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“The first virtue of a thesis is that it is done.” Both of us remember our supervisor’s words very clearly. And, to be honest, submitting the first completed draft version of this thesis really felt like fulfilling that first virtue. We had finally managed to put approximately six months of hard work, both in South Africa and in the Netherlands, to paper. A huge relief.

Three weeks after submitting the draft we discussed our first virtue with our supervisor who suggested some improvements, followed by another week of editing in the public library in Amsterdam. Now we can say that we are really done. We have finally finished our thesis! And although we did all the writing, we would never have been able to create this document without the help of many, many, many people. You have all been of great assistance to our endeavor. The individuals we would like to send our special gratitude are:

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Amsterdam, August 2008,
Tijl Couzij and Ivar Halfman
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ntroduction

Contemporary society can be challenging. Every day we have to make sense of our interactions with one another. We continuously run the risk of misreading or misinterpreting the things other people do and say, or vice versa, our own words and actions may be misinterpreted. To make it all even more demanding, an increase in global interdependency and mobility introduces exotic, exciting, but sometimes also downright frightening new elements into our lives. One central feature of these elements is the introduction of new worldviews that sometimes appear to be radically different from those we have come to internalize as our own. Unless we decide to move to a deserted island somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, we will have to deal with this diversity and face the corresponding challenges that come with living in modern multi-cultural societies, whether we want to or not.

Concerns about disintegrating or even polarizing societies – and a wish to prevent people from moving to an island in the Pacific Ocean – have generated a renewed interest in what Weiss & Rein (1970) have called ‘broad-aim programs’. With this term they refer to “programs, which hope to achieve nonspecific forms of [social] change-for-the-better (…)”\(^1\) (ibid: 97). Various agents in society initiate these broad-aim programs, which vary from locally organized barbecues to international exchange programs. In ‘our’ city of Amsterdam for example, we have a program broadcasting locally recorded soap series, and there are ‘urban games’ in which different parts of the city team-up and compete with one another (Platform Amsterdam Together, 2008).

Accompanying the renewed interest in broad-aim programs to increase ‘social cohesion’ is the search for new and suitable evaluation methods for these programs. Traditional methods concerned with the evaluation of these types of social programs have been criticized for their experimental and reductionist character that focuses on specific program effects and specific program goals, thereby often missing crucial aspects of a

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\(^1\) “(...) and which also, because of their ambition and magnitude, involve unstandardized, large-scale interventions and are evaluated in only a few sites” (Weiss & Rein 1970: 97).

2 Although Weiss & Rein recognize a wide variety of broad-aim programs, we will use the term a bit more narrowly. We are more concerned with the related subjects of social cohesion and conflict prevention. Our research is focused on the specific case of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP).

Lacking appropriate methods for evaluation severely complicates processes of decision making on the part of agents sponsoring these broad-aim programs, and on the part of policy makers at different levels of government that may want to implement broad-aim programs. Moreover, not knowing how these programs function and not knowing what it is they produce hinders the application of these programs and obstructs opportunities for program improvement. Therefore, based on our case study (which is concerned with the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and its workshops), we – Tijl Couzij and Ivar Halfman – propose an alternative model for the evaluation of broad-aim programs in the field of conflict prevention and social cohesion. To make the impact of programs in these fields more tangible, we argue for the use of a specific form of ‘narrative analysis’, more specifically, the analysis of participants’ conflict stories.

**Focus of our research**

From preliminary discussions with the main stakeholders of our ‘case’, we deduced one core request: Design an evaluation model for AVP. (‘AVP’ will be explained in more detail below). Proceeding with our research, analysis, writing, and rewriting, we discovered that this core request consisted of three sub-goals. Sub-goal one: Get a thorough understanding of AVP and its impact on participants’ experiences. Sub-goal two: Use this knowledge about the program’s impact to find (an) appropriate method(s) for evaluating it. Sub-goal three: With the appropriate methodology, design an implementable evaluation model geared towards AVP which can be piloted. This triple divide is also reflected in the structure of our thesis, which is discussed at the end of these

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3 Initially we wrote about our search for workshop-effects.
introductions. Let us now proceed with a brief explanation of two key concepts: ‘AVP’ and ‘evaluation’.

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

AVP is the abbreviation for ‘the Alternatives to Violence Project’ (hereafter AVP), which was initiated by American prison inmates who wanted to reduce organizational/structural and physical violence\(^4\) in their prison facility. In 1975 they asked the Quakers to develop a program that became known as AVP (Phaphama (pronounced as papáma) Initiatives website, 2008a). Through conducting two- to four-day workshops prison inmates were supposed to learn that conflicts can be dealt with peacefully, i.e. without recourse to violence. After a basic workshop, an advanced workshop and a trainer’s workshop, the prisoners had empowered themselves to co-facilitate future AVP workshops and help other prisoners to settle disputes in a nonviolent, satisfactory and constructive – as opposed to a destructive – fashion.

Due to the positive responses to these workshops and the reported decrease in violent incidents in prisons (see for example Delahanty 2004; Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005; Sloane 2002), the project spread in America and around the world.\(^5\) During this process of fanning out, the focus of trainings widened. Although AVP flourished in jails and in detention centers, it also found its way to schools, churches, community centers, youth centers, companies, and other places outside the prison walls. In addition, when the focus of trainings widened, a simultaneous widening of application occurred. Apart from ‘violence reduction’ many other reasons for facilitating AVP workshops were recognized.

In 1995 AVP reached South Africa (Phaphama Initiatives website, 2008b), and with the help of South Africa’s Phaphama Initiatives (hereafter simply Phaphama) the Alternatives to Violence Project was introduced in the Netherlands where DiversityJoy (the Dutch organization facilitating AVP Workshops in the Netherlands) launched her first

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\(^4\) What is important here is that the term ‘violence’ is not limited to physical violence. It includes various other forms of violence that may occur among human beings. In the end one might even claim that AVP is concerned with ‘constructive communication’.

\(^5\) On a contact list derived from the website of AVP international the following countries are mentioned: Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Belarus, Burundi, Canada, Caucasus Region, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Hong Kong, Hungary, Japan, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine (West Bank), Russia, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tonga, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States (AVP International website, 2008).
workshop in Amsterdam Oost-Watergraafsmeer in 2006 (DiversityJoy website, 2008a). From then on workshops have been facilitated in schools, for teachers, for community workers, and in relation to social work more generally.

Now, after approximately two years of experience and cooperation, DiversityJoy and Phaphama, are curious to know what they are achieving. The simple fact that AVP has spread quickly around the world with a limited budget and a rudimentary structure, can in itself be perceived as an indication that the program is appreciated by its participants (Delahanty 2004: 3). Hence, DiversityJoy as well as Phaphama have gathered multiple stories about people’s positive experiences with AVP workshops. However, as long as these stories remain dispersed, it is difficult to see the bigger picture. Which themes run through these stories, and how can the stories be presented to interested parties? Which lessons can be learned? These are questions that Phaphama, DiversityJoy, (future) clients, and funding partners would like to see answered; something, which we hope this research can contribute to.

**Evaluation**

As we understand it, ‘evaluation’ refers to investigative processes (such as research) aiming to shed light on – in our case – the functioning of an intervention program. The information generated through the research may help to falsify or confirm the claims made by the program and/or give suggestions for intervention improvement. These two components – verifying claims and identifying opportunities for improvement – reflect two major goals of evaluation: accountability and learning (Swanborn 1999: 15). Depending on the stakeholders’ requests (for accountability or learning), the balance between these two major goals of evaluation may shift, and the emphasis may be put on one or the other.^[6]

With ‘evaluation model’, we mean the structure of methods used during the evaluation research. Depending on this structure and the methods used, an evaluator generates specific forms of data. This means that it is important to carefully consider the evaluation methods, before conducting the actual evaluation research. In fact a huge part of our thesis is concerned with a search for appropriate methods. First we need to find out

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what it is our model needs to assess, and then we need to find out how this assessment can appropriately be conducted.

Traditionally, scientific models for evaluation have mainly been based on experimental designs criticized above by Weiss & Rein (1970), and on statistics and mathematics. These ‘hard’ methods have proven to be largely incapable of grasping changes in often indefinable conceptual ideas like social cohesion (Abma 2000; Guba & Lincoln 1989).

However, controversy also surrounds the ‘new’ methods of research – primarily found in the social sciences – like for instance ethnography, case studies, and in-depth interviews. Because these methods rely at least to some extent on the scientists’ descriptions of a specific case and on respondents’ stories, questions have been raised with regard to the objectivity and the scientific value of these ‘softer’ methods. Nevertheless, there appears to be a rising awareness that fresh evaluation methods, mostly qualitative in nature, are necessary in order to make reasonable and valuable judgments about seemingly intangible social phenomena.

The world of science and the world of evaluation increasingly seem to acknowledge the need for creative solutions to solve the problem of broad-aim program evaluation. Guba & Lincoln (1989) for example propose what they call ‘Fourth generation evaluation’. Abma (2000) describes Guba and Lincoln’s method as negotiated evaluation.\(^7\) Generally, the idea is to start a process in which all relevant stakeholders exchange their ideas with regard to the program.\(^9\) Similar, though not the same, is the Delphi-method. The Delphi method differs from the fourth generation evaluation because only a selected group of experts take part in the process and not necessarily all relevant stakeholders. In addition, in the Delphi method it is crucial that the experts remain invisible and unknown to one another (Swanborn 1999: 163-166).

Although the successes of these ‘new’ methods vary, their emergence signals a search for fresh, new, and appropriate evaluation methods. Along these lines we hope to

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\(^7\) Additional discussion on research methods can be found in chapter 2, our ‘methodology chapter’.

\(^8\) Interestingly, in our private correspondence with Dr. D.W. Laws, the idea to evaluate a program through a process of negotiation was mentioned repeatedly.

\(^9\) We want to stress that, although Abma (2000) described ‘fourth generation evaluation’ as ‘negotiated evaluation’, the process Guba & Lincoln (1989) portray is not one in which the stakeholders literally sit at a table to negotiate. In reality, most of the stakeholders never see each other (Guba & Lincoln 1989).
contribute ideas and creative solutions for the difficulties evaluators of broad-aim programs face.

**Thesis structure**

As mentioned above, the triple divide of goals guiding our research has also shaped this thesis. We have divided the thesis into three related but separate parts.

**Part One ‘Understanding AVP’** includes the first three chapters covering our own research, and is concerned with addressing the first sub-goal: *Get a thorough understanding of AVP and its impact on participants’ experiences*. In this part we explain how we approached this quest and we present our findings. More specifically, chapter 1 explores the philosophical foundations of AVP and the translation of these foundations into AVP Workshops. In addition, we explore the results and methods used in previous AVP evaluation research. Chapter 2 is our methodology chapter where we explain the methods we used in our research, and why we specifically chose these methods. In chapter 3 we present the findings of our research. Basically, chapter 3 answers the question: What have we learned about AVP workshops and about the workshop’s impact on participants’ experiences?

**Part Two ‘Thoughts On Design’** includes chapter 4, which addresses the second sub-goal: *Use the knowledge about the program’s impact (presented in part a), to find (an) appropriate method(s) for the program’s evaluation*. Here we introduce the reader to ‘narrative analysis’ and explain how this methodology can enrich the field of evaluation.

**Part Three ‘Our Design’** is represented by chapter 5, which contains a manual for the evaluation of AVP Workshops. Here we combine our knowledge about the AVP program – more specifically our knowledge on existing constraints – with the concepts of narrative analysis to achieve our third sub-goal: *Design an implementable evaluation model geared towards AVP which can be piloted*.

In our ‘After-Words’ we make an overall reflection. Drawing, in part, on comments and suggestions collected during our research, we address some of the stakeholders’ unanswered questions. Since these comments and suggestions include participant’s remarks about the functioning of AVP workshops, elements of our ‘After-Words’ can be regarded as evaluative. Our ‘After-Words’ finish with ideas for future research.
There is one thing left to say here, and that is that we hope you enjoy reading our thesis. We invite you to give us in-depth feedback and we ask you to be critical. When reading about stories, think of stories yourself. Reflect on the thoughts that may occur as you evaluate our writing. Hopefully we can learn from you and improve our writing, our style, our English, and of course we hope to improve this completely new method for evaluation.
Part One

Understanding AVP

“AVP, AVP... just hearing the word: Alternatives to violence. I mean... ya... What is this thing?”

(from an interview done in Orange Farm South Africa)
Chapter 1. AVP Philosophy, Workshops, and Evaluations

According to DiversityJoy, in their two years of workshop facilitation their primary aims have always been to stimulate people to develop a positive view of themselves, a positive view of others, and a positive view of the differences among people, preferably resulting in an improvement of self-esteem, an increased respect for others, more effective ways of communication, an increased sense of community, a more productive engagement in conflict and an increased sense of responsibility for one’s feelings and behavior (translated from DiversityJoy website, 2008b). Indeed, the overall goal is to make people feel part of social diversity in a positive way and see opportunities for constructive and productive conflict engagement. The AVP manual describes this as follows:

“The alternatives to violence Project is a multi-cultural volunteer organization that is dedicated to reducing interpersonal violence in our society. AVP workshops present conflict management skills that can enable individuals to build successful interpersonal interactions, gain insights into themselves and find new and positive approaches to their lives”. (AVP manual 2002: A-4)

AVP philosophy and the ‘five pillars’

In addition to a set of goals, programs like AVP often have a set of basic assumptions or a philosophy guiding their efforts. Although little has been written about the theoretical foundations of AVP it is reasonable to assume major parallels and ties with national and international movements promoting nonviolence. Therefore, before focusing on the Quakers, who are regarded as the unmistakable founding fathers of AVP, we prefer to swiftly introduce the reader to some ‘nonviolent’ thinkers and practitioners.

In her article Nonviolence is two, Judith Stiehm (1968) writes about nonviolent thinking and distinguishes between ‘conscientious’ and ‘pragmatic’ forms of nonviolence. The ‘conscientious’ form starts with the idea that human life (or life in general) has intrinsic value and that it is therefore morally wrong to hurt or destroy (human) life. In this view nonviolence springs from morality and is, therefore, often related to religion. Mahatma Gandhi in India, and Martin Luther King in the U.S. were clear proponents of this motive for nonviolence. At the same time however, both also saw the practical
applications and advantages in daily life that could serve as incentives to adopt a nonviolent stance. And these practical applications and advantages are the origins of the other, ‘pragmatic’ ways of thinking about nonviolence.

The ‘pragmatic’ motive for nonviolence is explained and strongly advocated by Gene Sharp who wrote the trilogy *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, in 1973. This way of thinking takes the principle of utilitarianism; nonviolence is simply seen as the most effective way for the most people to get what they want. Neither morals, nor religion are decisive here. It is the usefulness of nonviolence and the belief in its effectiveness to accomplish social change that has convinced its partisans. By departing from moral convictions and from religion, the nonviolent movement has become increasingly attractive to individuals not sharing religious beliefs, and to people who are convinced that nonviolent behavior should be founded somewhere outside religion.

As already mentioned, AVP was founded by the Quakers, a religious group with a long history of nonviolent action. While developing AVP, however, the Quakers put their religious arguments for nonviolent action aside. When reading the AVP manual one may notice the occasional mentioning of a spiritual power as a force supporting humanity.\(^{10}\) It would nevertheless be an immense exaggeration to say that God is omnipresent, let alone imposed on the AVP community.\(^{11}\) Although the Quakers may have strong religious convictions in favor of nonviolent action, it appears that AVP had to be accessible and open to everyone interested in nonviolence. This implies that non-religious individuals would be able to benefit from AVP as much as anyone would. Perhaps this interesting mix of religion and accessibility has to do with the fact that AVP was *initiated* by American prison inmates, and only *developed* by the Quakers.

To return to AVP philosophy, we stress that little has been written on the subject. It appears that AVP organizations try to keep as many paths open as possible. What can be found is written on the different AVP websites, in the AVP manual (2002) and in a handful of articles (most of which are only published on the Internet). Collecting information from these sources, we conclude that, in AVP philosophy, it is assumed that

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\(^{10}\) There also appears to be a distinction between ‘the religious’ and ‘the spiritual’: “AVP is spiritual not religious” (AVP New Zealand, 2008). The exact meaning of this distinction remains rather vague and is not one of our main interests here.

\(^{11}\) Studying several AVP websites, we have found no claims with regard to a religious foundation (see for yourself on the websites of AVP USA, AVP New Zealand, AVP Australia, AVP International, DiversityJoy, and Phaphama).
there is a ‘power for good’ in everyone of us. From this ‘power for good’, people are believed to be capable of transforming (potentially) violent conflict situations into constructive situations that assist people instead of upsetting them. As a result, AVP organizations see it as their task to evoke this ‘power for good’ in people, rather than to teach them new behavioral patterns. The AVP manual describes this as follows:

“Ours is a process of seeking and sharing, and not of teaching. We do not bring answers to the people we work with. We do not have their answers. But we believe that their answers lie buried in the same place as their questions and their problems - within themselves. Our job is to provide a stimulus and a ‘seeker-friendly’ environment to encourage them to search within themselves for solutions.” (AVP manual 2002: A-2)

Another main assumption that connects with the ‘power for good’ is that there are possibilities to find and apply alternatives to violence in any conflict situation. Through this assumption it becomes clear that ‘conflict’ is perceived as something that can be positive. Depending on the way a person handles the conflict the outcome, however, can be felt as negative. It is believed that the conflicting parties have the abilities to transform the situation into a positive process. There is more than just a sparkle of ‘agency’ here. Within AVP, people are seen as potentially knowledgeable and active agents capable of choosing the way they react to conflict.

These basic assumptions about people are reflected in the structural fundamentals of AVP, namely the ‘Five Pillars’ (showing the goals and the five ‘fields’ of learning), and important ideas concerning ‘experiential learning’, the ‘safe space’, and the ongoing nature of the program, all of which are discussed below.

The ‘Five Pillars’ of AVP are: Affirmation, Community building, Communication, Cooperation, and Creative conflict transformation. These pillars represent the main areas of focus in a workshop.

“Affirmation [is about] building self esteem and trust, Community Building, [is about] establishing and nurturing connections with others in a group, Communication, [is about] improving both listening skills and assertive methods of expression, Cooperation, [is about] developing co-operative attitudes that avoid

\[12\] Not all AVP organizations use the same five pillars, some use different names or different emphases, some do not use them at all. We have chosen to use the ‘Five Pillars’ because Phaphama and DiversityJoy use them to represent the basic structure of AVP workshops.
competitive conflicts, (…), Creative Conflict Resolution [is about] getting in touch with our inner power to transform situations and ourselves.” (AVP Australia website)

Sometimes small differences are made concerning the names of the pillars, but DiversityJoy and Phaphama identify these five pillars (from interviews with the different initiators of DiversityJoy and Phaphama).

Another crucial issue is that of ‘experiential learning’. In AVP philosophy it is assumed that people learn best when doing things instead of hearing or reading about them, namely learning by experiencing. This could also partly explain why not much of the theory concerning AVP is elaborated upon in writing; people are supposed to experience rather than be told what social diversity is and how to cope with the (potential) conflicts erupting from the varied social environment. Experiential learning connects closely to the idea that is used concerning the pragmatic approach of this program. The workshop is said to have developed through practice instead of theory. Although there is, as we have seen, a clear history behind the ideas promoted in AVP, this history is not something that is often referred to.

Then we want to mention the ‘safe space’. According to AVP philosophy, workshops should establish a ‘safe space’ in which participants feel confident enough to open up to one another and freely share personal, and often emotional experiences. By keeping to the agenda of the workshop, facilitators are supposed to create this ‘safe space’. From our own experience we agree that 1) the ‘safe space’ is an important factor for workshop success, and that 2) in most (if not all) workshops we participated, a ‘safe space’ was established early on the first workshop day.

A final assumption in AVP is that the training is perceived as an ongoing process, or even as a first step on a journey. “It has been well said that ‘peace is a process’. The essential thing to remember about AVP workshops is that they, too, are a process that allows people to experience the way of nonviolence” (AVP manual 2002: A-6). The idea is that the process of learning continues, and that learning is an ongoing process. In this sense, AVP is not regarded as a course you complete or one from which you graduate. Again, it is seen as a step on a long journey towards nonviolent communication.
**AVP workshops**

Now, how are these ideas translated? What does an actual workshop look like? In order to answer these questions we now give a short description of a basic workshop. The description is partly based on our own experiences and partly based on a sample-agenda derived from the AVP manual (2002: D-7). As a consequence, our account can diverge from the way other workshops are conducted and experienced. Whereas the framework of AVP workshops is generally the same, the actual content may differ a little, depending on the situation and the participants. To keep things synoptic, we will not describe a complete workshop but give a short representation with some clarification where necessary.

**DAY 1  
SESSION I**

- Opening talk
- Agenda preview with names of the team
- Introduction of the team
- Introduction of everyone: Going around the circle letting participants introduce themselves and telling the group one thing they hope to get out of the workshop
- Adjective name exercise
- Affirmation, in two’s
- Light and Lively: the big wind blows
- Brainstorm and discussion: What is violence?
- Evaluating and closing

**SESSION II**

- Gathering: name of favorite food
- Agenda preview
- Concentric circles
- Light & Lively: A name game, ‘Name Frisbee’, 1 2 3 4 name
- Sharing: A conflict I solved nonviolently
- Listening exercise

**SESSION III**

- Gathering: A sport I really enjoy
- Agenda preview
- Transforming Power talk
- Light & Lively
- Power 1 2 3 4
- Evaluation
- Closing: Texas hug

**SESSION IV**

- Agenda preview
- Gathering: What transforming power means
tome
- Principles of Transforming Power
- Light & Lively: Owl and mouse
- Broken squares
- Cooperative construction
- Evaluating and closing
DAY 2
SESSION V
- Agenda preview
- Gathering: I feel good about myself when…
- Introduction to role-play
- Role-play (In small groups, with video, if wanted, interspersed with Light & Lively if needed)
- Evaluation and closing

SESSION VI
- Agenda preview
- Gathering: A hiding place I had as a child
- Empathy
- Light & Lively
- More role-plays
- Trust circle or trust lift
- Evaluation and closing

***LUNCH BREAK***

SESSION VII
- Agenda preview
- Gathering
- Recap: Learning from role-plays
- A cooperative learning and planning exercise (e.g. building a new society, coalition exercise, strategy exercise)
- Light & Lively
- Who am I?
- Evaluation and closing

SESSION VIII
- Agenda preview
- Gathering
The workshop agenda above is a sample agenda, derived from the AVP manual (2002: D7). It is displayed here to give the reader an idea of what is done in a workshop. Below we elaborate on a few of these exercises.

Except for the very first session, every session is started with an Agenda preview and a Gathering. The agenda preview speaks for itself. The agenda for that session is shortly explained to the participants and questions and suggestions can be reacted upon.

All the gatherings in one workshop are different, although the idea behind it remains the same; bringing the group together again after breaks. In the gatherings there is always a group element, for example, people are asked to share something personal with the group. By inviting participants to finish the sentence “I have the most fun when …” (AVP manual 2002: F-3), participants exchange personal stories and facilitators enable themselves to affect the mood of the group. The gatherings are supposed to increase or (re-)establish a sense of community. “Community is created by each individual having some sense of the humanity of the other participants in the group” (AVP manual 2002: F-2). Sharing personal stories during the gatherings is thought to help facilitate this community.

Two other activities that take place in every session are the Evaluation and the Closing. In the evaluation the participants are asked to evaluate the finished session. The remarks of the participants are grouped in three categories; ‘happy-face’, ‘sad-face’, and ‘candle’. ‘Happy-face’ denotes a positive point, ‘sad-face’ represents points that are mentioned which can be improved on, and the ‘candle’ represents suggestions on how to do a particular activity in that session differently. These comments are jotted down on a flip-chart, which is divided into the three mentioned categories.13 We were told that in the Leeuwkop prison in Johannesburg, these comments were handed over to the prison coordinator responsible for introducing the AVP workshops. Apart from these post-session evaluation exercises, which offer the participants an opportunity to reflect on his or her own experiences and make sense of these experiences, there is also a program

13 A specific Mercedes-star-like drawing is made on the flip-chart to denote the partitions. Starting in the middle at the top of a flip chart sheet, a vertical line is drawn until approximately 20 to 25 centimeters above the bottom. Then, the end of this line is connected to the two bottom corners of the flip chart sheet. Now, the sheet is divided in three sections: left, right, and a triangle at the bottom. A happy face (☺) is drawn at the top of the left column, and a sad face (☺) at the top of the right column. A drawing of a candle is positioned in the top of the triangle at the bottom.
evaluation at the end of every workshop. This post-workshop evaluation is discussed below.

As their name suggests, Closings are used to close a session, a day, or an entire workshop. According to the AVP manual, closings “(…) emphasize unity, (…) affirm the group or the individual (…) [or] they may acknowledge a job well done or time well spent” (AVP manual 2002: F-20). In addition, closings also provide an opportunity to say goodbye to each other and/or share appreciation in the group. Closings are performed in different ways but most of the time they involve a group effort or a round of sharing to enhance the group feeling and signaling the end of a session, a day, or a workshop.

Another recurring component in the workshop are the Light & Livelies. These are physical exercises that differ every time. These active breaks last about 5 minutes or so. Most of the time they take the form of a game, a game without losers. The games resemble variations of games like musical chairs or tag. The main reasons given for doing the Light & Livelies are to re-energize participants and to (re-)affirm a sense of community (AVP manual 2002: F-6). It re-energizes the participants by shifting their focus on something physical, which helps to keep them concentrated and focused during the other more emotional elements of the workshop. When the facilitators or the participants start to feel tired, a Light & Lively is thrown in to break the pattern, or just to do something light and fun, something different for a little while. At the same time, by actively doing something together, without ending up with winners and losers, the group is stimulated into congregation, rather than segregation. From our own experience we can say that participants feel that they did something together which was fun and that made them actively work together.

The Affirmation exercise is done in pairs. First, one is asked to tell the other the positive things about her/himself for three minutes. Then the other is asked to do the same. The person listening is supposed to keep quiet and listen attentively. No questions are allowed. After both participants have told their good qualities to each other the first listener is asked to introduce the first narrator to the whole group using the good qualities he has just learned about the other. By telling other people the good qualities of your exercise-partner, one shows that one has listened attentively and understood the story. Perhaps even more important, one repeats the good qualities to a third party. By doing this, the first narrator hears her/his own good qualities being repeated by somebody s/he
did not know a few hours ago. This affirms the person having these qualities in a way rarely experienced in normal life. According to the AVP manual (2002) “In this exercise we bring out and recognize and affirm the positive qualities in ourselves with the support of the others in the group” (ibid.: E-5).

Another exercise – often mentioned by participants – is the exercise called the **Broken Squares**. This is a short story describing our own observations and experiences during this exercise.

| At one point we were asked to sit down with four other participants. We had to make some sort of jigsaw puzzle. Everyone had to make a square on the floor in front of him. The facilitators provided the pieces of the squares in envelopes. The goal was to finish all the squares of all the different group members. All the squares had to be of equal size. And there was supposed to be no talking or signing; only offering your own pieces to others was allowed. As an individual, you could only look whether your pieces fitted in someone else’s square, and then offer that person the piece you think might be useful to her or him. The pieces offered by someone else could either be accepted or refused. Once all group members finished their square, or when time had run out, the exercise was over. When we started, I got the pieces from my envelope and started puzzling. Unfortunately I could not make a square with the pieces I received, so I looked at the others’ progress. Nobody in my group seemed to do any better, so I decided to offer one of my pieces to my neighbor who, in my eyes, needed it to finish her square. She rejected my helping hand and I got really frustrated. Why didn’t she see what I saw so clearly? Why could she not accept my piece and finish her square? I initiated a few additional exchanges, but the repeated rejection of my neighbors’ narrow-mindedness blocked my puzzling capacities completely. I was upset. In the last few seconds I was looking frantically to find a solution for my neighbor’s and my own unfinished squares. But nothing seemed to make her realize that my piece would complete her square, and that her piece would finish mine. We ran out of time…
| Repeated rejection of my neighbors’ narrow-mindedness blocked my puzzling capacities completely. I was upset. In the last few seconds I was looking frantically to find a solution for my neighbor’s and my own unfinished squares. But nothing seemed to make her realize that my piece would complete her square, and that her piece would finish mine. We ran out of time…
| After the facilitators had ended the exercise, we were asked to reflect on what happened. I explained that my neighbor could not see what I had seen, and that this obstructed our attempts to finish our squares. ‘If she only…’ I now looked again at the squares and the unfinished pieces that were lying in front of us. I suddenly realized that I could have finished my square with my own pieces. I should have only turned one of my pieces around. That would have completed my square. I had been focused so much on my neighbor’s square and her ‘frustrating lack of insight’, that I had completely overlooked my own opportunities. I had let my emotions take over, and I had failed to see the solution that was right in front of me.

| The exercise described is supposed to let people experience a variety of things. One aspect is to let people experience how important communication is and how powerless and impaired one feels when one is not allowed to communicate. On the other hand, it shows that even without talking and with a few additional constraints, it is possible to work |
together. The experience should make people reflect on their ideas about others, about their role within a group, the role of communication within a group, what it means to work together, to be sensitive to others’ needs, and also that a group can achieve things a single person cannot. From this experience it is not too difficult to extend the lessons learned to real life situations. A group can achieve things that one single person cannot do by him or herself. Participants claim to learn that sensitivity to others’ needs may come in handy. The ‘boxed’ story shows that, although the ‘goal’ of getting all the squares finished in time is not always achieved, experiencing the need to be sensitive to others’ needs, and experiencing cooperation, are felt and reflected upon. In fact, this reflection appears to be a crucial part of this exercise and a crucial part of almost all other exercises as well.

They are led by the facilitators who invite the participants to share their thoughts and feelings concerning the exercise. In addition facilitators often ask participants some questions. “What happened?”, “What strikes you most?”, and “What can we learn from this exercise?” The facilitators empower the participants to come up with their own answers. In this way facilitators utilize the ‘wisdom of the group’, as it is sometimes called, and the group is affirmed in their collective wisdom. This claim of conducting post-exercise reflection fits the theory of experiential learning. The assumption is that these reflections maximize the exercise’s effects and effectiveness.

In the ‘boxed’ story Tijl describes how he was trying too hard to ‘help’ other group members, thereby forgetting to take care of his own part in the process. Interestingly, this is also one of the discussion points suggested in the AVP manual (2002). It suggests to discussing the following statement (after the exercise with the participants) “It does not ‘help’ others to give them too much help” (ibid.: E-9). From this general suggestion in the manual it is clear that Tijl is not the only one who reacted like this. He appears to have exactly done as predicted by the AVP workshop organizers. By focusing too much on ‘helping’ the other, Tijl forgot his own bit and, maybe even more importantly, his group members may not have liked his attempts at all.14

Two exercises normally done towards the end of the basic workshop are the ‘affirmation poster’ and the ‘graduation’. We combine the two here because the affirmation poster returns in the graduation ceremony.

14 Among other things, this is something Tijl has come to realize from the post-exercise reflection.
In the Affirmation Poster exercise, the participants are given a large piece of paper on which they are asked to write their names. Then all the posters are laid out on the floor, a table, or are taped to the back of the owner. Then everyone is asked to write one positive remark on every other poster. Of course, this positive remark should be honest and it should concern the poster’s owner. This means that the participants are asked to reflect on the workshop and on the other participants. They have to ask themselves questions like; What has this person done? What did I particularly like? What are his or her qualities? These questions refresh the workshop sections in the participants’ minds. When everybody has written on everybody else’s poster, the facilitators collect the posters and keep them for the graduation ceremony.

In the Graduation on the last day of the workshop, the affirmation poster is put together with the personal certificate for every participant. The participants are asked one by one to take a poster (plus certificate) from the pile and read out aloud some of the positive things written on the poster. In order to increase the tension and make it even more exciting, participants do not disclose the name of the specific graduate participant while reading the positive remarks about that person. It keeps the group attentive and it increases the build-up to the climax, when finally the name is announced. From our own experience we can say that many participants really try to make a show of the announcements. In this way the graduation process is a final moment of mutual affirmation.

Although the post-workshop evaluation is normally done before the graduation ceremony, we wish to discuss it here to connect it with the next section. In the post-workshop evaluation participants are asked to fill out a short questionnaire asking them to describe what they have learned. Questions like “What was the most important thing you learned from this workshop?” “Is there anything you have learnt about ‘affirmation’ in this workshop that you did not know before? What? Please explain your response.” These and other questions are asked concerning the five pillars (from the evaluation questionnaire used by Phaphama after the basic workshop). These questionnaires provide the AVP organizations with valuable information about the opinions of their participants, and about the participants’ feeling, concerning the lessons they have learned or the skills they believe they have mastered.

15 For an example of this questionnaire see the appendices.
Although informative, these questionnaires are limited to what participants themselves believe they have learned. Changes on the participants’ subconscious level remain mainly out of focus. In addition, critics might say that this method of evaluation simply elicits socially preferable answers (after two workshop days participants know very well which answers are preferred by the AVP organization). And, because the evaluation is conducted immediately after the workshop, participants are on ‘a high’. They are still in a positive workshop ‘rush’. In short, it appears to be sensitive to at least try and expand the existing post-workshop evaluation questionnaires to collect additional information about a broader range of possible, and longer-term, workshop effects. In the following section we present some attempts to evaluate AVP programs.

**AVP programs evaluated**

Reviewing evaluation reports on AVP programs serves two purposes here. First, it is a quick and simple way to get more acquainted with AVP and with its reported impact on the longer term in multiple contexts. Secondly, it serves to explore the field of our own research topic, which therefore may help to inform our own model for the evaluation of AVP programs. We start serving the first purpose, and finish with serving the second.

**Reports on the impact of AVP Workshops**

Various conducted evaluations have approached their research from different angles. We start to discuss the reports of Sloane (2002), Miller & Shuford (2005), Bitel (in Phillips 2003), and Walrath (in Delahanty 2004) because of the variations in their focus. Although they all used the prison environment, they identified different indicators for their (mostly experimental) evaluation research. Therefore, the conclusions about AVP’s impact have different dimensions and, in our opinion, show the range of AVP’s believed impact.

Sloane’s (2003) evaluation research focused on behavioral change in inmates of the Delaware Correction Center. More specifically, Sloane focused on changes in violent behavior. He looked at the frequency and content of prison rule infractions, which are reported by prison warders.\footnote{It is normal practice for prison warders to report infractions of prison rules; therefore Sloane could make use of already existing reports without having to train reporters.} Having carefully created a traditional experimental design,
he found that the amount of reports on inmates declined for those who have participated in AVP Workshops. In addition he found evidence that AVP had more effect both on higher educated inmates, and on younger inmates. Basically, Sloane’s study claims that participants of AVP workshops reduce their violent behavior.

Miller & Shuford (2005) conducted their evaluation research in the same prison as Sloane had done. Their focus however, was on rates of recidivism. Although they did not use a control group and an experimental group as Sloane had done, their claims are equally convincing. Three hundred (former) inmates who had participated in AVP Workshops in the previous 10 years were followed with Delaware’s Criminal Justice Information System. For a period of three years after the inmates’ release, the researchers calculated the rates of recidivism. From these calculations the researchers conclude that “By all definitions of recidivism, the rates certainly appear low (…)” (ibid.: 7). Here, AVP is seen to positively influence rates of recidivism.

Bitel (in Phillips 2003), piloting evaluation research in three U.K. prisons, created a context for the two evaluations above because he argued that declines in incidences of violence, and recidivism rates, are both unsuitable for the evaluation of AVP programs. He rejects the claim that these two indicators reflect goals of AVP, and he refuses to use them for evaluative purposes. Instead Bitel identifies four key components representing the goals of AVP: building self-esteem, facilitating trust, revelation of choices, and developing responsibility. Then he connects these goals to “criminogenic background factors (…) that have been statistically correlated to violent criminal behavior” (ibid.: 10). In other words, Bitel reduces the complexity of AVP into four theorized ‘effects’ which he then associates with factors believed to influence the development of criminal behavior. Having found AVP successful in three, and possibly four of his identified goals, Bitel suggests that AVP is helpful in preventing and reducing crime.

Another research we wish to mention here was also conducted at a corrections facility, this time however in Maryland (Walrath in Delahanty 2004). Four established intrapersonal measurement scales – The Anger Expression Scales (Spielberger, Johnson & Jacobs), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Scheier and Carver's Life Orientation Test, and Rotter's Locus of Control Inventory – were used to assess changes in participants’ experiences. The outcomes of the tests showed “significantly lower levels of
expressed/experienced anger at 6 months post intervention (…) [and] lower rates of confrontations (…)” (ibid.: 5).

In addition to evaluating AVP workshops inside correctional facilities, research has been done outside prison walls as well. In contrast to the evaluations conducted in prisons, these evaluations have a more descriptive character. Two similar AVP evaluations have been carried out in Rwanda. Both evaluated programs that were involved in the country’s search for post-genocide reconciliation, and the related Gacaca\textsuperscript{17} trials. The first evaluation was completed in 2003 (Niyongabo & Yeomans 2003), the second in 2005 (Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005).

Niyongabo & Yeomans (2003) evaluated an AVP program that started in 2001. The evaluators\textsuperscript{18} relied on interviews with 39 people that had participated in the program. They subsequently clustered their findings around the themes most referred to by their interviewees. These themes were ‘Rwandan culture’; ‘ethnic divisiveness’; ‘forgiveness’; AVP’s contributions to the Gacaca process; ‘hierarchy’; ‘women’; ‘family’; and ‘religion’. Although this report’s overall claim is that the AVP program was ‘successful’ in helping the process of reconciliation and Gacaca, the individual interviews enabled the researchers to elicit criticisms and suggestions for program improvement. However, the suggestions and criticisms of respondents in this evaluation appear to have been addressing local circumstances that do not (in our opinion) concern AVP’s basic concepts. This has been somewhat different for Shipler-Chico & Uwimana (2005).

Shipler-Chico & Uwimana (2005) evaluated a program that focused in particular on AVP workshops for Gacaca judges. In addition to individual interviews, they conducted focus groups and they participated in one-and-a-half AVP basic workshops. Again, the overall feeling of respondents was encouraging. The authors conclude that “It is clear from this evaluation that AVP is a highly valued and respected program in Rwanda” (ibid.: 21). Nevertheless, Shipler-Chico & Uwimana were able to elicit concerns that stretch beyond the local Rwandan context and (in our opinion) address issues of a more structural nature.

\textsuperscript{17} Gacaca is a traditional form of Rwandan arbitration, which was reinvented, adapted, and implemented to deal with the challenging issues of justice, reconciliation, and truth finding after the 1994 genocide. (Delahanty 2004: 3, Niyongabo & Yeomans 2003: 1, Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005: 5-7).

\textsuperscript{18} Both evaluators are also AVP facilitators (Niyongabo & Yeomans 2003: 19).
From these concerns they recommend, for example, that AVP facilitators meet more regularly to discuss – among other things – the cultural relevancy of certain exercises; they also recommend evaluating facilitators’ facilitation skills; and they have identified a wish among participants for post-workshop follow-up meetings (ibid.: 22).
Drawing lessons for our own model

Looking at the first four evaluation examples from the previous section, it is clear that all four relied on theories about AVP workshop effects. Sloane’s, and Miller’s & Shuford’s evaluations aimed at establishing connections between AVP on the one hand, and the decrees in violent incidents and the respectively the decline in recidivism on the other. The evaluations of Bitel and Walrath relied on multiple theorized workshop effects, which can be said to reduce AVP into separate goals like building self-esteem, reducing anger, facilitating trust, and developing responsibility. None of the four researchers attempted to include participants’ ideas about workshop effects. This is markedly different in the two more descriptive evaluation efforts. These evaluations aim to include participants’ experiences and participants’ comments and suggestions for program improvement.

A returning element in four of the six reviewed evaluations is the attempt to identify or define multiple workshop effects. Both Bitel (in Phillips 2003) and Walrath (in Delahanty 2004) theorize these workshop effects, where Niyongabo & Yeomans (2003) and Shipler-Chico & Uwimana (2005) elicited them from their interviews and clustered them around broader themes. Although these broader themes may cover more than one of the theorized effects, they also appear to be less clear.

Apart from observations concerning findings, we wish to say a few things about the research methods used in the various evaluations. Since we are looking for evaluation methods that have to be implemented outside prison walls, and conducted on a regular basis, experimental designs with control groups and experimental groups are simply out of the question. It is more likely to generate valuable information about AVP workshops in a short period of time and with less artificial workshop adjustments by interviewing participants and/or observing workshops. However, looking at the period in which all of the above mentioned evaluation researches have been conducted, none of them presents a possible model for the evaluation of DiversityJoy’s and Phaphama’s AVP Workshops; they simply take too long, and probably cost too much.

What we can learn however, is the relationship between the research methods and the quality or nature of the gathered information. Since we are looking for information that may help to inform our search for appropriate evaluation methods, there is no point in solely theorizing about AVP’s possible impact on participants’ experience. An appropriate evaluation method should be focused on the changes in participants’ experience.
Therefore we would probably gain more information when we have conversations with participants. In essence, our own research – about the influence of AVP on participants’ experience – will most likely gain from descriptive research methods. After analyzing the data derived from that research we can look for appropriate methods for evaluation. In the following chapter we go into more detail with regard to our choice of research methods.
Chapter 2. Methodology

Methodology is something that makes a lot of people yawn, often including ourselves we might add. Many see it as a tough piece of theory that has to be there for reasons of scientific ‘credibility’. Although methodology might seem tough to get through, it is the basis of what comes later. The same thing goes for telling a joke: tell a joke to people and go straight for the clue, nobody laughs. But when you tell a joke by leading your audience along the storyline and then come to the punch line people understand the situation, and considering it is a good joke, can laugh about it.

Methodology simply means ‘a system of methods used in a particular area of study or activity’ (Oxford American Dictionary). In our case this means the system of methods used in order to come to understand the area of broad-aim programs (in particular AVP) for which we have been asked to develop an evaluation model. What ways of research did we use and why did we choose these particular methods? Below we try to answer these questions.

Scientific approach

A first distinction – in science traditionally believed to be of some sort of relevance – is the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods. Both approaches to research have been associated with specific strengths and weaknesses. With Geertz (1973) we do not necessarily value one over the other. We would like to present our own thoughts about the two approaches.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH. Quantitative research methods assume a rather positivistic idea of ‘truth’ and reality. Basically, positivism regards reality as ‘objective’ and ‘singular’; phenomena simply exist. The phenomenon of sound, for example, can be depicted as waves proceeding at a certain speed and frequency. As far as we know, this model of sound – as waves – holds for every possible sound one can think of and in every context. As long as no one comes up with a better model for sound, this ‘wave’ model is perceived to be ‘the truth’ of sound. It should be no surprise then that the idea of a (stable)
external reality and the belief that this reality would eventually be uncovered, evolved in physics. To illustrate, when Einstein wanted to enter the field of physics, he was advised not to: the scientists of his time told him that, apart from a few loose ends, they had already discovered everything there was to know about nature…

When the social sciences started to develop, new goals to describe and uncover the ‘truth’ about the social world emerged. Hoping to achieve successes similar to those achieved in physics, social scientists started looking for models with which the social world could be depicted. And, derived from the traditions in physics, social scientific researchers tried to stay at a distance from their subjects in order to gain quantitative ‘objective’ data. They did not want to interfere with the research outcomes (Gilbert 2001: 32). And still, the idea that scientific knowledge – be it in physics or in the social sciences – should be ‘objective’ remains very important.

Nevertheless, the ‘objectivity’ of scientific knowledge is no longer solely associated with quantitative research. If the goal of the social sciences is to describe the social world, it takes more than numbers. Therefore, research methods of a more qualitative nature were needed and developed. One important qualitative method that springs to mind is ethnography, which was developed in the field of cultural anthropology. Interestingly, it was also in anthropology that (cultural) relativism evolved. This relativist conviction holds that human cultures can only be understood completely from within, and only from within those cultures is it possible to fully understand human behavior. From living in, and observing non-Western styles of society, anthropologists concluded that two different ‘cultures’ could never be weighed against one another, let alone be positioned on the positivists’ ladder of social evolution.

From cultural relativism it is only a small step to accepting the existence of multiple perceptions of reality, and the idea that social reality cannot exist without multiple human perceptions. Several scientific traditions like interpretativism, post-structuralism¹⁹ and, constructivism²⁰ have adopted this idea. They share a belief in the existence of multiple subjective understandings of reality.²¹ Or, put differently, as far as it is knowable, reality is formed and created by the understandings and interpretations of the individual (Gilbert 2001: 33, Glaserfeld 1990: 1, White & Taket 2000: 701). Hence,  

¹⁹ Foucault, Derrida.
²⁰ Berger, Luckmann, Durkheim, Saussur, Habermas, and even in some ways Wittgenstein.
²¹ Further discussion on this is found in the chapters on narrative analysis.
understand specific parts of social reality research methods, including various human perceptions, have to be adopted. Especially qualitative research methods appear to be up for this challenge, because of their descriptive strengths.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH. However, qualitative research is often seen as ‘soft’. What is meant by this connotation is that qualitative research exhibits the possible influence of a researcher’s (‘subjective’) interpretations and observations, and therefore does not provide ‘hard’ factual scientific knowledge. Normally, qualitative researchers do not hide their subjectivity. They make it part of their research method, they make it explicit in order to convince the reader of the aptness of their interpretations. This does not mean, of course, that qualitative researchers can say or write whatever they want. In contrast, the qualitative researcher not only presents his own interpretation, he also describes what he saw and how he interpreted his observations. In addition he includes his own personal perspectives that might have influenced the process of interpretation. Through this approach the researcher attempts to make his observations insightful and valuable to others without having an objective claim to one truth or one reality. He simply claims to have added, a scientific and valuable perspective on social reality.

Depending – among other things – on the field of research, the way one understands reality, and the research questions posed by the stakeholders, applicable methods of research have to be chosen. Our understanding of reality corresponds most with that of the interpretativists. Moreover, since we are interested in broad-aim programs that “hope to achieve nonspecific forms of change-for-the-better, and which also, because of their ambition and magnitude, involve unstandardized, large-scale interventions” (Weiss & Rein 1970: 97), experiences of individuals and groups have to be included in our research. Qualitative approaches are better suited for reporting these experiences and for portraying the complexity of the meaning given to these experiences. In our view it is important to make the effects of AVP workshops visible through in-depth qualitative research methods focused on (changing) perspectives of the individual in its context. Therefore, our research methods have to aim for the specific and the particular case, instead of generalizability. 22

It is our conviction that qualitative methods give us the appropriate tools to get to the core

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22 Of course, this doesn’t mean we refuse to count our interviews or the interviewees, or that we refuse to collect quantitative data about our respondents such as age, gender, nationality, etc.
of individual experiences, the processes of change of perspectives, and the interrelations between these topics, which are all important to get a clear – and preferably complete – picture of the impact and changes that broad-aim programs, including in our case AVP, have on their participants.

So far we have come to the conclusion that, in our case, qualitative methods provide the most suitable approach. Now we face a second choice: which specific research methods should we use to conduct our research on AVP-induced changes.

**Research methods**

Our initial search for an appropriate evaluation method was based on the idea that, in order to be able to evaluate AVP programs, we would have to find a method, with which the goals people have with regard to AVP workshops, could somehow be ‘weighed’ against the effects of the workshops. Because we already had multiple informative discussions with representatives of the AVP community in the Netherlands we believed we had gained enough knowledge about the goals of AVP workshop before going to South Africa. Therefore, the research methods applied in South Africa (individual interviews, focus group sessions, and participative observation) were for the larger part focused on finding ‘workshop effects’. If we would reveal the ‘effects’ of AVP workshops – we reasoned – we could start to look for, and perhaps design, a suitable evaluation method. As a result of this theory about the concepts of evaluation research, we started our research with the aim of generating a list of ‘workshop effects’. We decided to use three main methods: individual interviews, focus groups, and participative observation.

SEMI-STANDARDIZED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS. Our individual interviews combined the open structure of open interviews with the easier-to-handle standardized interviews.

The advantage of having almost infinite freedom in open interviews is the space it provides to the interviewee to speak freely in her or his own way and from her or his own experience. Researchers conducting open interviews hope to minimize their steering influence during the interviewing process. However, the openness of this interview
technique also produces a lot of post-research work with regard to examination and interpretation, before the researcher is able to explore cross-interview similarities and differences. For these reasons, open interviews can be particularly helpful in the early preliminary phases of a project in order to explore the research field.

Our interview technique – we have come to call ‘semi-standardized’ – emerges when structure is introduced into the open interview. An important opportunity for introducing this structure is presented by the researcher’s pre-existing, or obtained, knowledge\(^{23}\) of the research field. The structure we added was a list of mostly open-ended questions or themes we wished to address during the interview.\(^{24}\) More importantly, since we knew we would eventually have to cross-examine a large number of individual interviews, adding this structure would save us a lot of time in the analytical process. However, during our interviews, we tried to give our interviewees the space to talk about their experiences and include ideas we had not yet thought of, regardless of our added structure.

FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS. The second research method we have used is the focus group. A focus group consists of 5 to 10 people who are physically brought together in a group to discuss a number of topics (Gilbert 2001: 170). An important feature that made this method suitable to the context of our case is its nature of group discussions. First, during group discussions, everyone is present at the same place at the same time, which (obviously) saves time (Hirseland 2004: 37-38).

Secondly, the interaction among group members stimulates thinking and is more likely to elicit new information one would normally not get from individual interviews (Ansay & Perkins 2004). In our case, focus group participants stimulated each other to create better, and more complex, understandings about the impact and effects of AVP workshops. Previously conducted focus groups have also proven this point of generating a larger range of ideas (Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005, Swanborn 1999: 158-161).

A third consideration in favor of focus groups is that they “provide a way to evaluate the important social dynamics and subjective responses to existing programs” (Ansay & Perkins 2004: 315). This advantage seemed to be important when researching a broad-aim program like AVP. During our focus groups we would not only be able to talk

\(^{23}\) Possibly gained through conducting open interviews in the preliminary research phases.

\(^{24}\) The actual semi-standardized individual interview questions are included in the appendices No.4.
with participants and have discussions with them, we would also be able to observe behavior in the group. How do participants interact with one another? Perhaps even more important, in the case of former AVP participants, focus groups resemble the setting and social dynamics found in AVP workshops.

Our fourth encouragement for using focus groups in our research is the fact that our research was partly conducted in South Africa. And, according to Dr. Van Heelsum (2008) focus groups are especially useful in Africa as it supposedly connects with many African cultures. People are familiar with the methodology of group discussions, and they are particularly responsive to the participative aspects of it.25

Last but not least, convening focus groups presented an opportunity to test possibilities for in-workshop evaluation methods. Before traveling to South Africa we had already developed some ideas. Having respondents gathered for a focus group would provide us with a ‘moment suprême’ for trying and testing some of these ideas in a setting similar to the setting in AVP workshops. If we ask participants to do this exercise, how will they react? Are they able to do it? What are the outcomes?

In practice, this ‘try-out’ meant eliciting personal conflict stories from participants. Then, the group members would collectively choose one story with approval of the story’s owner, and discuss possible alternative decisions the characters in the story could have made. Additionally, we asked our focus groups to generate a list of about twenty workshop-effects, and then to agree on a reduced list of ten effects.

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25 The actual focus group interview questions are included in the appendices, No.5.
The third method we applied during our research is participative observation, and if we had not been invited by DiversityJoy and Phaphama to participate in some of their AVP workshops, we would probably have decided to include participative observation on our own account.

One of the main claims made by the AVP program initiators is that its way of changing people works through experiencing the specific exercises and group processes. According to the program’s initiators, the program only works when experienced; you can tell someone all about it but it only really works when you do it yourself. Due to this experiential nature of the program it appeared to be essential to participate in several workshops and observe what happens. Participation would enable us to enrich our research findings with information collected through our own experience. Apart from workshop participation, we have had the privilege to spend a lot of our research time with facilitators, program managers, directors, and other individuals involved with the program.

Through our participation in workshops and our close cooperation with crucial players in the research field, we have gained much valuable information. However, an ongoing discussion about participative observation reveals continuing concerns with regard to objectivity. With a wish not to revisit the discussion on scientific knowledge and objectivity, we simply want to remind the reader that we are not so much evaluating the AVP program; we are collecting information in a rather short period of time in order to design a model for the program’s evaluation. Participative observation has simply assisted us in identifying opportunities for evaluation and it enabled us to experience the workshop’s effects first hand.
The combination of qualitative research methods, described above, helped us to get a full range image of the research field (the research field: effects of broad-aim programs dealing with conflict prevention and social cohesion). Moreover, we experienced the different character of the information generated through the different methods used. Eventually, this fact – the fact that we felt a difference in the nature of information generated in our three research methods – has been critical in finding an appropriate method for the evaluation of AVP programs. This will be somewhat clarified in chapter 3.

In the section below we go into some quantifiable aspects (or, as some would have it, ‘hard’ ‘facts’) of our research and provide additional information on the individuals we interviewed, the focus groups we convened and the workshops we participated in.

**Research population and workshops we participated in**

In our research we spoke with a total of 56 people. All of them had at least completed the basic AVP workshop. More specifically, 20 had completed the basic AVP workshop, 13 had additionally completed the advanced workshop, and 23 of our interviewees had reached the level of facilitator after completing the ‘training for facilitator’ (T4F) workshop. 34 of our interviewees claimed to be male, 22 claimed to be female. The age ranged from 17 to 63 years. 48 considered themselves to be South African, 1 considered himself to be Australian, and 7 said they were Dutch. We conducted 22 individual interviews; 18 in South Africa and 4 in the Netherlands. We convened 4 focus group sessions; 3 in South Africa and 1 in the Netherlands. Finally, in the Netherlands we participated in a basic workshop, and in South Africa we both participated in the same advanced and T4F workshop. After our return to the Netherlands Ivar participated in another advanced workshop in Amsterdam.

All focus groups in South Africa and the Netherlands were homogenous, with regard to their level of AVP participation. The participants of the first focus group in South Africa had all just finished the basic workshop. Our second focus group was composed of AVP facilitators. Everyone in our third focus group had not yet participated

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26 For specific information on respondents see the appendices No.1.
in the T4F but had finished both the basic and the advanced workshop. In the Netherlands our focus group participants – our fourth focus group – were all facilitators.

With regard to our workshop participation: We took part in a basic AVP workshop in Amsterdam facilitated by DiversityJoy. In Africa we participated in an advanced AVP workshop facilitated by Phaphama in Leeuwerkop penitentiary facility. And we participated in the T4F (training for facilitators) AVP workshop facilitated by the Greater Edendale Development Initiative (G.E.D.I. a social development program that has adopted the AVP method) near Pietermaritzburg. Furthermore, Ivar took part in an advanced AVP workshop in Amsterdam facilitated by DiversityJoy.

Although most of our scheduled research activities went amazingly well, things did not always work out the way we had planned. Two interviews, planned to be either a focus group or semi-standardized individual interviews, needed some improvisation for practical reasons: available time, available rooms, and available chairs.

We faced one challenge when we had to simultaneously interview two people in the same space; two researchers and two interviewees at one table. In the end this turned out to be an outstanding decision as the two individuals were close friends who had known one another for a long time and who could confirm each others’ stories.

The other challenge faced was when both of us had to interview three interviewees in one conversation. Again this turned out to be a very informative session. All three interviewees had known one another for some time and had become close friends during their involvement with AVP.

We have treated both interviews separately because they do not fit into the two interviewing categories (individual semi-standardized or focus group interviewing) that we have set up. These interviews are part of the total number of conducted interviews, but they are not included in the different categories. In total this includes 5 interviewees; 2 females and 3 males. As a result they will not show up in any category.

**Handling research data**

We have looked at our approach, the utilized methods, and how these methods have been applied. Now we present the way we have handled the collected data.
We digitally recorded all the interviews and focus group sessions. All these recordings have been translated into summarized transcriptions. During this process of transcribing we got to intimately know our data, which made it transparent and accessible for analysis (Forester, Peters & Hittleman 2005). The next step was analyzing the transcripts. We did this by using the framework that we have used in our interviews. We had three main parts; before the workshop, during the workshop, and after the workshop.\footnote{An example of our interview questions is added in the appendices No.4.}

To be able to reflect and analyze our own observations and experiences we made field notes at the end of every (workshop) day. To get our reported observations as transparent and clear as possible we intensively discussed our observations and looked for shared or contrasting experiences.

In all analyses we tried to identify patterns that were dominant throughout the collected data. Some points kept returning in different interviews. We also incorporated experiences of participants that were mentioned only once, but that resonated with something we had experienced ourselves. This way we tried to connect our own experiences with those of the people we interviewed.
Chapter 3. Findings beyond effects

In the previous chapters we discussed how our research was shaped and how the different research methods we used provided us with a large amount of data on participants’ experience in AVP programs. Now we turn to our findings. The key feature in this account is the way in which our initial focus on ‘workshop-effects’ changed as we came to value the complex way in which participants experienced the AVP program. Our growing appreciation of these ‘findings beyond effects’ helped us reorient our search for an appropriate method for evaluating AVP programs.

We begin our account with the beautiful lists of ‘workshop effects’ that we worked hard to compile. We created these lists by analyzing and abstracting from the stories that participants told us in the individual interviews and in our focus group sessions. After having presented these lists of ‘workshop effects’, we contrast them with the complexity of individual stories that we began to appreciate as we compared them with our own experience as participant-observers in the AVP workshops. This moment of contrasting lists of abstract ‘workshop effects’ with complex stories and experiences, was the turning point in our research. It was in this moment that we realized that our initial focus on finding ‘workshop effects’ had obscured and reduced the complex changes that shape and define participants’ experience in the AVP workshops.

Lists of ‘workshop effects’

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS. From the responses we received to the questions we asked during our individual interviews, we extracted a list of ‘workshop effects’. In some instances, interviewees simply claimed to ‘have learned to be more patient’ or ‘to listen more carefully to others’. When such statements were made, we normally asked participants to tell about situations in which they used these acquired skills. If interviewees could not clearly explain what they had learned, or if an interviewee could not illustrate his or her initial claims with stories, we usually managed to elicit stories at other moments in the interview. As a result, the effort to construct the lists of ‘workshop
effects involved us with analyzing interpreting stories. To give the reader an idea of the character of these stories, we include an example here. The interview was conducted with a young female forum member of the Greater Edendale Development Initiative. In speaking about the effects she had seen in other members of the forum who had participated in the AVP workshop, she used the word ‘discrimination’. We picked up on that:

*And you said something about discriminating. What do you mean by that?*

“There was that… [discrimination] within the forum. There were people who… like… the groups of people who will stay together, talk together. And some other[s] felt left out. You see? So… As the members of the forum, we wanted all of us to be a family. So after these workshops I think that is improving. We are starting to be a family. Actually we are a family right now from what I see. We are a family.”

*And how does it feel [to be a family]?*

“(…) At the first I was afraid to ask from another person what to do… to ask for help. Ya. Because of those groups [inside the forum]. But now since we are a family I’m free to ask for help and I am free to offer help where I can help. So… they all know that, the members of the forum. And I told them in the staff meeting that I am going to change. I am going to be punctual, I am going to commit myself. And since we are now a family, I can say that.” (Individual interview in Greater Edendale on 16-05-08)

It was from responses like this that we derived ‘workshop effects’ like ‘feeling equal to others’, ‘respect others’, ‘feel others’ needs’, ‘realize that others also have problems’ and also ‘self-esteem’, ‘know myself’, or ‘use the I-message’.29 A collection of these stories eventually resulted in the list of ‘workshop effects’ based on the individual interviews that is presented below. Except for ‘positive attitude’ all these ‘effects’ should be read as completing the sentence: ‘Now I am better able to…”

Listen
Express feelings
Stay calm
Use the I-message

28 For the exact numbers of the scored effects reported on by the interviewees, see the appendices No.2
29 The ‘I-message’ is a way to express your (negative) feelings. It basically says that if you have something on your mind concerning somebody, say it to this person in a way that is not offending or accusing. An example is; “When ______ (whatever happens …- it must be an observable action and not your interpretation), I feel ______ (an emotion), because _______ (…explain the basis of your feeling rather than blaming the other person or yourself), and what I would like to see happen is ______ (how the both of you can take into account one another’s needs and work towards an acceptable solution for you both) [cited from the AVP 2002 basic manual p. E-31]
Affirm others
Think highly of myself (self-esteem)
Respect others
Positive attitude
Feel the others’ needs
Forgive others
Communicate
Realize that others also have problems
Feel equal to others
Know myself

FOCUS GROUPS. During our initial analysis of our focus group sessions, we created similar lists of ‘workshop effects’. As mentioned above, the focus group participants were asked to reduce their initial list of 20 ‘workshop effects’ to list of 10 ‘workshop effects’ that every member of the group could agree to. Because of this process, an interesting contrast existed between the effects lists created from the individual interviews, and the effects lists created from the focus groups. In the focus group sessions the participants were the authors of the effects lists, whereas we had created the effects lists from the individual interviews.

When reviewing the three lists from our focus group sessions, we saw striking similarities. The groups had come up with around 16 different effects, some of which overlapped. We compiled the three lists into a single list of the nine ‘most reported effects’ in the focus group sessions. Again, the items in the list below identify areas in which the respondents described improvement in their capabilities. These effects should be read as completing the sentence, “I have improved my ability to…”

Communicate
Trust
Heal
Motivate myself
Feel part of community

30 Because our post-South Africa focus group session in the Netherlands had a different purpose, we did not ask the participants to make a list of ‘workshop effects’. 
Feel good about myself (Self-esteem)
Think before reacting
Positively change my attitude
Decrease violent behavior

Comparing this list with the list of items from the individual interviews, we were struck by the similarities. Many of the items appear to overlap. One explanation for this could be that the focus group lists had influenced the way we ‘read’ and analyzed the individual interviews. The respondents in individual interviews did regularly mention single effects, however. As we explained above, when interviewees did this, we asked them to elaborate with a story containing examples. Another explanation for the similarities among the lists is suggested by an observation from our focus groups sessions.

We noticed that in our focus groups, the reduction from 20 to 10 ‘workshop effects’ went remarkably smoothly. At first we thought this was explained by the AVP skills the participant gained, like ‘listening’, ‘affirming others’ or communication skills more generally, which could each have been regarded as a positive evaluative finding. Although this may in part have been correct, at one point we were struck by the similarity in the language used by the focus group participants and the language used in AVP workshops. We began to realize that our emphasis on specific ‘workshop effects’ had forced our interviewees to draw on the only shared language that was readily available: the language used in AVP workshops. Something similar had happened in individual interviews, when respondents spoke about the ‘workshop effects’ they experienced. Unknowingly we had also forced them into using the AVP language.

These observations were compatible with the goal we had had from the very beginning of coming up very specific workshop effects and we should have felt rather happy with these lists. Surprisingly to us, we did not. Instead we felt somewhat disappointed and confused. It was almost as if our lists of ‘workshop effects’ downplayed the richness of stories we had heard in the individual interviews. They completely erased features of the focus group discussions and the conflict stories that were shared and analyzed there. Moreover, our lists of ‘workshop effects’ excluded features of our own experience in the workshops.31 Looking at our apparent success, we could not avoid

31 You have probably noticed that our participative observation has not yet been discussed.
thinking that something appeared to be seriously wrong with, or, perhaps, seriously missing from our findings. In short, the lists of ‘workshop effects’ we had come up with did not seem to aptly reflect our experience in the AVP Workshops and our intuitions about their impact.

**Beyond effects towards stories**

Since focus group participants had to come up with an ‘effects’ list on their own, there had always been room for discussion about what was actually meant by some of the ‘effects’ they put forward. In most of these discussions, theories emerged about forms of interdependency among the effects. Disturbingly complex webs of ‘effects’ started to materialize. Because these theorized interconnections among ‘workshop effects’ would have seriously messed-up our search for discrete ‘workshop effects’, we initially ignored them. Who would be able to find applicable methods for evaluating something like this:

‘Communication’ was connected to self-evaluation, the use of I-messages, sharing/expressing feelings, think before reacting, self-esteem, respect for others, knowing yourself, listening.

‘Trust’ was connected to: self-esteem, positivity, sharing/expressing feelings, ‘lots of love’, being friendly to others, ‘being spiritual’.

‘Heal’ was connected to: sharing/expressing feelings, ‘lots of love’, sense of belonging/community, self-esteem, positivity, build better relations, ‘being spiritual’.

‘Motivate myself’ was connected to discipline, self-esteem, reintegration into society, positivity, being spiritual.

‘Feel part of a community’ was connected to: sense of community/belonging, trust, self-esteem, knowing yourself, self-evaluation, reintegration into society, respect for others, sharing of experiences/feelings, being spiritual.

And so on, and so forth…

Similarly complex relations could easily be constructed from the stories told in individual interviews and with the conflict stories that focus group participants volunteered. Many of these stories touched us deeply and we empathized with the narrators. Because we were
actively reducing these stories into specifically defined ‘effects’ at the outset, however, we lost sight of the emotion and meaning these stories carried for their narrators. In retrospect, we were guided by our interest in translating these stories into bullet-point ‘effects’.

As we began to appreciate these effects, we entered a ‘twilight zone’. We began to develop a sense that the ‘workshop effects’ approach had to be left behind. At the same time we felt it would be almost impossible to design a model for evaluating interconnected ‘workshop effects’. Moreover, we did not have a clear focus of where we were headed. The one thing we were increasingly certain of was that, up to that point, we had not really identified ‘workshop effects’. Instead, and without being aware of it, we had collected a lot of data about how the AVP community – including participants, facilitators, program managers, and probably ourselves – talks about, and expresses its understandings of the Alternatives to Violence Project. To grasp changes in participants’ understandings we would have to find a way to engage the uniqueness and complexity of individual experience. What gave us the confidence to pursue this insight was the way it corresponded with our own experience and observations from participating in workshops. This was the kernel from which a more complex picture of workshop impact evolved.

PARTICIPATIVE OBSERVATION. A first point that stood out as a part of our own observations was the extraordinary feeling of connectedness that developed in the workshops. Initially, we linked this to the ‘workshop effect’ of ‘feeling close to others’ or ‘feeling part of a community’. This feeling of connectedness provided trust and security, which are both probably related to the ‘safe space’ that is created in the workshops. If we shift our focus from the creation of the ‘safe space’ to what participants are asked to do within that safe space, however, a whole new level of analysis opens up.

Within the created ‘safe space’, different workshop exercises invite participants to exchange their ideas, their worldviews, and their positive and negative experiences. They share their individual understandings of reality. To give an example of such an exercise in the basic workshop – often noted as salient by interviewees – is the ‘concentric circle’ exercise.

In this exercise, two circles of chairs are created facing one another. In other words, the inner circle of chairs faces the outer circle of chairs. Participants each take a
seat and face someone else. Then, those sitting in one of the circles are given five minutes to talk to the person facing them about a subject provided by the facilitators. During these five minutes only one circle talks; the other circle listens. Although the topics differ, they are always personal. Examples of topics are “Someone I admire and why” or “A time I did something I am proud of” or “A part of me or my life I want to work on this next year” (AVP manual 2002: E-19). The personal nature of these topics, enables participants to get to know one another very intimately in a relatively short period of time. They share parts of their histories, their feelings, their wishes, hopes, worries, goals, challenges and more.32

The emphasis this creates on sharing experiences and exchanging ideas, returns in the moments of reflection that occur after each exercise. Thus, in addition to the exchange of experience that occurs during the different exercises, these moments of collaborative reflection, help participants see how the same exercise may elicit completely different, sometimes even contrasting, experiences.33 Part of the facilitators’ role is to help participants use these reflection moments to explore contrasting experiences until the group can grasp how and why their experiences are so completely different. In this way, the group’s diversity is celebrated, and, perhaps even more importantly, participants come to realize that their sense of reality is not necessarily shared by the people around them. Participants may even start to question their own, often strongly held, personal beliefs and convictions after having been confronted with radically different, often new, points of view.

As our research progressed, the role of these workshop elements slowly gained significance in our account of the AVP programs. In every workshop that we participated in, whether it was in the Netherlands with a group of Amsterdammers or, in Leeuwkop correctional services in Johannesburg, with a group of South African prisoners, the end result was always the same - a strong sense of connectedness. In two days, people who had never met before – and who would have probably never met otherwise – became

32 We want to stress that there is much more going on in this exercise. However, to make the point we wish to make here we emphasize the sharing element.
33 We have experienced this diversity ourselves not only during the workshop, but also through comments made by different interviewees. On one and the same exercise (in this case the ‘blind walk’ or ‘trust walk’ where one participant closes her/his eyes and is led by another participant) one interviewee had learned that “you don’t have to trust other people” (individual interview in Bondungunga High School on 15-05-08). Someone else had concluded that “everyone can be a leader” (individual interview in Greater Edendale on 11-05-08).
equal members of a group, perhaps even friends. Somehow, the group’s diversity was transformed into a power for cohesion.

**Re-informing our search for applicable evaluation methods**

It was this kind of direct experience in the program that helped us begin to pick up on features that were available in the focus group discussions – particularly in the complex theories of interconnectedness that were often developed. We should, perhaps, have picked up on the awkwardness of reducing the stories volunteered in individual interviews in focus groups into bullet points on a list of ‘effects’. We should have also been a little more sensitive to our own experiences during our participative observation and given them a bit more weight. We should have realized that these initially disturbing signs of complexity and intangibility corresponded to everything we had read about the difficulties of evaluating broad-aim social programs. Fortunately, we did realize this… just in time. Once we did, our beautifully constructed lists of ‘workshop effects’ looked bleak, cold, simple, abstract and disconnected from everything we felt AVP represented: experiencing the strengths of diversity by opening up to others and by exchanging thoughts, feelings and worldviews.

It was not immediately clear, however, how we could act on this insight. If the experience of diversity, and the exchange of views, ideas and worldviews are what is crucial in AVP, what can and should an evaluation method look for? What we could not shake, was a sense that our view of these programs had changed. The workshops put people together and got them to share and exchange personal stories, which, in turn, almost always led otherwise complete strangers to begin to empathize with, even come to like, one another and to begin to reflect on deeply held commitments. Participants appeared to have learned something from, and something about other participants. But what did this suggest about how and when a workshop should be considered successful? Revisiting the focus group sessions in which we talked about conflict stories can help.

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34 Interestingly, during our first workshop participation, one facilitator explained that he considered a workshop successful when there had emerged a sense of community. At the time, this comment seemed a little bit simplistic. Now this has changed a bit since this sense of community can partly be considered the outcome of mutual sharing.
The conflict stories that participants chose, volunteered and analyzed together, made us realize the importance of multiple perspectives. While talking about one particular conflict story, participants respectfully shared their own interpretations with the story’s owner. These alternative accounts often suggested how the narrated conflict could have been dealt with differently. These elaborations often generated new insights into the conflict situation. For example, a participant in the focus group in the Leeuwkop correctional facility described a situation in which he had eventually shot a man who apparently wanted to steal his car. Another inmate, who was incarcerated for car theft stressed the narrator’s role in the escalation of the situation. Once the narrator had drawn his gun and pointed it on the suspected thief, the inmate explained, he had severely limited his own options. The second inmate elaborated. If someone would ever point a gun at him, he had better shot. Otherwise, he himself would get shot, probably with his own gun.

However ‘weird’ and ‘unreal’ this exchange of insight may appear at least to some of our readers, it is a clear, if somewhat extreme, example of how people with a different perspective can create new understandings of a complex situation. Moreover, since it is a rather extreme example, it adds to our readers’ understanding of a prisoner’s perspective of reality. A central question here is how this exchange of perspectives contributes to (new) understandings of social reality. Does a person’s understanding of her/himself, of others, and of their places in the world, change when s/he positively encounters understandings, perspectives, experiences and explanations of others? And, not overlooking our search for appropriate evaluation methods, how can these changes in perspective be captured?

In ‘Part One’, we have tried to clearly present the development in our own effort to understand the impact of AVP workshops on participants’ experience. Our initial focus on abstract ‘workshop effects’, highlighted the fact that we were missing out on important parts of how participants experienced and explained the impact of AVP on their individual lives when we began to compare it with our own experience and with features of the interview data that our approach had elided from our findings. We initially neglected clues present in the stories people told, the discussions we had, and in our own direct experience of the AVP workshops. We came to a new account in which the key to understanding

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35 One of our most stunning focus group experiences was our first, which was conducted in prison. The guys had no problem sharing their conflict stories. As a result, we mainly heard the inmate’s stories that had gotten them into prison. The example given in this section is also from that focus group session.
AVP is to be found in the sharing of individuals’ unique narratives and the development this fosters. Thus the influence of AVP only becomes visible if the ‘ideographic’ quality of these accounts is preserved. Put differently, if someone would ask us: “What happens in AVP?” we would say that AVP aims at enriching participants worldviews by bringing multiple perspectives together, simultaneously enriching participants’ understanding of events from the past and situations they will encounter in the future. In the following chapter we explain our proposals for how these enrichments and changes in worldviews can be made visible through the use of ‘narrative analysis’.
Part Two

Thoughts on Design
Chapter 4. Narrative Analysis in different contexts

“Each tale of conflict, in the way it is told, has the power to keep people locked in combat, and it has an equal power to free them from suffering. Each story can lead them closer to anger or forgiveness, toward impasse or resolution, into stasis or transformation.” (Cloke & Goldsmith 2000: 2)

In this chapter we discuss the analysis of narratives and the possibilities it may provide for evaluating broad-aim programs. We review how narrative analysis is used in fields like psychotherapy and organizational learning to find in-depth information about the narrator and to help this narrator work on his or her social and psychological development. Our idea is that if therapists can help clients develop through reconstructing their stories, and gain insights into clients’ development by analyzing these narratives, and if organizational development consultants can make conflict situations tangible, through narrative analysis. Then it might be plausible that this kind of developments in participants’ capacity to deal with social interaction generally and conflict more specifically, which AVP proponents claims are fostered by the AVP program, could also be made visible through the analysis of narratives.

So if we let people tell a conflict story before they participate in a workshop, and let them tell a story after their participation, and we then analyze the differences that occur, we will get an idea of what has changed in the narrators understanding of conflict situations.

To get an idea how narrative analysis is used and how it works we will now discuss this array of methods thoroughly.

Narrative analysis is simply put a variety of ways to analyze people’s stories and extract information from these. This form of analyzing stories is broadly used in many different contexts, both in the world of science and in daily life. In daily life it is often done without thinking, but the process of listening, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from others’ stories, is a common thing for most people. People base most of their decisions and therefore most of their actions on what they perceive and interpret from the world around them. This process is, in the social world, often based on different forms of communication of which told and written stories are important examples.
The scientific process of analyzing narratives differs from the daily routine in its way of analyzing and in the presentation of this analysis. The indicators that are used to give meaning to the different aspect in stories are made overt. The indicators that the researcher uses should be understandable to others and should be clear to the point that others could repeat the analysis. The tradition of narrative analysis, as is clearly described by Lawler (2002), focuses on “the ways in which people make and use stories to interpret the world”. In this view, telling a story is not simply communicating with others it is also communicating with oneself. Story telling is seen as a tool to understand the world and at the same time communicate this view to others. The narrator is in a way giving a “storied” (ibid.) image of her/himself. In other words narratives contain information (encrypted) of peoples understanding of the world and therefore of themselves.

Narratives are not understood as a set sequence of facts. That is also why narrative analysis is not really dependent on the ‘truthfulness’ of a story, although this knowledge could also add interesting information. Lawler (ibid.) describes narratives as social products, which are embedded in a social, historical and cultural context. This makes stories very suitable for contextual understanding of social processes, providing a picture of the situation that includes its particular circumstances; this in contrast with the idea of positivist experimental reductionism. Two other proponents of narrative analysis, White and Taket (2000) say the following about this:

“A common theme is that many of these thinkers [narrative analysis thinkers] have developed methods for analyzing narratives that allows one to get beneath the text to identify patterns and themes. In particular, exploring beliefs and meaning that are not knowable at first because whenever meaning is expressed it is usually in a particular context and that context largely determines the meaning. The process involves analyzing surface structures then deep structures which are 'value' or 'belief systems imbedded in the narrative, followed by interpretations and reflection.” (White & Taket, 2000).

Here White and Taket also touch upon another strength of narrative analysis, the possibility to get access to information (about beliefs and meaning) that is inaccessible when singularly focusing on the literal content of what people say. Differently put, it provides a backdoor to the worldview of people; to the framework that informs their actions.
Now that we start to have an idea what narrative analysis is about we can move on to some examples of the different uses of narratives in general, in order to get an idea of the scope of its application in the scientific world.

**The use of narratives in psychotherapy**

In narrative therapy – a specific form of mental health care – the client and the therapist collaboratively construct a story about the situation the client is in. From this story the therapist looks for openings to create a different, more positive version of the story. In many cases a client views her/himself as the problem, whereas the therapist prefers a story in which “The person is not the problem, [but] the problem is the problem” (Carey & Russell 2002: 1). A question here could be: does the externalization of the problem, not cause externalization of responsibility? - as is often done when people put their faith and responsibility for their actions in the hand of a higher being. What is meant with externalizing is that the problem is detached from the persons. The people are not the problem but they have a problem, which means they can still be responsible.

In session, the aim is to de- and re-construct a client’s initial story in order to get the client on a different path of perceiving her/his life. When the client retells stories of ‘problematic’ experiences, the therapist is able to assess whether or not the client detaches her/his identity from the experienced problems, and whether or not the therapist’s treatment is effective. Thus, in narrative therapy, narratives are used 1) to assess the current mental state of the client; 2) to ‘treat’ the client by collaboratively working to reshape the client’s stories; and 3) to evaluate the client’s improved development and thereby the impact of the therapist’s treatment.

The way stories are used in narrative therapy is a clear example of the scientific traditions it springs from; a few of which are constructivism, post-structuralism, and interpretativism. Within these traditions the notion of ‘reality’ is intrinsically connected with individual experience, feeling, emotion, and interpretation. In the previous chapter we already noted that reality, as far as it is knowable, is formed and created by the understandings and interpretations of the individual (Gilbert 2001: 33, Glaserfeld 1990: 1, White & Taket 2000: 701). When individuals share their understandings of their experiences through stories, they simultaneously express, and (re)create the way they
interpret social life and the way they engage in it. In narrative therapy, it is therefore believed that by closely observing the way individuals make sense of their life-experiences it becomes possible to assess important features of individual identities.\textsuperscript{36} Beyond a story’s surface, it is possible to get to what Chomsky calls the ‘deep structure’ or what Freud calls the ‘latent level’ (Hermans 1999: 1196) that holds valuable information about an individual’s ideas about reality and social life. Changes in this ‘deep structure’ then indicate changes in an individual’s understanding of the social world and should consequently also indicate changes in an individual’s behavioral patterns.

Additional claims have been made with regard to the connection between an individual’s story and her/his behavior. DeSocio (2005) writes that:

“Behavior follows language, reinforcing and perpetuating a particular life story, to the exclusion of other possibilities. Once formed as a reasonable representation of one's life, the individual acts as if a particular version of the life story was true.” (DeSocio 2005: 54)

Here, an important link is established between a person’s attitude towards life – derived from the expressed interpretation of reality in her/his story – and the logic behind her/his behavior. A subjective experience of fear, for example, helps individuals to assess situations and to inform their action. Or, as Cloke & Goldsmith (2000) say it “We assuage our fears by manufacturing images and stories that give us permission to pull away, or to cause the others harm” (ibid.: 4). When individuals transmit their stories, they also transmit their subjective interpretation, expressing their attitudes toward life and informing their behavior.

\textit{The use of narratives in evaluation research}

Although narratives are used in a different manner than we have just described, in this part we see more traditional and less far-reaching ways of narrative use.

A narrative is a story, and within the traditions of constructivism, post-structuralism and interpretativism, stories are seen as reflections of the ways in which individuals see, experience, interpret, and learn from the world in which they live. When

\textsuperscript{36} For additional information on narrative therapy see for example Kelly (1998) and Madsen (1999).
individuals design stories about their experiences, they draw on their own understandings of what happened in order to make sense of that experience by constructing a coherent and comprehensible story. By sharing these stories, individuals express the way they interpret social life as they engage in it. Stories, thus, are the means for communicating their identity and their reality to themselves and to the outside world.

INTERVIEWS. These views on individual identities and realities have been used in different forms of evaluation research. To begin with, much qualitative research depends, at least in part, on the stories derived during interviews. A representative example ‘close to home’ is an evaluation research on AVP workshops given to judges in Rwanda overseeing the local trials of genocide suspects. Shipler-Chico & Uwimana (2005) conducted 37 interviews with judges, government leaders, AVP-facilitators and community members, which led them to conclude that AVP had not only helped the judges in overseeing the trials of genocide suspects, (ibid.: 4), but also that AVP is:

“(…) a quiet and unassuming advocate for women and children’s rights: many interviewees talked about how AVP helped to shift communication patterns between husbands and wives and stem violence in the home.” (Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005: 6)

In this evaluation, the researchers studied the content of the stories they elicited. With that information they constructed their final evaluation report in which they presented the ‘Lessons From Alternatives to Violence Workshops with Gacaca Judges’ (Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005).

In addition to the wide spread use of narratives in non- or semi-structured interviews that use open-ended questions that are standard practice in much qualitative research. This example shows how, by letting the interviewees give their answers in the form of a narrative, the interviewer gives space for the respondent to express their own ideas about the character and significance of contextual particularities. Narratives bring these insights about contextuality into the research ‘data’.

A ‘STORIED’ EVALUATION. In a second example, stories get another role in evaluation. Constantino & Greene (2003) realized only during their evaluation research of

37 Convening focus groups, comparing pre- and post-workshop verbal surveys and observing one-and-a-half workshop were the other research techniques used (Shipler-Chico & Uwimana 2005: 8).
an intergenerational storytelling program that respondents did not directly answer their
questions, but started to tell stories expressing how the program had affected their lives
(ibid.). These stories “provided windows of unique insight into participant’s
contextualized lived experiences of important program benefits” (ibid.: 43). By
incorporating their respondents’ stories into the story of their research findings,
Constantino & Greene created a ‘storied evaluation’ of the storytelling program, which,
according to the program manager “‘was wonderful’ and ‘read like a novel’” (ibid.: 46).
Respondent’s stories were incorporated into the final report, which the researchers also
attempted to present in the form of a story.

Here story telling has a double role; one as a way to tap information and,
two as a way of comprehensibly presenting the research findings, namely, ‘what
happened’ due to this program.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE. Another, perhaps more ‘elegant’,
process-oriented way of using stories in evaluation research, is the Most Significant
Change (MSC) technique. In A Dialogical, Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The Most
Significant Change Technique, Dart & Davies (2003) clarify how the stories people tell
can be helpful to the field of evaluation. Drawing on an evaluation research done in
Australia,39 the authors explain that large-scale, broad-aim, interventions can be evaluated
when the stories of those who have somehow been affected by the intervention, are
collected and reviewed. In several phases of the evaluation process, the stories
representing outcomes valued highest by the stakeholders are selected (also by the
stakeholders). Subsequently, these stories are used to inform the future planning of the
project’s leading team directing the intervention. Some sort of evolutionary process
emerges: as the team’s planning is directed towards the stakeholders’ goals, the project
increasingly generates stories reflecting the preferred outcomes. Thus, the project
increasingly generates the outcomes preferred by the stakeholders (ibid.). Having created
an MSC selection process feeding back into the program’s management, the researchers

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38 Perhaps this is confusing: the research was focused on evaluating an intergenerational storytelling
program. During research, respondents did not answer question directly but started to tell stories about the
program’s impact (Constantino & Greene 2003).

39 Jessica Dart (1999), A story approach for monitoring change in an Agricultural extension project. A paper
established a self-directing evaluation mechanism focused on continued program improvement.

A traditional point of criticism could be that by handling research or evaluation data this way one ‘pollutes’ the very process one researches. This is true when one has the goal of researching a ‘clean’ sample. But if the goal, as is the case here, is to develop the program according to the interests of the stakeholders, this criticism loses its meaning. Here we also see an example of how stories can (re)direct an evaluation process, and more importantly the evaluated program.

Looking back at our own research and proposal for an evaluation model, the interviews we have had with participants, facilitators and funders of AVP workshops – which we used to inform our proposal for the evaluation model of AVP programs – have been similar and different from the interviews conducted in the first research example. Of course we similarly used open-semi-structured questions that gave our interviewees the chance to contextualize and bring in their own thoughts and experiences on the matter. Where our research differed from that by Shipler-Chico and Uwimana was where they mainly used the literal content of the stories told by their interviewees to come to their conclusions about the effects of AVP in Rwanda, whereas we use our findings to inform a new evaluation model. We try to use our findings to understand what an evaluation model for AVP programs has to look for.

From the second example we simultaneously draw on the way participants’ stories were included in the research, and the way the final report in this second example had been constructed as a story. Our evaluation model – described in more detail later – explicitly elicits conflict stories from workshop participants, and presents the results of the subsequent analysis in the form of an easy-write, and easy-read document. Finally, in the third example, the idea to create a sort of ‘evolutionary’ process is very interesting for evaluation research, especially when the evaluation is focused on learning and program improvement. We have tried to include parts of this learning process into our evaluation model as well. A detailed description of the model we propose is given in the next chapter.

In both the second and third example, attention was paid to the importance of the stories’ accuracy, truthfulness, and validity. In their reflections, Constantino & Greene (ibid.: 47-48) raised some continuing questions:
“How important is it that a participant’s story be ‘accurate’ or ‘truthful?’ What is the implication of a narrator’s use of exaggeration, or ‘blarney’ for evaluators’ use of participant stories as data? Is it enough if the story, however exaggerated in its details or its telling, conveys a message that reflects the impact of the program on that participant? Moreover, what if the participants’ stories are boring or not told in an engaging manner?” (Constantino & Greene 2003: 47)

Dart & Davies (2003) explain “[I]t would have been possible to follow up the stories” used in their MSC technique and that “Although such checking never occurred, there was considerable pressure by peers to record information accurately. Stories that seemed implausible or incorrect in factual content were not selected” during the process of MSC (ibid.: 152).

To evaluators, and to a large number of qualitative researchers more generally, these questions and concerns can become crucial if they want to generate information that is evaluated as ‘reliable’. However, in this chapter’s introductory example of narrative therapy, it was shown that the assessment of the therapist relies less on the content of a client’s story, and more on how the client structured the story’s content. In the example, part of the therapist’s job is to assess the extent to which the client detaches her/himself from the problems or challenges s/he is experiencing. Although, in the context of therapy, it might also be important whether or not a client gravely exaggerates her/his stories, the expressed detachment of the problem from the client is harder to ‘stage’. In other words, the therapist tries to enter (parts of) the ‘latent level’ of the client’s story circumventing issues of reliability of the story’s content. Evaluators using respondents’ stories can either try to ‘check-up’ on stories, or, like the narrative therapist, focus on the deeper structures that are harder to manipulate and in this way less vulnerable to truthful or correctness reporting.40

To get a clearer picture of how stories can be used to surface the deeper levels of subconscious communication that inform behavior, we will look at another example, which is set at Harvard University.

40 During our research we used interview methods from the first example. Our proposed evaluation method will use the analysis of the deep structure of participant’s stories, thereby confirming or falsifying the claims made both by participants and the AVP program.
The use of narratives excavating deeper levels of conflict stories

During a seminar at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, the attending financial executives (CEOs) were invited to reflect on transcriptions of conflict-conversations, which they had written themselves (Argyris & Schon 1996: 75-84). All conflict-conversations were divided in two columns. In the right-hand column, a part of the conversation was transcribed, and in the left-hand column the person’s unspoken thoughts and feelings were presented. For example:

**Thoughts and Feelings Unsaid**

- *I hope we’ll work cooperatively.*
- *I fear we won’t*
- *What is wrong with him? He’s missing the most important point.*
- *He doesn’t want to accept ownership; he wants to make me responsible.*

**The Conversation**

- CEO: *I’m sure that you and I share the same goals. We need to rethink our latest cost estimates.*
- Other: *The latest estimates are not the most reliable.*
- CEO: *I can see that some costs can be reduced (by your recommendation), but that still leaves us with a very large problem.*
- Other: *The original estimates were produced by others. We never really agreed to them.*
- CEO: *We will have to use these estimates. That’s the reality.*

(Argyris & Schon 1996: 79)

At the seminar, participants are introduced to a list of ‘left-hand column’ thoughts and feelings – especially thoughts and feelings the writers had about their conversation partners – and were then asked to comment on the list. With these comments, the second list is crafted. Some of the comments on the second list suggest that the authors of the conflict-conversations “were opinionated,” that “they talk as if they are right,” that “they are avoiding conflict,” that “they are not listening,” and that “they exhibit lack of empathy” (ibid.: 82). Then, the participants are asked to reflect on the nature of their comments on this second list.
During the exercise the participants become aware 1) of the overall negative way in which both their thoughts, and the comments on their thoughts are constructed; and 2) that these negative evaluations, both during the conversation and in their comments on the second list, obstruct inquiry and opportunities to constructively deal with the conflict at hand. Although the participants were trying to solve a problem, everything they did and said actually prevented the problem being solved. Put differently, the participants were confronted with the discrepancy between their ‘espoused theories’ – i.e. the things they say they do or the things they say they intend to do – and their ‘theories-in-use’ – i.e. their actual behavior while in conflict.41

Some of the attending executives said they had understood what it was they were doing wrong and were convinced they would now be able to implement the ‘lessons learned’ in a role play (ibid.: 83). According to Argyris & Schon, the executives did act differently in these role plays: “They were more diplomatic and easing-in. [But] [t]hey bypassed the threatening issues and acted as if they were not doing so” (ibid., emphasis added, C&H). Hence, the results of these role-plays were similar to the cases written at the beginning of the seminar (ibid.). Having obtained comparable results from almost 6000 diverse individuals, Argyris & Schon conclude that:

“It seems that individuals throughout the world deal with difficult, embarrassing, and threatening issues in a similar manner. For example, they make evaluations and attributions that are crafted in ways that do not encourage learning. They are predisposed to be unaware of the discrepancies they produce, such as aspiring to be positive yet being negative.” (Argyris & Schon 1996: 83)

At least two conclusions can be drawn from this case description. First, it is possible and meaningful to identify and comment on an individual’s behavior when s/he is in a conflict by studying her/his conflict stories. The second conclusion is that simply confronting people with the discrepancy between their intentions and their behavior is insufficient to really change the ways in which they engage in conflicts. It takes more to translate awareness42 into real changes. This also strengthens the earlier claim that even when

41 Argyris & Schon (1996) explain the concepts of ‘espoused theory’ and ‘theory-in-use’ in the first chapter of their book on pages 12 to 15.
42 Although we may doubt the similarity of meanings, we remind you that the word ‘Phaphama’ also means ‘awareness’.
people are aware of things that go on at the ‘latent level’ these processes are not easy to change let alone fake.

We have presented this story about the Harvard seminar to illustrate how the analysis of written\textsuperscript{43} conflict stories can reveal facets of the ‘deep structure’ of individual conflict behavior. The facets revealed during the Harvard seminar could be summarized as the ‘tacit’ or ‘unconscious’ processes of communication that are triggered when people are confronted with situations they evaluate as ‘difficult, embarrassing and threatening’. By looking back at the previous example in combination with the experiences from narrative therapy – especially the detachment of the ‘problem’ from the person – we slowly start to discern the features of a framework that can assist us in analyzing narratives. In the following paragraphs we continue to develop the outlines of this framework.

**Expanding the framework to analyze narratives**

In addition to the work within narrative therapy and organizational development discussed above, stories (and their narrators) are frequently assessed in a broader variety of settings. In these settings important assessments are made about the individuals who tell the stories. Inside the walls of mental health institutions, for example, therapists listen to the stories of their clients to find out ‘what’s wrong’ and ‘how to deal with that what is wrong’.\textsuperscript{44} In court, judges and juries listen to the stories of perpetrators, victims, and witnesses before making a verdict. At home, thoughtful parents listen to their children’s stories to manage their quarrel over the remote control. In professional mediation, focusing on the stories told by the conflicting parties is also becoming an established practice (Hansen 2003).\textsuperscript{45} Professors sometimes assess the progress of their students by

\textsuperscript{43} As we understand it, the main difference between told narratives and written narratives is the impossibility to observe non-verbal communication in written narratives. Watzlavick et al (1967) have written a very interesting text on the interaction between verbal- and non-verbal communication.

\textsuperscript{44} Within the psychological field of narrative therapy, assessing a client is even considered to be part of the intervention (Madsen 1999), stressing the importance of modes of communication between the client and the therapist in reconstructing a client’s story.

\textsuperscript{45} In our opinion narrative mediation and narrative therapy (see previous footnote), especially when the latter is dealing with troubled families, are closely related.
examining the reflections they write about previous exercises. Below we elaborate on a few of these examples to expand the framework for analyzing stories. We turn briefly to look at some indicators that can assist us in assessing personal narratives and subsequently will give some insight into the ‘deep structure’ of the narrator.

COHERENCE. When a client enters the room of a mental health therapist, both the client and the therapist engage in a conversation through which the therapist attempts to understand the client’s request for help. In addition to what a narrative therapist looks for, the coherence of a client’s story is also an informative feature. According to Androutsopoulou et al. (2004) a story’s comprehensibility and the extent to which the story evokes empathy for the narrator are indicators for a story’s coherence (ibid.: 391). During a client’s treatment “self-narrative coherence indicates ‘improvement’” (ibid.: 385) because “telling coherent life stories [can be seen] as a process of enhancing communication and of increasing the feeling of closeness to others” (ibid.).

What does this tell us concerning the use of ‘coherence’ as an indicator or tool to analyze narratives with? If a person’s story is coherent (in the sense that the story elicits empathy for the narrator and is comprehensible to the audience), the narrator can be expected to also be able to establish some form of basic connection with her/his conversation partners. This will directly have an effect on opportunities for others to understand the person. Audiences are more likely to take time to listen, thereby also affirming the importance of the narrator, which will, in turn, affect the narrator’s self-image. When a person has a high level of self-esteem he or she might feel less threatened by situations, which others would evaluate as threatening and embarrassing. Finally, when people evaluate a situation as threatening or embarrassing, they often fall into their unconscious defensive responses, as illustrated in the story about the seminar at Harvard, where these intuitive responses obstructed the inquiry for solutions. The coherence of a story is indicative of an individual’s ability to communicate with, and relate to others.

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46 In a course called ‘conflict and negotiation’ students regularly engaged in negotiation role plays, after which they were asked to write a paper in which they were invited to reflect on what had happened in the role play.
47 Communication and cooperation are reflected in two of the five AVP pillars.
EXTERNALIZING. The kind of experiences with using narrative in therapy that are described earlier in this chapter have inspired the development of a new approach to mediation called ‘narrative mediation’ (Hansen 2003). It resembles narrative therapy in its emphasis on externalization, and the deconstruction and reconstruction of, here conflict, narratives. In the context of mediation, externalization means that the conflict or problem becomes something external to the conflicting parties. It becomes connected to the relationship, rather than an intrinsic quality or characteristic of one or more of the parties.

What does this tell us about narrative analysis? When individuals write stories in which they detach themselves from the problem(s) they are experiencing, they can be said to express the ability to externalize which suggests higher self-esteem in that the person doesn’t need to describe the conflict in terms that make the other responsible and thus opens the possibility that the person in question bears responsibility (as well) but is not necessarily the problem. Similarly, when the problem in a conflict story is detached from all characters in the story, the participant can be expected to have an easier experience relating/connecting with others, because the others (or the self for that matter) are not viewed as intrinsically problematic. In short, externalizing the experienced problem from all characters in the story is indicative for a person’s self-esteem and her/his ability to open up a space for equal communication, co-operation, which eventually could lead to a resolution of the conflict.

DE- AND RE- CONSTRUCTION. Deconstruction, both in narrative therapy and narrative mediation, draws on the internal contradictions in a clients’ stories to open lines of development in conflict narratives. Hansen (2003) borrowing from Cobb, explains the deconstruction of conflict stories in mediation as “destabilizing the client’s theories of responsibility” which “simultaneously serve to legitimate one’s point of view and de-

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48 In 1991, Rifkin, Millen & Cobb had already redefined “the role of the mediator as managers of the storytelling process” (ibid.: 161). And, in 2002, Skjorshammer (2002): “Given that a major challenge in managing conflicts is related to communication and the use of language, the narrative approach might provide new avenues in this respect” (ibid.: 927).
49 “Separate the people from the problem” (Fisher et al. 1991) is probably what more traditional mediators and negotiators would say.
50 During one of our final focus group sessions, the attending Dutch facilitators agreed that high self-esteem heavily affects a person’s ability to confront difficult situations. One of the remarks was that persons with high self-esteem won’t be blown away by a conflict, but retain the ability to keep calm and create a space for resolution (Focus group 2008 (Dutch facilitators)).
legitimate the point of view of the other party” (ibid.). Reconstruction then, is the opposite process in which the therapist or the mediator and her/his client develop a new story with new understandings of the experienced problems or conflicts. In mediation, reconstruction of a narrative should, according to Cloke & Goldsmith (2000), involve the creation of a new story in which everyone ‘lives happily ever after’ (ibid.: 9). Skjorshammer (2002) translates this as the attempt to converge the conflicting stories (ibid.: 923-924, 927-928).

Translating this to the practical application of this indicator for the analysis of narratives, it seems that people are able to deconstruct their own conflict story and reconstruct it into one in which everybody ‘lives happily ever after’. It can be argued that they learn to see how their conflict situation can be transformed into a positive and constructive relationship.51 It is an indication of an individual’s ability to search for, and find solutions that might bridge the gaps between conflicting parties.

How do indicators like coherence, externalizing, and de- and reconstruction expand the frame for analyzing stories and how do they relate to broad-aim conflict prevention programs like AVP? These three indicators give a short introduction to general indicators that can help analyze stories of participants in broad-aim programs. To go one step further in expanding a framework with which to analyze stories, we will now zoom in on a specific form of narratives, namely conflict stories and what indicators can assist us in this field.

**Expanding the framework with features to analyze conflict stories with**

Most of their time mediators deal with narratives of conflict. As we indicated above, these can be understood as ‘theories of responsibility’ through which blame is apportioned to someone/something else.52 Put differently, most conflict stories contain perpetrators and victims. “In every conflict story we have heard people position themselves as victims for one reason: to trade power for sympathy” (Cloke & Goldsmith 2000: 15-16). In their stories, people often position themselves as powerless in order to get sympathy from their audiences. As long as they come out as the powerless victim, they cannot be blamed for the conflict. ‘The other’ had all the power and is therefore responsible for the whole thing.

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51 In AVP this corresponds with the fifth pillar of ‘conflict transformation’ or ‘transforming power’.
52 At one level this issue of apportioned blame is also related to processes of externalizing the problem from other characters in the story; something we described in the previous section.
Hence, what becomes important in a conflict story is the description and positioning of characters.\textsuperscript{53}

When stories are created, several processes, both consciously and unconsciously, help the narrator to position her/himself. Important conscious processes of positioning are at play when a narrator designs and shapes her/his story to fit the audience’s expectations – or to fit what the narrator expects the audience will appreciate in a story. Surely, to get sympathy from an ‘AVP audience’, probably some sort of specific stories are to be created. If the narrator knows s/he is expected to be a responsible person, s/he is likely to present a story that fits that expectation. Nevertheless, if the narrator reshapes his or her story to fit assumed expectations of the audience, the fact that he or she has reshaped the story can be revealed through the narrator’s unconscious processes that are accessible in the story’s ‘deep structure’. These unconscious processes are revealed both through a story’s content and its structure. Below, elements in conflict stories affecting the positioning of characters are touched upon.

Looking at a conflict story, explicit moments of contemplation (does one ‘think before reacting’ or ‘stay calm’?), self-reflection, and perspective taking, as well as the transmission of messages during the described episode can be noticed. Taking a step back, it becomes possible to say something about the complexity with which the narrator presents the characters in the story. This ‘step back’ also allows for comments on the described situation, and whether it is likely to escalate, or to be resolved. Moreover, if the story is about a conflict that was resolved, it is possible to reflect on the nature of the resolution. Finally, it is possible to comment on the structure of the story and the impact it has on the positioning of characters. Now we look at ‘contemplation’ and what this contributes to our analyzing framework.

CONTEMPLATION. A recurring theme in our interviews was respondents’ claims to have learned to ‘think before reacting’ or to ‘stay calm’. This related especially to giving other(s) space to let off steam and to prevent oneself from making an immediate, often defensive or even aggressive, response that can escalate the situation. Narrators may explicitly include these moments in their story, to explain the elements of the situation

\textsuperscript{53} Cloke & Goldsmith (2000) compare the characters in a conflict story with the standard characters in fairy tales. They claim that in every conflict story there is a helpless princess, a vicious dragon, and a brave prince (ibid.: 16-19).
they were in. Someone may, for example, include statements like, ‘I just kept quiet’, or ‘I wanted to hit him, but I kept my cool while he was shouting at me’. The inclusion of these comments in a story can elicit empathy for the narrator. It is also possible that narrators emphasize their wish to communicate with the other(s) and therefore chose not to respond, but to listen. This indicates openness to learning and in some occasions it also indicates the narrator’s strength to question personal beliefs.

SELF-REFLECTION. During the process of writing a conflict story (or telling one for that matter) it may happen that narrators become aware of aspects of their own actions, and do a conscious or unconscious post-conflict self-evaluation. Narrators can become aware of the impact of their own behavior, their own thoughts, and their own feelings on the development of the conflict. Yet, the narrator has to choose whether s/he wants to include these reflections in her/his final story or leave them out. This clearly comprises matters of representation. Therefore, if a story contains moments of self-reflection it is important to question the effect of the self-reflection. Does the narrator include reflections to increase the victim-perpetrator positions, or does s/he include reflections in order to question her/his own behavior. Sometimes reflections of behavior can even create openings for solving the conflict: ‘Perhaps, if I had listened to him, we would have been able to deal with the situation’.

PERSPECTIVE TAKING. Closely related to processes of self-reflection is a narrator’s ability to see the conflict situation from multiple perspectives. The more a person is able to do so, the more likely it is s/he will understand the other’s behavior and deal with it accordingly. However, perspective taking can also empower the conflicting situation. This is most likely to occur when the narrator explains the other’s behavior without ‘really’ taking the other’s perspective. When the narrator already has a negative image of her/his conflict adversary, attempts at perspective taking could end in statements such as ‘Sure I understand her, she simply saw another opportunity to screw me over and did so!’ Nevertheless, if a narrator is able to empathetically understand what it feels like to be the other (Fisher et al. 1991: 33, see also Leary 2004), she or he will in many cases be better able to understand the decisions made by the other. This increases feelings of closeness or

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54 At one level the writing or telling of a personal conflict story should be considered as an important post-conflict moment of self-reflection.


‘connection’, stressing the relationship between parties. As a consequence, the conflicting parties in the story appear to be equally powerful. There is a diminished necessity to blame someone for the situation. The narrator has a clearer understanding of the impact of his own behavior on the other(s).

TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGES. If a conflict story contains transcription of conversations among the story’s characters, there is an opportunity to ‘scan’ the conversation for contradictions. Here we wish to distinguish two possible contradictions. First, complicated contradictions may be found in the relationship between the content and the form of a message, something the attending executives at the Harvard seminar noticed when they commented on the nature of their own comments (Argyris & Schon 1996: 75-84, and see above). There, the participants’ comments on their own behavior, were formulated in a way that was ‘closed’ and that lacked an ‘openness to learning’, similar to the behavior their comments were directed at.

Closely related is a second form of contradiction; the so-called double bind. In a double bind, the structure in which the message is transmitted, communicates the direct opposite of the message’s content (Argyris & Schon 1996; Kenny 2000; Watzlavick et al. 1967). Examples of these “classic binds include ‘Stop obeying me’ and ‘Be spontaneous’” (Kenny 2000). Other contradictions are commandingly formulated questions: “What are you looking at man? [Stop staring!]” At other moments double binds are erected with two separate messages. An example given by Argyris & Schon (1996) is: “We encourage everyone to be innovative and risk oriented. This is what we mean by empowerment. Of course, we also expect you to keep out of trouble” (ibid.: 100). An understanding of features like double-bind helps to clarify the importance of internal coherence in narratives. When the messages in a conflict cohere, instead of containing contradictory elements, the narrator is able to communicate clearly and straightforwardly, thereby increasing the likelihood that mutual understanding and trust may develop.

COMPLEXITY OF CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS. Another element indicative of a narrator’s stance toward the different characters in her/his story is the complexity with which s/he describes them. In the move from standard conflict narrative to what Sluzki (1998) calls ‘better formed stories’, characters become less stigmatized and are defined by
the narrator “as active, competent, responsible and reflexive” (ibid.: 5). If a narrator uses more complex descriptions of the actors involved in her/his story, it indicates a perceived ‘closeness’ or ‘sameness’ between the narrator and the character in question, or in other words an ability to relate. The character becomes more of a human being with whom an audience can identify. More complex character descriptions express the narrator’s appreciation of the other actors involved in the story. It is as if the narrator tells the audience to equally respect all the actors, not only her/himself.

PROGNOSIS OF CONFLICT TRAJECTORY. An important element of conflict, is the existence of possible solutions, more specifically, the narrator’s ability to see these possible solutions. Sometimes stories of conflict end with a solution that seems sustainable. Other solutions do not seem strong enough to hold for long. This frames questions that can be asked while analyzing a story: Is the story open ended, does the narrator have a positive attitude towards finding a solution that can be satisfactory for both parties? Has the narrator drawn lessons from the experience? How does this experience inform her/his future conduct with regard to similar situations? These elements in a story all provide information on the narrator’s ability and will to constructively look for possible solutions and barriers that obstruct the narrator from finding solutions. Another indicator is the point of departure, which we will now look at more closely.

POINT OF DEPARTURE AND STRUCTURE. Typically, every story starts somewhere, has a middle part, and an ending. What might be of interest is the function of different parts of the story and the sequence in which they are told. A story’s point of departure and its structure influence the audience’s image of the actors in the story and the audience’s image of the narrator. A clear example of what a point of departure can mean for the communication and understanding of a conflict situation will follow in the next part of this chapter.

All the elements described above, affect the audience’s, as well as the narrator’s, image of the (interpreted) conflict situation in the story and consequently of the narrator whose interpretation it is. What we are looking for is ‘how can these conflict stories inform us about the narrator’s actual conflict behavior?’ and, when comparing narratives of the same
event written by the same narrator at different moments in time, what do the differences between the two narratives say about the changes in the decision structure of the narrator? We hope to give some preliminary answers to these questions in the following paragraph, by giving an example of how an outline of a narrative analysis could inform us on these matters.

**The analysis of a conflict narrative in a nutshell**

To our question ‘What have been key-moments in your relationship with DiversityJoy?’ an interviewee, who had participated in DiversityJoy’s basic workshop, briefly told a story of a conflict in which she had suddenly realized what AVP was about:

“[A]t one moment I was cycling to work, and then I was incredibly cut off by some other chap, also riding a bicycle… so I started to shout at him like: ‘hey! Can’t you look around and watch out?’ and he turned around and looked at me very friendly and said: ‘Oh sorry, I did not see you.’ And that’s when I thought ‘This is what DiversityJoy is all about. This is it.’ Simply to be able to give such a reply… that is the essence of an alternative to violence.” (Interview with a representative of one of DiversityJoy’s financier)

How can the frame for analysis be applied to stories like these in order to make judgments about the individual’s development? This story we see as exemplary of how many of us would react to such a situation in traffic. What is interesting here is that the narrator starts to analyze her own behavior immediately after she has acted. She shows reflective ability and an advanced insight into alternative possibilities to her own behavior. Here we just wanted to give an example of a conflict story and what these may include. With another (longer) story presented below we will do a first ‘nutshell’ story-analysis.

The story below is about work at a telephone service for questions concerning HIV/AIDS. Besides being employed at this service center, our interviewee is also an AVP Workshop

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55 From the original Dutch transcript: “[O]p een gegeven moment fietste ik naar mijn werk en toen werd ik ontzettend gesneden door een of andere vent ook op zijn fiets… dus ik begon echt keihard tegen hem te schreeuwen van: ‘he! Ken je niet uitkijken?’ en hij draaide zich zo om en keek me heel vriendelijk aan en zei: ‘oh sorry ik had je niet gezien.’ En toen dacht ik: ‘Dit is waar het om gaat bij DiversityJoy. Dit is het.’ Gewoon dat je zo’n return geeft… dat is gewoon de kern van een alternative to violence.”
facilitator for Phaphama in South Africa. After having given the story, the analysis starts with a focus on the story’s structure, and develops from there. Along the way we touch upon the elements discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. What happened?

“It was last year November or December, around the World Aids day. There was this guy… When I got on shift at ten, the guy phoned in. That was the first call that I got. The guy had been phoning during the eve… he [had] phoned during the day asking for a place around Joburg whereby he can go for an HIV-test. The lady that answered the phone was rude to him. He just… the lady dropped the phone.

So when I came in, the guy just [unclear]: ‘You’re useless. I don’t know what qualifications do you have. You’re not fit to be there! I have connections at the department of health, I can phone them, and the funding will stop, you’ll be unemployed!’ And he just went on and on and on. And I just kept quiet. After some time I told him: ‘are you ok now?’ [and he replied] ‘What do you mean? I’m not ok! [unclear]’ [Interviewee:] ‘You know what… you have the right to be angry and I understand the kind of bad service that you got, but please give me a chance to be able to help you because we [here the ‘we’ refers to the people answering the phone calls in the center] might be doing the same kind of job but we’re not the same.’ And he said: ‘Why are you so cool and calm? I was expecting you to swear back and yell back.’ And I said: ‘you know, we [again referring to the people answering phone calls] are not the same. The service that you might have got earlier, it was bad. But, I mean, give me a chance to be able to talk to you.’

And he was calm, and he apologized. He said a lot of things that would actually disturb the whole shift. But I just told myself that: ‘you know what, I understand… And even myself, even when I phone a telephone line and get that kind of a service… actually, obviously I’m gonna be angry’. But he calmed down and ended up apologizing. So to me… I… like… it [AVP] helped me in a way that… I put (...) [myself] aside and focused on this person, and in disguise I used the I-messages… I didn’t actually say: ‘I feel…’ one two three.[56] Because if you’re there… it’s a client-centered session.[57] You need to focus on the client. But eventually he apologized, and I checked the numbers and I gave him the conducts.” (Double interview with facilitators, 2008).

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56 ‘One two three’ refers to the logic flow of things happening in a particular situation. Here it is used to fill in the ‘I-message’ exercise that normally begins with ‘I feel…’ and then covers a whole range of emotions, wishes and future conduct. It resembles the English ‘this and this and that’, or the Dutch ‘zus en zo’, or ‘dit en dat’.

57 With a ‘client centered session’ she means that the people who call should have all the attention, not the employees of the service line.
While one is reading, one unavoidably forms a ‘first impression’ of the characters in the story and some ideas about the relationship between the characters. Keeping this image in mind lets read the first paragraph\(^{58}\) again:

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\text{“It was last year November or December, around the World Aids day. There was this guy… When I got on shift at ten, the guy phoned in. That was the first call that I got. The guy had been phoning during the eve… he [had] phoned during the day asking for a place around Joburg whereby he can go for an HIV-test. The lady that answered the phone was rude to him. He just… the lady dropped the phone.” (ibid.)}
\]

This paragraph – paying special attention to the part starting with “The guy had been…” etc. – prepares our thoughts and feelings about the characters in the story in a certain way. Or differently, how would our ideas about the characters have differed if the first paragraph had not been presented here? And, most importantly, how does this inform our impression about the person who told the story?

In our view this first paragraph avoided a negative first impression of the caller. While telling her story, our interviewee explains the reasons for the caller’s behavior before she tells us what he did. Whether she did this on purpose or not does not really matter. The sequence in which the story is told, or the story’s structure, contextualizes the behavior of the caller thereby making his actions more understandable. And, by making his behavior more understandable, it becomes easier to relate to the caller; he becomes one of us. We could be that guy. The point of departure is clearly of the utmost importance in a/this story, so much is clear. It leads us to think in a particular way about the characters in the story and about their relations to one another.

Let us now take a closer look at the first (verbally communicated) message sent by our interviewee during the conversation. “After some time I told him: ‘are you ok now?’” Following the caller’s surprised response, our interviewee convinces him that her first message was a sincere inquiry into his feelings. There are no contradictions or double binds in her messages. Moreover, the fact that the caller replied directly to the question ‘are you ok now?’ stresses the power of the message in this situation. It immediately builds a bridge between our interviewee and the caller. Now the two are communicating with one another instead of talking to each other; this way they start to build trust in their

\(^{58}\) As the story was told there were obviously no paragraphs.
relationship. Here the analysis focused on the ‘transmission of messages’ and ‘contemplation’ giving the other (and herself) time, but also ‘perspective taking’ comes into play, how does the other person feel? This creates space for the feelings of the other and helps the listener understand the other party better.

Another important aspect of this first communication is the fact that our interviewee “just kept quiet” until the caller finished his outburst. Here our interviewee reflects on her own behavior. She listens to the caller’s concerns and, by giving him space to express his feelings, she affirms the importance of his concerns. After the caller’s reply, our interviewee explains how she sees the situation. She shows her empathy with the caller’s frustration and expresses her wish to get an opportunity to help him.

In the third paragraph our interviewee explains how she was able to handle the situation in the way she did. “But I just told myself that: ‘you know what, I understand… And even myself, even \[59\] when I phone a telephone line and get that kind of a service… actually, obviously I’m gonna be angry’”. Here she confirms that she remained calm to be able to listen to the caller while he was fuming. She did not fall into a defensive or an offensive response that could have escalated the situation. More importantly, she has understood the man’s concerns to the extent where she would have felt the same “when I phone a telephone line and get that kind of a service…” Here we witness an explicit moment of perspective taking in which our interviewee places herself in the caller’s position leveling herself with the caller.

Overall, our interviewee appears to be good at her job at the telephone center if she is able to respond to situations like these in the way she did. Her colleague appears to have had more trouble dealing with this person. There is confidence in the way our interviewee handles this caller, and, there is confidence in the way the story is told. She gives the caller time to speak his mind, she does not interrupt, she keeps calm, and thinks in a positive, constructive way towards solving the problem. In retelling the story the interviewee does not feel the need to give the caller the image of a culprit, and as mentioned above, the caller could be one of us, or the other way around, we could be that caller. In her descriptions, the interviewee refrains from associating the caller with

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59 ‘even’ is used differently in South Africa when used in combination with a person, like in “even myself” (meaning “I also …”) or “even this person” (meaning “this person also…”), it is then often used as ‘also’.
negative and/or abstract notions that might ‘de-humanize’ the man and create a victim-perpetrator situation.

Summarizing some of the deducible qualities of this narrator after the analysis we just read, a possible form of writing these down could be the following: our interviewee thinks before she reacts, she reflects on her own behavior, she is able to listen and affirm the emotions of the caller and empathetically see the situation from his point of view. In her communication she is sensitive to the other’s experiences, thoughts, and feelings, which enables her to connect with the caller. After this connection is made she can work towards a solution to a problem that has been detached from the characters in the story.

This is just an example of what a description of an analysis of a narrator in our eyes should look like. In the next chapter we will come back to the subject of presenting the narrative analysis.

**Closing: summary and reflections**

We believe that the use of narrative analysis in the evaluation of conflict prevention programs could partially look like the nutshell analysis presented above. We also believe that with some directive questions and a set of focal points it should be possible for many people to do the analysis. The directive questions are presented in the next chapter, the focal points are the elements with which to do the nutshell analysis. To recollect these elements…

We have discussed 1) a story’s coherence; 2) the extent to which narrators externalize problems and conflicts from both her/himself and from the other party or parties involved; 3) the extent to which the narrator de- and reconstructs her/his conflict story to a constructive situation; 4) the sequence in which the story is told and its effects on how the characters are perceived; 5) moments of contemplation in which a person ‘thinks before reacting’ and ‘stays calm’; 6) moments of self-reflection in the retelling of the story; 7) moments of perspective taking; 8) the nature in which messages are transmitted and the internal coherence of these messages; 9) the complexity with which the characters in the story are presented; and 10) the prognosis of conflict trajectory, solutions and lessons learned.
Again, we want to emphasize that the interplay among these focal points is not straightforward, and that the process of analysis should therefore be holistic in the sense that the analysis itself should be a ‘thick-description’ (Geertz 1973) of the conflict story. Not all focal points will be as useful or meaningful for every story, but different combinations of these focal points, within the analyzing framework should, in our eyes, provide sufficient structure to elicit enough useful information. Only when the analyzing framework is used as a whole to assist the analyst in finding the ‘deep structure’ in the narratives, only then is it possible to get a more complete picture of how a narrator views and reacts to conflict situations.

Considering all the previously mentioned, we believe that all of the focal points (which together started to form the analyzing framework) are connected to individuals’ conflict behavior. Many of these focal points or indicators coincide with the effects participants claim to experience after participating in the AVP program. This affirms our earlier mentioned idea that AVP programs can be evaluated using narrative analysis as a tool to investigate the process of change the program seems to induce.

Putting everything together, it starts to become clear that, narrative analysis provides a valuable tool to find out more about the subtle (sometimes bold) changes that broad-aim programs, like AVP, cause in the world-views and the subsequent behavior of its participants. It enables the researcher to collect meaningful data on the changes and differences in participants after they have taken part in an AVP workshop, and finally, it makes it possible to say something valuable about the impact that AVP workshops in particular and broad-aim programs in general, have on their participants.

Now we have come to this conclusion we can move on to the next chapter in which we will attempt to link the narrative analysis to the specific situation and context of DiversityJoy and Phaphama. Here parts one (‘Understanding AVP’) and two (‘Thoughts on Design’) come together and will lead us to the third part ‘Our Design’ in which we will do a proposal for an actual evaluation design.
Part Three

Our Design
Chapter 5. Our model for evaluating the AVP-program

This whole thesis has worked towards this point. It has paved the way for an evaluation model showing in a descriptive and meaningful way the impact of AVP. In order to make this third part ‘Our Design’ readable on its own, we will first give a short summary of what has been discussed thus far, before moving on to the exploration of our own evaluation model.

In January 2008 the authors were asked, by two AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) organizations, DiversityJoy and Phaphama, to think of an evaluation method that could describe the process of their (broad-aim) AVP program. This request included both a ‘learning’ and a ‘accountability’ component. This means that the organizations had two main objectives. On the one hand they wanted to know what they ‘produced’ in order to learn and improve as organizations. On the other hand they wanted to be able to show the effectiveness of what they are doing.

Soon, the magnitude of this request became apparent. Initially we thought we had to make two big steps. One, to gather information on the AVP program, and two, to find a way using our gathered information, to design an evaluation model that would be able to evaluate this broad-aim program. To implement our first step, we agreed, apart from a thorough literature study, on a triangular approach. We decided to combine semi-standardized interviews with focus group interview sessions, and participative observation. These methods would be applied in our research both in the Netherlands (DiversityJoy) and in South Africa (Phaphama).

During the process of analysis, we slowly realized that our decision to combine multiple research methods had created a situation in which we had gained extremely valuable information for our future evaluation model. In our interviews, and partly in our focus group sessions, we appeared to be running into some sort of barrier. What this barrier was exactly we discovered only later, but the feeling that we constantly hit a wall was clear.

Most of our interviewees could mention effects like ‘Now I am better at listening’ or ‘I am more patient now’, but they seemed more comfortable and satisfied when telling stories about a situation in which they felt ‘AVP’ had helped them. From our own
workshop participation we knew about the facilitation of sharing. In workshops people share their feelings, they share their experiences, and they share their ideas. Basically, people exchange worldviews. At first we did not think too much of it. But along the way we felt dissatisfied with our lists of workshop-effects elicited from our own research. These lists of workshop-effects seemed to reduce the participants’ experiences too much.

We came to realize that in this program, the whole (of what happened) was greater than the sum of its parts (the reported separate effects). The separated workshop effects never seemed to match up to what participants seemed to feel or tried to express. Slowly it started to dawn on us that the stories themselves might be hiding the changes we were looking for. Stories in themselves seemed to express, in a more complete and contextual way, what had happened to the participant.

This discovery led us to insert a third step (so, this becomes the second step and the former second step becomes the third step): finding a framework that enables us to analyze people’s stories. This put us on the track of Narrative Analysis. Narrative analysis focuses on the ‘deep structure’ of stories; it looks at sections in stories that reveal information on the world-view, or the understanding of conflict-situations of the narrator. Stories are here believed to reflect and inform worldviews, attitudes and behavior of the narrator. Therefore, changing stories reflect changing worldviews, changing attitudes and changing behavioral patterns.

So the second part of our thesis became an exploration of this analysis framework. In this part, ‘Thoughts on Design’, we discussed narrative therapy, where the therapist uses the de- and re-construction (together with the client) of the clients stories as a way of therapy, at the same time monitoring the progress of the client by the changing of the story. We also discussed the use of conflict narratives at Harvard to make CEOs aware of their conflict behavior, where it becomes clear that simple awareness of these processes is not enough to change that behavior. We deduced from this that if psycho-therapeutic clients can be helped by changing their stories (with them), it would be logical that the social development of participants of AVP programs shows up in their stories, as well. So if we let people tell a conflict story before they participate in a workshop, and let them tell a story after their participation, we may see and analyze the differences. From these

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60 For explanation of this term see the chapter on narrative analysis.
differences it must then be possible to give an account of what has changed in the conflict behavior of the participants.

This is in a nutshell what has happened in the past chapters (and months for us). It brings us back to the point where we started in this chapter, ‘Our model for evaluating the AVP program’.

The core of the evaluation model we propose exists of the comparison of the analyses of written conflict stories. At the beginning of the workshop (‘T1’), participants are asked to write a short story about a personally experienced conflict. Then, at the end of the workshop (‘T2’), they are asked to do the exactly the same thing. They are asked to write about the same personally experienced conflict. A few different variations are possible here. After the two narratives of the participant are collected, the differences in the ‘deep structure’ are analyzed.

Instead of writing the exact same story, the narrator will – when there have been significant changes to his understanding of conflict situations - write the same story in a slightly different manner. These differences can be analyzed by (groups of) AVP-facilitators, at specific moments already catered for in the structure of AVP, and/or the differences can be analyzed by (groups of) ‘external’ evaluators. In either case, the differences are informative in the first place for what participants learn from the workshop. In the second place, these differences are stimulants for the AVP-community to ask questions about the connection between AVP workshops and the changes in participants’ stories. Third, noticing a program’s strengths and challenges can assist in directing the intervention’s focus towards preferred outcomes.

This basic structure of our evaluation design is informed as mentioned before, by what has been discussed about narrative analysis and what we have found out about the AVP program. During our research on the latter it became apparent that because of the nature of the program the evaluation method must be one that is part of the program. It must be adapted to the programs structure. We came to this conclusion while in our eyes the specific field where this program operates on – social cohesion, conflict engagement, understanding of the social world – cannot be described or made visible without the specific ‘discourse’ of the program. This ‘discourse’ consists of stories that are told to each other, which is another reason why we think narrative analysis connects so well to
this program. These stories have to be used as complete images in order to understand their full meaning. This has put serious constraints on us, but also has forced us to be creative within the way of the program. That is why we have come to this specific design of our evaluation model.

This complete chapter is concerned with the structure of our evaluation model and with the processes involved. (1) First we will present a manual that can be used when setting up the actual evaluation. The different options presented in this first part will be commented upon by means of box-texts. T1 and T2 are the main part of our evaluation model, T3 has a more exploratory nature. With T3 we present an idea that was a result of an interest in long-term changes and a reported need of participants to have a possibility to come together after the workshops. Next (2) we will focus on the analysis of the different stories that will be collected. This is followed by (3) a clarification of how to report the findings of this evaluation model. And finally (4) we will close this chapter with a short summary of the proposed points.
Our evaluation manual


Proposal for T1

For T1 we want to propose two options. The order in which the options are presented denotes our preference.

Option A:

WHAT TO BRING. To start with T1, pen and paper (this paper could be a prepared T1-story-form\textsuperscript{61}) are needed for all participants. Also an envelope for every participant should be brought and something to gather the envelopes in afterwards.

STARTING THE EXERCISE. When all participants are present, everyone gathers in the circle (a basic component of AVP Workshops). After their words of welcome, the facilitators introduce the story-writing exercise. An indication: the story should be between 15 and 30 lines.

\textsuperscript{61} An example of how a story form could look like is included in the appendices, No. 8.
Crucial elements in the introduction to the participants are that 1) the participants are asked to write a story about a conflict that they are comfortable writing about; 2) this conflict is a conflict that they have experienced or are experiencing themselves (They are not asked to retell a story about a conflict they have seen); and 3) they are asked to write down, as clearly as possible, a testimony of what happened including thoughts and feelings. Moreover, because the story is personal, it is important to stress that 4) the information they provide is strictly confidential; that 5) unless they volunteer to share their story, it will not be used in the workshop; and that 6) the stories may be used by the organization but it will never be done in combination with a name. Furthermore, facilitators might want to inform the participants that the exercise will be repeated towards the end of the workshop.

Note: When someone has difficulties remembering a personal conflict, the facilitators can help the person to remember a story. We have found the following two ‘remembering exercises’ useful. The first is adapted from Cloke and Goldsmith (2000: 15), the other exercise is inspired by an exercise led by two ‘In Kr8’62 facilitators during a DiversityJoy ‘inter-vision day’.

Remembering exercise 1: stop and think of a story of your own and the way you usually tell it, a story about yourself and a conflict in which you were involved. If you believe the story is too long, select an episode you evaluate as crucial to the conflict. Describe as clearly as possible what happened in this episode. (Adapted from Cloke & Goldsmith 2000: 15)

Remembering exercise 2:
a. How do you get annoyed? “I can’t stand it when people…”
b. When was the last time you experienced this?
c. Select an episode of this situation and describe as clearly as possible what happened.
(Inspired by a DiversityJoy ‘inter-vision day’ exercise facilitated by ‘In Kr8’)

Incorporating this exercise into the normal structure of AVP workshops will affect the traditional ways in which facilitators open the workshop. However difficult or easy it may be to move participants’ attention from their conflict stories into the workshop exercises, the writing of a conflict story will take precious workshop time. Unfortunately it is hard to predict exactly how much time it will consume at this point. What we can say however, is that when we piloted this exercise with four Dutch facilitators, and provided them with

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62 For more information on ‘In Kr8’ look at http://www.inkr8.nl.
COLLECTING THE STORIES. When the participants have finished their writing, they write the number ‘1’ on their paper and put their sheets in the provided envelope without sealing it (a second version of the story will later be added). They write the date and their full name on the envelope. As soon as everyone has finished writing, the facilitators take over and briefly reflect on the exercise.

**Option B:**

GETTING STARTED. In this second option the same thing is asked of the participants as in option A, only the timing changes. Participants are now asked to write their conflict story (with the same characteristics as described in option A, before the workshop day. This means that the workshop participants have to be contacted before hand and instructed on their assignment by (e-) mail. The participants also have to be instructed to take the story forms with them and hand them in with the facilitators at the workshop day.

This option is proposed as the institutional constraints of time, could make it difficult to implement option A. Option A takes some time away from the workshop, which could be seen as disadvantage. Although option B would intrude less upon the workshop it brings a lot of work in advance. All participants have to be contacted and an instruction form and, a story form, have to be sent to them. In addition to this, the participants have to be willing and able to invest this preliminary time into the program. Another disadvantage is the fact that when participants are contacted through (e-) mail they have no easy way of asking questions to facilitators, that in option A would be able to help the participants on the spot.

COLLECTING THE STORIES. Collecting the conflict stories written by the participants prior to the workshop, can be done by the facilitators at the beginning of the workshop. Each story should be put in a separate envelope with the full name and the date written on it. The envelope should not be sealed (the second story has to be added later).
Although some of the participants may have general ideas about what to expect from the workshop, few know exactly what will happen. Most of them probably know that the workshop has something to do with conflict prevention, or nonviolent communication. Therefore, participants should not be too surprised when they are asked to write about a personally experienced conflict. After we had piloted a story writing exercise, the attending AVP facilitators reminded us that it might be difficult for people to be immediately involved in a personal conflict. During the same conversation however, one of the facilitators mentioned that they, as facilitators, immediately position the exercise in the whole of the workshop, and that participants initially have no clear picture. Seen from this perspective it seems no serious problem to ask participants to write about a personal conflict at the beginning of the workshop.

Connecting as closely as possible to ‘the way of the workshop’ it is probably best to introduce the evaluation exercise verbally (instead of handing out written instructions) to the participants.

Proposal for T2

For T2 we have four possible options, although the first two and the second two are very similar.

Option A:
WHAT TO BRING. To start with T2, pen and paper (this could be a prepared T2-story-form) are needed for all participants. Also the envelopes that were used for T1 need to be present.

STARTING THE EXERCISE. In this first option the participants are asked to repeat the same thing as was asked of them at T1, except now they are asked to write about the same personal conflict story as they did at T1 (for exact formulation of what should be asked look at the text for T1, option A). In addition to this, participants are asked to write a 2 on the story form in order to make sure that the two stories are distinguishable for the analysis.
To simultaneously secure the collective feeling of group cohesion at the end of the workshop, and the seriousness with which the participants write their second story, ‘T2’ should be done somewhere before the workshop’s collective closing. Perhaps it could be done right before the last in-workshop evaluation exercise. Then, an additional possibility arises, namely the opportunity for participants to express any frustrating or positive emotions they might feel as a result of the story writing exercise, which could inform the way this part of the evaluation should be changed or not, in the future.

Since the participants have done the writing exercise before, the instructions for this ‘repeat’ can be brief. What the facilitators should be sure of is that participants understand they are asked to give an account of the same conflict they have written about at the beginning of the workshop. This is done to ensure the comparability between the first and the second story.

Because no one (or maybe a few) is likely to remember the precise wording used at the beginning of the workshop, these second writings at ‘T2’ will be different from those at ‘T1’. This is to be expected.

MAKING SURE. Facilitators should make sure that participants understand that the exercise is no memory test. Participants should focus not so much on what they wrote, but on the conflict they wrote about.

Interestingly, since the proposed method of narrative analysis exposes changes in the ‘deep structure’ of the stories, this method is, therefore about changes on a level that participants are not likely to be able to consciously manipulate, as they may like to. This would mean that, although, participants may know that their stories will be analyzed, this should not interfere with the process. We do however suggest not too be explicit in the instructions, while we do not know at this stage what will and what will not influences the stories in a disturbing way.

Furthermore the facilitators should tell the participants again that the organization, and possibly external evaluators as well, will analyze their stories. This means that their stories will be stored and at some point reviewed. Participants should be assured that, during the process of analysis, their names are detached from their stories, so that there no longer is a connection between the analytical results and their names.
COLLECTING THE STORIES. Because the two stories of one participant are compared with one another, the stories should be placed together in the envelope the participant has put his first story. Hence, the facilitators should hand out the envelopes collected at T1 to the designated (by the name on the envelope) participant and collect it again when the participant has finished the second twin-story and has put it with the first, in the envelope.

As soon as everyone has finished her/his story, facilitators should collect the envelopes and create a short period in which participants get an opportunity to speak their minds about the exercise. It would be interesting to find out how participants feel while working on the same conflict for the second time, and if participants themselves observe differences in how they think about and present their personal conflict. This reflection can also be done during a last in-workshop evaluation.

As said before, at this moment we only have experience with eliciting conflict stories from four Dutch facilitators. We have not been able to pilot the exercise with people who have not participated in AVP workshops, and consequently, we have not been able to pilot the ‘T2’. Our best guess for the amount of time it will take is, again 20 minutes. Because participants already have selected a personal conflict and because they now know what is being asked, the time gained on instructing and remembering can be spent on writing.

In general, post-workshop participants are expected to have a better understanding of their conflict and will demonstrate this understanding in more detailed, hence longer, testimonies.

Option B:
Option B is practically the same as option A only the request for a conflict story changes. In this option (B) the participants are not asked to write about the same conflict as they did in T1 but are now free to choose their conflict story, themselves. (For the rest of the steps we refer to T2 option A).

This (option B) would have the advantage (compared to option A) that participants will not get bored so easily, by having to write about the same conflict twice. Another advantage is that by choosing a new conflict story the cards are shuffle a new, this could have positive effect on the de- and re-construction of the ‘deep structure’ of the participants. The disadvantage, however, can be that the comparison between the two narrative analyses becomes slightly more complicated. This may, however not be the case, as the analyses will not depend heavily on content but more on the ‘deep structure’ of the participants’ conflict stories, which is supposed to remain more or less the same whatever story is written by one narrator at the same point in time. Since this has, however not been piloted in this specific case, we cannot be certain about these claims.
Option C:
Option C is in content the same as option A, only the timing of asking the participants to write their (same conflict story as was written down at T1) conflict story is different.

WHAT TO BRING. For T2 option C, an new envelope and a piece of paper (this could be a prepared T2-story-form) for all participants is needed.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS. The facilitators explain to the participants that they are to write about the same conflict as they did during T1 but not to do it right than but to do this after a period of time (say 7 days, but a longer period is also possible). The facilitators should hand all participants the paper and the envelope, for the story. (For a description of the steps that are equal to those of option A, see the part about option A.)

Two things are important to mention here. The period of time between the workshop and the moment that the participants are asked to write their second version of their conflict story depends on the question about long-term changes. The shorter this period (one day to a week after the workshop) the less chance that other processes in the lives of participants influence the participants. The longer the period between the end of the workshop and the time when the participant writes her/his conflict story the more one extends the reach of the evaluation. In other words the shorter the interval the stronger the claim that what one notices (changes in conflict stories) can be attributed to the AVP program, the longer the interval the more one extends the reach (in time) of the evaluation. T3 could possibly also give an opportunity to extend the reach (in time) of the evaluation model. More about this will follow in the next part of this chapter.

THE COLLECTION OF THE STORIES. The participants should, after they have written their T2 conflict story, put the story in the provided envelope and send it to the AVP organization. For the organization it is important that the T1 and the T2 stories of the participants are put in the right envelopes, meaning the stories of the same narrator have to be put in the same envelope, to enable meaningful analysis of the stories later.

This option (C) implies more work for both the participants as well as the AVP organization. The participants have to find the time and willingness to write their conflict story.
story after the workshop and then mail their story (by mail or e-mail that depends on the possibilities of the participants and organizations). The organizations then have to collect, select, and combine the stories of the different participants in order to make them analyzable. This is a clear disadvantage of this option (C).

**Option D:**

Option D changes the time when the conflict story is written (compared to option A) and gives the participants freedom of choice about which conflict story they want to write.

In this option (D) the participants are asked to write any personal conflict story at a certain time after the workshop (here the same thing counts as in option C concerning the length of time between T1 and T2) and mail their story in the provided envelope to the AVP organization.

The advantages and disadvantages have all been described above; the choice of option will depend on the context of the evaluation, on the questions that one wants answered, and on the outcomes of future pilots of the evaluation model.

**Proposal for T3**

We see T3 as a product of a few coinciding points that we encountered during our research. So, with T3 we combine a few reported requests into one add-on possibility for this evaluation model. In our eyes this add-on can achieve 3 goals in one action.

The first is the repeated request of the interviewed participants for a possibility where they can gather again after the workshops. The second is an objective of the AVP organizations (DiversityJoy and Phaphama) to become more of an AVP community. And the third is the interest for long-term changes that are part of the process that AVP evokes with its participants.

Different thoughts concerning the evaluation value of this third evaluation moment have crossed our minds. The earlier mentioned problem of the longer period between T2 and T3 is one. Another is that although maybe it gets increasingly difficult to connect specific changes in participants story structure to the AVP program when the time interval grows, it is still interesting how this process of change develops over longer periods. Especially when considering the nature of the workshop skills that participants take with them and try to apply in their daily lives. The fact that these skills have to be applied in daily life indicates an ongoing process, which does not stop or end after the workshop. This is also a strong incentive to see what happens in the long run.

THE FORM. T3 is a refresher-day, for former participants and facilitators. Three to four times per year a refresher-day should be organized, to accomplish the earlier mentioned
goals. The setting for these days could resemble the AVP workshops, but should incorporate three specific components. One is an evaluation component, two is an AVP workshop-refresher component and three should be a community-building component. We will only give a proposal for the ‘evaluation component’ the practical development of the other two components will have to be dealt with by the AVP organizations.

An example of what a refresher-day could be, already exists already in South Africa. It is called the HIPP Club (Help Increase Peace and Positivity Club). Here, a group of approximately thirty youngsters, all having participated in an AVP workshop, gather every Friday after school for two hours. In those two hours of ‘youth AVP’ they laugh, sing, dance, discuss, eat, and have fun with each other. According to themselves they form a community even outside the Friday meetings. Following this ‘HIPP’ example and adapting it to the Dutch context, we thought to combine DiversityJoy’s and participants’ wishes for an AVP community with an additional opportunity for evaluation, in an AVP ‘refresher’ day.

**Option A:**

**WHAT TO BRING.** The facilitators must provide pens and papers (which can be prepared story-reflection forms) for all the participants.

**INSTRUCTION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS.** The participants are asked to fold the paper over lengthwise and write on the left side in short (10 - 20 lines) the same conflict story as they wrote down at T1, only now they are asked to write it down factually. They are asked to write only what happened not what they or the other thought or felt; just what happened.

**NEXT STEP.** When all participants have finished writing their story, the facilitators ask them to reflect on what they have written down on the left, and write down these reflections on the right. These reflections should be reflections on the thoughts and feelings the participants had during the actual conflict, what they thought and/or felt about the other, about themselves, about the situation, etc. To summarize, on the right the reflections are written down next to the accompanying factual description on the left.
This exercise is inspired by the Harvard conflict story model, which is mentioned above in the chapter about narrative analysis. For an elaborate description of how to perform this exercise read the part about the Harvard conflict story model for CEOs.

The point of this exercise is that it may well inform the analysis on how people have changed between T2 and T3. How much of this change can be attributed to the AVP program is difficult to say, because of the (probably, depending on when T2 and T3 are taking place) length of time that will have lapsed since the workshop.

Nevertheless, in the beginning phases of implementation, some playful experimenting can be done with the timing of ‘T2’, sometimes aiming for a 100% response by implementing ‘T2’ in the workshop, and at other times postponing ‘T2’ to some time after the workshop. Through these experiments it can become clear what practical advantages, which variation provides.

COLLECTING THE STORIES. When everybody is finished writing their stories (and reflections) the stories should be collected and added to the personal envelope of the participant with the two stories from T1 and T2.

Option B:
The preparations are the same as in Option A only the folding of the paper to write on can be omitted.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS. In this option (B) the participants are asked to repeat T2 option A (write a personal conflict story about the same conflict they have written before about). For precise instruction look back at the part about T2 option A.
This option has the advantage that it produces the T1, T2 and T3 stories all about the same conflict and simplifies the comparing of the narratives in the analysis phase. The twin-story becomes a triple-story. Another advantage may be that the participant not only provides interesting information on how s/he is approaching the conflict situation at the time of writing, it may also help the participant in developing her/his understanding of the conflict. And this may lead to a development concerning the social capabilities of the individual as is suggested by narrative therapy.

Although the time between the requests to write about this personal conflict may be considerable, it still may get boring for the participant to get confronted with this same conflict story during the entire time in which s/he participates in the program. This of course also depends on the conflict that is chosen the first time (T1).

Option C:
The preparation is the same as for T3 option B.

In this option (C) the request to the participants is the same as T2 option B. The participants are asked to write about any personal conflict they want (the length should be approximately between 15 and 30 lines). For specific instructions on the different steps see the part about T2 option B.

The collection of the conflict narratives is also the same as in T3 option B.

This option (C) is in our eyes more favorable as it gives the participants the freedom to choose a (new) personal conflict story that can evoke more inspiration than the earlier (T1 and T2) narrative. And would in this way work in favor of this option. An possible side effect could be that choosing a new personal conflict also might be informative in showing how the participant now approaches conflict situations. The choice of conflict, could well be an expression of the ‘deep structure’ of the narrator’s story. This is, however, highly speculative but it could be taken in to account in the analysis phase.

A limitation that has crossed our minds is the self-selection bias of the attending participants. In the case of positive evaluative results at T3, critics are most likely to point to the fact that the results do not necessarily represent the long-term effects of all former AVP participants. Even ‘worse’, participants attending the AVP ‘refresher’ day probably are the more motivated AVP-ers actively ‘testing’ and continuously redesigning and adjusting their AVP knowhow. These people, therefore, would probably ‘score’ higher anyway. We agree. These people have already evaluated AVP as an effective conflict prevention program. This however does not mean that T3 cannot generate meaningful
information on the way the changes in deep structure and subsequently in conflict
understanding and approach. On the contrary, the fact that these people have decided to
come to the refresher-day (T3), simply by this choice alone, provides information on how
the program is valued by its participants. Further more the added stories (T3) and analyses
of these can give meaningful information on how the development of these few
individuals who participated in the T3 is going, what has changed in their ideas about
conflicts and if changes keep happening or if this evolution slows down or speeds up
through time. This information can be of great value to the AVP organizations, informing
their own development.

Analysis and comparing Twin Stories

Three questions that are relevant here are: When is the analysis done? Who does the
analysis? And How is the analysis done? We suggest a two-sided analyzing process. On
the one hand the facilitators are asked to do a few analyses during their inter-vision days.
And the second part is an ‘external’ (more about the ‘externality’ of these evaluations
below) evaluation effort.

WHEN IS THE ANALYSES DONE? We propose that the analysis be done at two
different moments. One is the inter-vision day, which is already present in the
DiversityJoy structure, and the other is at chosen intervals an ‘external’ evaluation (more
about the ‘externality’ of these evaluations will follow later in this chapter).

Inter-vision days are days on which DiversityJoy invites her facilitators, and if
possible also some experts from outside, with the aim to share knowledge about
DiversityJoy and about aspects of facilitating AVP workshops. Having combined external
expertise with individuals representing DiversityJoy appears to be an outstanding occasion
to compare and analyze a few of the participants’ conflict stories.

The other moment we propose is once a year or once in two years. This would
concern a broad evaluation of a considerable amount of twin stories (in some cases maybe
even added with a story elicited at T3) done in an ‘external’ evaluation.

WHO DOES THE ANALYSIS? We propose that the analysis should be done both by
facilitators during the inter-vision days and once a year or once in two years by a team of
evaluators that operate outside the program (but who have participated in the AVP
workshops, so also facilitators). Our proposal to let facilitators evaluate their own program might seem a trap for biases. As a result, we expect the more ‘positivist’ oriented minds to raise doubts in this respect, especially concerning issues of reliability, (in-group evaluation bias, etc). Although at first glance this seems to be a valid point, it becomes problematic when one considers that all people who completed the 3 stages of AVP are called facilitators. The nature of the program is experiential and attempts to change its participants. This means that when one would want to work with ‘external’ evaluators, they should not take part in the program, because they would lose their externality very easily. This means that the evaluation has to be done by people who have not participated in the program. We do not think this is a good idea because of the nature of the program. Consequently, we have to get at ease with the idea of people doing the evaluation who have done the program and therefore will be evaluators and participants/facilitators (provided they have done all three stages of the AVP program) at the same time.

What we mean with ‘external’ evaluations then is an evaluation done outside the program itself, by people who have participated in the program, and understand it from within.

During all the analyses at least three facilitators should be involved in answering the analytical questions. Moreover, they should (ideally) all agree on the answers. If there is disagreement, this should be included in the analysis as well. Doing the analysis and interpretation of the differences between the twin-stories in this way, secures some sort of inter-subjective interpretation. To support this claim, Johnson, McDaniel II, & Willeke (2000) write “Results indicate that at least three raters are required to obtain acceptable levels of reliability for holistic and individual analytic scores” (ibid.: 65, emphasis added, C&H).

**HOW IS THE ANALYSIS DONE?** First we will propose a way for the analysis that is to be done during the inter-vision day by the facilitators and second we will do a proposal for the analysis as an ‘external’ evaluations.
Analysis done during inter-vision days: We should first look at how the twin stories should be selected. The organization select a few twin stories at random from the archive, and hands them over to the facilitators who than have to analyze them on the inter-vision day. The randomness has nothing to do with representation while for statistical representation, the number of the stories are far too small. Statistical representation is not what we are looking for here anyway; we want to get an insight into the process of changes that AVP elicits. So a simple picking of different twin stories from the archive will suffice.

On the inter-vision day (from now on simply ‘the day’) either before or during the actual meeting, some envelopes are randomly selected from the emerging databank. Dependent on the number of people attending the day, more or less envelopes can be selected. We suggest that three or four individuals work on one ‘twin-story’. These groups are asked to agree on four ‘one paragraph’ answers to four different questions, which are provided on paper, together with the necessary writing material. If a group is unable to agree on an answer, the group should agree on a paragraph in which it explains the reason(s) for disagreement. The four questions are:

1. What are the differences between the two stories? In answering this question the group can start with a short statement about possible differences in their ‘first impressions’ about the two stories. Perhaps one of the two stories elicits a different sort of empathy than the other. After that, using the 10 focal points identified in the previous chapter are used to analyze the stories i.e.: 1) a story’s coherence; 2) the extent to which narrators externalize problems and conflicts from both her/himself and from the other party or parties involved; 3) the extent to which the narrator de- and reconstructs her/his conflict story to a constructive situation; 4) the sequence in which the story is told and its effects on how the characters are perceived; 5) moments of contemplation in which a person ‘thinks before reacting’ and ‘stays calm’; 6) moments of self-reflection in the retelling of the story; 7) moments of perspective taking; 8) the nature in which messages are transmitted and the internal coherence of these messages; 9) the complexity with which the characters in the story are presented; and 10) the point of departure and structure. For elaboration on how to use these 10 focal points see chapter four, on Narrative analysis.
The group now attempts to identify changes specifically around these focal points. Then, the group should agree on a paragraph in which these differences are formulated. The paragraph answering this question could for example start with: “Comparing the story written at the beginning of the workshop with the story written towards the end of the workshop, we have noticed differences in the way the narrator…”

2. **Looking at these differences, what has the narrator learned from the workshop?** Here, the group combines the identified differences (from their answer to question one) and discusses/brainstorms what these differences say about the impact of the workshop on this particular participant. Ideally, the group agrees on one paragraph in which strong argumentation connects the ‘holistic’ unity of the identified differences to workshop goals. A paragraph in which an answer to this second question is formulated could for example start with: “Looking at the differences between the first and the second story of this narrator, we can say that s/he has learned to…”

3. **What difference represents changes mostly valued by AVP?** Again, the answer to this question should be an agreed upon paragraph in which strong motivation identifies the most valued (by the different facilitators) difference between the two stories. When the group members have divergent ideas about the most valued and identified difference, they all include a paragraph in which they motivate for what they consider to be the most valued difference between the two stories. An agreed upon paragraph answering this third question could for example start with: “The difference, representing changes which are most valued by the AVP community, is the change that enables people to… This narrator reflects these changes when s/he writes…”

4. **Which elements present continuing challenges for the AVP community?** Here, the focus of the analyzing group is a little different from the situations above. Although the group’s focus should be on the differences between the stories – emphasizing that not all differences between the stories have to be evaluated as ‘positive’ changes – it should also be on the similarities or maybe even ‘negative’ changes between the stories. In the focus on similarities between the stories, again, the ten focal points provide the starting frame.

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63 With a ‘holistic’ unity of identified differences we want to avoid attempts to discuss the identified differences separately.
The answering paragraph here could for example start with: “AVP could assist this narrator in developing her/his ability to…”\(^64\)

All groups should write down their agreed-upon answers and include a paragraph about the process of analysis. As always, dissenting opinions\(^65\) should be voiced as well. When all groups are finished, there is time to collaboratively evaluate the analysis process using the workshops’ usual evaluation model. The comments and suggestions can be used to inform the next analysis of twin conflict stories. After evaluating the analytical process, the twin-stories return to their envelopes, accompanied by the single-sheet reports, and the envelope is marked as analyzed by facilitators.

A copy should also be made of the analyzed twin-stories and the added facilitators analyses, to provide a growing and evolving guide for the organization. This can function as a mirror for the organization in the sense that it can help the AVP organization to get an idea of how its participants react to its workshops, what the greatest challenges are in the eyes of its own facilitators, and maybe even more importantly it can help the AVP organization shape and maintain a well informed self-image.

At this moment we do not know how long it will take groups of three to four individuals to write four agreed upon paragraphs answering the four questions, plus a paragraph about the analytical process. This simply needs to be done. Perhaps the first analysis trial should have a different outlook. We suggest two possible settings. The first suggestion is that the separate groups analyze the same twin-stories, after which they can exchange their findings. The second suggestion is to analyze a single twin-story with everyone present at the inter-vision day. Only by doing the actual analysis and experimenting with different options is it possible to decide the most efficient method.

**Analysis done by means of an ‘external’ evaluation:**

As a second part of the analysis process we suggest that there is also an evaluation done, by a team of evaluators (as been discussed before these would best be evaluators who have thorough knowledge of the AVP program). An extensive amount of analysis of twin

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\(^64\) An interesting additional question the AVP community could or even should consider is ‘How can the AVP program generate the most valued changes and improve its impact? 

\(^65\) ‘dissenting opinions’ in judgments is an established practice in judicial rulings. When a minority of judges disagrees, including when disagreeing with the opinion of the majority, they get an opportunity to say so.
conflict stories (and some added T3 stories) from the archive should be done once in one or two years. These analyses should be done by the same method as has been described above for the inter-vision day evaluations, only the last part of evaluating the own analysis process can be omitted. The presentation should be different but more about the reporting will follow in the next part of this chapter.

The difference between the two analysis moments is that the first analysis moment (during the inter-vision day) has a strong organizational learning character, while the second (an ‘external’ evaluation), by the fact that it consists of a larger number of analyzed stories, can reach a wider scope and is thus better fitted for answering questions of accountability. This does not mean that the two analysis moments should not or cannot be used for other purposes than those described above.

Additionally: An alternative moment of re-analysis can be implemented by letting a team of evaluators re-analyze the twin stories that were analyzed during the inter-vision days, using the same analysis steps as were described for the inter-vision day analyses. In this way additional credibility concerning inter-subjective analyses can be acquired. Depending on the way this is presented it might strengthen credibility. But if this really would add much of value, is questionable.

4. Reporting Results

The two mentioned main goals of an evaluation are learning (for the organization) and accountability. These purposes often require different ways of presentation of found data. The learning goal, is an internal objective and hence this makes the presentation, except for the sake of clarity, less important. One could think of a summary of what was found during the different analyses at the inter-vision days, but the stories and the analysis comments can also be used as information sources by themselves; just reading them makes the reader aware of the different elements that are important. Different members of an organization may also have different interpretations of what these twin stories and analyses mean for the organization, which can be a rich source of discussion material concerning the identity, future possibilities, and challenges of the organization.
Concerning the accountability goal of the evaluation, the form of presentation will depend mainly on the parties that need to read these evaluation reports. We will give a few possible options, which seem plausible at this stage.

QUICK FIX. One swift and simple way of providing interested parties with quick evaluation material is to send them a ‘sample’ of envelopes containing twin-stories with their corresponding single-sheet analyses. Ideally, a standard letter in which the analytical processes are described in detail accompanies this sample. This latter ingredient of the ‘report’ increases the transparency of the evaluation process that positively influences the experience of ‘validity’ of the evaluation findings (Hoek, v.d. 2006: 1-2).

We are aware, however, that potential financial partners may have not have the time to read it, when presented in this way, but it could, positively distinguish the program, as different from many other programs claiming similar outcomes. We admit that this however is questionable in a time of ‘no-time’.

ANNUAL REPORT. In order to satisfy the previously expressed expectations concerning the reporting needs of possible financial partners or clients, we propose something more ‘fancy’. We recommend producing an annual report in which a considerable number of analyzed twin-stories is covered. Again, for the sake of transparency, both, twin-stories reflecting changes valued by, and twin-stories reflecting the continuing challenges confronting the AVP community, should best be included in the annual report. In other, perhaps harsher words, the report should be a combination of positive and ‘negative’ workshop outcomes. Here we would like to make a case for what in our eyes would be the AVP approach. By being transparent in the way one presents the analyses of the conflict stories, and what these mean according to the evaluators the credibility of the organization and its program increases. Through transparency trust is transmitted. Trust in ones own

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66 In the Dutch original under the headings of ‘validity’, Van der Hoek (2006) writes: “Vooral bij de reconstructie van de interventielogica, de identificatie van resultaatniveaus en indicatoren, en de definiëring van gehanteerde criteria blijft veel te wensen over. In mindere mate geldt dat voor onderdelen als de gegevensanalyse en de formulering van onderzoeksvragen. De meest winstgevende mogelijkheden tot verbetering bevinden zich daarmee bij de onderdelen die bepalend zijn voor de transparantie van het evaluatieonderzoek” (ibid.: 1-2).
program, the results and the understanding of this by the possible client or financial partner.

A possible way of shaping a presentation of an annual report may be by a selection of some of the ‘most promising’ and ‘most challenging’ twin-stories the evaluators can find. These should be accompanied by a clarification of the process involved and the interpretation of these analyses, and what implications these have.

MODEL SET-UP ANNUAL REPORTS. An introduction to the annual report should at least include a brief overview of the organization, the reasons for the evaluation research, and the reasons for reporting the results. Most importantly, the introduction should include an explanation of how the twin-stories have been 1) collected (consisting of the covered number of workshops, the number of participants, the processes of writing during the workshop); 2) analyzed (consisting of the analytical process, stating the number of ‘evaluators’, and the focal points); and 3) selected (example: ‘most promising and ‘most challenging’).

The main part should include a few ‘most promising’ and ‘most challenging’ stories accompanied by the analyses, to show the reader what exactly it is that has changed. Including these stories will enable the reader to draw conclusions for her/himself, which ideally should overlap with the final part of the annual report presenting the ‘conclusions’ or ‘reflections’. Crucial in this part is also the focus on the ‘challenging twin-stories’. The reader(s) should get some ideas about the organization’s response to these challenges.

The final part, or the conclusions, should include a summary based on a considerable amount (to be decided on depending on the total number in the archive) of analyzed twin stories. In this summary a story is told about how people can and have changed by participating in the AVP program. Bringing into clear view what process takes place stimulated by the AVP program.67

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67 Alternatively one could decide, cutting the whole process short in our opinion, to let the main part consist of scored changes that participants go through, deduced from the analyses of the twin stories. This however does not take into account that these scores will treat the program as something it, in our eyes, is not. Namely a ‘scoreable’ collection of different parts, that can be measured independently of each other, for elaboration on this point see our discussion on our research findings in chapter 3.
The reader(s) might and can, due to impatience, jump to the conclusions immediately, in order to get to the point that they might think is most important. Hence it is important to draw the reader’s interest by writing, the conclusion, in a way, which arouses interest in the earlier parts of the report.

5. A quick review

Looking at what we presented above let us take a step back and quickly review the evaluation model in light of current evaluation techniques.

From the evaluation methods that make use of narrative analysis, our method incorporates both examples of a ‘storied evaluation’ and the ‘Most Significant Change’ technique (MSC technique) as we described in chapter four. To remind the reader, a ‘storied evaluation’ is an evaluation research based on respondents’ stories, and, in the MSC technique respondents’ stories are selected on the basis of the ‘most significant change’ after which these most representative stories are fed back into the program’s coordinating team.

In our case, the stories in a ‘storied evaluation’ are the stories of personally experienced conflicts. When external parties request insight into AVP’s effects and effectiveness, they receive the analysis and copies of what we have come to call ‘twin stories’ (‘quick fix’) or they can be provided with an ‘annual report’. At the inter-vision days, the proposed process of analysis and selection of twin stories resembles the MSC technique because everyone attending the inter-vision days gets to express and use what s/he believes reflects the most important goals and the most important challenges for AVP. This can assist the AVP community into deep thought about opportunities to learn as an organization.

Although these two methods have informed our model, an important difference is the focus of the analytical process. Where these two methods are mainly focused on the content of the stories – in which respondents explain how the intervention has been of importance to their lives – our model explicitly elicits a specific type of story relevant to the program’s goals, and its analysis is focused on excavating the ‘deep structures’ of understanding the world and one’s place in it. Our model investigates beyond a story’s surface.
Expanding the implementation of ‘deep structure’-narrative-analysis from assessing individuals in mental health clinics, and helping conflicting parties in mediation, to the evaluation of broad-aim programs in the field of conflict prevention and engagement, is entirely new. Increasing the scales of both, the story-assessors and the assessed entity is challenging. Instead of one-on-one or one-on-two assessments, all/many facilitators become story assessors, and (potentially) all participants are assessed to enable the emergence of an image, making the process of change ‘tangible’ that AVP is expected to induce. Additionally, the model could trigger learning cycle within the AVP community that could speed-up and provide direction for further development.

Telling and assessing stories are central to all our lives. We tell and assess stories every day. Stories are the glue that make our life-experiences stick together to form a framework through which we give meaning and understand the world. Therefore, with Constantino & Greene (2003) “We believe that storytelling is a significant part of being human and thus can contribute in many valuable ways to the social practice of evaluation” (ibid.: 48). We hope our proposal is one of these ways.
After-Words

Although these words written afterwards may be considered unimportant, our after-words deal with some remaining loose ends, starting with unanswered stakeholder questions. After that we present some valuable evaluative information from our research. We end this thesis with a few final reflecting words of our own, hopefully echoing into the future.

Responding to some of the stakeholders’ remaining questions

Because the major part of our research – leading to this thesis – was triggered by meetings and private conversations with representatives of DiversityJoy’s and Phaphama’s important stakeholders, we wish to respond to some of the questions and requests that surfaced from these contact moments.

Apart from DiversityJoy’s wish that we design an evaluation model with which the organization is able to do self-evaluations on a regular basis, another pressing question was ‘What is it that we do?’ We have interpreted this question as: What is it that AVP does or aims to do in order to get workshop participants into alternative, constructive, and nonviolent conflict behavior? An answer to this question can easily be derived from the evaluation model we have designed. We believe that AVP aims at enriching participants’ worldviews by bringing multiple perspectives together, thereby simultaneously enriching participants’ understandings about events from the past and events in the future.

Another curiosity, expressed by the program manager of DiversityJoy, was focused on the workshop effects on individuals and on groups. Although our evaluation model is not specifically designed to distinguish between effects on individuals and effects on groups, during our research we have heard stories about both effects. Respondents explained how AVP skills helped them with challenges they faced individually, and respondents told how the AVP skills of a few individuals positively influenced proceedings during group meetings. One interviewee, telling about her work as the head of a night patrol team explained for example:

“(…) you know when you have a group of different people, there will always be conflict. And this particular time, we were sitting in the circle, and I was like; let’s
talk about our problems because I am aware there is a fighting. And in our [subsequent] discussion, I picked up that the six [who had participated in the basic AVP workshop] were particularly more peaceful than the rest. And at the end of the meeting they actually commented to say, ‘You know, had it not been for the workshop…’ (…). I just observed in that meeting. The aggression was more reflected on those that had not attended the workshop. And at the end of the meeting, there was this confession. And actually there was a request that ‘You need to organize it [an AVP workshop] for the rest of us’.” (Individual interview, basic level AVP, in office Phaphama, Johannesburg, 05/09, 2008)

To include the assessment of workshop effects on groups would need a shift in focus of the model. The exercises for assessment then would highlight more macro-level effects. One could think about group exercises such as group negotiation games. Nevertheless, if people choose to write conflict stories about group meetings they have attended, the current evaluation model provides opportunities to assess effects on group processes as well.

A further concern with regard to workshop effects was expressed by one of DiversityJoy’s important stakeholders as ‘gender-issues’. Based on our conversation with a representative of that stakeholder we translated this concern into a question: “Do AVP workshops affect thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behavior, related to perceived gender differences?” For the answer(s) to this question similar remarks apply as for the answer(s) to the previous question about differences between workshop effects on individuals and workshop effects on groups. Our model is not focused explicitly on finding changing experiences around issues related to gender, but it is of course possible that participants themselves choose to write their conflict stories about conflicts that deal with (perceived) gender differences.

At the same time, mainly during our research in South Africa, we noticed that many described and discussed conflicts actually were related one way or the other to gender relations. We heard about conflicts between a sister and a brother, between a wife and a husband, between girls and boys, between a mother and her son, and between a niece and her uncle. To illustrate, when we asked an interviewee why she wanted to facilitate an AVP workshop for ‘married people’ she plainly replied:

“For the answer(s) to this question similar remarks apply as for the answer(s) to the previous question about differences between workshop effects on individuals and workshop effects on groups. Our model is not focused explicitly on finding changing experiences around issues related to gender, but it is of course possible that participants themselves choose to write their conflict stories about conflicts that deal with (perceived) gender differences.

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“Because I’ve experienced… last month my cousin… died. She was killed by her husband. He beat her with the hammer in the head. So… there are some conflicts that the married people experience. So I felt that there should be a workshop to married
people. Yeah.” (Individual interview with facilitator in ‘Greater Edendale’ on 05/16, 2008)

In another interview on the same day, a younger guy explained how the AVP ‘I-messages’ helped him to communicate with his mother:

“I was just sitting in my room, watching TV. Then she just came in without knocking you know. Well before I-messages I would just say: ‘Mum, can’t you just KNOCK!?‘ You know? But then after I did the AVP workshop and then that situation happened. I’ll sit down and talk to her like: ‘Mum I do… I really don’t like…’ no… ‘I feel like…’ ‘it hurts when you come into my room. I feel sad when you come into my room without knocking. Because some other time like… I’m eighteen now… no I’m nineteen now… And you could come in when I’m showing some private stuff… and then you could see that stuff which you are not supposed to see. And that would jeopardize our relationship and stuff.”” (Individual interview with advanced participant in ‘Greater Edendale’ on 05/16, 2008)

What we can say about the influence of AVP workshops on gender related issues, is that they appear to open up a space in which these issues can be discussed freely in mixed gender groups of AVP participants and facilitators.

Taking it all together, the beauty of our model is that, in principle, it allows for meta-analyses with more specific evaluation questions like some of those touched upon above. More generally, if people change their worldviews and ideas about their own social environment, they are likely to also (re-)evaluate their ideas about relationships among women and men, old and young, ‘black and white’ etc. The ‘diversity’ in AVP workshops simply covers multiple and diverse dimensions of diversity, which can be assessed with a post-evaluation meta-analysis focused on specific issues.

**Evaluative material**

Presenting our findings like we did above somehow changes our search for an evaluation model into an evaluation research; something it was not intended to be, and which it is not, or perhaps it is, but only partially. It is true that we have gathered valuable information about participants’ experienced workshop-effects and the workshops’ effectiveness. Below we present more of these findings and combine it into some recommendations. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that we have only spoken with (former) AVP participants and AVP facilitators. Moreover, for the purpose of our research
we did not find it necessary to look for, and interview, individuals who had ‘walked out’ of AVP workshops or had ‘learned nothing’ from attending a workshop. Although we only heard very few stories about these individuals, we know they exist. Someone for example told us that:

“[Y]ou’ll find that there are people that went there and forgot what happened. There is this one guy that I work with in the policing forum. You will never say he attended an AVP workshop. He is still as aggressive as he was, if not worse than before. He did the workshop after I had done the workshop and I remember [that a facilitator] and the other facilitators had had enough of him. But what I like, is they were still able to handle him professionally. That’s why I say that the facilitators that I know are the best. You know, and… they still handled him properly and brought him down to earth to the end of the workshop. But like I say if I were to introduce you to him now, you wouldn’t think he did the workshop. He is still the same old person. And you know, even if you remind him that he remember he did the AVP he’ll tell you ‘don’t give me that.’” (Individual interview with basic participant in office Phaphama, Johannesburg, 05/09, 2008)

Hence, if you read the following findings and recommendations, remember that everything is based on the conversations we had; conversations exclusively with people who felt positive about AVP.

FIRST TIMERS AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS. Continuously returning remarks were about how surprised people were about the first workshop they participated in. In fact this has been the main reason to select the AVP basic workshop as the initial focus of our evaluation model. Interviewees commented on how the workshop had opened their eyes, and had made them realize things they had never realized before. Of course, the first time starts with first impressions, which were also very informative.

Interviewees recalled that ‘there were no tables’ and that ‘we did not have to write anything down’. Others mentioned how quickly they were able to mingle with people they would normally not talk to, out of respect. These encounters were related to age differences, perceived difference in status, and (again) to gender differences. What also appeared to be surprising to many participants, were the facilitators. Students got to workshops facilitated by students and prisoners attended workshops facilitated by fellow inmates. And this also occurred…

“I think what actually made our first First FIRST experience so frustrating, or however you want to put it… is that we were together… Being the adults that we are [giggling]. And we were like: ‘ok… we’ve been doing language and teaching
professors and all that. And now we are going to be taught by school kids? And then they were late!” (Double interview with facilitators, Soweto, 05/10, 2008)

However, during the first day, all the participants we spoke to got used to the idea of being at the same level as the facilitators and the other participants. Mirroring the experience described above is the answer of a student when we asked her how she felt attending a workshop together with her teachers:

“Well I was nervous at first, you know? Teachers can be really strict. But when we were in the workshop ooh… they were like your pall. Yeah. So it was fun… ya.”

(individual interview with basic participant at Bondungunga high school on 05/15, 2008)

Based on the conversations we have had with various participants and facilitators, we should conclude that the AVP workshops effectively create a space in which people with different backgrounds can meet and interact on the basis of equality.

CHANGES IN PARTICIPANTS’ GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS. We gathered a wide range of reasons for individuals to participate in their first AVP workshop. Some were selected by their teachers, or convinced by friends, others volunteered because of a personal interest in the workshop, or because they hoped to meet some nice girls, or because they knew they would get a certificate. One thing connecting these different objectives or incentives, is the workshop’s ability to transform them all into a sincere wish to learn more about AVP. When we interviewed the guys who initiated the AVP HIPP club for youth in Orange Farm, one of them gave us the following account:

“AVP, AVP… just hearing the word. Alternatives to Violence. I mean… ya… What is this thing? You know, when you come to a young person and tell: ‘we are going to talk about violence’ [they say] ‘So what?! It’s none of our business!’ Then the good thing [for me]… I started when they talked about food. It was all about food when I first did the workshop. You know like… I didn’t pick up on anything. But you know (...) I remember when we did the boundary agreements. I have NEVER in my life set up a boundary for myself. I’ve always sit waiting for someone to tell me: ‘you know what, this is what you need to do and this and this and that. And THAT, you’ll do.’ (...) For once in my life I had to be responsible.” (Triple interview with HIPP facilitators in Orange Farm, 05/11, 2008)

Thus, workshops connect to the participants, or the participants are able to connect elements of the workshop to their own life experiences.
MENTALLY CHALLENGED. The claim that AVP workshops are capable of connecting to practically all participants, got a new meaning when we learned that AVP workshops were also given at a workplace for mentally challenged. Although the participants of the workshop had already left for home when we got there, we did interview two central leading ladies, who had also participated in the workshop, together with what they call their ‘clients’.

“We know this one [someone working at the workplace, mentally challenged] as a very shy person, this one cannot even talk. But there [at the AVP workshop] they were different people. They were asking questions, they were just talking. To me it was the first time I can see them stand up for themselves [and] say, ‘I, so and so, I don’t like this and that and that’. And then I realized at the end of the day that we [as the workplace coordinators] don’t allow them to speak up…” (Individual interview with workplace manager in Greater Edendale on 05/15, 2008)

What happened during the workshop’s role play?
“In the role play… For me it was more… to see my clients… and… interacting at that level. Because I did not know that they can be able to think differently from who they are. You know? So… it was interesting to see them. You know? Living ‘another’ life so to say. Like changing their names, and following whatever they are told to do. You know? So… I keep on saying: I looked at them differently ever since. Because I did not know that they were going to be able to be like that. To interact at that level.” (Individual interview with social worker in Greater Edendale on 05/15, 2008)

Both individuals we interviewed expressed their complete surprise about the abilities of their ‘clients’. They had never thought of them as equals, and if it had not been for the AVP workshop they would probably never have known. One way to put this is to say that the workshop is able to adjust to the level of the mentally challenged. Another way of seeing things is to say that AVP workshops create a safe and stimulating space in which everyone is able to communicate on the bases of equality.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKSHOP IMPROVEMENTS. In all our interviews we asked interviewees if they could recommend any improvements. Even though many respondents claimed there was nothing wrong with the workshop, most of them were able to give suggestions for workshop improvement if asked. These recommendations ranged from using a group’s mother language, and the length of the workshops, to time management, the implementation of a selection process for future facilitators, and the organization of a reunion day. Next to the importance of time management and the creation of an AVP community through reunion days, we want to stress especially the idea
to implement a selection procedure for future facilitators. Because the quality of an AVP workshop largely depends on the quality of the facilitators, it is important to either carefully select the facilitators or closely monitor their capabilities.

**Our final words for now and the future**

All in all, we believe to have created a rather extensive model for the evaluation of AVP workshops in the Netherlands, South Africa, and all over the world. With the chosen methodology – i.e. narrative analysis and its focus on the ‘deep structure’ of stories – it is possible, both for the AVP-community itself and for external evaluators, to discover important and interesting aspects of changes in participants’ worldviews. Since those worldviews affect a person’s attitude towards conflict, they also affect a person’s attitude towards his fellow human beings more generally. Hence, a focus on changing worldviews and attitudes could potentially reveal much more valuable information, reaching far beyond the AVP community.

For example, narrative analysis could prove to be an important aid in building peaceful societies in which people (inter)actively and collaboratively create the multicultural societies they want to live in with one another. Therefore, narrative analysis could prove to be applicable, not only in the field of conflict prevention, but also to assess changes in what has been called the ‘social cohesion’ in societies.

At the same time, because the model is quite new, we hope to have initiated enthusiasm amongst those who are continuously looking for solutions to deal with the difficulties many evaluators face. And, as we said at the beginning, let us all be critical and honest about possibilities, challenges and constraints within the model. For these reasons the use of narrative analysis in evaluation research will hopefully greatly benefit from future research. Although this future research may challenge existing ideas about evaluative knowledge, we believe these challenges should be confronted. And, from our own experience we can say that researching this field can be a lot of fun as well! People simply need to do what they do all the time: Share their stories.

Written by Tijl Couzij and Ivar Halfman, a.k.a. the Netherlands©
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Oxfam/Novib 2008a. Interview with K. Kammeraat (DiversityJoy’s contact at Oxfam/Novib). Interview was conducted by I. Halfman.

Meeting 2008a. with dr. D.W. Laws (thesis-supervisor), T. Schram (director & trainer/facilitator DiversityJoy), L.A. Beckx (program manager & trainer/facilitator DiversityJoy), and the two authors: Tijl Couzij and Ivar Halfman.
### Appendices

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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Orangefarm</td>
<td>11-May</td>
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Explanation coding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Explanation code</th>
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<tr>
<td>AVP</td>
<td>AVP Level</td>
<td>1 = Basic 2 = Advanced 3 = facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td>1 = &lt;20 years 2 = 20-29 3 = 30-39 4 = 40-49 5 = 50-59 6 = &gt;60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edu</td>
<td>Finished level of education</td>
<td>1 = Primary school 2 = High school 3 = University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male or female</td>
<td>1 = Male 2 = Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foc/Indi</td>
<td>Part of focus group individual interview or dual/tripple interview</td>
<td>1 = Individual interview 2 = Focus group 3 = Dual or triple interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>SA = South Africa NL = Dutch Aus = Australian</td>
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</table>
Appendices No.2

Analysis coding for individual semistandardized interviews

the participants reported an increase in their own ability concerning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Reported effects</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expressing your feelings</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staying calm</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>using I-messages</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Affirmating the other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Self esteem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>respect for others</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Positive attitude</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Feeling others needs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Forgiving others</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Realizing others have problems too</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sense of equality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Knowledge yourself</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dicipline/motivation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Feeling own responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Transforming Power</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
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## Appendices No.3

### Research Agenda South Africa

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 04</td>
<td>Arrival at Johannesburg airport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 05-May</td>
<td>D1 Participation Advanced workshop in Leeuwkop Correctional Centre</td>
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<td>Tue 06-May</td>
<td>D2 Participation Adv workshop in Leeuwkop</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D3 Participation Adv workshop in Leeuwkop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 08-May</td>
<td>D4 Participation Adv workshop in Leeuwkop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 09-May</td>
<td>AM Focus group interview with Basic level in Leeuwkop 9H00-12H00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2 Basic level participants)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at Phaphama Offices 13H00-14H00 Phindile Tladi and Theo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM Meeting Judy and other Phaphama employees 14H00-16H00</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Judy, Jabu, Sarah, Corlette, Thuli and Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 10-May</td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2 Advanced level participant) 11H30-13H30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neo, Mosiwa, Reginald, Bongani - Facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM Focus group interview with Facilitators 14H00-16H00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moni, Dimakatso, Tebogo, Botumelo, Kananelo,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonkululeko, Connie, Khangezile, Ps and Gugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2 facilitator level participant) 16H00-17H30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thulisile and Corlette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 11-May</td>
<td>AM Focus group interview with Advanced level in Orange Farm HIPP 9-11.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 HIPP Guys and 4 Facilitators as it would be easier to do it in OF for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neo, Reginald, Mosiwa and Bongani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 12-May</td>
<td>Travel by plane from Joburg to Kwazulu Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting with Geoff Harris and maybe students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 13-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 14-May</td>
<td>Participating in a T 4 F workshop</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2x advanced level participant)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2x facilitator level participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 16-May</td>
<td>Meeting Geoff Harris and maybe students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2x basic level participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2x advanced level participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews (2x facilitator level participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 17-May</td>
<td>Travel by plane to from Kwazulu Natal to Joburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 18-May</td>
<td>leaving to Amsterdam</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Individual Interview:

Intro:
I'm Tijl Couzij / Ivar Halfman, and together with Tijl/Ivar I have been asked to develop a model for the evaluation of AVP Workshops, like those conducted by Phaphama. In order to develop an evaluation model, we need to know something about the aims and experiences of participants. So basically, I would like to get to know your ideas and feelings with regard to the workshop(s). Everything you say will be confidential and will be dealt with carefully. If you feel uncomfortable answering some questions, please say so. You don't have to respond when you feel uncomfortable. Before we start our conversation could you give me some practical information?

Practical info: (fill out info sheet).

Do you have any questions at this moment? Then I will introduce myself to you, so you get to know me a little better as well.

Personal introduction interviewer:
- Introduce Tijl/Ivar

Personal information:
- So now I've introduced myself to you... would you be so kind to introduce yourself to me? (Helpful question: if I had to tell my colleague whom I talked to, what would be an apt description of you?)

Deepening: (8 min)
- Could you give me a short history of your life? (pick up on cues!)
  - Where did you grow up and go to school?
  - What further education did you take part in?
  - What do you do, work, other?

- Could you describe some moments in your life you experienced as critical moments?

The workshop: (12 min)
- When/Why did you first decide to participate in a workshop? (pick up on cues!)
- Where was the workshop given?
- What were your first impressions of the workshop group, location, and atmosphere?
- Could you tell me about your experiences during the workshop?
  - Which moments do you remember of the workshop?
  - What did you like, and what didn't you like? (Perhaps give example of own positive and negative experience to stimulate criticism).

After the workshop: (20 min)
- How did your opinion about the group, location and/or atmosphere change after the workshop?
  - Did you stay in touch with other participants afterwards? For how long?
    -if so, did you see any changes in their behavior or attitude?

- What did you tell other people (non-participants) about the workshop?

- Now, some time after the workshop, would you say the workshop has influenced you?
  - How?
    - Which workshop elements would you say have influenced you most?
      - How?

- What would others say if I asked them how the workshop has helped or changed you?
  - for example your mother, father, friends, colleagues. Or did people actually tell you about the changes they saw in your behavior or attitude?

- Have you experienced moments on which you suddenly realized the usefulness of (parts of) the workshop?
  - What happened?

- What are your future-plan concerning AVP?

- What do you believe is key to AVP?

- How would you think AVP Workshops could be improved?

**Reflections:** (10 min)
- Do you remember critical moments in your contact with Phaphama/AVP workshops?

- Reflecting on our conversation and especially your contribution to it, were there moments on which you thought: "I should not forget to tell him this or that"?
  
  *(Give respondent time to think it over, and take time to look over your list of questions to see if you missed out on anything).*

- As you have told me a lot of valuable and personal information, I can imagine you would like to know something about me as well. Do you have any questions for me? Personal or in relation to our research?

**Epilogue:** (3 min)
- Thank you so much for participating. It was very helpful to me. Thanks again.
Appendices No.5

Focus group

Preparations:
- Pens, forms, presents, Dictaphone + batteries, paper, something to drink.

Intro us: (10 min)
- Who are we? & Why are we here?
- Rules of engagement
  o Give each other room to speak.
  o Try to speak loud and clear so our recording device records everything that is said.
  o Try to respect each other’s opinion
  o Feel free to ask questions to us and one another, but try to do it respectfully.
  o Everything you say is confidential. All information used in our thesis will be anonymous.
- What are we going to do? (agenda) & How are we going to do it? (roles researchers)
- Hand out basic information forms (5 min)

Intro participants: (10 min)
- We would like each of you to shortly introduce yourselves, so we all get to know each other to some extent.

Goals: Why did you decide to participate in the workshop?
- What did you expect from participation in the workshop?

Effects with regard to individuals: (30 min)
- Can someone tell a story about a personal experienced conflict that escalated?

SIDE BAR: choose story to analyze.
- How could this situation have been dealt with differently?

Light and Lively: which L&L did you like most?
- Do L&L, if no response, do ‘fast and furious’ L&L.

Core elements, effects with regard to groups (30 min)
- Has your relation to other workshop participants changed? How? Example…
- Have you applied/used your workshop skills since you’ve participated?
- Have you applied/used workshop skills in this focus group?

(Gender elements: Do women experience different workshop effects from men?)

Finalizing a list of effects: (20 min)
- So, to get it all together, we want to make a list of the effects this workshop has had on you. Therefore we want to ask you to mention effects you experienced. When we have twenty effects, we quit. Then it is up to you to agree on a final list of ten workshop effects.)
Appendices No.6

AVP/HIPP self- and workshop evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avp / hipp</td>
<td>basic</td>
<td>- / 200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

workshop venue/location

affirmation

Is there anything you have learnt about “affirmation” in this workshop that you did not know before? What? Please explain your response.

communication

What one or two communication skills have you learnt in this workshop that you would like to try to use in your life? Please explain your response.

cooperation

If there was one thing you would like to change in the way you cooperate with people, what would it be? Please explain your response.

trust and community-building

a) What, if anything, have you learnt about your ability to trust yourself and others from this workshop? Please explain your response.

b) As a result of attending this workshop, how do you think you can build healthier family, school and friendship communities in your life? Please explain your response.

transforming power

How would you explain “transforming power” to someone who asks you about this?
## Overall Workshop Evaluation

**What did you enjoy most about this workshop?**

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**What was the most important thing you learnt on this workshop?**

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**What did you *not* enjoy or what did you *not* find valuable in this workshop?**

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**What are your feelings about the facilitation of the workshop?**

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**What suggestions do you have to improve this workshop?**

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**Would you like to attend further workshops?**  
If yes, please tick the workshop below you would like to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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</table>
Appendices No. 7

Basic Participant Information

Dear participant, the information you will provide by filling out this form, will be handled with strict confidentiality. No other party but the researchers will be handling this form and the information on it.

A) Name: first name, sir name (last name)

B) E-mail address:

C) AVP Level:  □ Basic  □ Advanced  □ Facilitator

D) Age:  □ under 20  □ 20 – 29  □ 30 – 39
□ 40 – 49  □ 50 – 59  □ 60 or above

E) Educational level: what is your highest finished educational level?
□ Primary school  □ High school
□ University
Other: __________________________

F) Gender:  □ Male  □ Female

G) Nationality: __________________________

H) Profession: __________________________

Thank you for participating

With kind regards Ivar Halfman and Tijl Couzij
Appendices No.8

Story Writing Exercise
Welcome to the workshop of DiversityJoy. Before starting the actual workshop we would like to invite you to do a ‘literary’ exercise. With this exercise we can assess individual development. Furthermore, the exercise will help to assess the impact of the workshop, and enable us to improve it. The information you provide is confidential.

Introduction to the exercise:
All of us experience disagreements and sometimes-even conflicts in our lives. The way we deal with these situations is telling.

Below we ask you to provide a short story of about 15-30 lines about a disagreement or a conflict you have been involved with. Please explain what happened. What did you do? What did you say? And the other(s)? Try to be specific.

Take some time to remember such a personal story.
When remembering such a situation appears to be too much of a challenge, perhaps one of the remember-exercises below is helpful.

Remember-exercise: top and think of a story of your own and the way you usually tell it, a story about yourself and a conflict in which you were involved. If you believe the story is too long, select a part you evaluate as crucial to the conflict and write that down below.

Remember-exercise: a. What do you find irritating? “I can’t stand it if people…”
b. When was the last time this occurred?
c. Select a specific episode of this situation and describe it. What happened? What did you do? What did the other(s) do?

Afterwards: When you have finished your story, put the form in the provided envelope. During the workshop’s gathering your envelope is collected.

T2
Dear …

Some time ago you have participated in a workshop from DiversityJoy. You probably remember the very first thing you were asked to do: Write a personal conflict story.

Now we basically ask you to do the same thing. Could you describe the same conflict? We expect the story to be different from the first story, if only because there are probably very few people who are able to remember their exact words from the first exercise. Hence, it does not matter if the stories differ. It is important however that you describe the same conflict as in the workshop. What happened? What did you do, what did you say? What did the other(s) do and say? If you want to add remarks or questions about the workshop or the exercise, feel free to do so.

When you are finished please put your story in the pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelope we provided and post it.

Thank you for sharing your story.