



BBC JANALA

2013 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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OFFERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING TO MILLIONS

By BBC Media Action

Project URL: bbcjanala.com

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phone handsets are plentiful: over 95% of the population has access to one of 95 million handsets in circulation.

BBC Janala has turned the mobile phone into a low-cost educational tool, offering hundreds of three-minute English lessons and SMS quizzes to thousands of people each week.

By dialing 3000 from a mobile handset, almost anyone can learn English at their own pace: the mobile service tracks learners' progress, allowing them to pick up where they left off in any spare moment. Lessons are structured around a progressive English syllabus, which lies at the heart of learning materials available in other ways too.

The mobile service is reinforced by an interactive website; television programmes; four lessons per week in leading Bangla newspaper, Prothom Alo; and hundreds of local learner meet-ups and English learning clubs. Bangladesh's six mobile operators offer a greatly reduced tariff of 50 Paisa (£0.004) per minute for calls to the service.

The project is designed to help adults - 15-45 year olds - at the early stages of learning English. A particular focus is people living in the poorest rural areas of Bangladesh, with the aim to develop better language skills and so improve their chances to work and to take part in civic life. An extension into higher level English language, aimed at specific industry sectors, is in development.

BBC Janala is the largest, multiplatform innovation to improve basic English language skills anywhere in the developing world. It is part of English In Action, a programme supported by the UK Government that aims to improve the English skills of 25 million people in Bangladesh by 2017. The mobile learning platform it has created could be widely applied throughout the developing stems.

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