**Transcript: Reflection on the impact Covid-19 will have on our learners and community**

**Head Teacher – Shungu School**

I want to discuss issues that are quite pertinent for us as a school with regards to transport and tourism in Livingstone with regards to the Covid period and even life beyond Covid.

I want to first of all indicate to say the Covid that had come has come with a lot of information, some will tell you the virus will be with us forever and we need to take up this which we call normal now. So, it means safety is very key in everything that we are going to do even beyond Covid. I think now we need to be cautious of our health because our health is essential if we are going to be proactive and productive.

Now, if we doubt our health then it leads to stress, it leads to over-thinking, and eventually these are mental health matters. As a head teacher I have a few concerns with regard to Covid and transport; we will be opening schools and our children cover long, long distances. Most of them will jump on taxis, they will jump on mini-buses, they will jump on many other kinds of transport. Now what is the guarantee that as they’re using that transport, they are going to be safe guarded with regards disease, viruses or germs. There is a need for specific education, there is a need for sensitisation and there’s a need for awareness so that our learners, not only our learners but also our teachers and the many other people that are training to access a service from here, are protected in the process of coming to school. Transport is a key thing because if they are going to be in a mini-bus they are going to begin to think what is social distance like in a mini-bus. If it’s not a mini-bus it’s a taxi; are we sure that taxi drivers are carrying only 4 people? Are we still seeing the trade where there are 3 people behind and 2 in front, or are we seeing taxi drivers that want to make a little more money and are putting in a little bit more people than is expected. There is a need for us to look around that and see how best we can follow these guidelines.

Shungu being a school in this locality where we have truckers that are inclined to bring sweet potatoes, to bring tomatoes, to bring vegetables from far-away lands is a point of concern. Now if the people that are coming here are not very conscious of Covid or any other diseases, and there’s so many people they are carrying in their trucks together with the products they are coming to sell. If they are moving and exchanging the viruses or bacterias, it means that this area is prone because our communities are continuously buying food from there and not only being there, Shungu being next to Marumba market, they key market in Livingstone. We have tourists coming here. We have so many people moving from Gumba(?) north, Gumba(?) central, highlands, airport and all these far-reaching areas in Livingstone, they are coming to this area; but are they only bringing money or are they also bringing disease? Are they taking care of themselves? Are they continuous of the Covid regulations and the regulations of just health? Now, there are people in a panic mode and as long as they see people in groups they will not come out of their homes, they will not come out of their safe areas. Now what is the guarantee that these people will be told one day to say, ‘everything is over can you come out’. Now this intells complete change of attitudes, mental processing, and so on. So we will not come out of this Covid safe as long as we do not follow the right guidelines of keeping ourselves safe, using face masks, staying home, avoiding many places, and avoiding just pushing the powers that be that this should be open, this should be open, this is for our own good. If that is not done then we should be sure that the life of people has changed completely.

Now I want to talk about the effect of this Covid. Most of our people that have children here work in lodges and so on, or earning their living through selling and buying, welcoming visitors and making them feel at home and as long as there is Covid then these institutions are closed. It means the little resource that they need to come here and support the school through their children so that the learning can be enhanced, is going to be reduced or is going to be squeezed and then it means that the lives of the people around us is going to be difficult; it means also that the life of the school is going to be difficult and at the end of the day we are going to be producing half-baked or full/empty children will come out of school. Our essence is that the children should have a very clear conscious, should have the right attitude, the children should learn how they can approach the future with hope, with less mental health matters that includes trace and other psychological effects that this period has brought on us.

Thank you so much.