



A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

## REPORT ON HORNBY-FUNDED TEACHER ASSOCIATION PROJECT

**Title:** Connecting underprivileged children and tertiary students through cross-age teaching: a hand-in-hand ELT approach

**Country:** Bangladesh

**Dates:**

Phase I: November 2019–March 2020

Phase II: January 2021–April 2021

### 1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

There are numerous issues that need to be addressed to enhance the inclusive lifelong learning of the primary and tertiary students of Bangladesh. However, in order to attain a tangible goal, both target groups deserve attention because one determines the foundation of education while the other represents the harvest of years of teaching.

In Bangladesh, there are different types of schools helping young children obtain mainstream primary education. However, those who are unable to attend privately funded or well-placed public schools, and who come from families earning as little as £70 a month, do not get an enjoyable learning experience, which results in dropouts, social and/or gender (digital) divide and inequity. The 'Bangladesh Education Fact Sheet 2020' report prepared for UNICEF highlighted that the increased dropout rates of male primary children at urban and semi-urban bustees and at grade 4 requires more investigation and effort to help sustain their interest in education. Hence, we chose to teach English to the primary children of garment workers at a designated school named Ashraf Textile Mills.

Secondly, the findings of 'Bangladesh Tertiary Education Sector Review: Skills and Innovation for Growth' by the World Bank in 2019, suggested a dismaying prospect for graduates in Bangladesh following prolonged and frustrating joblessness among this group. The absence of academia/industry links and innovation were held majorly responsible for the inability of this group to be part of the increasingly globalised world. Therefore, this bi-fold project aimed to benefit the two target groups by creating an enjoyable learning experience for the underprivileged children taught by our young adult beneficiaries – final year undergraduate students.

Finally, the 2013 article written by Prithvi Shrestha identified that many primary learners shared negative perceptions of the existing story-telling activity, finding it teacher-led and non-communicative. Therefore, this project also aimed to emphasise student-led storytelling activities focusing on social change and global peace.

Unfortunately, however, from March 2020 onwards we were unable to proceed with our proposed plan due to school closures as a result of Covid-19, so we decided to carry on and teach street children. Some of these children's parents are sex workers or beggars; some



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have no parents; a few have lost one of the parents to drug-addiction or through second marriage. Having no prior experience of teaching children from this community, we took assistance from the Founder, Dr Towfique E-Elahi, of a station school named Let There be Light and their representative, Ms Rina Akter, of an association, working at Kamlapur Railway Station. Moreover, since these children had no English literacy, our learning aims were also simplified to the English alphabet and basic vocabulary and pronunciation.

## **2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The overall objectives of this project were to:

1. involve the underserved community in the learning process through active participation;
2. engage the tertiary students in community work through voluntary teaching;
3. attain enhanced graduate attributes through cross-age teaching.

During Phase I (November 2019–March 2020), we hoped that our students would have enhanced English reading comprehension and the ability to participate in short talks and story-telling activities. However, we could only conduct two classes before the school closure.

During Phase II, we taught the street children with no ability to read and write in English, let alone speak. Hence, our primary objectives were to introduce the English alphabet, commonly used vocabulary, and basic pronunciation. The specific objectives were to:

1. help them write their names in English;
2. recognise and pronounce some common vocabulary;
3. raise awareness of moral values using story-telling activities.

## **3. PROJECT MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLES**

The team members from BELTA were selected according to the guidelines of the Advisor and then-President Mr. Harunur Rashid Khan (2019) and the newly elected President (2020) Dr Rubina Khan. Professor AMM Hamidur Rahman was added later on the advice of the BELTA team since he is one of the founder members of BELTA and the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science of the institution that facilitated the daylong training of the student teachers.

### **Team Leader**

*Name:* Rabeya Binte Habib

*Position:* Assistant Professor, Daffodil International University; Publications Secretary 2019–2021, BELTA

*Responsibilities:* Proposer, organiser, trainer, materials developer and coordinator of all actions relating to the project

### **BELTA team members**

*Name:* Dr Arifa Rahman

*Position:* Advisor, BELTA

*Name:* Dr Rubina Khan

*Position:* President, BELTA



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*Name:* Harunur Rashid Khan

*Position:* Immediate Past President, BELTA

*Name:* Dr Akter Jahan

*Position:* Treasurer 2019–2021, BELTA & Hornby Alumni

*Responsibilities:* trainer, materials reviewer

*Name:* Professor, AMM Hamidur Rahman

*Position:* Facilitator; Lifetime member, BELTA and an Advisor of BELTA Journal; Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Daffodil International University

*Responsibilities:* trainer, facilitator

### Student Teachers

Four final year undergraduates from Daffodil International University (DIU) were selected to be the student teachers of this project. These students had previous experience of peer tutoring through the Students Teaching Students (STS) project arranged since 2016 by the Team Leader and proposer of this project. The student teachers were:

*Name:* Md. Samsus Sajeedin

*Name:* Tasnim Hadiya

*Name:* Umme Habiba Nafsi Zahan Lima

*Name:* Kazi Rima Akter

*Responsibilities:* Materials developer, teacher, researchers (they conducted surveys in the field to facilitate the work)

## 4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

### Phase I (Pre-Pandemic)

Activity	Dates
Initial screening for the selection of student teachers	November 2019
Training sessions and meetings with the selected student teachers	November–December 2019
Baseline survey (students and two English teachers of Ashraf Textile Mills)	8 December 2019
Daylong training session of the student teachers	11 January 2020
School visits	February 2020 (initial survey, consent form distribution and two lessons)
First pandemic cases and subsequent lockdowns in Bangladesh	8 March 2020 onward

### Phase II (During Pandemic)

Activity	Dates
Communications to look for an alternative school	January 2021



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Contract with association: Let There Be Light	February 2021
Initial survey	13 March 2021
Completion of the fieldwork	March 2021–April 2021
Strict lockdown in Bangladesh	22 April 2021

## 5. EVALUATION

For the first time, BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association) has participated in a project that had an aim to empower university students. Accepting our proposal which included university students, (some of whom may make teaching their future profession) in teaching English to disadvantaged children has been an important step in BELTA's future work to improve English teaching and learning in the country. According to the BELTA website, BELTA is a non-profit forum for '*ELT practitioners connected to the teaching and learning of English in Bangladesh*'. What is more, it was four senior members of the BELTA executive committee who took the time to train them on a daylong training session (see photos below). This beginning may in the future lead to further planning and implementation of student development and may contribute in reaching the long-term goal of overall enhanced English language teaching and learning across the country.



The BELTA Hornby Trust TA Project team with a few students of the department of English, DIU on 11 January 2020. From left to right: Umme Habiba Nafsi Zahan Lima (student teacher); Kazi Rima Akter (student teacher); A M M Hamidur Rahman (Facilitator, Dean, FHSS, DIU); Team Leader: Rabeya Binte Habib; Professor Arifa Rahman (BELTA Advisor); some students; Md. Samsus Sajeedin (student teacher); Harunur Rashid Khan (Immediate Past President, BELTA)



Hornby alumnus and BELTA Treasurer 2019–2021 Dr Akhter Jahan during her training session; Tasnim Hadiya (student teacher) on the left.

As for the wider community, impact evaluation was conducted by two means with three different target communities: (1) underprivileged children studying at a mainstream lower-end school; (2) street children including children with and without parents; and (3) the student teachers.

Due to the pandemic, no significant conclusions were reached with the first group apart from their level of English reading proficiency – only one student out of 50 was able to read the short story we provided. (To hear the most proficient reader, click on the following link: <https://www.powtoon.com/c/bb8Zw1DYi2A/1/m>) Most students remained silent when we asked them to read while two out of three were able to read a few words. These findings echo the findings of the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) 2019 study where only 8% of children were able to read an English sentence from their textbook.

The images below illustrate our efforts to assess the students' current level of English proficiency in reading and speaking, and the varied teaching/learning strategies used in the two lessons we were able to hold with the students of Ashraf Textile Mills before the 'new normal'. We evaluated the students by various means such as a pre-test, post-test, worksheets, games, and interactive talks in class following our baseline survey at Ashraf Textile Mills on 8 December, 2019.

## Classes



A Class on Syllable



A class on Gender using real life example and multi-media



Group work



Students taking part in pair work

*The varied teaching/learning strategies used including individual and group work, and multimedia*

The images below illustrate the initial survey conducted with street children on 13 March, 2021, how we met and planned online, and the activities (e.g. games, craft work, worksheets and multimodal materials) we used to teach the alphabet, vocabulary and pronunciation.

**HORNBY TRUST TA PROJECT**  
2019-2020 (extended)  
"Connecting Underprivileged Children and Tertiary Students through Cross Age Teaching: A Hand-in-hand ELL Approach"  
Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

**Report for the Baseline Survey**

Personal information:

Child's Name: <i>Hridoy Khan</i>	Profession: <i>Dead body Transportation</i>
Gender: <i>Male</i>	Age: <i>12</i>
Father's Name: <i>Salamah Khan (Caline)</i>	Profession: <i>Transport</i>
Mother's Name: <i>Shoona Begum</i>	Profession: <i>Home wife</i>
Address: <i>Deathbody Room</i>	Contact Number:

1. Have you ever been to a school?  
 Yes  No

2. Do you know Bengali Alphabets?  
 Yes  No

3. Do you recognize English alphabets?  
 Yes  No

4. Can you spell simple Bengali words (like- কাকা, মৌ, খাবা, গরুর)?  
 Yes  No

5. Can you spell simple English words (like- book, shop, Apple, Pan)?  
 Yes  No

6. Can you write in Bengali (at least your name)?  
 Yes  No  
Sample writing:

7. Can you write in English (at least your name)?  
 Yes  No  
Sample writing:

8. Can you communicate with others in Bengali?  
 Yes  No

9. Can you communicate with others in English?  
 Yes  No

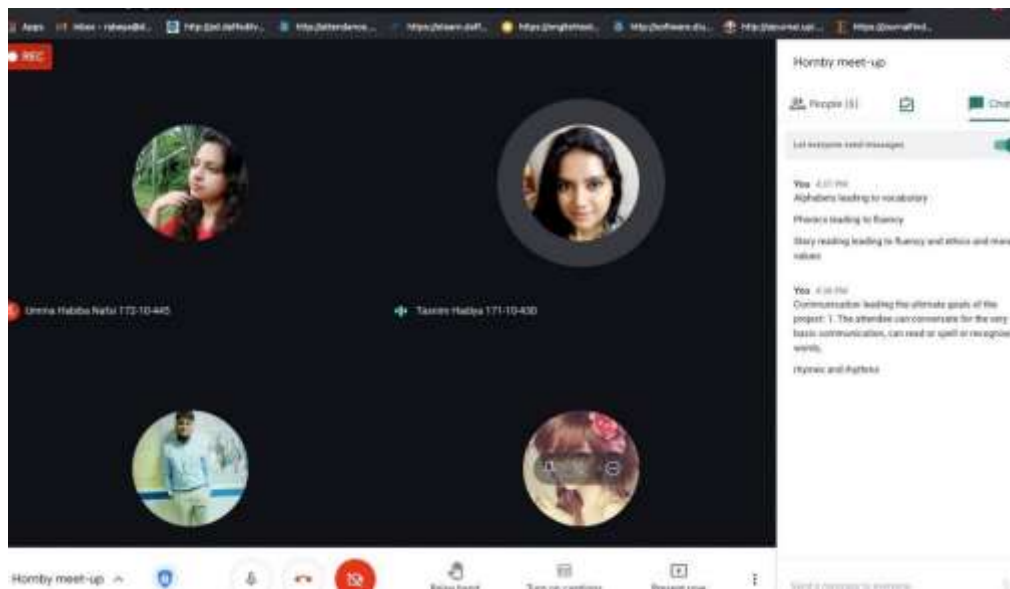
10. What you have learnt so far from your school?  
a) *only no disturb*  
b)  
c)

11. Can you recite any Bengali rhyme or tell any story?  
 Yes  No

12. Can you recite any English rhyme or tell any story?  
 Yes  No

Would you or your parents like to give us the permission to take your photos and videos and use these in our printed and online documents?  
 Yes  No

Example of a completed initial survey report



One of our online teaching planning meetings



*Using multimedia*



*Group work*



*Playing a game*



*Stationery and book donations*

## **Outcomes of our teaching at Phase II**

Since these children were totally unable to read and write in English, we tried our best to help them write their names, say and write an introductory sentence, know and recognise some basic vocabulary, identify and craft objects with the vocabulary, such as 'balloon', 'candy', 'fan', and finally write them on paper or on the worksheet.



*A student on day 10 writing his name in a full sentence on the board  
(\*Disclaimer: Non-compliance of wearing a mask properly)*



*Students doing classwork and solving a worksheet in English  
(\*Disclaimer: Non-compliance of wearing a mask properly)*

\*Details of the disclaimer can be found in section 8.

For the third group, involving the brilliant minds of tertiary students as student teachers, submission of reflection and peer observation reports were used to assess their learning. Submissions were done via email and hardcopy forms before Covid-19 and then online during Phase II.

Their reflections demonstrate their understanding of how to plan lessons for diverse formal and informal learning contexts and learners, the importance of using an appropriate approach, classroom management, empathy, moral values and gratitude for the blessings bestowed on them, which many do not have. The reflections also recognise the value of peer learning and observation.

*“Before conducting my first class I observed one of my colleagues’ Tasnim Hadiya’s class. The way she was co-operating and interacting with her students was very smooth and effortless. That day I observed that a complete Direct method or CLT will not be appropriate for them. I also observed that they get easily frustrated and bored. To draw their attention was really a tough job.” [Umme Habiba Nafsi Jahan Lima]*

*“After finishing this project, I can say that I have learned a lot. ....Thirdly and most importantly, I have got some lifetime lessons like- not complaining about silly things. We should always be positive and thankful in every situation.” [Umme Habiba Nafsi Jahan Lima]*

They also observed that it was the younger street children who were more interested in learning, suggesting that future projects should focus on encouraging this age group.

*“On 13th March 2021 ... we interacted with them as friendly as possible so that they could be comfortable sharing their stories with us. We observed that the young children were much more attentive than the grown up children. There were students of different age ranges. Some were coolies, some were beggars, some were tokai and various types of child labourers.” [Tasnim Hadiya]*





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*“On our first visit, we experienced a cross-age group who hardly can spell and write their names in English. One significant thing that we found is, rather than the grown ones (age 12–15), 7–9-year-old children are more responsive towards alphabets and their sounds and their picking up capability is astonishing. Moreover, the grown-up ones showed less interest in learning a new language than the young children.” [Md Samsus Sajeedin]*

Moreover, the student teachers' strength and drive to achieve the lesson aims, and their understanding of the value of education not only for the children's future but for their moral upbringing was clearly evident in Tasnim Hadiay's reflection report:

*“On March 19th, we headed for the first class conducted by me. I was as nervous as the previous day but was confident to some extent as I knew that I am good at public speaking; on top of that I got along very well with the students. Though when I started, I found almost every face new but did not let the fact bother me and tried my best to achieve the lesson objectives. It was a heavenly experience. Gradually, I noticed that students were enjoying my class, performing activities but at the same time creating rifts in between class activities. That day I learnt no matter what age group you belong to, if you do not get proper education and guidance you will get involved in fights with a person even 10 years younger for no reason. I got to witness a physical fight between a girl who had a baby with a boy who was more than 7–8 years younger than her.”*

Finally, I would also like to share how another student teacher wrote in her reflection report that she had learned for a lifetime and will return to these kinds of children to teach them further if she gets another opportunity:

*“I have learnt an unforgettable experience. This lifetime experience has taught me to be strong, to keep going on in hardship too, to endure, to keep faith, to dream big, to have patience, to be kind and to be content and showing gratitude. I will keep them in my mind and will try to be a better human being. If I ever get any chance to help children like them, I will try to help as much as possible. So this experience will definitely help me to grow as a better person.” [Kazi Rima Akter]*

She also wrote that despite the experience being hard, she still wished to teach them further, which clearly is an indication that our student teachers want to contribute more to society:

*“We saw many potential students while teaching. I wish we could get them from start to finish. Then we could achieve our goal more successfully. The students have potential in them, have thrust for learning as well as for food. On the last day, they were asking us when we would go there again and in which time. We were feeling sad to say goodbye to them. When I was taking a survey of the students, a boy told me that he wanted to study more and if anyone would take them to study, it would be much better.”*

## **6. EXPENDITURE**

Due to the pandemic and the changing context and situation, most of the planned expenditure had to be re-thought. When we started Phase I before Covid-19, no significant



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amount was allocated to transportation or online communication, but in the event we had to take health and safety measures for the safety of the student teachers who travelled out of Dhaka to the Kamlapur Railway Station. Also, since we had some remaining money, we decided to donate some stationery and books to the street children's school and reward and encourage the student teachers for their efforts and cooperation during this difficult time by presenting them with gift vouchers.

**Note:** 1 GBP=109 BDT

<b>Phase 1: Before Covid-19</b>				
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total cost BDT</b>	<b>Cost in GBP</b>
Daylong training	1	12	2400	22.02
Food during the introductory visit, initial survey and two classes	4	50	6650	61.00
Materials	4	50 per session	2791	25.61
<b>Phase I total cost</b>			<b>11,841</b>	<b>108.63</b>
<b>Phase II: During Covid-19</b>				
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total cost BDT</b>	<b>Cost in GBP</b>
Transportation to and from venue *Due to Covid-19, a privately rented car took student teachers to Kamlapur Railway station from their home in Gazipur	Day 1–Day 10	3,800	38,000	348.62
Sanitizer *H&S measure		240	240	2.20
Internet Data Support *For online communication and multimedia support in class		Data connection	1,940	17.79
Mobile communication			500	4.58
Masks *H&S Measure			380	3.49
Snacks	Day 1–Day 10	2,500	25,000	229.36
Let There Be Light's Representative Cost *As per the contract	Day 1–Day 10	500 per day X 10	5,000	45.87
Materials Cost (printing, photocopying, chocolates etc.)	Day 1–Day 10	6,903	6,903	63.33
Conveyance (local transport usage while buying materials)			500	4.58
Breakfast for student teachers *Since they travelled far from another city to the outskirts of Dhaka city, they had taken their breakfast only for 2 days out of 10 visits			850	7.79



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Certificates for student teachers and the Team Leader (designing, printing, and postal cost) *Due to Covid-closure, these will be posted			1,000	9.17
E-banner design for the upcoming BELTA webinar on the sharing session of Hornby Project *Online event		1 E-banner	500	4.58
Token of appreciation to the student teachers *For their resilience and dedication	4	1000 BDT gift voucher	4,000	36.70
Donation to the street children through Let There Be Light: stationery (pens, notebooks, books, pencils, erasers, etc.) *As a token of appreciation			4,000	36.70
<b>Phase II total cost</b>			<b>88,813.00</b>	<b>814.76</b>
<b>Total Cost of the Project</b>				<b>923.39</b>
<b>Balance in BELTA account</b>				<b>+ 76.61</b>

## 7. DISSEMINATION TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

Although it has been repeatedly mentioned that the project progress was hampered due to Covid-19, the pandemic actually helped the project to reach a wider audience. Fortunately, as Team Leader I was invited to a panel presentation of the project by Africa TESOL and TESOL (USA), where I gave a session titled 'What's Happening Globally? Advocacy Among TESOL Affiliates' at its 2020 TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit.

### Panel Presentation

Panelist of 2020 TESOL Virtual Advocacy and Policy Summit held on June 22-24

Presented about BELTA's activities and the Hornby Project as its Team Leader



### Panel Presentation

Panelist of Africa TESOL Webinar held on June 30 titled Spotlight on Current Hornby Projects

Presented about the Hornby Project as its Team Leader. The project involves few students of English department in the internationally funded project.



*Details of the presentations at the 2020 TESOL Advocacy Summit and Africa TESOL Webinar*

I received several comments from the audience at Africa TESOL about the uniqueness of the project with respect to its impact on the student teachers. I still remember a comment made by the moderator of the event who commended the project and its impact on student teachers' employment readiness mentioning the common saying that the project can be an example of attaining solutions to graduate employability issues by saying "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." Dr Martin Wedell also shared positive remarks about the innovation of the project and the detailed reflections of the student teachers.



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Our student teachers have already been praised by many at BELTA, DIU, and the facilitators of the association named Let There Be Light, where we conducted Phase II. After the completion of the fieldwork, the Founder of the association sent a WhatsApp text commending the dedication of these young brains.



WhatsApp Text from the Let There Be Light Founder  
Newsletter

### Successful Completion of the Fieldwork of Hornby Trust TA Project

A BELTA team led by Ms Rabeya Binte Habib under the guidance of BELTA Advisor, President, Immediate Past President and a Hornby Alumni, has completed the fieldwork of Hornby Trust TA Project 2019-2021 (extended due to COVID) titled 'Connecting Underprivileged Children and Tertiary Students through Cross Age Teaching: A Hand-in-hand in ELT Approach'. The team consisted of four final year undergraduate students of Daffodil International University who taught several English lessons to the underprivileged children of RMG workers at Ashraf Textile Mills School before pandemic and the street children at Kamplapur Railway station during COVID-19 facilitated by a voluntary association named Light of Hope.



Fig: A student writing his name on board

The team incorporated the hygiene and safety measures of WHO regarding covid

Report of the Project in the BELTA

Moreover, in order to reach the wider English teaching fraternity of the country and beyond, we shared the news of the fieldwork completion of our project in the quarterly BELTA E-newsletter in June 2021. You can find the complete news at <https://www.belta-bd.org/newsletter-current>

Finally, there are two further upcoming sessions on the project report: the first being the monthly BELTA Webinar on 29 August as part of the 'BELTA Webinar Series No. 11' and the second at Daffodil International University (DIU)'s Campus – a TV event titled 'Success Stories of Our Students' arranged by HRDI, DIU.



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**BELTA Webinar Series No 11**  
**Cross-age teaching for social and emotional learning and contribution: A new dimension to student engagement**  
Student Teachers:  
Ms. Samira Sayeeda, Tazkia Akbar, Liana Nabou Nafis Zahon Liana, Razi Rana Akter  
Speaker:  
**MS. RABEYA BINTE HABIB**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Daffodil International University  
Meeting ID: 639 8186 2809  
Password: 922154  
Sunday, 29 August 2021  
8:00pm - 9:00pm  
BST 7:00 pm  
Organized by: Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association

*BELTA webinar on our project report*

The second event at DIU has been delayed because two of our student teachers were due to start their postgraduate studies in Norway and Canada in September 2021. However, since one of them had to defer it till December 2021 (again due to the Covid situation in Bangladesh), we are now planning to hold the event in November 2021.

## 8. OVERALL REFLECTIONS

As Team Leader, I had to play all roles mentioned in section 3 but what made my contribution more challenging was the arrival of the pandemic. At one stage, I thought that we might need to call off the project, surrender to the pandemic and submit an incomplete report. Immediately the pandemic hit the world, I was baffled with my own role at my workplace. Though I had to take up the responsibility of being a member of the Online Support Team at my workplace, which was announced in March 2020, once I got settled with my added responsibilities I contacted the Head Teacher of Ashraf Textile Mills hoping that we could conduct our classes online since he had responded positively about the online project completion possibility. Later, however, we discovered that most of the students were not having classes and the attendance ratio at their infrequent online classes was only 1 or 2 out of 45 or 50 registered students. Hence, we planned to wait.

Once I realised that this was like 'waiting for Godot' due to the prolonged school closures, I started to look for an alternative, and luckily came across an initiative from a colleague of mine at DIU who was teaching street children. Then we resumed our work in March 2021 and finished it before the country-wide lockdown on 22 April 2021.

What amazed me was my student teachers' resilience to the odd situation and their sincerest efforts to complete the project within the stipulated time. Working with a person who looks for every detail and careful measures was not an easy task for them. My strength was the dedicated project team members without whom it would never have seen the light.

Sadly, on the second day, quite a few of the children didn't show up and thereafter attendance was sporadic due to them being street children. Nevertheless, we found that



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snacks and lunch helped to get some of them, and some others, back to the lessons. At our first meeting, we had made it mandatory to wear a mask properly all the time but this was not quite possible. We provided them with fresh masks on each visit but quite a few complained about breathing issues and refused to join our classes. Our student teachers tried their level best to make the children wear masks and tried to maintain social distancing during classes, although it was a difficult task at the country's largest and most crowded railway station. Nevertheless, we provided them with masks and sanitizer and ourselves wore masks and maintained all health and safety guidelines provided by WHO. We also made sure to keep track of these children to check if any of them had any health issues during or within two weeks after our visits. Finally, none of our participants, including the underprivileged children and our student teachers, contracted Covid-19. A short clip of an English alphabet and vocabulary class will best depict our efforts and the obstacles which we could not handle well due to time constraints and the fear of another sudden lockdown, which would make it an unfinished story. The following clip of our class can help one understand the scenario:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-iKdMD2fp3f3ISUv1hEsAjlRbwxd2SaP/view>

If any other TA or group is interested in undertaking a project of cross-age teaching for social and emotional learning, I would advise them to train and fully advise the student teachers of all possible situations and contingency plans as I did while training these students from November 2019 to January 2020. Four of the student teachers who were initially selected later dropped out for personal reasons. It was difficult but I waited until I had a team completely dedicated to working voluntarily and selflessly.

Finally, since the beneficiaries included students, as Team Leader I needed to be really understanding, empathetic, and tactful while handling young children and young adults of varied backgrounds. One needs to be very careful when working with children from a disadvantaged community.

Also, getting parental consent for participation and use of photos was a challenge in Phase II for us; hence, we took parental consent for the children without parents from the children, the Founder and the representative of Let There Be Light, since they were responsible for these children's participation. As the parents are illiterate, they could not sign any papers but we took oral consent in front of the Founder and representative, and asked each student during our initial survey whether they agreed to be filmed or photographed.

## **9. GOING FORWARD/ LOOKING AHEAD**

The most recent text that I received from the BELTA President, Dr Rubina Khan, is that she would like to run a similar collaborative project involving other teacher associations in the region, so I am planning to share the project with the executive committee members of a few other teacher associations to know if they would like to join as collaborators. By involving other teacher associations and with increased funding, the project can run for a long period of time, as wished by one of the student teachers too, and may have more significant impact on both the tertiary and underprivileged community at low-income schools and elsewhere.

BELTA can also take up the opportunity to submit a proposal for a similar Hornby Trust award for 2021–2022 to include student teachers from various higher education institutions:



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both public and private to get more enhanced involvement. As this was BELTA's first endeavour to directly work with the student community, another project is highly needed. More importantly, projects like this will not only create employable graduates but also socially responsible citizens who will contribute to the betterment of the socio-economic condition of the country or countries involved. Moreover, the promotion of projects like this could help improve local ELT practices by giving prospective teachers some hands-on experience. I strongly believe that further implementation of cross-age teaching will help develop our future contributors to the nation with social and emotional learning to thrive lifelong.

To sum up, I will do my best to sustain this practice due to my personal interest in promoting learner autonomy, innovation and critical thinking via my long-running project 'Students Teaching Students' at two of the courses titled Eng 424: Introduction to ELT and ENG 334: Project Paper, where I will try to involve students in teaching the children of the deprived community once we go back to the 'previous normal'.

## REFERENCES

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