**Transcript: Learning what inclusive education is**

Greetings – my name is Sharon Handongwe

Observer from Holy Family Rehabilitation Centre in Monze

Today I want to share with you my experiences on inclusive education. I have been working with NAD office in Livingstone for the past 4 years on their project of inclusive education and I can tell you that when we started this project in the years back, I was equally not well-versed in what inclusive education is. What came to my mind when I heard about it was children with and without disabilities in the same classroom. Of course, that is partly true but I came to understand after the trainings from Duncan that it not only includes the children learning in an environment but it included a lot of other aspects. Things like attitude, how is the environment they’re learning in, how are they learning the teaching methodologies and also the participation and support from the community among others. So, having participated in those trainings helped me to understand better what inclusive education is.

Wesley Mweemba – District Resource Centre Coordinator

Livingstone District

Inclusive education by itself is a good program, or it’s a good concept in a way that it enlightens teachers, even any person in the community. Not only to mean not only the learners that have disabilities, the learners that might be challenged in one or the other, we are just looking at all children that are supposed to be in school so that we increase their time of learning. Also, when they are in school, we want them to be present in lessons, we also want them to participate and at the end of it all we want them to achieve. So, there are times when learners might be present but because of the teaching styles, because of the methods teachers might be using, the learners might not achieve. So, we want all these components to be addressed in inclusive education and that is what our teachers in these schools have been undergoing through.

Olive Samukolo – Principal Trainer

Victoria Falls University

My name is Olive Samukolo – I’m a Senior Lecturer at VF University. I also happen to be a ToT, a Principal Trainer of inclusive education. I have been trained by CBR who works in association with NAD and at the same time NAD is also working in association with EENET.

So, we’ve been trained, it’s almost 4 years ago to be trained as inclusive education educators. In the inclusive education training, we’ve been able to learn that inclusive education is a process where there’s increase in the participation, in the presence and the achievement of all learners. So, in simple terms it is education for all and Zambia being a signatory to the UN on education for all we are in a hurry not to leave anyone behind. So, I personally have been able to learn that the system in the inclusive education needs restructuring in terms of culture. We restructure the culture; we restructure the system and we restructure the practice that all children in schools can be enabled to learn in an inclusive education. In the same way we’ve been able to also learn that we should never exclude any child, since we are looking at the global goal which is not leaving anyone behind. We do not want to exclude any child because when we exclude children they actually pass through social and emotional situations. In those situations, whereby those children may feel rejected and sometimes they will feel pain, so they are feeling painful. So, all that we want us to do is to include all children. When we talk about including all children, we are talking about those that have sen, those that have non-sen, rather in short those that are disabled and non-disabled, those that are asylum seekers, those that are in poverty situations etc. etc. All those children must be included in school so that they are not excluded.

The same way when we include these young children, what I’ve learnt in education is that the children will be able to be present in school, they will be able to participate and they will be able to achieve, because Zambia is in a hurry to achieve the global goal by 2030 and in our 7th National Development Plan it is stressed that all children must be included in school. So, I have this experience and as a lecturer all our students have been included in the school because at first when I came here in 2011, those that had serious special educational needs they were being turned down. Foe some of our colleagues who may not understand se and inclusive education because there are doubts in the community, doubts with parents we have not thrown away se. In the first place, inclusive education is a big umbrella, se is just in the umbrella, general education is just in the umbrella, the umbrella of inclusive education. We have not thrown anyone, we salute and we give respect to any child because they have an equal right to education. So, those that want to study ie, se, those who want to train the young children, they are free to come on board. Nothing is changed, what we have done is to blend so that people understand inclusive education is a big umbrella, it’s for all and remember Zambia is a signatory to the education for all which is inclusive education.

Thank you very much.