of Whatsapp which is most popular among the teachers surveyed from India. Due to the sample sizes, we did not explore differences among age groups in detail,

but our experience and anecdotal evidence suggests that younger teachers are earlier adopters of social media and potentially more interested in the benefits it may bring with regards to professional development.

It is interesting to note that Twitter and LinkedIn – arguably the most appropriate platforms for professional engagement – are the least popular for the teachers we surveyed in the South Asia region. It is possible again that this is due to a lack of awareness about how these can be used most effectively. This suggests a need for further awareness-raising and training on how social media can be best exploited for professional purposes.

KEY FINDINGS

As reported on page 16, 56 per cent of the teachers across the region report using their mobiles to access social media platforms. This is supported by further data, where teachers were asked how often they use specific social media channels.

Overall, 64 per cent of teachers across the region report that they use Facebook either sometimes or frequently. This appears to be slightly higher for teachers from the private school sector and there is some regional variation with a range from 53 per cent in India to 75 per cent in Nepal.

The usage of other platforms is less consistent. Whatsapp is used sometimes or frequently by just 24 per cent of the overall sample. However, there is

considerable regional variation: in India, 42 per cent of teachers report using Whatsapp on a regular basis, while in Nepal this figure stands at just 13 per cent. Again here, private school teachers appear to use the platform more than those working in the government sector.

Twitter and LinkedIn are used the least of all, with overall totals of just 15 and 11 per cent respectively for teachers using either platform sometimes or frequently. There is little regional variation here, with the exception of the Nepalese teachers and their regular use of LinkedIn – this is much lower at just 3 per cent of those surveyed (see Figure 10).

In terms of their purpose for using the different social media tools, most of the teachers who use social media report

using the platforms to connect with friends and family (65 per cent overall), compared to just 41 per cent who use it to communicate with colleagues. An encouraging 24 per cent of the teachers using social media report that they use it to participate in professional interest groups.

There was some variation here between the countries, as shown in Table 6 below. Some differences also existed between government and private sector teachers, with slightly greater numbers of the latter reporting that they use social media for professional purposes (e.g. 49 per cent of the private school teachers use the platforms to connect with colleagues compared to 34 per cent of those from the government sector).

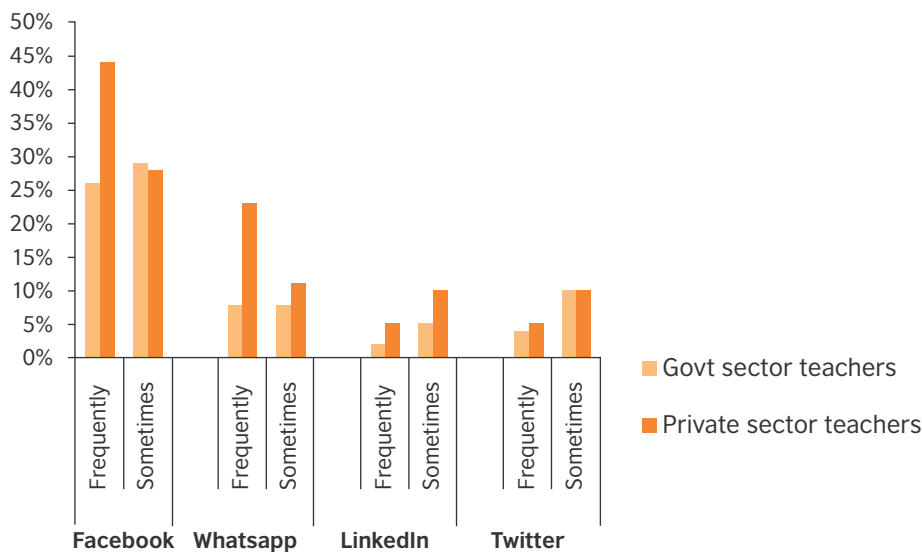


Figure 10: Frequency of social media usage, reported by teachers surveyed

	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Connect with friends and family	51%	68%	59%	79%	79%	69%
Connect with colleagues	25%	44%	42%	53%	41%	50%
Join general interest groups	23%	21%	23%	27%	31%	14%
Join professional interest groups	13%	30%	24%	36%	36%	15%

Table 6: Purposes of social media usage reported by surveyed teachers



Teachers in Pakistan participate in a workshop

'While we have put our teachers through trainings in the past, there is little follow up. We are interested in something that follows on well after the training.'
Director – private school group, India

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CPD

BACKGROUND

The benefits of teachers continuing to focus on their own professional development after their initial training are well documented. Teachers need to stay up to date with current practice and changes in policy and curriculum in order to be able to perform effectively in the classroom, and 'the desire to continue to learn' is considered to be a fundamental component in measures of overall teacher motivation.³⁶

Furthermore, research has shown that a focus on improving teacher effectiveness has a positive effect on learner outcomes. According to research in the UK by the Sutton Trust (2011: 2),³⁷ 'the difference between a very effective teacher and a poorly performing teacher is very large. For example, during one year with a very effective maths and English teacher, pupils gain 40 per cent more in their learning than they would with a poorly performing teacher.' The same report also asserts that this gain is greater for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, in his research on the sources of variance for learner achievement, John Hattie (2003)³⁸ reports that after student characteristics,

over which we generally have little control, teacher effectiveness has the greatest impact on learner outcomes. He reports that it has a larger influence than the combined effect of parental support, peer effects, school type and school leaders.

However, as India's National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009: 72)³⁹ warns, 'the expectation that ideas that are engaged with during workshops will be directly taken into the classroom for practice is misplaced. [...] Change is a slow process and it requires patience to see change on the ground.' This supports the assertion that continuing professional development is about much more than just face-to-face training sessions. Teachers need to be empowered to take responsibility for their own development, enabled through access to a variety of opportunities and resources. To achieve this, the digital channels described in this report can clearly play an important role.

Perhaps one of the most important areas of focus is to help teachers navigate through the wide range of opportunities and resources available and to identify

those which both meet their needs and are of reliable quality. This can be facilitated through the establishment of frameworks for continuing professional development. Several organisations and government departments in South Asia have been working on these in recent years. For example in Pakistan, Directorate of Staff Development in Punjab province has developed a CPD framework for its primary and secondary level teachers.⁴⁰ In India, the Centre for Teacher Accreditation is working on a similar initiative, including assessments and certification for teachers to work towards.

Internationally, the British Council has recently launched its own continuing professional development framework,⁴¹ based on extensive consultation with a range of stakeholder groups including many professionals in South Asia. Cambridge English⁴² and EAQUALS⁴³ in the UK have also developed useful frameworks to help teachers structure their CPD pathways and direct them to appropriate resources.

³⁶ Morgan, M., Kitching, K. and O'Leary, M. (2007) The psychic rewards of teaching: examining global, national and local influences on teacher motivation. *American Education Research Association Annual Meeting 2007*, April 10, Chicago, USA.

³⁷ Sutton Trust (2011) Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK – interim findings. [online] <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2teachers-impact-report-final.pdf>

³⁸ Hattie, J. (2003) Teachers make a difference: what is the research evidence? [online] file:///C:/Users/amyliightfoot/Downloads/john_hattie.pdf

³⁹ National Council for Teacher Education (2009/10) National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education. [online] www.teindia.nic.in/NCF.aspx.

⁴⁰ www.dsd.edu.pk/pages/contents/49

⁴¹ www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development/continuing-professional-development

⁴² www.cambridgeenglish.org/in/teaching-english/cambridge-english-teaching-framework/

⁴³ <http://eaquals.org/news/item/19191>

'We struggle to find good English teachers. If there is anything that can improve the efficiency of English teachers, that will be good for the students and the school.'

Principal, private school – Bangladesh



Teachers discuss a lesson observation in Bihar, India

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

The current research has demonstrated that teachers are most interested in personalised professional development opportunities that involve communication and sharing – TV and radio were both seen to be considerably less attractive as channels for education and learning, largely because of the lack of interactivity. This supports other studies which have shown that being able to participate as part of a learning community is one of the key factors in successful, sustained development.⁴⁴ Most of the teachers indicated that computer and mobile would be their preferred channels for accessing resources and content.

The vast majority of the teachers surveyed show an interest in developing both their English language proficiency

skills as well as their teaching skills, with a particular interest in the former. There is some variation across the region in terms of the specific areas that they would prefer to focus on (e.g. aspects of language or specific areas of teaching).

With regard to language proficiency development, a desire for better productive skills appears to be a priority for most. This may reflect a lack of emphasis on the development of these skills during the teachers' own language education to date. As far as teaching skills are concerned, there is again some variety, but the results suggest the most common areas of interest are exploring teaching and learning materials and improving their own ICT knowledge and skills.

⁴⁴ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team (2015) Investing in teachers is investing in learning: a prerequisite for the transformative power of education. Background paper for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development. [online] <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002338/233897E.pdf>

'I am looking for access to other teachers or experts who can help me when I have any questions or clarifications.'

Government school teacher – India

'When I find something interesting online, I share with other teachers in my school the next day.'

Government school teacher – India

KEY FINDINGS

Ninety-five per cent of the teachers surveyed across the region indicated that they would like to improve their English language skills. This ranged from 85 per cent of government sector teachers in Afghanistan, to 100 per cent of government school teachers in Bangladesh. A slightly smaller proportion of the participants reported that they would like to improve their English language teaching skills – an average of

88 per cent across the region, ranging from 78 per cent of the teachers from Afghanistan to 98 per cent of the teachers from Nepal. Despite these minor variations, it appears that there is an overall desire among the teachers surveyed to develop the skills they need to do their jobs effectively.

Closer questioning around the specific areas that the teachers want to improve

reveals that the most popular aspects of language proficiency that they would like to improve are speaking (76 per cent), vocabulary (63 per cent) and pronunciation (58 per cent). Table 7 shows the relative popularity of the different areas of language, with those at the top of greatest priority, down to lowest priority at the bottom of each column.

Afghanistan	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Speaking	Speaking	Speaking	Pronunciation	Speaking	Speaking
Vocabulary	Listening	Vocabulary	Speaking	Vocabulary	Vocabulary
Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Grammar	Pronunciation
Grammar	Pronunciation	Grammar	Writing	Listening	Grammar
Listening	Writing	Writing	Listening	Pronunciation	Listening
Writing	Reading	Listening	Grammar	Reading	Writing
Reading	Grammar	Reading	Reading	Writing	Reading

Table 7: Surveyed teachers' priority areas for development of English language proficiency skills

An examination of the number of teachers who responded for each of the categories in each country reveals that those surveyed in Nepal and Sri Lanka appear to be the most enthusiastic.

Exploring the areas of teaching skills that the teachers are interested in developing also suggests that those from the same countries (Nepal and Sri Lanka) are again the most eager, with larger numbers of

teachers reporting that they want to develop their skills in the areas shown in Table 8 below. The percentages of teachers indicating interest in these are also given here.

	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Exploring teaching and learning materials/resources	68%	73%	62%	76%	36%	81%
Planning lessons and courses	59%	53%	44%	50%	37%	61%
Understanding your learners	44%	34%	36%	54%	31%	48%
Supporting differently abled learners	29%	25%	28%	55%	28%	50%
Managing lessons/Classroom management	48%	35%	33%	50%	15%	44%
Using technology for teaching	50%	56%	57%	70%	44%	75%
Evaluating and assessing your learners	25%	16%	37%	41%	15%	44%

Table 8: Surveyed teachers' priority areas for development of English language teaching skills

'I would like to know what worked and what did not for other teachers.'

Private school teacher – Bangladesh

'I am open to paying for something that is of quality and coming from a credible source.'

Private school teacher – Nepal

Greatest interest appears to be in exploring teaching and learning materials or resources, closely followed by using technology for teaching (although the latter may be influenced by the known focus of this research). Conversely, there appears to be less interest in developing skills related to assessment or supporting differently abled learners. The reasons behind these preferences could form the basis of an interesting follow-up study.

Perhaps most interesting given the primary focus of this report is the data collected with regard to the teachers' preferred channels for improving their English and teaching skills. Corroborating the data in earlier sections of the report, the teachers surveyed appear to favour computers and mobile as key channels for improving their skills (both language and teaching). Overall, just over 50 per cent of the respondents suggested that computers are either their first or second

preference for access to content, followed by just under 50 per cent for mobile. Radio was the least popular, with only a fifth giving this as a preferred choice. Television was higher at around 40 per cent.

Results from the focus group discussions and interviews with other stakeholders also suggested that the teachers felt that the majority of their CPD is focused around short periods of face-to-face training at the start of the year rather than a more staggered approach that allows them to develop through the entire year. It was suggested that greater follow-up, with more in-classroom engagement would be more beneficial in the longer term.

In addition, feedback from the teachers indicated the importance of establishing a sense of community and collaboration for successful engagement and to inspire

participation in available initiatives. The ability to share experiences is a clear preference for many of the participants and they recognised that this can be further facilitated through the use of technology.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, further research into teachers' willingness to pay for content is necessary. However, it is encouraging to note that during the focus groups some of the teachers indicated that they would be willing to invest if the quality of the content was high. Coupled with clever incentivisation for teachers and the establishment of safe, collaborative platforms, developing high-quality content is likely to be well received by the teachers surveyed through this research and potentially to others like them across the region.



A teacher displays homemade mobile phone speakers for use in the classroom

RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the key findings of the research are that access to technology is largely similar for the teachers surveyed across the region. The majority of the teachers are positive about using technology to further their continuing professional development and are particularly interested in those which offer interactivity with other educators and which will foster a sense of community and collaboration. Computers and mobile phones are currently the most preferred channels for accessing resources, content and discussions among these teachers. However, there also appears to be low levels of digital literacy and ICT skills among the group surveyed which needs to be addressed.

Based on these findings, the following tentative recommendations are made, bearing in mind the limitations of the findings with regard to generalisability across the region. These recommendations are aimed at policy makers as well as content creators and service providers looking to produce resources or other professional development initiatives for English language teachers in South Asia.

1 Teachers are enthusiastic but systems of incentivisation are recommended in order to motivate them to participate in programmes and access self-directed resources. This could be either systemic, at the state or district level (for government school teachers), or driven by school leadership (for private school teachers). It could also be integrated within the resources, for example through the use of gamification, certification or digital badges.

2 Teachers need support from school leadership and their peers to both

undertake professional development opportunities but also to put into practice what they are learning. School leaders need to be involved in the promotion of opportunities and encourage teachers to participate, offering guidance where needed. Indeed, whole system support is needed from the government level down to ensure that quality professional development opportunities are prioritised, through digital or other means.

3 Teachers need to develop their ICT skills and digital literacy. One way this can be achieved is by ensuring access to existing technology in schools. Many of the teachers in our study reported that there are often problems with maintenance or permission to use computer labs, for example. In some schools, mobile phones are banned, meaning that teachers are unable to use the potential that these offer as a resource within their classrooms.

4 We need to be creative about how we develop digital content and resources for teachers so that it can sit on multiple channels, depending on teacher preferences for access. Clearly, different channels will enable different levels of interactivity and functionality, but core content can potentially be similar.

5 Not all uses of digital need to be high tech. There are opportunities to support teachers to use technology in ways that require minimal resources but which can provide significant benefits for them and for their learners. For example, there are ways of making low-cost speakers and low-cost projectors using mobile phones and household items (see photo above).

6 Further research is needed to identify the degree to which teachers are willing to pay for resources to develop either their English language proficiency or teaching skills. It is clear that the potential payment models are still developing within the region so this will need some careful consideration by any organisation hoping to monetise the delivery of services or products to a similar group.

7 The development of Open Educational Resources may be one effective way to meet teachers' needs in a way that is more flexible and accessible for the market. Several projects are exploring this at the moment, including The Open University in the UK's TESS-India project. MOOCs, such as those offered by the British Council and others in partnership with Futurelearn,⁴⁵ are another related area for development within the region, enabling large numbers of teachers to access high-quality online training for free, including interaction with large numbers of other professionals from around the world.

8 The importance of community and the benefits gained from collaboration and peer support should not be underestimated. Technology offers a variety of tools for this purpose (e.g. social media platforms) which can be exploited either independently or alongside other programmes.

9 Finally, the evidence base for the specific types of technology which best aid teachers' development and learning is relatively small. There is a need for further research to explore the benefits and challenges related to particular interventions.

⁴⁵ <https://www.futurelearn.com/partners/british-council>



CONCLUSION

Our research paints a largely positive picture about these teachers' current access to technology and how this might be exploited for the purposes of professional development. In particular, the use of mobile phones and social media may be key drivers behind a possible shift towards less top-down in-service education and towards a more individually curated pathway of professional development. However, while access to information and resources for many teachers around the world is greater than ever before, there are serious risks that English language teachers in South Asia are not able to reap the benefits because of a lack of digital literacy, ICT skills and, in some cases, access to devices on which to engage with content.

Our secondary research of the wider context suggests that access will continue to grow across the region and that infrastructure will become more widely and reliably available as governments and other key stakeholders in all of the six South Asian countries surveyed commit to improvements. It is an exciting time to be working with teachers, as technology offers previously unavailable opportunities for even rural-based educators to develop their skills in a personalised way using high-quality content. As well as taking advantage of their current habits, it is clear that we also need to encourage teachers to develop these further, supporting them to experiment with new ideas as well as new technology.

While bearing in mind the current scenario, it is also important to look to the future and ensure that new interventions are ambitious and creative. With the right support in terms of skill development and access, some inspiration and motivation, we are confident that teachers will rise to the challenge of working in new ways to ensure their continued professional development. More highly skilled, motivated teachers working within an established community for support and collaboration will play a vital role in achieving the ultimate goal of increased quality in the classroom.

FURTHER READING

- Recent research into the use of technology by early adopting teachers in India

Central Square Foundation (2015) *Teaching with technology: early EdTech adoption by Indian school teachers*. [online] www.centralsquarefoundation.org/pdf/Teaching-with-Technology-Early-EdTech-Adoption-by-Indian-School-Teachers.pdf

- Summary of approaches to technology usage for teachers' CPD, incorporating a literature review and case studies

Gaible, E. and Burns, M. (2005) *Using Technology to Train Teachers: Appropriate Uses of ICT for Teacher Professional Development in Developing Countries*. Washington, DC: infoDev / World Bank. [online] www.infodiv.org/infodiv-files/resource/InfodivDocuments_13.pdf

- Review of edtech projects aiming to answer the question 'What is the evidence that the use of edtech, by teachers or students, impacts teaching and learning practices, or learning outcomes?'

Power, T., Gater, R., Grant, C. and Winters, N. (2014) *Educational technology topic guide*. Health and Education Advice and Resource Team. [online] www.heart-resources.org/topic/educational-technology/

- Detailed overview of ICT in education in South Asia, including individual country profiles

InfoDev / Price Waterhouse Cooper (2010) *Survey of ICT for education in India and South Asia*. [online] http://euindiacoop.org/el/survey_of_ict_for_education_in_india_and_south_asia.htm

- Report exploring the link between computer usage and learning outcomes

OECD (2015) *Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection*. PISA, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264239555-en>

- Report with case studies exploring social media usage for CPD of education professionals in the UK

McCulloch, J., McIntosh, E. and Barrett, T. (2011) *Tweeting for teachers: how can social media support teacher professional development*. Pearson Centre for Policy and Learning. [online] www.itte.org.uk/sites/default/files/Tweetingforteachers.pdf

- Explorations of the effectiveness of mobile to facilitate the development of teachers' skills

UNESCO (2012) *Mobile learning for teachers in Asia: exploring the potential of mobile technologies to support teachers and improve practice*. [online] <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002162/216284E.pdf>

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