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Having welcomed an event participants, Education Minister Misir Mardanov, noted the close co-operation established between the Ministry of Education and British Council. He gave information on successful implementation of joint projects, as well as works done within the co-operation. Talking about the Intensive English Language Training Project the Minister underlined that the main goals of the project are to create a contemporary system reflecting recent advances in the training field for improvement and extension of skills of English language teachers, and use interactive training methods and new educational technologies in English language training.

Moreover, the Minister informed that in 2003, the Azerbaijan English Language Teachers Association (AzETA) was created on the initiative of British Council. The organization has a head office in Baku and 8 branches in regions. Noting the importance of improving foreign language teaching to integrate Azerbaijan into the world community, and expand international co-operation, the Minister underlined positive results from the use of methods successfully implemented in the international practice. He also touched upon problems existing in the foreign language teaching fields of schools, and works implemented to resolve these problems. Moreover, he noted the Intensive English Language Training Project has implemented at 7 pilot schools of Baku since 2008/2009 academic year.

Having stressed that the project encompassed 189 classes and 5352 pupils, the Minister gave information on new training plans, programs and textbooks for intensive English language training. According to him, 120 teachers from 7 pilot schools took part and increased their level of professionalism and methodical skills in the training courses provided by the trainers of the British Council. He emphasized a need to improve the quality of English language teaching at all schools. Noting, from this viewpoint, the number of schools with intensive English language teaching will be increased to 20 in the next academic year, Mr. Mardanov, touched upon future challenges and made some proposals and recommendations.

Paul Clementson, Country Director of the British Council, thanked the Minister for the successful implementation of Intensive English Language Training Project. Noting they attach a particular importance to the co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Mr. Clementson talked on key targets of British Council and underlined that joint projects will contribute to the development of relations between our countries. Talking about the importance of learning English to succeed in the international arena, and a sharp rise in the number of people who speak in English, Mr. Clementson underlined that works done in this direction have yielded positive results in Azerbaijan as well.

Programmer manager of British Council Gulshan Huseynova gave information on measures implemented within the Intensive English Language Training Project and listed facts on results of works done in the frame of the project. According to her, along with national textbooks, there have been used textbooks sets (student book, workbook, teachers manual with audio CD and didactic materials) published by Cambridge University which are acceptable for Azerbaijan as well. Moreover, G. Huseynova informed that last year, lessons of 85 teachers of I and VII classes of pilot schools were observed by the employees of the British Council.

Noting in 2011 the top 4 trainers of the project took part in intensive training at the University of Warwick, she gave information on final results for overall monitoring of the project. G. Huseynova compared the amount of time spent on English teaching in Azerbaijan with the corresponding figures in other countries, and brought forward a number of proposals to improve the efficiency of the project.