TEAM NASS

IID Policy Hackathon 2026
Education in the Age of AI

ঝরে পড়াদের বাংলা পড়া

Right-level Bangla reading for out-of-school working teens in Dhaka



Rafi, 15, works at a tea stall. He can't read the signs around him.

15y, and he still can't read a shop sign.

We find each teen's reading level in 10 minutes, and teach from there.

Try the App for quick level check
appnass.shad.workers.dev

Open to meet Rafi →
Problem, response, and the path to action

FOR THE JURY: WHERE TO FIND EACH CRITERION

Problem & evidence	p2	Proposed response	p3	Feasibility & costs	p2, p4
Inclusion & ethics	p3	Impact & partners	p4	Critical reflection	p2, p3

1 · THE PROBLEM

Taught like six-year-olds, they drop out again.



Seated by age → a Class 1 book, laughed at → stops coming → still can't read. *Composite character; AI illustrations.*

> **Who:** working teens, 12–18, out of school in Dhaka's slums. In law they fall between non-formal primary (8–14) and adult education (15+); policy ties NFE to the primary curriculum, so teens get Class 1 books (NEP 2010).

1 in 3	out-of-school children (7–14) read with understanding (31.9%). Poorest fifth: 33.6%, so 2 in 3 can't; nationally 50.2%. *MICS 2025*
1 in 6	leave before finishing primary (16.25%), peaking in Grade 4. Weak reading and leaving **coincide**; we don't claim cause. *APSS 2024*
12 of 14	practitioners we surveyed place learners without any reading check. *NASS survey 2026*
3 of 8	NFE staff wanted an app (8 of 14 overall). **So reading stays on paper.** *NASS survey 2026*

How strong is this? n = 14, somewhat leading questions: an early signal. Plus 2 practitioner interviews.

The gap: level placement exists for 7–14s. Not for teens.

UNICEF's **EMDC** gives every learner a week-one placement test and groups each class by level (243,534 children by Dec 2024, including Dhaka slums via Jagorani Chakra Foundation). Dhaka Ahsania Mission does too.

SKILFO

Skill-Focused Literacy for Out-of-School Adolescents

BNFE with UNICEF, funded by the Global Partnership for Education. Ages 14–17. Cox's Bazar pilot: 6,805 completed, 58% girls. Scaling to **16 districts, 100,000+**.

ALO

Alternative Learning Opportunities for Out-of-School Children

BNFE, about 93% government-funded, 2026–2028. **38,400 learners** in 960 centres: 19,200 aged 10–14 (basic education), 19,200 aged 15–24 (skills).

Neither SKILFO nor ALO's 15–24 track publishes a reading placement. That is our gap. We plug a check into their intake, not replace them.

Barriers and lessons, and what we do

BARRIER OR LESSON	HOW WE HANDLE IT
RISK Teacher workload (TN)	→ **Phone keeps records; 3–4 groups, not 30 levels**
RISK Network or old phones	→ **Sync later; offline install next; Android 7+ now**
RISK Scorers disagree	→ **A scorer-agreement test before any learner**
RISK NGOs don't adopt it	→ **Plug into SKILFO and ALO intake; free and open**
TN Visible ladders hurt self-esteem	→ **Private results, never ranked**
US Paper-first; a live chatbot	→ **Records on the phone; AI behind the scenes**

TN = Tamil Nadu Activity-Based Learning (Aslam et al. 2016). Gap box: unicef.org, bnfe.gov.bd, UNICEF Innocenti 2025.

2 · OUR RESPONSE

Start learning based on the reading level, not by age.

১
Check in 10 minutes
Voice-guided, so no reading is needed to start. One shared phone held by the centre.

২
Group into 3–4 levels
The dashboard sorts the room. The facilitator rotates: one group reads aloud with her, others work on their sheets.

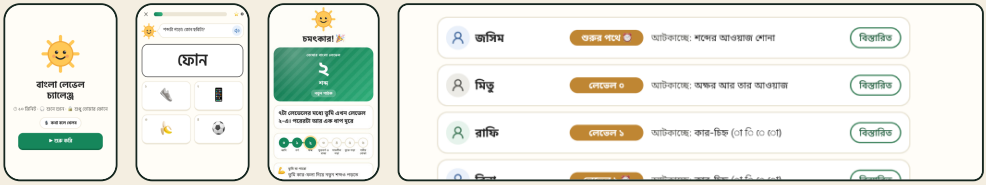
৩
Teach everyday Bangla
Printed sheets for teens: signs, prices, bKash. Level ২: «দোকান · ভাড়া · বিকাশ · ওষুধ»

অক্ষর থেকে অর্থ

One Bangla reading scale: 7 levels, 3 reader groups

০ ধ্বনি	১ বর্ণ	২ শব্দ	৩ যুক্তবর্ণ ও বাক্য	৪ সাবলীল পড়া	৫ বুঝে পড়া	৬ গভীরভাবে বোঝা
Hears the sounds in words	Knows letters and their sounds	Reads words with vowel signs	Reads conjunct words, short sentences	Reads an SMS or notice fluently	Finds facts in an ad or the news	Not yet tested Reads between the lines, spots fake news
নতুন পাঠক ০–২			স্বাধীন পাঠক ৩–৪		দক্ষ পাঠক ৫–৬	

One level per learner; facilitators also see 17 blocks to form groups. Built on NAPE, ASER, EGRA and TaRL.



1. Listen · 2. Play · 3. Level

Dashboard: each learner's level and sticking point. Demo data.

Where AI fits **AI drafts level sheets and transcribes the optional read-aloud. A person checks every line. AI never sets a level.**

We dropped a live teacher chatbot after the "chatbot trap" sessions.

Who could be left out, and what we do

Girls kept at home	→ Classes at hours girls can come; a woman facilitator where possible
Learners with disabilities	→ Voice-guided check; the scale starts at sounds (level ০)
Non-Bangla speakers	→ NFE Act 2014 s.8(1) allows own-language teaching for small ethnic groups; our check is Bangla-only for now, and we say so
Teens without phones	→ They don't need one: one shared phone per centre. Only 32% of the poorest homes own a smartphone *(MICS 2025)*

Safeguards: no pass/fail, never ranked or shown · nickname only · guardian consent for under-18s (Personal Data Protection Act 2026) · read-aloud opt-in: audio goes to a transcription service; we keep only the score.

Still testing: can one teacher run 3–4 groups? Phone access. **No learner voices yet.**

3 · FROM IDEA TO ACTION

The future we want, and how we get there.



Our ask

A BNFE circular (NFE Act 2014 s.12): a reading-level check at NFE, SKILFO and ALO intake, mapped to EMDC's levels. Plus an open teen primer (s.9(4)).

At intake in SKILFO (scaling to 100,000+ adolescents) and ALO (19,200 aged 15–24), **every teen gets a reading level on day one.**

Pebble
Now · our team

Apps ready to test; open release; scorer-agreement test first.

Rock
0–6 months · NGO partners

Pilot in 3–5 Dhaka centres. Track scorer agreement, attendance and level gains. **Nothing signed yet.**

Boulder
BNFE, MoPME · via NFE Act 2014 s.12

BNFE circular under the NFE Act 2014 (s.12): record a reading level at intake in the NFE MIS for SKILFO and ALO. PEDP-5, approved 4 Nov 2026, has no reported out-of-school line.

What a 100-learner pilot costs

TEAM ESTIMATE · NOV 2026

ITEM	ASSUMPTION: 100 LEARNERS, 4 CENTRES, 3 MONTHS	BDT
People	Facilitators (4 × 4,000), coordination, scorer checks	26,000
Facilitator training	1-day workshop: venue, refreshments, travel	8,000
Shared phones	One per centre: 4 × 7,000 (basic Android)	28,000
Printed level sheets	100 learners × 80	8,000
Server, speech AI, data	Cloudflare, ElevenLabs (~$33), data for 4 phones	10,000
Total	**Per learner BDT 800, mostly people and phones**	**80,000**

For scale: EMDC costs about GBP 45–75 per child for a whole programme. We are one part, not a programme.

Next 30 days · owner: Team NASS

- Meet the BRAC Migration team: scope a pilot
- Scorer-agreement test on simulated profiles
- Fix the app: nickname, consent text, lock names
- Map our levels to EMDC's five cycles
- Bangla review of all items

INTERESTED · NOTHING SIGNED **BRAC Migration Programme team** (trafficking survivors) · **a special school**.

POTENTIAL · NOT YET CONTACTED **UNICEF EMDC / Jagorani Chakra Foundation** (level placement 7–14, Dhaka slums) · **Dhaka Ahsania Mission** (groups by level; learning partner) · **UCEP Bangladesh** (working children) · **BRAC Education** (catch-up schools) · **Aparajeyo Bangladesh** (street children, Dhaka).

Try it: appnass.shad.workers.dev · **Scale:** appnass.shad.workers.dev/framework

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Short forms: APSS Annual Primary School Statistics · ASER Annual Status of Education Report · BNFE Bureau of Non-Formal Education · EGRA Early Grade Reading Assessment · EMDC Educate the Most Disadvantaged Children · MICS Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey · MIS management information system · MoPME Ministry of Primary and Mass Education · NAPE National Academy for Primary Education · NFE non-formal education · PEDP Primary Education Development Programme · TaRL Teaching at the Right Level

Sources: UNICEF Innocenti EMDC report (Dec 2025) · NFE Act 2014 · Personal Data Protection Act 2026 · MICS 2025 · elevenlabs.io · cloudflare.com · mobiledokan.com · brac.net · ucepbd.org · educationaboveall.org · aparajeyo.org · Illustrations made with AI.