



A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

REPORT ON HORNBY-FUNDED TEACHER ASSOCIATION PROJECT

Title: Providing professional development to new APC-ELI members

Country: Cuba

Dates: January 2019–2020

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Cuban System of education is under a process of improvement, and English is one of the main subjects in the school curricula. The renovation is guided by recent international frameworks and approaches which demand preparation, training and support to teachers and students. This can be facilitated by teacher associations, like APC-ELI (the English language teaching section of the Cuban Association of Pedagogues – Cuban Association of EFL teachers).

The APC-ELI was founded only six years ago and as a section of the largest Teachers Association (TA) in Cuba, can naturally reach teachers all over the country. Though many teachers may be members of the APC, many English language teachers are not fully aware of the section and the opportunities it can provide them, so there is a need to increase the APC-ELI membership.

APC-ELI headquarters are in Havana, so reaching EFL teachers in the provinces or remote areas has been a challenge, but very necessary for several reasons:

1. to provide professional development;
2. to empower teachers from different cultural and social backgrounds and contexts by developing meaningful events and activities; and
3. to help APC-ELI grow.

Moreover, APC-ELI also works for inclusion in its projects. That is why a very high percentage of the EFL teachers included in the project are women and several of them come from rural areas, so the project also had an impact on gender and other demographic issues.

It is also important to note the limitations in internet access in Cuba, which have made sustaining a network of support and wider professional development opportunities for EFL teachers difficult.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to provide an opportunity for professional development by means of EFL training sessions to three of the less advantaged provinces in the country – Artemisa, Granma and Ciego de Avila – and to increase the membership of the recently founded APC-



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ELI.

The project was aimed at teachers working in primary and secondary education and universities and sought to promote interaction among the participants with a focus on sharing and learning from each other's knowledge and experience.

3. PROJECT MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLES

Team leader

Name: Eduardo Garbey Savigne, PhD, Full Professor

Institution: Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de la Habana, Chairperson of the APC-ELI

Responsibilities: Project leader and responsible for the control and monitoring of the implementation of the project and the monitoring of the finance

Team members

Name: Isora Enriquez O'Farrill, PhD, Full Professor, Teacher trainer

Institution: Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas E J Varona

Responsibilities: APC-ELI Academic leader and responsible for drafting the teacher training program

Name: Maria de los Angeles Reyes, MA, Associate Professor

Institution: Facultad de Medicina Manuel Fajardo

Responsibilities: APC-ELI Organizing officer and Deputy project leader. Responsible for the development of the academic program in the Western region

Name: Juan Carlos Izaguirre Sanchez, MA, Associate Professor

Institution: Facultad de medicina 2 de Santiago de Cuba

Responsibilities: APC-ELI Coordinator in the Santiago de Ciba province. Responsible for the development of the academic program in the Eastern region

UK collaborators (*who were invited and volunteered to jointly deliver the training*)

- Michele Laufer – Former Senior Academic and Senior Lecturer, University of Westminster
- Greta Akpeneye – Former Managing Director and Secretary: GCA Associates Ltd (Community and Education Consultants)

The selection of the tutors was based on their teaching experience, their leadership and their background and outcomes in the TA. The two UK tutors have had longstanding relations with the Cuban ELT community.

4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The training took place in January–February, 2020, just a month before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Cuba.

The program for each of the three venues was as follows:

Day 1



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The participants were informed about the objectives of the event. There was a briefing and overview of APC-ELI, which included an explanation of the aims and benefits of joining a Teachers Association. The teachers were also instructed on how to develop their portfolios and a case study related to the benefits of membership for professionals was discussed.

Day 2

The participants were given an overview of the CEFR – discussing what CEFR is and what it is not. Teachers also participated in several activities about current approaches to language teaching methodology and assessment.

Day 3

In small groups, teachers presented ways of cascading the training in their contexts and shared their reflections about the workshop. Then there was evaluation and the completion of the APC-ELI membership forms.

Having UK teachers present at these ELT training sessions was a big incentive in that the participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas with English native speakers.

18 teachers participated in each training event, most of whom were secondary or tertiary teachers and female.

5. EVALUATION

The project had a positive impact and resulted in a number of outcomes including:

- The feeling of satisfaction for having provided some professional development to those teachers, and to have complied with our TA motto: *Committed to professional development and opportunities for all Cuban EFL teachers.*
- The acknowledgement given by the University leaders and the statements given by the local coordinators where the training was held.
- The number of teachers (37) who finally joined APC-ELI.
- The number of those trained teachers who have participated in the Cuban webinars during 2020 and 2021 and shared their views. Around 14 of those who participated in the Hornby training events presented their papers during the 5th APC-ELI Conference held in December 2020; several of them also attended the Cuban webinars on Creativity, Inclusion, Teacher wellbeing and Current ELT methodology.
- The interest expressed by other universities (Las Tunas University, Camaguey University and Sancti Spiritus University) to develop and hold similar ELT training events with similar conditions. APC-ELI has applied again for a Hornby Trust award to provide this opportunity to those teachers. The universities have also offered to contribute to the cost.

The training workshops and the APC-ELI membership project will take place by the end of 2021. The institution commits itself to providing a room for 15 teachers, provide lodging facilities for teachers who may need it and give access to technical equipment and also to adjust the individual plan of the university teachers who are scheduled for the event. (Extract from communication with Universidad de Las Tunas)



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The officer representing the University of Camaguey confirms the approval for welcoming the training event for teachers of English in 2022. The institution has a well-conditioned classroom with the necessary equipment for 15 teachers and it can also provide accommodation to four teachers from other municipalities. (Extract from communication with Universidad de Camaguey)

The Dean of the Teacher Training School of the Jose Marti Perez University of Sancti Spiritus authorizes the training workshop for the Foreign Language Department, including its graduates. The training workshop aimed at the theoretical and methodological upgrading on English language will be delivered by APC-ELI. (Extract from communication with Universidad de Sancti Spiritus)

- The recognition APC-ELI has gained among Cuban EFL teachers as a trustworthy association. The British Council also recognises APC-ELI as a trusted partner and has confidence in our ability to deliver English training in Cuba.

Dear Sirs,

It is a pleasure to be in contact with you from British Council's Cuba office.

This letter aims at supporting APC-ELI in Cuba on its application related to a project to improve skills on English teachers in Cuba from selected provinces.

British Council has been working with the above-mentioned association for more than 5 years and it has shown commitment and impact on the trainings and cascading carried out. The ability to organise fruitful trainings both face to face and digital-online have been put into practice. The final reports issued after activities have been quite useful to measure impact and to propose new future actions.

APC-ELI is among the most relevant partners we have in Cuba; it manages funds very well and with transparency and values like equality, diversity and inclusion are also pillars for their actions.

We would encourage any organisation to rely on APC-ELI as a trusted partner to design, organise and deliver any English training for Cuban teachers and Professors nowadays.

Extract from letter of acknowledgement and recognition from British Council Cuba to IATEFL

Finally, the reaction from teachers in all three venues was positive and most teachers expressed their satisfaction in the PNI (positive, negative and interesting) survey at the end of the training.

Some of the PNI feedback

Positive

- The opportunity to have an English native speaker as part of the training team;
- The Hornby Project reached secondary school teachers and university teachers alike, with no distinction among them and similar opportunities.

Negative

The short duration of the training;

The limitations of a proper sustainability and lack of materials for cascading.

Interesting

- The creation of portfolios among secondary school teachers;
- To learn about the benefits and opportunities that APC-ELI provides.



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6. EXPENDITURE

The budget allocated by Hornby was spent as planned:

- £600.00 to cover costs of the venue closer to Havana
- £650.00 to cover costs of the venue in the central province
- £730.00 to cover costs of the venue in the Eastern Region

This budget was also complemented by local funding from each of the universities. This local funding covered:

- accommodation for 5–7 teachers who lived far from the venue, mainly in rural areas;
- indirect costs of utilities: water and electricity, the classroom and technical equipment;
- salaries of the participating EFL teachers during training (decided by school leaders);
- publicity via local media and radio by each university’s communication officer.

Good management of the funds gave the TA the possibility to cover the travel costs, accommodation and meals of the UK teachers, too.

7. DISSEMINATION TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

After completing the project a written report was sent to all institutions and people involved in the project i.e. The British Council, the President of APC, and the A.S. Hornby Educational Trust.

The project was also reported in the APC-ELI newsletter, Vol 7. No.1, February 2020, which is sent by email and WhatsApp to around 500 members, plus non-members. Some copies are also printed for those with no access to mobile technology or a PC. The aim is to provide information to EFL teachers about opportunities and increase their motivation for continuing professional development.



Committed to professional development and opportunities for all Cuban EFL teachers



NEWSLETTER

APC- ELI Vol 7. No. 1 February 2020

The APC ELI *winter* course took place from January 13-17 and January 20-23 at the APC headquarters. It was led by Prof. Michelle Laufer from the University of Westminster. She also attended and participated in the Hornby Educational Trust Award Teacher Training held in Artemisa. See picture below



Dr. Greta Akpeneye (left) also contributed with the APC-ELI in the teacher training sessions of the Hornby Trust Award held in Ciego de Avila





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The A.S. HORNBY EDUCATIONAL TRUST TEACHER ASSOCIATION PROJECT SCHEME was awarded to APC-ELI to support a teacher-training project and it was aimed at increasing the membership to the association. The provinces, which benefited from this award, were Artemisa, C. Avila and Granma. The APC ELI delivered the teacher training sessions in January-February 2020. See some pictures below



Maria de los Angeles teaching in Artemisa province



Garbey fostering membership to APC ELI in C. Avila



Juan Carlos in action in Granma province

Extracts from article published in the APC-ELI newsletter

The benefits of our Hornby-funded project were additionally presented at the 'IATEFL 2021 International Virtual Conference' by Isora Enriquez during her presentation: 'Cuban ELT community and British Council: bridges for professional development'.

Cuban ELT community and British Council: bridges for professional development

Isora Enriquez O'Farrill (Enrique J. Varona Pedagogical University)

Cuban English Language Teaching (ELT) is in a permanent process of improvement to raise the quality of learning outcomes. Continuing professional development is key to achieve such a goal. This talk will analyze successful collaboration between the British Council and the Cuban education ministries to enhance English teachers' professional development throughout the country.

Presentation summary, IATEFL Conference Programme, p. 46

APC-ELI also supported ALC-GELI (Cuba's other ELT Association) with their Hornby TA project award proposal (2020–2021) by providing ideas and suggestions. This proposal – Creating professional development opportunities for young teachers in primary and secondary education in remote communities and local schools – was also successful.

8. OVERALL REFLECTIONS

First, the project provided some Cuban EFL teachers from some less advantaged provinces in the country with an opportunity, and this was really rewarding.

The APC-ELI team developed a more concise idea on how to implement and organise a project with different partners. This led to fruitful teamwork and is one of the lessons learned.

We feel the strength of the project lies in the teachers' willingness for more CPD, and the real need to enhance knowledge about teaching.

This project is part of CPD in the country. There are other provinces and regions which also need this kind of opportunity and APC-ELI is planning to apply for a further award to benefit three or four more provinces.



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If APC-ELI were granted another Hornby TA project award, we would certainly include online and virtual links and the use of blended teaching to maximize learning and possibly reach a larger number of participants.

Our aim, as we suggested to ALC-GELI, is to figure out and organise this type of project to benefit the less advantaged and those who need it most.

9. GOING FORWARD/LOOKING AHEAD

APC-ELI will submit a similar proposal for the next Hornby TA project awards in September 2021 in order to provide CPD opportunities to other less advantaged provinces with similar contexts and needs.