**Transcript: Overcoming the challenges and fears of being selected into an inclusive education programme**

**Deputy Head Teacher – Riverview School**

Riverview is offering education from pre-school to grade 12. Besides that, in 2016 the school was chosen to be among 6 schools that are piloting in the 3 districts of Southern Province. So, in 2016 I will say Riverview became pilot school for ie, in short, we started to implement However, when this news came to us that we were going to implement it was received with mixed feelings. Teachers, pupils and the community at large felt that it wasn’t going to work; they had worries about challenges that it was going to bring about because to start with people lacked awareness, they also lacked positive attitude towards Besides that they lacked sensitivity.

So, it was a big challenge to accept the program and start implementing it. Besides that, actually the teachers were worried about the overwhelming large classes that they already have, so they felt that if they were going to be asked to be including learners with disabilities and special educational needs in the classrooms it was going to be a lot of work for them and they couldn’t be able to manage. They also worried about lack of inadequate teaching and learning materials, they also worried about not knowing how to handle these learners because they were not trained in se; they were not trained in how to handle learners with disabilities. In short what I can say is that before the coming of this teachers and other stakeholders had mixed feelings about children with disabilities.

Before we introduced this program, before the program was introduced by CBR I will say that as a school we were not admitting learners with disabilities; or I will say maybe learners with severe disabilities. We were only admitting learners that have learning difficulties because those do not show; you only think the child is not progressing well and yet they have a learning difficulty. For learners that have hearing impairment, learners that have visual problems we were not accepting them until we were trained by CBR in So, the challenges actually were a lot before the teachers were trained on how to handle learners with disabilities, but then after learning how to handle them things started changing, we had a problem of attitude towards learners with disabilities. Things started changing, awareness was raised, peoples attitude started to change, and these learners were eventually accepted in the mainstream classrooms by the peers because they were also educated about the issue of disabilities. Besides that, actually the teachers worried also because there isn’t any curriculum, they felt there is not a curriculum for learners with disabilities, meaning that it is going to be very difficult for them to fit into the mainstream classrooms. We thank CBR for the training we’ve been having since 2016, it has changed the way teachers, the way the community, and the learners view peers and learners with disability.