Respondent 5 (R5)

**Onderhoudvoerder:** Nioma Venter (NV)

**Tyd:** 21:53

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| NV | Okay, this is an interview with respondent 5, who is part of the Little Seeds operational team.  She has been involved with Diaconia since 2015, until the collaboration of Little Seeds began in May 2019.  You are welcome to answer in English or Afrikaans.  The three questions I sent you, will be the framework of our conversation. |
| R5 | Yes |
| NV | The first question is the idea of an integrated approach to work together towards a shared vision and a shared strategy.  Now as honest as possible, what was your experience when Diaconia and Badisa came together as partners.  And we started 2018, 2019 got a name.  Came together as partners in ECD.  When you share your experience, you can keep that in the back of your mind, you can talk about the emotional relationship component, and or about the operational, the functional experiences you had when we got together.  The first question is the idea of an integrated approach to work together towards a shared vision and a shared strategy. |
| R5 | What is the question? |
| NV | Our attempt to work together – how did you experience that initial coming together? |
| R5 | In my opinion, it should be very easy to have a shared vision. But I think, or what I noticed, was that it was very difficult to work together.  At first it sounds like we are doing the same thing, but the church has its own reality and so does the organization.  So you know your clients that you have to serve, but the other one has DSD that they have to keep satisfied. The organization bears heavily on all those obligations that they have. The different expectations made us struggle to find a joint vision for a long time. And then the way of working to get there. You do it this way and I do it that way. It was just a big struggle. For good reasons. No one was reluctant, but they are two different organizations, and they work differently. They are set up differently and have different outcomes in mind. Also, different responsibilities. |
| NV | I hear you saying that theoretically one vision sound veasable, but in reality it is challenging. What are some of the external realities you noticed that challenged this ideal? |
| R5 | Yes, when I say theoretically, I also mean everyone’s intentions was pure.  I really think people wanted to see x, y and z happen and nobody wants to work against each other or be in competition. I want to work with you.  But I think the practical... I think, well like all the rules of the organization and how the organization's history is, made it difficult for Diaconia. |
| NV | And it works both ways? |
| R5 | Yes. And there is a history of challenges.  The functions and the so-called oversight.  I think those things weighed heavily on Diaconia and on Badisa who are used to working like this. |
| NV | The history of the relationship was challenging? |
| R5 | Yes |
| NV | Okay |
| R5 | I think so. I am from Diaconia. Maybe I see it clearly coming from Diaconia. |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | I don’t think anyone’s intent was bad. I think it was difficult for everyone. |
| NV | Yes. Okey, so you say you understand the logics of the tension. Can we reflect on what exactly it was that was difficult?  You mentioned a history and ‘bagage’.  You also mentioned boxes that needed to be ticked.  Anything else you can think of? |
| R5 | A lot of the stuff is just a sense I get.  For example, I think from the Church, from Diaconia's side, we were much more spontaneous. What should we do you guys? Who is going to do it? Let's do it. And the things happened.  Badisa has the organization to which they must answer again. They must report to DSD and to the church. They must work carefully. They can't just get excited about an idea and work with it. Everything must go through processes.  And I think they're also used to getting a lot of setbacks.  With experience one learns to move forward more and more cautiously. Moving forward is something you don't just do; you try to maintain. Or move forward safely. |
| NV | And this caused tension at the time of the merge? |
| R5 | I think it caused a lot of delay. |
| NV | Okey, that makes sense |
| R5 | Because then... the one person must know 'okay, you cover me'  If I get in trouble, because I act out of my box now, I cover you. And the other must make commitments, which he may not know if he can. I only saw it from the outside. That's just how it looked to me. And you don't always understand it, but these were valid things from their experience. |
| NV | Two different systems |
| R5 | Sure |
| NV | And many differences. |
| R5 | Yes, and no critique intented, but the tempos of work also differed. |
| NV | Okay? |
| R5 | Yes and you have to get stuff done, but now you must wait for approval. Especially at the beginning. But still, a shared vision should be possible. |
| NV | So those were the realities you witnessed.  In reflection, what do you think each partner bring to shared success? |
| R5 | It is difficult to say. I only know the teams for four years now. |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | For example Erika I dont know that long. I know Isabella longer. I dont know, it is difficult. |
| NV | Can I help you? |
| R5 | Help me please |
| NV | Don’t think of people. Think of the church and of an organisation and what each of them could possibly bring to a merger. |
| R5 | Okey. The church can bring something. |
| NV | So what is that thing the church can bring? |
| R5 | I think my position makes me bias. |
| NV | Dont worry about that. Other people in the research represents other voices. I am interested in your opinion. |
| R5 | I just found in everything I tried, if I did not have a congregation motivated to participate, nothing happened. From energy to practical support, this is what congregations bring to the process. If I didn't have that, I would have a really hard time actually getting anything done on the ground, no matter how much energy I put into it. |
| NV | Ok. So you say congregations brings energy. How does this energy means practically? |
| R5 | I can be enthusiastic, going to the congregation, do the training but when I leave someone must sustain the work that has been done there.  And this is what the congregation does. That is the hard work. |
| NV | And this is what you reckon the valuable role of the congregation is? |
| R5 | Absolutely. Keep on motivating the ECD workers and help them overcome obstacles, even small ones, as they go on. |
| NV | How is the congregation different from the organisation in this sense? |
| R5 | I think because in the congregation, people do what they do as a service or a ministry and not as a job. |
| NV | As a calling? |
| R5 | It is their calling yes |
| NV | Something motivates and drives them |
| R5 | Yes, they really want to do it and they give their best efforts. |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | I am struggeling to understand why it can not be the same with Badisa, but, to this day, I am struggeling to understand it and it is not that I want to be critical at all. |
|  | I think it is the way in which Badisa works. I feel more cohension from congregation to congregation than I feel from one Badisa program to another. Congregations are part of a presbytery or a synod and you can feel that cohension in the church. With Badisa each program is isolated, works with their own boundaries and budgets and stick to their own territory. I dont get the same support from different Badisa offices than I get from different congregations. |
| NV | Okey |
| R5 | Badisa programs are all small businesses surviving on their own. Each do their own fundraising and so on. |
| NV | So you find it easier to get the buy in of congregations in the vision than from Badisa progams? |
| R5 | Please, I do not try to be critical about Badisa |
| NV | No no no – this is an appretiative conversation. We will get to the contribution of both parties. I get what you are saying, that the church decided on ECD and that you can testify to the energy you observe when you approach different congregations. Whilst with Badisa you have the experience of a more silo approach. |
| R5 | Yes and I get why |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | I understand it. To begin with, Badisa staff are employed workers. |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | They answer to DSD and the work agreements they have with DSD. But they will have to consider collaboration. |
| NV | Do you want to expand on that? |
| R5 | For me, who manages the Smart Start program, I do not see any benefits of collaboration with Badisa as it is at the moment. But a Badisa office could assist me in the recruitment and selection of coaches. They know the local people. They could offer a local team where my coach could latch on and feel safe and supported. We could share resources, small logistical stuff, but at the moment I turn to congregations for this support. |
| NV | So if you can dream, what would the way forward look like? |
| R5 | Yes, it would be a big thing for me if we could really scale our work. If the merger could work to that achievement. We should work together and share the success.  I don't know how, I don't know enough about organizations and structures.  But also practical stuff, that if my coach needs a car and the organisation has a car, why can’t we share it? If it is possible, of course. Practical stuff that kind of makes sense to me, but we can’t dictate it from Bellvile, it will have to happen in communities |
| NV | A local community will have to dream and accomplish that kind of collaboration? |
| R5 | Maybe if they have one governing body, but even there it should not only be about descisions. If ECD does not exite you, I dont know! There must truely be an experience of collaboration and share enthusiasm about the work we do.  I want to take the members of Badisas management team to a ECD site. I want to show them what we are doing. No sitting in offices and making decisions and you have’nt seen it for yourselves! Lets go and meet the people! You will not be the same when you return. |
| NV | It will exite you to experience it first hand? |
| R5 | You might be critical at first, but you will not leave there whithou new insight and new perspectives. |
| NV | Absoluut. |
| R5 | I feel that we are stuck here on top and that the system is heavy laden with a lot of logistical stuff that could have been dealt with sooner if we where all on the same page. |
| NV | We still have that dream, that together we can go further. What are the other cautions that you think we need to take note of. |
| R5 | No but I.... I think we will have to guard against too much of a bureaucratic system that we build into Little Seeds. It drains energy.  Beware of just hiring more and more and more managers and on the ground we do not have enough capacity.  Everyday I have to deal with new challenges and we need team members who can assist, not more bosses. That is my honenst opinion. |
| NV | It is a very important remark. What I hear you say is that we should not make the structure top heavy and where it matters, we are understaffed. |
| R5 | Put the weight on the ground where it matters. |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | We are working very well on our own – we dont need more regulation. Many bosses do not add value in the kind of work we do. The more I am managed, by a manager who needs to report to another manager, the less I can do. You laden with administrative duties. |
| NV | Ja |
| R5 | Maybe we should consider how we use the capacity we have. I know other companies where the head of department is as much management as operational. She does not sit and manage people all the time. She leads her team – she works with them. She also gets in her car and go to the places where we work. In Diaconia we also worked like that. |
| NV | So what you say is that capacity should to maximised in an operational sense? |
| R5 | Yes, and that we could manage ourselves. |
| NV | Instead of layering manager on manager? |
| R5 | Yes, especially in the development phase that we are in. |
| NV | Thank you for your valuable contibution. |