Respondent 3 (R3)

**Onderhoudvoeder:** Nioma Venter

**Tyd:** 19:57 ; 03:12

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| NV | We can start |
| R3 | I am respondent 3.  I am part of the operational team of Little Seeds  I have been involved with Badisa since 1996, up to the merge between Diaconia and Badisa |
| NV | Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this research  I gave you three questions beforehand  And we're now going into the framework, discussing it.  The first question is on the idea of an integrative approach to work together on shared vision and strategy. But then, it is one thing to say, ‘Let’s work together on our shared interest in ECD’, but what was your experience, your honest experience, within the process? You can answer on the emosional as well as the operational experiences you had. |
| R3 | Okay, I think I might mix the two together.  I think the… my understanding and the remembering of this integrationprocess.  First of all, we were only two Badisa staff members on the operational side that came over into the merge. It was an awfull experience for me. There was almost no prior conversation with me on the matter. In a consultation beforehand a  diagram was drawn to me and I was told that I will lead the team. That's it. |
| NV | Leader of the Little Seeds team? |
| R3 | Yes, that was what I was told. And she told me, ‘You always wanted a bigger unit, now you will have one’. But that was not my idea of a bigger unit. So excuse me if I say that I am extremely negative about this process. I still feel negative about Little Seeds to this day. Maybe I’ll tell you why later on. |
| NV | I would like to hear |
| R3 | That's why I say it's a bit of a mixed bag for me.  As I said at the beginning, I have been involved with Badisa since 1996.  Came a long way, and in 2006 I didn't have a choice.  The choice was made for me to say that you will be involved in ECD and the orphanages  So I was working 24 hours a day at that point  So on Saturdays when rugby was being watched and so on, it was just - I went behind my desk and worked very hard.  But leave it there for now |
| NV | 2006? |
| R3 | 2006 I moved over specifically with the assignment ECD  Didn't know anything, and it was uncertain time as such, because in 2003 Badisa was established, also as a merger between social work services of the DRC and URC. |
| NV | Yes I am aware – CMR and SKDD |
| R3 | That's right yes.  So for three years they had challenges with the bigger Badisa programs. The transition and the change had to be managed.  Then they realized, but we, now I'm talking about us, CMR only had Uit-en-Tuis.  The daycare center. The SKDD services just went on doing their own thing like in the past. There was someone else in the position for just over a year and when she resigned, the job was just thrown on me.  Because no other social worker wanted the orphanages.  So I just... had to jump in.  And now it was challenging for me because you couldn’t approach the CMR and the SKDD programmes the same. For example, in many places there were no employment contracts in place. There was no structure anywhere.  So I just, I just had to put all that stuff in place. |
| NV | So all the ECD centres moved over to Badisa? |
| R3 | All the kindergartens, yes.  And there were many kindergartens that resisted the process!  So I had to go see each one, negotiate each one what are the advantages, what are the disadvantages, and all that.  So, no one mentored me.  No one told me what to do.  Because no one knew what to do.  So I had to find my own way… |
| NV | You did pioneer’s work |
| R3 | So I think the bottom line is still today, I have an incredible bond with everyone.  So I feel like a mother, I am also described as the mother.  Oh, I got the most beautiful Mother's Day message, but yes  I also think the constancy was also … the decisive factor for people to trust me  And that people allow me to work with them,  The human factor is important to me, I am a social worker.  So building relationships and compassion have always come first for me.  So this is my piece of history as far as where I come from.  So when this new Little Seeds started, there were no discussions with us.  And I've always felt, and I mentioned it, that I was thrown out then to this day.  I did this job, I know what goes on at ground level, but you never asked me for my opinion.  You never asked, what do you think? What's your opinion?  So it was a bad experience for me.  So yes. The emotion is that I was kicked out.  This is quite a heavy one.  I am sorry, but that is my truth. |
| NV | That is ok. It is part of the process to be honest. |
| R3 | So that is what was promised to me, but until this day no one talked to me about it ever again.  So the first experience of Little Seeds is we moved from our offices and joined Diaconia at their side of the building.  And here we are. |
| R3 | And I felt in a way that I'm open to changes, I'm not at all…  I never kick against changes.  But I think the fact that we were never sat down and talked to.  Think I was very bad for me.  I think erveryone accepted that the process was communicated well, but it was not.  There was no communication with us.  And that's the worst part.  Because you assume, you hear, you see.  But nothing is discussed with you.  And this is the bad part.  and it was very bad for me at the time.  Okay, so here we're sitting upstairs now. We get our offices  I knew nobody here. No one introduced us to the church officials working in the same part of the building.  I had to get to know them over time.  Nobody said okay here's this guy, this is his job.  There's that guy it's his job… |
| NV | So everyone just assumed you knew each other |
| R3 | Yes.  And I say this with a deep honesty, I still do not understand our team's situation at all.  I don't get it, and it's not that I'm unwilling....  Let me say why I say so.  Each one of us has his own areas in which he works, we cannot work in each other's areas.  So all that it was for me, in my mind and in my thinking, is that I just changed an office.  Responsibilities have been added, which makes it even more difficult for me now.  But I can live with that.  I will adapt, until the day I retire.  Yes, we came to know each other and I can ask ‘how are you doing today,’ but in terms of cooperation, there is not really anything to cooperate on.  I tried, for example, if I see something.  Especially with the start of Covid, I shared a view ideas, just to be told that Smart Start is doing their own thing.  So Smart Start... even before the merge,  I didn't have a good relationship with SmartStart.  Not with a person, but the idea of SmartStart.  I felt because Smart Start is not a program, it is actually a franchise.  And actually you are doing other people's work, and I can already see the collision ahead.  Because remember we had a similar program, which I also started.  In 2013, all on my own.  And go and ask for funding from the department.  No one helped me, no one told me what to do.  When I look back now and see how I did it, I shake my head.  But it's done! And it’s still running today. Not as strong anymore, but it is still going.  I would actually like for all the home care programmes to rather now go under SmartStart.  It could work for me.  Because, we hired someone, the department, to help with the home program.  The person resigned and that whole package was just dumped on me again.  So I don't give all my attention to the home program. |
| NV | Do I understand correct – you say that in your experience each member is still working in her own silo, even though there was a merge of the two parties? |
| R3 | Everyone is still in her own silo, yes |
| NV | So daar is nie 'n… daar het nie 'n … |
| NV | No shared vision at all? |
| R3 | I… okay let me put it this way  Not at present, because you know why?  There are things happening in the Badisa organization that we are not informed about.  And I ask and I ask.  And I beg and I beg.  I just don't think anyone wants to inform me, so that's the one thing  Don't know what's going on, know something is going on, I hear it everywhere.  I was also part of the middle management team for a very long time until I was shut out.  There... I think because we, I mean we sat around a table last week and tried to capture the value chain, and I listened to the group around the table and said we can't…  I am not going to do double work, because that is what is going to happen. There is no budget for that.  We don't know what our budget looks like.  So, if the one wants to fly to the Eastern Cape four times, where are you going to get the money, do we have the money?  Do we have the manpower to expand?  What does our picture look like? We can see what we want.  But... I have been dealing with Badisa way of working for too long.  And I know, you don't ask for the money.  The money is put down for you and you have to work with it, you have a budget.  And if you don't have enough money to visit your place, you just have to stay until the next month.  That's how it works.  But we have no idea what we are talking about here.  Because here want a laptop and a car... and...  I say you can't, before we sit around a table with Helet.  And no one informs us about what our budget looks like.  No matter how much we ask for information.  And running off to the Eastern Cape now will also have an influence on my work.  I currently, mercifully still get... a subsidy from the department, even though it is not a 100% subsidy, but I still have to deliver the outcomes.  I assume in two years my subsidy will disappear.  I want to know what is the plan, am I going to have to leave?  Am I going to be able to expand in the Eastern Cape?  what is the plan  It's my insecurity, and it's all the time that makes…  For me the whole process (the merger) took too long and we're not there yet.  If I have to look back now, I would like to have said; You have to figure out Little Seeds before you get the staff involved.  Even if the process had to wait another 5 years.  I told the hub I will be gone, and I can promise you it's not going to be sorted out yet  The odds are big that this Little Seeds thing is just going to disintegrate – that is my opinion. |
| NV | So there was a lot of insecurities and a lot of unpleasantness for you personally in the process? |
| R3 | Yes |
| NV | For example the budget that is not known to the team – it does not enable you at all? It causes insecurities? |
| R3 | And the other thing is, which is very prominent for me in my work...  Because I functioned alone for so long – and now there is someone next to me, the project manager.  Now let's just talk about that, we still have no idea what her key responsibilities are  And it makes my functioning incredibly difficult  Because, in part, she steps in, in the work I'm already doing.  So should I talk to her? Is this her job? isn't it?  I don't know, there are things I expect from her and they are not done.  There are things I put on her table, that I suppose is her responsibility. It is not done.  I write circular letters, the circular letters actually have a very short way to go. In the past I would write the letter, send it to the director and she approves it. Now it has to go throught the project manager, then to the director and then only back to me and off to the clients.  Two months ago I sent three circular letters to the project manager, and I still don't know what happened to them.  but now… Now I ask, what is the project manager's key responsibilities?  Because it hinders me in my work.  Now I'm either told to go find out for myself, or no attention is paid.  she steps in, do the work I'm supposed to do, do it halfway, and thrown it back at me.  And that makes it even harder for me |
| NV | So this just adds to your frustration |
| R3 | It adds more and more insecurities |
|  | And yes, it is a dreadfull experience |
| NV | I hear you and is not nice to hear your frustrations. Thank you for being honest about all that. |
| R3 | Yes |
| NV | If you dont mind me pushing on for a bit, I would like to ask you: Do you, at all, see any strenghts that either Diaconia or Badisa brings to a merger? |
| R3 | VKO Badisa has been used to holding all forums/training and conferences only for its own staff all these years.  There are so many other ECD programs especially from the URC that would benefit from being involved in such events. It is not just a case of us knowing better, but together we can build a solid ECD foundation.  No mapping has taken place yet. Between Badisa and Diaconia there is no certainty about the scope of programs. LS works directly with the departments and understands the direction. This information can be freely shared for everyone's benefit  I know how I struggled to get Religion lessons for Badisa's Daycare. Here the church can join hands and help us a lot with lesson material.  We can also learn a lot from the other partner. We can share knowledge and also move closer to each other in this way. Currently, we still work and live very much in our own silo. |

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| NV | And looking forward? Any words of wisdom? |
| R3 | If wish I could just do my work. There are much to do. Contact with my schools and their teachers. But now I sit here in my office and I am interrupted all the time. Now I must do this or that while the aftercare programme needs my attention. It is a constant frustration.  So I said to myself – just hang on until it is time to retire. I have to pray four years to speed away.  And I'm not that kind of person.  I told this to our project manager, tell me what energade me here.  I wanted to go for the Maths for All training.  Because it would have given me the opportunity to also be in the church community.  Wherever to help children, young children, to develop Mathematically. This is what is needed in our formal programs.  It is required in our aftercare programs, and yes I asked for it two years ago.  So … I guess I'm considere too old now to do it on my own. Understand?  So what energades me here? Tell me what? Nothing. |
| NV | You feel like you are in a dead end? |
| R3 | Yes, it is…I am in a dead end because I don't know what will happen in two years ahead.  I say two years, it's a year and a few months.  Because, if... remember we have now transferred to WC Education Department. Will WCED keep on subsidising my position?  Is there a plan with me? Will Badisa keep me on?  Or is this the end of my career? I do not know.  Has anyone thought of that?  Has anyone ever wondered about that?  What impact will this have on Little Seeds.  Does this mean that there are even fewer staff who because remember they will then withdraw two subsidies?  These are the things I wonder about.  Does anyone know this? Does anyone think about it? |
| NV | I think we should end our discussion here. You were so bold and honest. Thank you for that. |
| R3 | I suppose I send your whole reseach process to a dead end |
| NV | Not at all. This is what reseach is about. |
| R3 | Okey. |