

Idea · Manila, Philippines

Bigkas Reads

Voice-based reading tutor on basic Android phones for early-grade learners in Filipino and English

The problem

What's broken today

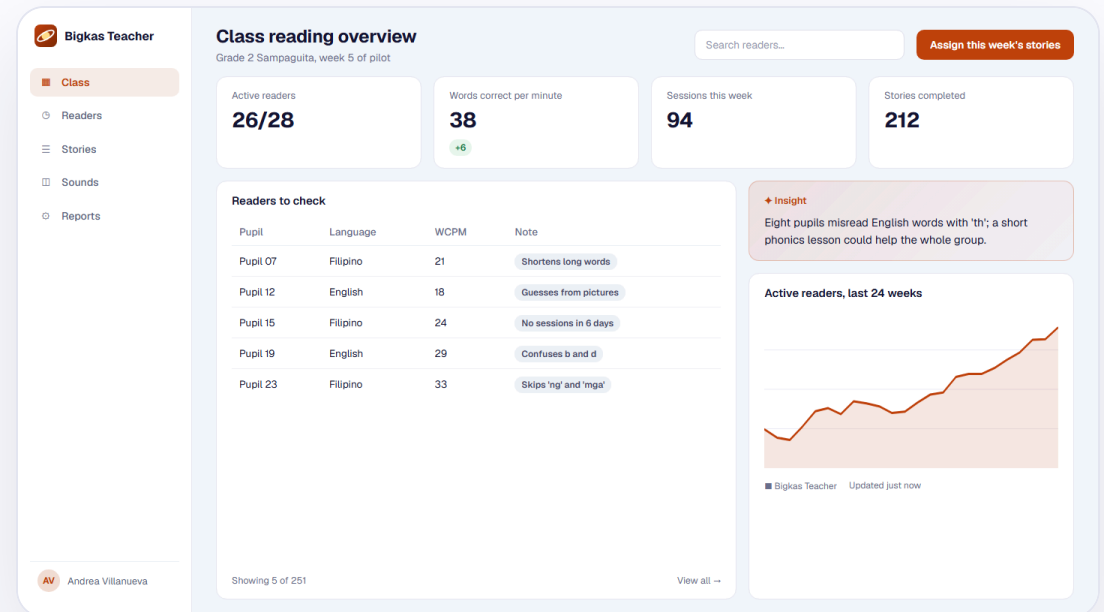
Many Filipino children reach Grade 4 without reading a short paragraph fluently, and a Grade 2 teacher with 45 pupils can listen to each child read aloud for only a few minutes a month. Parents want to help at home, but many work long shifts or are unsure how to correct English pronunciation. Reading assessments happen on paper twice a year, too late to change anything that term.



Our solution

Bigkas Teacher

Bigkas Reads listens as a child reads a short levelled story aloud on a parent's phone, detects skipped, misread and hesitated words in Filipino or English, and replies with gentle prompts. Each week the teacher sees words correct per minute for every child and the sounds the class is struggling with. Stories download in advance, so practice works without data after setup.



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Reading session

 Bigkas Teacher

Class

Readers

Stories

Sounds

Reports

Reading session

Pupil 07, 'Ang Bangka ni Lolo', level 2

Search readers...

Play recording

Words read

84

Correct

71

Hesitations

9

Time

2 min 10 s

Word errors

Word	Read as	Type	Prompt given
bangka	banka	Misread	Tap and listen
dagat	(skipped)	Skipped	Try again
malalaki	malaki	Shortened	Sound it out
umaga	umaga	Hesitation	None
mangingisda	mangisda	Shortened	Sound it out

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View all →

Insight

Pupil 07 shortens words with repeated syllables; the next story practises them.

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AV

Andrea Villanueva

Why now

The timing

Speech recognition now handles children's voices in Filipino well enough to run on cheap phones, and schools are under pressure to improve early-grade reading.

Market

Public and private elementary schools, local governments and reading programmes in the Philippines, which has around 13 million elementary pupils; Indonesia and Vietnam would follow.



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How we make money

Free for families; schools and local governments would pay per pupil per year (around ₱120), with deployments sponsored by companies' education programmes.



Traction

Where we are

4

Pilot classrooms

112

Children in pilot

3.4

Avg. sessions per week

60

schools

Waitlist

- 4 pilot classrooms with 112 children in Quezon City
- Average +9 words correct per minute in 5 weeks
- 60 schools on the waitlist after one teacher workshop



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Team

Who's building it

AV

Andrea Villanueva

CEO and co-founder

JS

Joaquin Santos

CTO and co-founder



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The ask

What we're raising

Raising US\$400K pre-seed to run a 2,000-child pilot in the 2027 school year

- 200 levelled stories in Filipino and English
- Child speech data collection with parental consent
- Pilots in two more cities with local government partners



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