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INTERVIEW WITH SARA MADUMA

Dale McKinley (DM): First of all thank you very much for agreeing to talk with us and taking your time on a weekend. Just quickly state your full name and where you live?

Sara Maduma (SM): My name is Sara Maduma. I'm staying here at Zone 6.

DM: Sara were you born in this community or where were you born?

SM: I was born in Sharpeville not here.

DM: In Sharpeville?

SM: Yes.

DM: What year were you born?

SM: In 1965.

DM: 1965?

SM: Yes.

DM: When did you move to this community here, what year?

SM: It was in 1993.

DM: So from the time you were born to 1993 you stayed in Sharpeville?

SM: Yes.

DM: Why did you move to this place in 1993?

SM: Here I was looking for my own house, to have my own house.

DM: At that time were you married, did you have a family or were you by yourself?

SM: My husband bought this house.

DM: Tell us a little about Sharpeville. It is just down the road really, not that far away is it ... how far is Sharpeville from here?

SM: It's not that far.

DM: Just tell us a little bit about growing up in Sharpeville in the 1960s and 70s ... what was it like for you as a young little girl?

SM: I don't really have a good memory. My father bought a house in 1970 and I started school in 1974 in Zone 12.

DM: Tell us a little more about when you were growing up there/ When you started school as a young girl what was it like?

SM: I started my primary school in zone 12 and my high school in zone 11.

DM: So maybe the best thing is what are your memories of that time when you were growing up ... what are some of your memories?

SM: When I was at high school the only thing I have only the background of Asinamali Campaign of the 3rd of September.

DM: What about it? What do you remember about the Asinamali Campaign?

SM: Education was disrupted and I was doing my matric and we were supposed to write trials but we didn't write it because people were burning shops and the classes were disrupted.

DM: Were you, as a student, at all involved in the things that were going on at that time?

SM: I was not involved in the riots.

Ahmed Veriava (AV): But what did you think about it?

SM: It was right because it was for our parents. By that time they had to pay the rent and the government had increased the rent. And they didn't have the money to pay.

DM: When you are saying your parents were not working what had your parents been doing before that? Your father, your mother to survive, to support the family?

Interpreter: Misunderstanding in that note, her parents were working.

DM: Where did they work?

SM: My father worked at a certain metal company and my mother was a domestic worker.

DM: And how was life for you? Was it difficult for you or ok in your family? Did you live well enough?

SM: There was no problem, they afforded.

DM: And brothers and sisters ... do you have brothers and sisters?

SM: Yes.

DM: How many brothers, how many sisters?

SM: At home we were 9, two girls and seven boys - but two boys have passed away. It's only 5 that are left.

DM: Did your two brothers pass away when they were young or when they were older?

SM: When I'm young.

DM: When you were very young?

SM: Ja.

DM: And you were ... you are the oldest, in the middle somewhere?

SM: I am the first born.

DM: You are the first born?

SM: Yes.

DM: So when you went to high school you said after primary school you went to high school. What kinds of things, at that time, were you interested in, that you wanted to study in high school?

SM: I liked history, I like sports.

DM: What kind of sports did you play?

SM: I played netball.

DM: And did you have a team that you played around in the area or other school?

SM: At home at the weekend I had a team that was playing netball at the weekends at school we played netball.

DM: And did you do well in school?

SM: Yes.

DM: Did you enjoy school? You took it seriously and you have matric?

SM: Yes.

DM: And when did you get matric?

SM: Yes.

DM: And what year did you get your matric?

SM: I got my matric in 1985, it was supposed to be in 1984 but because I had to repeat that matric because on the 3rd September we never went to school that year again. I passed but it was not good.

DM: And what did you do when you got your matric, when you left high school?

SM: I wished to be a policewoman, but I didn't...

DM: Why a policewoman, why did you want to be a policewoman?

SM: I just like police.

DM: Did you have a friend or family who was a policeman or what did you like about the police?

SM: I never had friends but I felt like it is the kind of a job that I can do.

DM: And what did you ... I mean you talked about the riots and other things so I'm sure that would be harsh to say, a difficult thing because the police were seen as being on the other side isn't it?

SM: I was not scared.

DM: So what did you do to try to make that happen to become a policewoman? Did you make applications or did you...?

SM: I did a lot of them every year when they want police. I went there and fill in forms but I am unsuccessful.

DM: Why do you think you were unsuccessful?

SM: I don't know.

DM: Were you ever given any reasons?

SM: I think it was God's will. I hated to work at the hospital, I liked the policewoman but now I'm working at the hospital.

The interpreter: He was asking whether they have ever given you a reason for your applications?

SM: No they never gave me any reasons.

DM: So how did you end up working at the clinic, how did that happen?

SM: I just applied but at the private hospital not at the government hospitals.

DM: Which private hospital did you start work at?

SM: They call it MelMed.

DM: What kind of job did you started doing initially at the beginning?

SM: I started with those nurses helping them ...I was working at the kitchen but if you have the knowledge about the patients, about those works, they will call you to help those nurses with the patients.

DM: What kind of people came into that private hospital? What kind of people were you serving and taking care of?

SM: Both whites and blacks.

DM: Not so many people from this community that you were living in? Or were there people from here that were coming to the hospital?

SM: Yes some of them.

DM: Some of them?

SM: Ja.

DM: And you started working there in the late 1980s?

SM: No.

DM: What year did you start working there?

SM: It was in 2004.

DM: So from the time you graduated from high school all the way till the 1990s, what were you doing during that period?

SM: I was staying at home because my father passed away in 1980 and so my mother she has no money to give me to go to school.

DM: Your mother was still working as a domestic worker?

SM: Yes.

DM: And she was supporting all of the children?

SM: Yes.

DM: All 9 of you or 7?

SM: Yes.

DM: When you are saying you stayed at home did you do any other things even if you don't get paid for it? What things were you doing?

SM: Nothing. I was staying with those children because my mother goes to work.

DM: Ok so you were taking care of the other kids?

SM: Ja.

DM: That was happening when the political system started changing in South Africa after 1990 right and other things?

SM: Yes.

DM: As a young woman who didn't have a job, who was looking around, what did you think that 1994 was going to bring after the changes?

SM: Let me take this example. By the time when Mandela was released many people thought life would change, there would be a better life, but that didn't happen and it's hard for the other people because they can't get jobs you see.

DM: What kinds of things specifically? Can you give us an example of what you thought was going to change when you say better life ... what do you mean by that?

SM: I thought the government would support the children who are going to school and people will get jobs but that didn't happen. More people were retrenched from their jobs.

DM: After 1994 - and I see you have got the picture of Madiba there on your wall - he became president and the new government is happening ... what kinds of changes did you see for you in your life and for your family after 1994 if anything at all?

SM: Those who benefited were those who were involved in the struggle like my brother who follows me ... he was involved in the struggle, government took him to Wits and he

does not even have matric. He worked at the license department but he is now working as a traffic cop.

DM: So you felt that because your brother had been involved in the struggle he was given the job?

SM: Yes.

DM: What about the other brothers and sisters, what about them?

SM: No he was one but they were 2 in Zone 7 and the other was killed by the Zulus he was also an activist.

DM: You said previously that when you moved to this place you moved with your husband right?

SM: Yes.

DM: When did you get married?

SM: It was 1990.

DM: 1998?

SM: 90.

DM: 1990?

SM: Yes.

DM: And your husband, what did he do?

SM: He was retrenched, he was working at the metal company ISCOR in 1997.

DM: From that time that you got married until 1997 your husband was bringing in an income and were things okay for you during that time even though you were not working?

SM: We have been living with the money that they gave him and I was also doing piece jobs.

AV: What kind of odd jobs were you doing?

SM: Washing the clothes for people cleaning the houses for people.

AV: People in this area?

SM: Ja in this area because I had a child and that child has to go to school and I must do everything for her.

AV: Ok you have only one child.

SM: Yes.

AV: How old is she?

SM: She is 15 years and she is turning 16 on the 22 September, next week.

DM: And your husband is he still with you?

SM: Yes.

DM: And he is unemployed?

SM: Yes.

DM: So you are the bread winner now in your house?

SM: Yes.

DM: When did you get that job in that clinic?

SM: I just applied.

DM: Ja when was that, what year was that?

SM: 2004.

DM: 2004?

SM: Ja but I applied before, a long time, they just reply now.

DM: Tell us, after you got that job what was it like working in that place? What kinds of things did you do?

SM: I started like a hostess in the ward. Sometimes I help the nurses with patient.

DM: When you are saying helping ... have you gone through some kind of training or have some knowledge of being a nursing assistant or have you just learned on the job?

SM: I learned from them.

AV: When you say you are sometimes helping the nurses - what kind of stuff were you helping them with?

SM: I help them to take the patient to the toilet, giving them medicines and giving them the right food - the food they must eat, like diabetic food.

DM: And this is now called Medi-Clinic right, it's a private hospital?

SM: Yes, Medi-Clinic.

DM: Since 2004, what are the things that you see for why most people come to the hospital ... what are the problems with most of the people?

SM: Its diabetic, hypertension and high cholesterol and the rest is for the operations in most cases.

DM: Do you have any connections with the public hospitals in this area or do you work with them or just there at the private hospital?

SM: I just work at that hospital.

DM: Do you have other friends that are working as nurses at the other hospitals?

SM: I have only one friend who is a nurse in this area; I think its in Extension 2.

DM: Do you talk about your jobs to each other?

SM: Yes.

DM: What does she tell you about her job in the public hospital?

SM: She is not in the public hospital, she is also in a private hospital - we work at the same place, but she works at the children's ward.

DM: Do you think it's better for someone who works at the private hospitals than someone who is working at the public clinics or hospitals?

SM: It's only my sister.

DM: Your Sister?

SM: Yes.

DM: Tell us about what she says about working at that place?

SM: We don't talk about it and we don't meet that much.

DM: You don't talk about that at all?

SM: No.

DM: You are saying no? Is there some reason why?

SM: Because my job is different from her ... you see the government hospital is different from the private clinic.

DM: So I'm asking you what do you think is the difference for you ... working at the private versus public hospital?

SM: The difference is that the private hospital has good treatment and those people who are there are people who got money. The government sometimes they have no medicines and those clinics there are so corrupt because they treat people freely. That is why a lot have died because they have no money to go to the private. At the government the service is so poor.

DM: Have you ever been at the public clinic or hospital yourself?

SM: No.

DM: Your children, would you take them there?

SM: No, because I have a family doctor at Vereeniging.

AV: So if someone got sick you take them to the family doctor?

SM: Yes.

AV: If one of your family members is seriously ill and needed to be hospitalised where would you take them?

SM: My mother - I will take her to Kopanong not here at Sebokeng.

AV: Kopanong is a public hospital?

SM: It's a public but is better than that one of Sebokeng.

AV: Why did you say so? What's better about Kopanong?

SM: Because Kopanong sometimes they have better treatment but there at Sebokeng there is no better treatment when you go there.

DM: The place where you are working, the private clinic - do you have good conditions of employment, are you satisfied with your job?

SM: Yes I am satisfied because now I am a chef, I'm cooking for the patients.

DM: Now you are cooking?

SM: Yes.

DM: Just out of interest, what kinds of food do you cook for your patients?

SM: A lot like chicken, lasagne, macaroni, baloney and it's a lot.

DM: So I imagine you don't have to cook when you get home because you have been cooking the whole day?

SM: Yes sometimes I used to go home and cook for my mother because those food are so healthy.

AV: And your mother is still alive?

SM: Yes.

DM: And she lives at?

SM: She is there at Zone 12.

DM: In the old family home that you used to live in?

SM: Yes.

AV: Did she retire now or is she still working?

SM: She is not working now.

DM: She is on pension?

SM: Ja.

DM: And what about your other siblings? You mentioned your brother who is a traffic cop and your one sister who works in another clinic ... what about the others?

SM: My younger sister she works at the private hospital. The other one, my brother, he works there at the New Vaal, he is a technician. The other one, he works at metal at Vereeniging, he is a foreman. I have three brothers who work at the metals in Vereeniging because the other one he is a foreman.

AV: And only your husband was retrenched?

SM: Yes my husband was working at Vanderbijlpark, so my brother works at Vereeniging.

DM: It sounds interesting because it seems that most of your family are quite productively employed, which is rare. Most of the people here are unemployed. Is there something about your family, the education ...? Why do you think that people in your family are quite successful in getting jobs and working?

SM: Getting jobs?

DM: Ja.

SM: Because we all have the matric we have matric all of us. So if we ... like my brother who works as a foreman, he used to work there so he finds the work for the other one - you see we support each other. Like my younger sister ... I am working there and I just find a job for her last year at private clinic.

DM: As someone who works in health care ... even if it's a private hospital ... what do you think about the health of the community here that you live in?

SM: It's not alright, on the side of the people who are not working. Like when my neighbour is sick I refer her to the diet but due to lack of finance they won't afford.

DM: At the private hospital ... I mean you said mostly its hypertension, some surgeries and everything ... are there many patients for HIV/AIDS there?

SM: Ja we have.

DM: You have as well?

SM: Yes.

DM: And you obviously in that sense ... nutrition is even more important when your system is not very strong ja?

SM: Ja.

DM: Do you find in your community here ... we have just earlier today talking with a social worker who works here ... she was telling us about how many people are HIV positive and how many people are going hungry in this community. Do you see that as well?

SM: Yes because if a person she is HIV positive she must get good nutrition but if that people there are so poor they are going to die because they have got no money to buy food that they must eat.

DM: ... you were saying it took you a long time to get a job in 2004 ... when you got a job now things are better for you in terms of work. When you look after 1994 do you think things have gotten better for most people or not? How do you look at the last 10-12 years since Madiba became President and things changed? If you are looking back at the last 13 years how would you describe them?

SM: I will talk about 1994 at the time when Mandela was released and still a President ... things were better but when Mbeki took over people were starting to be unemployed - it was the time for starvation and hunger.

DM: Why do you think - if you think that's the case - why do you think that happened after Mbeki came in as President?

SM: If you look at the parliament they are fighting each other - that is why our situation is not right and others when they are given money to use for the community they don't use it for the community they just use it for themselves. Like now the ANC is split into two parties if you have seen them. Like me, I like Zuma - if there came another Xhosas I won't tolerate that because I see we have been suffering under those Xhosas - they cause our lives to be difficult you see.

DM: So do you feel very strongly that it's one group ... at the expense of another group?

SM: Ja now it has split into two because they are fighting each other. Some of the people they like Zuma some of people they like Ngcuka you see.

DM: Why do you like Zuma?

SM: Zuma he is so strong and he has that kind of dignity of the Presidency.

DM: Okay, we won't get into that discussion. I was just asking your opinion. I am assuming that you are an ANC member ... you are active in the ANC?

SM: No.

DM: But you support them?

SM: I support only one person because he is a Zulu man and I am a Zulu woman that is why I support him.

DM: Do you find that here in Sebokeng, because there are a lot of people coming from different parts of the country - Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho. Does everybody get along or do they divide according to language, culture ... that group from where they are coming from? What do you find?

SM: No.

DM: There is no problem there?

SM: There is no problem because we are all the blacks you see but when comes to our government that doesn't work.

DM: A few last questions I'm interested to know now that you are working you are travelling ... how far is it that you have to go to work, to the Medi-Clinic?

SM: I take the taxi at around 05h00 in the morning and I arrive there at around 05h35 because we work 6 to 6.

DM: So what time did you wake up in the morning?

SM: At 4 o'clock.

DM: You wake up at 4 and then what time do you leave here?

SM: I leave at 5 o'clock.

DM: You leave at 5 arriving at work when? When do you get to work?

SM: Sometimes 05h40 or 05h45.

DM: That's very early – is that when you are supposed to be at work?

SM: Yes because I must prepare breakfast for the patients.

DM: And then when do you need to knock off every day?

SM: No we work two days in two days off. Like now, I am having the weekend off.

DM: And you work 24 hours for two days – you work straight?

SM: I'm working 6 to 6.

DM: 6 to 6 for 2 days and then you get 2 days off?

SM: Ja sometimes 3 days in, 3 days off. Like now I'm weekend off from yesterday today then Monday I go to work.

AV: Are you on a permanent staff or are you working on contract?

SM: I'm working on the contract.

DM: What are the conditions of that contract ... I mean how long is it -a year, two years, six months?

SM: They didn't give us the conditions because now we have three years working for that contract.

DM: Do you get the benefit?

SM: Yes we get benefits.

DM: You do get benefits?

SM: Ja.

AV: What kind of benefits?

SM: We have a UIF, a provident fund and the medical aid but I can't qualify to be treated as all of my family my husband, my baby they would deduct R800 there because of my salary.

DM: Are you satisfied with your salary your pay?

SM: Yes now I am satisfied.

DM: You are satisfied now better?

SM: Ja.

DM: Just out of interest, when you take home your pay cheque every month, what is your household budget, what do you spend your money? What are the main things that you spend your money on, your main expenses for your house, your family?

SM: I used it for food.

DM: How much would you say, of your money, is taken by food?

SM: Let me take it like this. It's food, electricity, children for when she is going to school, its me for transport. I think I spend about R800 to R900. I spend R600 on food. Let me just say it's R1500 because I spend R320 a month for transport including for my child caring money.

DM: How much would you be left over after you have taken care of all of the things that you need to pay for? Do you have anything that you can save?

SM: I would be left with R700.

DM: And then you put that away...?

SM: I spend it for my mother.

DM: Ok so you are taking care of other people?

SM: Ja.

DM: But you feel that at least now that you can manage with that situation?

SM: Ja.

DM: Sara, if you are looking to the future, looking ahead ... what would you like to see happening for yourself, in your own life? Where would you like to go - what your dreams about moving into what places?

SM: Like next year I want to do engineering. I want to register with the Vaal Technikon. I just want to do this for my child because next year she will be doing matric.

DM: Where did that interest come from?

SM: Laughing.

DM: What made you interested in being an engineer?

SM: I like to fix things like TV, cars.

DM: That makes you feel like hands on, very practical kinds of work?

SM: Ja..

DM: And so you are hoping to go to school?

SM: Ja. Next year, I start in January.

DM: So you have already made the plan?

SM: Yes I have already planned.

AV: You say you have registered at the Vaal Tech?

SM: On December I'm going to register at Vaal Tech.

AV: And how will you afford to pay for it?

SM: I will afford it.

AV: Will you carry on working?

SM: Yes.

DM: And you have got a 15 year old daughter. What future do you think she has but now she still a few more years at school then she going to have to move out there in that big, bad world. What do you see for her?

SM: I see a bright future for her because she wants to be a social worker. She wants to go at Fort Hare after she finishes school.

DM: She is a bright young girl?

SM: Yes (laughing).

DM: So it seems when you look at the future you see good things happening possibly, for you and your family?

SM: Yes.

DM: And then what about on the bigger picture ...not just on the politics necessarily, who is in control, but South Africa. When you look at the country, when you look at the people what do you see for the next future?

SM: For the next future what I see I think if we can change the President then South Africa will be alright, life for the people is going to change.

DM: And last very last thing is there anything that you would like to say about yourself, about things that we haven't talk about or questions that we haven't ask you? We give you an opportunity if you want to say anything?

SM: I wish many people could get the job because children become tsotsis because of poverty - like now if you can go to Eatonside there is a lot of robberies and little boys with guns. You see, most people used to kill themselves because of poverty – it's not alright. Because they leave their children behind, who is going to look after those children after they are committing suicide – no one? We have a lot of thugs in the shacks there because their mothers and father are not working. Like me, I am working and my child gets everything she wants but what about the other children?

DM: Thanks very much for talking to us.

SM: Ok.

MINUTES - 45:17