Project Design: Early Grade Reading Programs

Operational Challenges
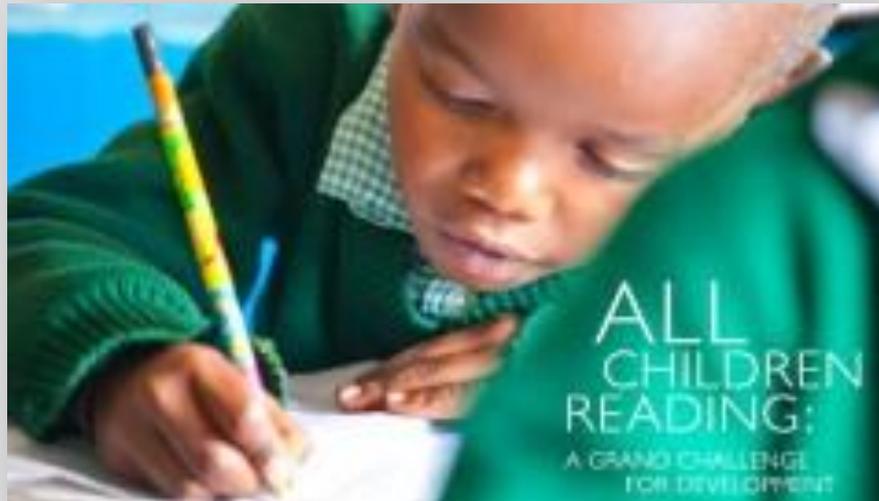
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- The contents of this presentation are the professional opinions of the authors and do not represent the official position of either RTI International or USAID.

Three Basic Operational Issues

- How to assure adequate focus on the teaching of reading

- How to train, support and supervise teachers so that they develop sound, daily instructional practice

- How to enlist the support of family and communities so that literacy acquisition is reinforced outside of school

Key Questions for Operationalizing Reading Improvement

- Is reading an explicit part of the curriculum?
- Do the teachers and students have materials that support a structured, sequenced approach to literacy acquisition?
- Do they use those materials every day in their lessons?

- Are there other books for students to practice reading?
- Are there other opportunities outside of school for students to have their nascent reading skills reinforced or for students to just practice reading?
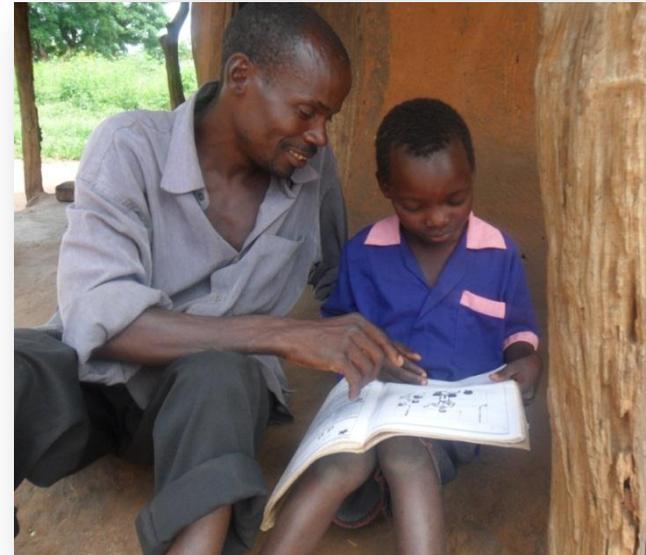
1. Curriculum and Materials

ACTIVITY 1

- Review example of explicit curricular objectives

- Does your country's curriculum treat the elements of reading as explicitly as these examples?

- Do teaching and learning materials support a focus on reading? In what languages?

- In a pilot program, how might you address these issues?

- In a larger scale or national program how might you?

- What are constraints and challenges around this issue?

Planning for language use in education – Transition?

Mother tongue-based (L1) language and literacy instruction and second (L2)/foreign language instruction

Mother tongue-based (L1) language and literacy instruction and L2/foreign language and literacy instruction *with explicit transfer*

L2/foreign language and literacy instruction and *opportunities to sustain mother tongue instruction*

2. Teacher training, support and supervision

- **Professional development (in reading content, pedagogy and assessment) is critical to teacher change and improvement of pupil outcomes.**

- **High quality professional development must:**

  - ✓ Build on teachers' existing knowledge and practices

  - ✓ Allow teacher input to training design and content

  - ✓ Promote and facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration and the development of teacher networks

  - ✓ Be experiential – provide examples of good practice and opportunities for teachers to try out new approaches

  - ✓ Be relevant to the actual situations in which teachers work and be conducted on-the-job

  - ✓ Provide coaching, mentoring and ongoing, frequent support as regular features of training and its follow up

  - ✓ Follow a specific, systematic plan and sequence—and be long-term

  - ✓ Develop and reinforce supportive environments at the school, community and system levels

Level of development of teaching profession

Stage of Teacher Development	Implications
Unskilled: Schools are staffed by unprepared and/or unqualified teachers who have limited levels of education.	Focus on content and foundational pedagogical knowledge. Provide teachers with structured guides, practical lesson plans and scripts and ensure frequent modeling, supervision and support.
Mechanical: Most teachers have received limited education and training. They work in a mechanical manner following textbooks and the curriculum without personal input.	Provide teachers with an expanded, diverse set of materials, introduce new, more effective instructional and classroom management techniques and deepen content and pedagogical knowledge. Modeling and support for implementation of new techniques will be important early on.
Routine: Teachers have repertoires of teaching practice from which to choose.	Expand teachers' repertoires and increase their collaborative reflective practice. Teachers' networks should be encouraged and facilitated.
Professional: Teachers frequently draw on wide repertoires of effective practice and are reflective practitioners.	Teachers can be given choices and allowed to guide their own professional development and offered opportunities to observe and reflect on a broad set of classroom approaches and experiences.

Teacher training and support

ACTIVITY 2

- What is the state of teacher professional development in your country?

- Is pre- and in-service training linked? What efforts are being made, or need to be made, to improve pre-service and in-service training?

- What are the challenges to doing so?

The degree and nature of behavior change

ACTIVITY 3

- What are teachers being asked to stop doing?

- How different is the new behavior from what they are doing? What incremental steps can they take to achieving the new behavior?

- What support and positive reinforcement will be provided along the way?

- Why would teachers be willing to stop doing what they currently do? What is the reward for dropping the old behavior and adopting the new?

3. Out-of-School Support

ACTIVITY 4

- What do parents and communities already do/what do they have that can support reading?

- How can parents (literate and non-literate) use their existing skills/assets to better support children's reading acquisition?

- Who can support parents to do this?