**Transcript: Some reflections by Principal Trainers**

**Silvia Mulenga**

**DRC Coordinator**

**Principal Trainer**

**Kazungula**

My job description is that I am a trainer of teachers I go into schools to identify training needs. I take part in material production, especially materials that are locally done, so mostly it is when you train teachers you make materials for teaching and learning. I also take part in monitoring teachers, I work with teachers in the classroom, sitting side-by-side with the learners and seeing how they’re reading. Sometimes I do spot-check reading, sometimes I participate in many assessments. So, this is all part of my job description as DRC Coordinator.

So, in terms of school inclusion, I want to say that I’ve been very privileged because as a trainer of teachers I learnt a lot of strategies that added value to my job. Some of the things we were not telling the teachers but because of participating in inclusive education my mind was opened and I had broadened my training skills. Yes, i’ll just mention a few areas; during our training we used to openly segregate, talking about children with special needs sometimes telling teachers to send the children back to their parents so that they can take them to special units. That’s what we used to do, because the teachers were not trained in what we have been trained now under inclusive education. So, it used to stigmatise the parents, the children but because of the coming of school inclusion at least now it’s all normalised we are able to work with all learners. Even now when I go in a class I would not complain to the teacher and the teachers would not complain and say ‘look at that child, how do I handle that child? Do I need to send that child back there’s nothing?’ because of the training we have acquired under inclusive education.

Apart from that it has helped us to work well with the parents. Initially the parents would sit back and hide their children in their homes. They were afraid to open up and say, ‘I have a child who doesn’t talk, I have a child who doesn’t see’. They were just hiding their children but because of inclusive education parents opened up and we are also free to talk to them and it’s that positive interaction.

Yes, one of the major changes was that I never accepted that learners with various disabilities can learn together with other learners in one classroom. But because of inclusion trainings, now I have accepted personally; that one I can’t hide. I used to think these learners should always be taken to special units and not put in class, but because of the school inclusive trainings this time I have agreed, have accepted and am part and parcel to see to it that all learners in our sector they can be in one classroom handled by one teacher. Personally, I used to feel that when those learners were put in the classroom, they would disturb the normal teaching, the so called normal children would be disturbed in their teaching. Not realising that when they mingle, they socialise and they help the others to learn and they become friends making life easier for those whom we say have disabilities. That was not clear but this time, personally I have accepted that learners with challenges can learn together with others in the classroom. They can be handled by one teacher; they can play together and use the same teaching and learning aids apart from those who have loss of sight. Those they need their own, especially the Braille, but these they can mingle and do all things together and they will help one another. So that has come to me as well as to the parents and to the learners and even to the communities.

**Patrick Kaluba**

**District Education Standards Officer**

**Principal Trainer**

**Gwembe District**

I am a trainer of teachers with support from NAD and working closely with CBR Zambia support in Livingstone. I have been Standards Officer for close now to 5 years. In terms of ToT for CBR I have been privileged to be working closely with CBR since 2016 when the program of inclusive education started and I was privileged to be part of the ToT. So, I have been there since inception and CBR with NAD has closely been training us with inclusive education. So briefly that’s who I am.

In terms of specialisation I’m also a specialist teacher and an inclusive teacher as well.

In terms of the district where I am, the knowledge and in terms of awareness as regards inclusive education the practice; I’ve had a lot of experience as a ToT basically, knowledge; from the onset we have been conceptualising to concepts of inclusive education, CBR we’ve done a lot of modules from the onset introduction to inclusive education, identification of out of school children, and many other modules which knowledge has helped me raise awareness and also of the practice in my field as a standard officer and also as a ToT.

I have interacted with teachers from the 6 pilot schools around Kazungula, Zimba and Livingstone. My interaction with these teachers was basically in-service. The moment we are trained as ToTs basically in every module, we go out in schools so that we roll out the same knowledge in inclusive education. So that we raise the pedagogical vision in teacher quality as they interact with the pupils. We have been made to understand that inclusive education is for all the children, not only children with disabilities but all the children including those that are disadvantaged so we meet their diverse needs. So, through it all it has been an exciting journey, we have had a number of trainings as ToTs. Not only that, we have also had a number of in-service trainings in our schools; that is Luyaba, Nakoa, Zimba. We have interacted with a lot of teachers there. I was also privileged to interact with a lot of teachers during in-set trainings in schools; in Kazungula where we have Riverview and Katapazi. Now most have my years have been with Shungu Primary/Secondary Schools where we have been training these teachers in inclusive education using the modules which Duncan Little as a lead facilitator from EENET has been conscientising us.

So it has been an exciting journey in that in terms of knowledge, in terms of concept of inclusive education, we have had a rich experience which has made me grow professionally. My understanding of inclusive education has been broadened, compliments of CBR and NAD technical and financial support. Through it all, experiences are so enormous, inclusive education is a reality in the Zambian context. Of course, in all our trainings we have been conscientised to say let us look at the barriers that impinge effective and efficient implementation of inclusive education, which are basically challenges. So, among which we have overcome mostly, the greatest barrier was attitude which barrier I think we have overcome through the teachers being conscientised to say inclusive education means education for all the children irrespective of their status. We have also looked at policy barriers; you know there are so many policies we are part of in line with Zambia being a signatory to a lot of international conventions; which conventions I can single out to say UNCRC. I think that has been an anchor as it says that all children have a fundamental right to learn regardless of where they’re coming from. So, in terms of policy we have attacked that one because we have so many policy documents which we have been conscientised at all levels. So, in terms of policy we have Inclusive Schooling Program so it’s there in 2000. Then realising that policy is very key as a Ministry we have in 2016 through collaborative partners like CBR and other partners in Zambian ie, we came up with inclusive education and se in Zambia implementation guidelines. So this has helped to understand and also to further see how best can we implement this inclusive education policy.

Now the other barrier is also of course practice. That is also bordering on the pedagogy of our teachers. Mind you the CBR focus is on the in-service teachers. We realise that teachers even if they come from colleges, their practice is more teacher-centred so to counter this practice barrier we have, through EENET, modules developed which have conscientised these teachers, which are learner-friendly and participatory in their nature so that the pupils drive their own learning as opposed to the teacher taking the whole show and copy copy copy. So, practice as a barrier has been overcome because everytime we go for inset activities we say the learning style should be child friendly. The learning environment in terms of seating arrangement and all those.

Then the other barrier that we also looked at in our practice or in our journey of ie, particularly in our pilot schools, is the resource barrier. Again, kudos or gratitude and we need to appreciate EENET, NAD and CBR. The modules are made in such a way that they are resource based. Most of the content are resources, meaning they’re hands-on. We try to see that teachers come up with case studies, of course which are global in nature and which they can find themselves with in their practice. So the resource barrier has been overcome because most of the materials that we train the teachers with in our pilot schools have been made in such a way that they are user-friendly in terms of resources there’s also case-studies.

Then so far as to mention the facilitation has been hands-on; teachers participate throughout because it is activity based, feedback and all that. We give them resources and they give feedback as opposed to the traditional ways of teaching.

Right so, the other barrier we are supposed to overcome is to do with the environmental barriers. Again, kudos and gratitude goes to NAD. Most of these our schools, previously before the program of inclusive education came on board in the pilot schools in the 3 districts we had unuser-friendly classrooms or infrastructure. Environmental barriers have been overcome because of the modification that have been done; building of ramps so that we make the classrooms more accessible.

The journey has been so exciting but challenges have been overcome. I know I’ve talked about policy; I’ve talked about practice, I’ve talked about environmental which is physical, I’ve talked about resource barriers, which barriers have been overcome through the training we have had in the 4 years of implementation. So, this knowledge has enabled me as a Standards Officer to check on compliance in terms of standards in the provision of quality inclusive education which the Ministry is trying to emphasise. You may be excited to know that the MoGE has come up with a theme, I think this is for 2019 last year, ‘Inclusive and equitable quality education depends on teacher quality and learning environment’. The key word here which is of interest is ‘inclusive’. So, the Ministry of General Education here has realised that for us to promote quality, equitable inclusive education, teacher quality is very very key. So NAD and CBR has come on board to help try to inculcate the pedagogy in these our teachers so that teacher quality is enhanced. Not only that, I think most of the infrastructure in our schools which I have been to are user friendly meaning that the learning environment has adjusted to adapt to the training properly. For that matter, what is inclusive is a fundamental right for every child irrespective of their status.

So, a lot has been done and which awareness situation has helped me in Gwembe specifically now to conscientise this in our school administrators during the training, although Gwembe is not a district per se but the knowledge that I have acquired over years through CBR and NAD and technical support from the word go has enabled me to have a broader outlook of inclusive education.

So now going forward, I am sure there are a lot of prospects, the ground is levelled, with the partnerships through these other NGO’s. The memorandum of understanding has been enshrined between CBR, Ministry of General Education and CDC so that all these modules now form part of the curricula so that all the teachers, pre-service and in-service we are talking the same language. In short, NAD through the EENET materials I think that is a plus in my view because the Government has conscientised this one to say it is an integral part of everything. There are a lot of prospects out there; it is a journey but we have already gone so many strides ahead. Thank you.