



Ushirika wa Maendeleo ya Elimu Barani Afrika  
الرابطة لأجل تطوير التربية في إفريقيا  
Association for the Development of Education in Africa  
Association pour le développement de l'éducation en Afrique  
Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Educação em África

**Triennale on Education and Training in Africa  
(Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, February 12-17, 2012)**

**Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for  
sustainable development in Africa: How to design and  
implement an effective response by education and  
training systems**

### **Sub-theme 1**

**Common core skills for lifelong  
learning and sustainable  
development in Africa**

---

**Early grade literacy in African classrooms:  
Lessons learned and future directions**

---

*by*

*Barbara Trudell, SIL Africa Area*

*Amy Jo Dowd, Save the Children*

*Benjamin Piper, RTI*

*Carole Bloch, PRAESA*

### **ABSTRACT**

**Working Document**

**PLEASE DO NOT DISSEMINATE**

**DOC 1.5.04**

## **Abstract**

Literacy - the ability to read and write – is recognized as being one of the *most fundamental* of core skills contributing to academic achievement, lifelong learning and sustainable development. However in many African countries, literacy achievement in the formal education system has not attained the levels necessary to support any of these outcomes. Primary curriculum expectations across the continent include literacy acquisition in the early grades, and yet somehow those expectations are not being adequately met.

This transnational thematic study of early-grade literacy brings together current research findings and program outcomes in the area of early-grade literacy in African nations, to highlight lessons learned and suggest possible future direction for improving early-grade achievement in reading and writing. The research and interventions of SIL International, RTI International, Save the Children and PRAESA, represent work in literally dozens of African countries – and they are generating significant theoretical and practical knowledge on early-grade literacy. This study brings that knowledge together in a coherent fashion, in order that the experience of these very diverse education organizations may be of real use to the stakeholders and decision-makers in African education. This study provides those stakeholders and decision-makers with more and better options for promoting early-grade literacy in their counties than they have previously had access to.