



IRN Update:

Reading literacy and associated interventions for High-Risk Children from Disadvantaged Communities.

In the last IRN updated November 2017, it was reported that the IRN has focused much of its work on the *Success for All* as one of the largest projects worldwide aimed at addressing learning deficits for at-risk children from disadvantaged communities. *Success for All* was developed over 30 years by prof. Robert Slavin and has reached over 2 million children from disadvantaged communities in the United States and puts into practice the findings of research on effective school instruction, curriculum, school and classroom organisation, assessment, accommodation for struggling learners, parent involvement and professional development. Overall, *Success for All* is based on multidimensional intervention theory, meaning that vulnerable learners who are at risk to fail in school require intervention on many fronts. In South Africa, the project was piloted as a reading intervention for at-risk children to gauge its potential benefits for a developing context where reading interventions are needed for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, the project is being implemented in the Netherlands in six disadvantaged schools and plans are for Germany to also pilot the project in 2018 as an intervention for at-risk children. In June 2017, a combined *Success for All* meeting between researchers from the Netherlands, Germany and South Africa was held with visits to Dutch schools to gain first-hand experience of the project's implementation and its challenges in the Netherlands. The *Success for All* Foundation in the UK has been instrumental in providing training to teachers in the pilot schools in South Africa.

Since this report, an IRN symposium was held in Cape Town in August 2018 to provide a platform for the

interventions for high-risk children from disadvantaged communities. At this symposium, three papers were presented. The first paper, presented by prof Janet Condy, focused on A literacy project in Sri Lanka: moving from memory recall to critical thinking teaching. Surette van Staden then presented some of the findings from a baseline study that aimed to implement Success for All in two disadvantaged schools in township contexts, while a third paper, by dr Funke Omidire, detailed how pre-reading skills were taught by two Grade one teachers with a total of 74 learners, in a high risk, high need inner-city school in Pretoria.