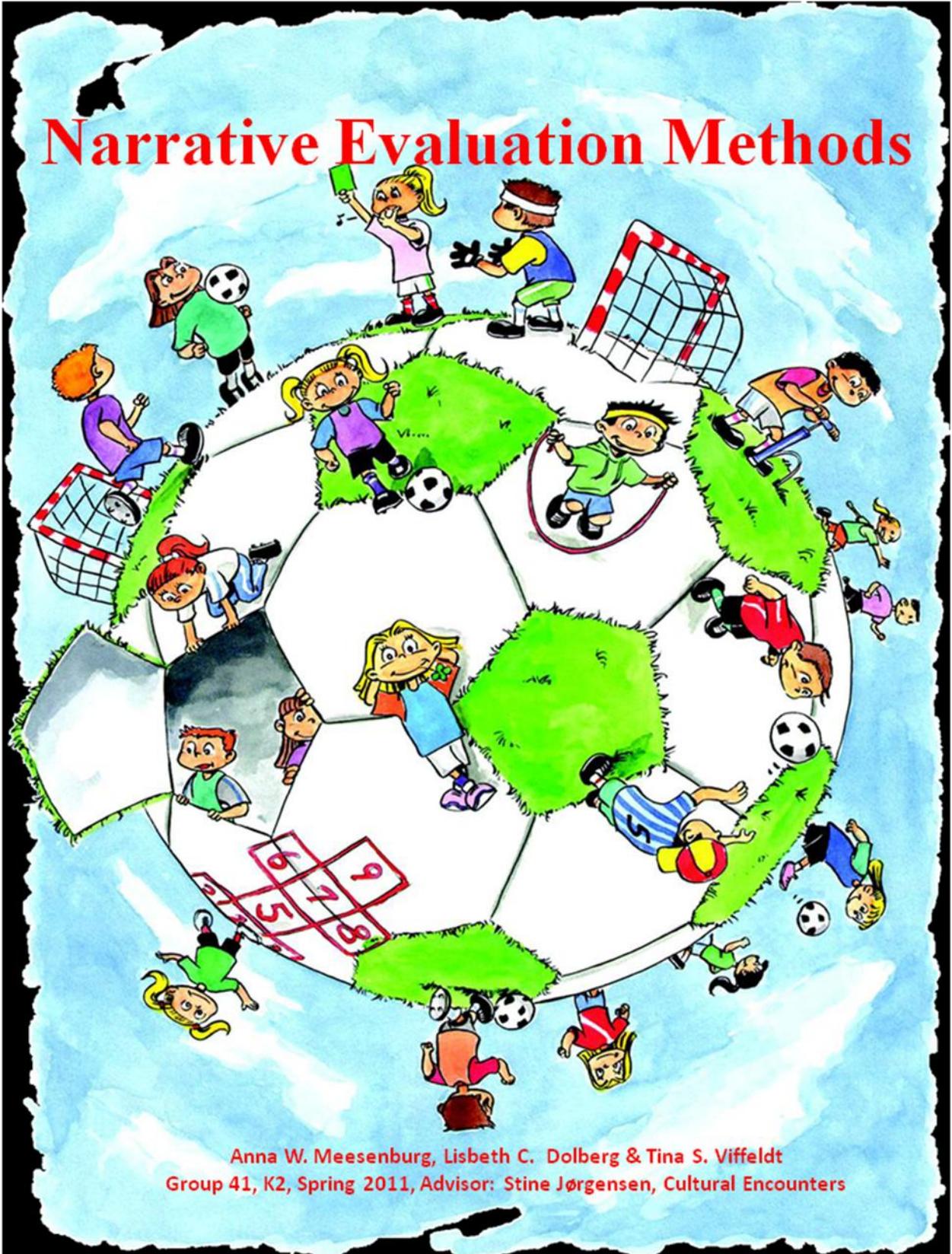


Narrative Evaluation Methods



Anna W. Meeseburg, Lisbeth C. Dolberg & Tina S. Viffeldt
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**- in a context of conflict and
reconciliation**

Graphics and material concerning CCPA and OFFS
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Presentation

What first gave rise to this present report was a profound interest in conflict resolution and peace building projects. Through our studies we have been presented with several theories as to why, amongst others, ethnic groups collide, and new ways of thinking identity as decentralised, that could help soften these divides between people. However, we are still left wondering, how to make the leap from theory to practice. When we stumbled across a request from a NGO, to help define an evaluation system¹ that could help them assess their project impact on people in post-conflict countries, we jumped at the opportunity to work within our field of interest. The NGO in question is Cross Cultures Project Association, CCPA. For more than ten years they have arranged football schools in post-conflict countries, with the aim of bringing together former rivalling parties and creating a ground for peace building and reconciliation. The concept is called Open Fun Football Schools, OFFS. By means of this concept CCPA hopes to bring about – amongst other things: *“The fostering of relations between people who do not normally interact or share interests due to ethnical, political, cultural or social divisions”* (Background and Fundamentals of the Open Fun Football Schools, 2010: 1).

In order to understand, which evaluation method might grasp such an issue, we started researching into the field of evaluation systems within social projects. In the process of that it became clear, that it was not just CCPA who was struggling with finding a method to measure the change in attitude and conditions for their target group. There seemed to be a general concern of how to capture more fluid developments such as, a change in perception within the people for whom the specific project was aiming at. This issue again opened up to a wider discussion of what makes an evaluation valid and what the demands are for making the statement, that a project had the intended impact? At the

¹ Currently CCPA monitors their projects and every other year they make an internal evaluation report. According to CCPA these are mainly concerned with: *“Outcomes of our programme (e.g. direct beneficiaries’ profiles, community-based spin-off activities, effects on cooperation between stakeholders, satisfaction of users). Outputs (i.e. goods and services delivered) and Inputs (i.e. financial and other resources used including local in-kind/in-cash support)”* (Grant application to Sida, 2010). Furthermore they distribute baseline and endline questionnaires to the local volunteer leaders of the OFFS (Grant application to Sida, 2010).

same time it seemed, that there was a growing request for documentation of the impact affected by social projects.

The evaluation methods can roughly be divided into two groups, the quantitative and the qualitative methods ²(Garbarino and Holland, 2009). Given our foundation in the area of human science and the wish of CCPA, to include the experiences of their subjects in the aftermath of the OFFS, we choose to concentrate on the qualitative methods of evaluation. This still left us with a multitude of opportunities, but there was one method that caught our eyes, which seemed to combine our interest in the bridge between theory and practice, and the field of post-conflict and reconciliation more than others; narrative methods for evaluation.

The narrative methods of evaluation build on the theory that it is in the social interaction between people and especially through language that we construct the world around us (Lundby, 2005). Therefore the narratives that people tell become particularly interesting within an evaluation because they aim to show how people perceive the world (Winslade and Monk, 2008). Narrative methods have also been implemented in regards to conflict resolution, where looking at what caused the conflict is not important but the effects are. In other words it is not a matter of what started the conflict, but how the people involved tell the story about the conflict, that is in focus. The belief is that narratives are in an ever evolving process, and to resolve a conflict, the narratives have to and can be changed (Winslade and Monk, 2008).

After we decided to focus on the narrative perspective of conflict resolution and how to evaluate through narrative methods we were still faced with several questions. In the area of evaluation systems there is a large debate going on, in regards to the question of when something can be called a valid evaluation and more specifically a debate on the relation between quantitative and qualitative methods (Garbarino and Holland, 2009). This made us wonder how to use the narrative method? Can it live up to the standards of validity given for instance by donors, and could there be a reason to question these standards when faced with very individual experiences such as a change of perception of the 'other'? There is also question of whether it can capture the changes of behaviour and conditions hoped for, concerning the subjects of the OFFS programme? We also

² There are several other ways of dividing evaluation methods; however this divide opens up to theoretical debates of validity and objectivity that we find interesting.

wonder how a method, which builds on a social constructionist understanding of the world in which truth, is a relativistic issue (Burr, 2004), can help an organisation like the CCPA, assess whether their programme is a success? If everything is in an ever evolving process and thereby a construction, can it then be anything but a snapshot?

These questions all lead us toward an investigation of how to evaluate and lead us to our cardinal question as given below.

Cardinal question

What are the advantages and disadvantages of applying narrative methods in an evaluation of CCPA's programme the OFFS?

Working questions

In which ways can a narrative method relate to the post-conflict context that the OFFS programme is situated in?

What challenges might narrative evaluation meet in relations to the demands for impact evaluation put forward by CCPA's donor Sida?

Reading guide

In this section we will briefly present how the report is structured and the content of its chapters. By doing this we wish to give the reader an overview of the report and show how we see the red thread running through the report.

Chapter 1: Introduction: In the introduction chapter we introduced our field of research and problem area and presented arguments as to why we find it interesting and relevant. These arguments led to our cardinal question and the subsequent working questions. As the final part of the introduction we present the reading guide that you are currently reading.

Chapter 2: Methods: The intention of this chapter is to set the frame of the report, both theoretically

and by elaborating on some of the choices and limitations we have made. We begin with briefly presenting why we have chosen social constructionism as our point of departure within theory of science. Here we will also introduce its main concepts. Furthermore we will elaborate on how the choice of social constructionism influences our view on our field of research and what it means for the way we go about answering the cardinal question.

After that we move on to the delimitation, in which we elaborate on the selections and deselections, we have made while working with the report.

Next, we briefly present our main theorists. And finally we present our case the humanitarian organisation CCPA, their programme the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) and the effects that CCPA hopes the programme will have. CCPA will serve as our focus throughout the rest of the report; we might stray at times, only to return to the context of the Open Fun Football School.

Chapter 3: Theory: This chapter is mainly concerned with conflict and reconciliation set within a narrative perspective. After having briefly introduced the theory of narratives, we will identify some main aspects of conflict within a narrative framework. This will lead on to how different theorist works with conflict situations through a narrative therapy and mediation approach. The intention of this is to get an understanding of how CCPA can be said to work within a narrative framework. Furthermore it is also used to extract some focus point that one has to be aware of when trying to identify narratives of conflict and reconciliation.

Chapter 4: Evaluation: After having presented the narrative theory we move on to a presentation of four central dimensions of evaluation theory. These dimensions along with the focus points of narrative mediation will be central in our development of a narrative method aimed at evaluating the effects of the OFFS. This narrative evaluation method is developed with the specific context of the OFFS in mind and will be presented as a guideline, rather than a 'ready to use' method. The guidelines to narrative evaluation consist of three parts: the 'preparations', 'collecting stories' and the 'analysis'.

This chapter will also include some points of quantitative and qualitative approaches to making claims about causality, which is considered a central issue in evaluations that deal with impact and effect. In continuation hereof we present some selected standpoints taken from the evaluation manual of one of CCPA's main donors the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. The purpose of this is to present some of the challenges and obstacles a narrative approach to

effect and impact evaluation might be met with from the 'real world' as represented by Sida.

Chapter 5: Discussion: The discussion takes its point of departure in our cardinal question and deals with a range of issues related to the advantages and disadvantages of using narrative methods in an evaluation of the effects and impacts of the OFFS.

We start off by presenting arguments as to why we find narrative methods relevant for an evaluation of the OFFS. We then go on to deal with the implications of having a social constructionist stance to science while at the same time being met with the practical demands of an evaluation.

In connection with this we will discuss concepts such as objectivity and validity as seen from a narrative and social constructionist perspective. Furthermore, we discuss if and how a narrative method can be used for establishing causality and to provide estimates of long-term effects.

In the last part of the discussion we look into some of the practicalities related to applying a narrative method in an evaluation of the OFFS-programme. We pose the question that if narratives are to be considered unique and particular, is it then still possible to compare them and possibly quantify them? And if not how can one then make statements about the overall effect of the OFFS-programme?

Chapter 6: Conclusion: In this chapter we sum up the main points from the discussion and conclude on the cardinal question and the working questions.

Chapter 2 - Methods

Point of departure within theory of science

We will in this part of the report introduce the assumptions which are characteristic to our point of departure within theory of science. In the following we will, furthermore, consider what it means for our approach when answering the cardinal question.

Our approach in answering the cardinal question takes place within a social constructionist framework. This of course has an effect on how we work with and answer the cardinal question. We could have chosen among several other approaches to understanding conflict and to build an evaluation method aimed at measuring the effects of the OFFS. But we see the narrative approach as an interesting and hopefully profitable way of combining the context of conflict and an evaluation of a programme set in this context³. We also find the narrative approach and its rootedness in social constructionism, a way of understanding amongst other things the importance of words, stories and positions in bringing a conflict about, keeping a conflict going and as key resolution. This will therefore also help us in understanding some of the effects of a programme working within this context.

As indicated in the above, social constructionism is focused on words and social interaction; it sees these as constructing how we perceive the individual, people and the world around us. In return this implies that we can never reach an object or situation without the use of words and therefore, the description of these will always be a social construction. With that being said social constructionism also implies that social phenomena are never complete or done because their meaning can never be definitively locked. This results in constant battles of definitions (Winther Jørgensen, 2002: 73). These battles of definitions therefore affect the understanding of conflict and post-conflict, in the sense that not one meaning can be attached to a conflict, but rather the conflict itself is a battle of meanings. Therefore it is our belief, that the narrative approach can help us to understand this complexity.

³ As mentioned in the Presentation, CPPA implements their programme in post-conflict countries, where the effects of the conflict are perceived as still lingering.

When using narrative methods in an evaluation it means, as mentioned earlier, that we have a theoretical assumption that language and more specifically narratives are constituted by – but also constituting for social practice (Burr, 2004: 46-62). It is therefore how groups and the individual tell their story that becomes our main focus area.

There is, however, an ambiguity when working within the basis of social constructionism, while at the same time working with evaluation, in which, there more than often is a demand for validity, causality and an isolation of effects to assess whether a project was a success. We do, however, not see this as a problem that disables us to discuss advantages and disadvantages of narrative methods in evaluations, but rather as a part of the discussion, and one which we will unfold during the report.

On a last note we believe that it is important to make clear some of the non-theoretical assumptions on which this report is built. Since we are using CCPA as our case study we wish to clarify the underlying assumptions that they have, and that we adopt when working with our cardinal question. One of their assumptions is that people do not want to be in a conflict. This assumption is what leads us to an investigation of how a conflict can be resolved. Another assumption is that a conflict has caused effects which still linger in the communities, and that these effects are not to be desired, and therefore a change needs to come about. This assumption is the ground basis on which we work with evaluation methods, to find ways of ‘measuring’ a possible change. Other assumptions are that football is a fun and neutral sport, that everybody is interested in their children and their community and so on.⁴ We hope, in working with narrative methods, that while these assumptions shape the goals that CCPA has, the narrative evaluation might help them to reflect on them and if necessary revise them.

Delimitation of the Report

As the focus of this present report is narrative evaluation methods, and one of our aims is to construct a guideline to narrative evaluation of the OFFS, it has been necessary to limit ourselves from several aspects concerning both CCPA and methods of evaluation. In the following we will list some of these aspects that we believe could have contributed to the understanding of the field of reconciliation and evaluation, but which would be out of the scope of this report to include.

⁴ See the section titled ‘The Open Fun Football Schools and their intended effects’

In focusing on narrative evaluation methods, which can be said to be inherently qualitative, we have limited ourselves from a wealth of other methods, qualitative as well as quantitative. This, however, does not imply that we do not recognise the usefulness of other methods – such as for instance quantitative methods. In fact as a general rule we would argue, that a combination of methods is often fruitful (Garbarino and Holland, 2009).

In regards to CCPA, there are several elements that we have had to look aside from in order to work more in-depth with our cardinal question and working questions. This is not because we find them to be irrelevant to the report, but because it will be out of our scope to include them all. For one, we have not included the aspect of resources. It would be beyond our focus to estimate the resources needed to implement a narrative evaluation method and compare this to the resources available to CCPA. We have, however, kept it in mind and occasionally included methods less time consuming, as this was one of the wishes put forward by CCPA.

Furthermore, we have chosen not to focus on a specific conflict or post-conflict country or area. CCPA has implemented their programme in 14 countries until now⁵, but as their wish was not an evaluation but rather an evaluation method, we have focused on elements that all conflicts could be said to have in common within the narrative perspective. In this way our guidelines aim at being applicable to any of the OFFS programmes.

In the presentation of CCPA, we will only briefly touch upon the work being done by in connection with the OFFS, as the OFFS-event is only part of the OFFS-programme. We will also only briefly touch upon some of the other goals that CCPA hopes to achieve with the implementation of their programme. We have, however, chosen to focus only on the evaluation of the OFFS, but we believe, that several of the elements given in the guidelines could be used to evaluate on the wider scope of the programme, should CCPA wish to do so.

As for the goals put forward by CCPA, we have taken the liberty of choosing only a few that we find to be central to the narrative approach to conflict and reconciliation. We will elaborate further on this in the presentation of CCPA.

Last but not least, we have chosen not to look into the game of football as a common interest and which role the game of football might play in the construction of new narratives. This is partly due

⁵ See the section titled ‘The Open Fun Football Schools and their intended effects’

to the fact that narrative evaluation methods aim at being open as to what experiences are highlighted by the participants themselves and partly as a necessary limitation in focus

Introduction of the main sources

In this section we will introduce the main theorists used in the report. Furthermore, we will introduce the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Prof. Dr. Tineke Abma is Research Director at the Department of Medical Humanities and a Senior Researcher at VU University Medical Centre. She is a member of the *Educational Board of Evaluation and Program Planning* and the *Quality of higher Education* (Tineke Abma, 14.5.2011). In the report we draw on her anthology *Telling tales: On evaluation and narrative*, in which she presents a series of discussions and case-stories related to narrative evaluation methods and theory.

Geir Lundby is educated as a clinical sociologist and family therapist. He is currently employed at the Regioncenter for children and youth psychiatry in Oslo, meanwhile teaching narrative therapy in the countries of Scandinavia. He is also co-editor at the Norwegian family therapy magazine *Focus on Family* (Lundby, 2005: Back-page). In the report we draw on his book *Narrativ Terapi* (In English: *Narrative Therapy*).

Marianne Winther Jørgensen is an Associate Professor at Linköping University in Sweden and is specialised in social constructionism. In the report we draw on her Ph. D. dissertation: *Reflexivity and Criticism* (2002) in our discussion. The dissertation deals with some of the key theoretical discussions within social constructionism.

John Winslade is an Associate Professor at California State University San Bernardino. He also teaches a mediation course at Cal State Dominguez Hills University and at the University of Waterloo in Canada. He is a member of the editorial board of the Conflict Resolution Quarterly journal. (John Winslade, 14.5.2011).

Dr. Gerald Monk is a Professor in the Department of Counselling and School Psychology at San Diego State University and teaches in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program. He is a practicing Marriage and Family Therapist in California and a mediator and trainer in collaborative divorce

practices and mediation in health care. Gerald has also worked as a psychologist and counsellor (Gerald Monk, 14.5.2011).

In the report we draw on Winslade and Monk's books *Narrative Mediation – a new approach to conflict resolution* (2001) and *Practicing narrative mediation: loosening the grip of conflict* (2008). We use these books to present narrative theory and methods for narrative mediation. Furthermore, we also draw on Winslade and Drewery's article in the book *Narrativ terapi i praksis – håbets arkæologi* (2006) (in English: *Narrative Therapy in Practice – the Archaeology of Hope*).

Peter Dahler-Larsen is a Professor at the Department of Political Science and Public Management at University of Southern Denmark. Furthermore, he is the head of education at the master programme in evaluation at the same university. His research areas include qualitative methods for evaluation seen from a societal, cultural and institutional perspective plus consequences of evaluations and evaluation systems and theory-based evaluations (Peter Dahler-Larsen, 13.5.2011). In the report we primarily draw on his chapter on evaluation in *Kvalitative Metoder – en grundbog* (2010) (in English: *Qualitative Methods – a textbook*) and the first part of the anthology *Tendenser i Evaluering* (2001), (in English: *Tendencies in Evaluation*) which he is the co-editor of.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is the Swedish state's international development agency and operates in accordance with the directions given from the Swedish government (Sida about us,13.5.2011). Our reason for including Sida in the report is that Sida is one of CCPA's main donors. Accordingly, Sida has the power to cut off further funding to CCPA, if the organisation believes that the results of the OFFS cannot be documented in an appropriate way. For this reason we find it relevant to look into some of the guidelines and norms that Sida has in regards to evaluation. In order to do this we have drawn of selected parts of Sida's evaluation manual *Looking Back – Moving Forward* (2007).

The Open Fun Football Schools and their intended effects

In this section we will introduce our case Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) and the organisations programme the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS). The purpose of the presentation is to provide the reader with information about and an understanding of the organisation and the programme. This information will be drawn on later on in the report. The section is structured as

follows. First, we will briefly introduce CCPA. Second, we will introduce the OFFS-concept and its conflict resolution approach. Third, we will present the intended impacts⁶ of the OFFS-programme and briefly explain how we would argue that they can be seen in a narrative perspective.

A brief introduction to CCPA

Cross Cultures Project Association is a humanitarian organisation founded in 1998 by the former Danish football player Anders Levinsen. CCPA's main purpose is to run peace building programmes in post-conflict countries. The Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS)⁷ is CCPA's first and largest programme. CCPA started its operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1998 and has since expanded to 13 more countries in the Balkans, South Caucasus and the Middle East. In the period from 1998-2009 approximately 222.800 children participated in the Open Fun Football Schools (CCPA Grant Application Sida, 2010: 5). While CCPA's head office is situated in Denmark, the organisation also has a number of regional and country offices. Furthermore, the exact implementation of each Open Fun Football School is to a large extent administrated and planned locally by local volunteers, which is considered a part of the reconciliatory concept of the OFFS. In this regard, CCPA argues that the Open Fun Football Schools-concept builds on a bottom-up, participatory approach (CCPA Grant Application Sida, 2010: 2).

The OFFS-programme

The OFFS-concept offers five-day summer football schools for children aged 7-12 years living in post-conflict communities. Although the schools are intended for children, CCPA argues that it is equally important – if not more so – to use the OFFS as a tool to unite their parents, the local volunteers and other stakeholders from the community (CCPA's Sport and Relation-building, 1.4.2011).

The intention of the schools is thus to bring together people of different ethnic and social backgrounds and to: "*facilitate friendship and create sports co-operation between people living in divided communities*" (CCPA Grant Application Sida, 2010: 2). In order to ensure that people with different backgrounds participate, OFFS has a set of requirements regarding the geographical,

⁶In regards to impacts, it is important to mention that we have chosen to focus exclusively on the impacts in regards to reconciliation. We will therefore only briefly mention other intended impacts.

⁷The OFFS was CCPA's first programme. CCPA has since expanded its range of programmes. In this report, we will, however, only look in to the OFFS-programme.

ethnic, cultural and social composition and gender balance of the direct beneficiaries (Background and fundamentals of the Open Fun Football Schools, CCPA, 2010: 1). Furthermore, they use a 'twin-city' concept when arranging the football schools, in order to ensure diversity amongst the participants (CCPA's Open Fun Football Schools, 18.5.2011).

The OFFS-concept builds on an indirect approach to reconciliation. This is exemplified by the fact that the children, parents and volunteers who participate in the schools do not meet to talk explicitly about past or current conflicts, or in order to find the 'root' of the problem. Instead they gather around their common interests. The common interests are defined by CCPA as being "*children – welfare - future and the development of children's football*" (CCPA's Children's Grassroots Football Universe, 18.5.2011). CCPA further elaborates that:

"The whole organisational and pedagogical set-up is geared toward nurturing the community spirit and the social relations in contrary to the more traditional conflict resolution techniques that start with the problems to be solved, which is, a projection of the deadlocked conflict situation" (CCPA's Conflict Management Approach, 15.5.2011).

A major part of both the football schools and the preparatory seminars held is thus to facilitate so-called communication situations, where the participants get a chance to discuss and discover common values. In this regard the sports ground is seen as a neutral place to meet and the sport being played a so-called free space, where everyone focuses on the joy of the game, instead of being a representative of for example an ethnic group. The game of football is thus seen as a tool to achieve something else rather than a goal in itself (CCPA's Sport and Relation-building, 1.4.2011).

The expected effects of the OFFS

After having presented CCPA and the OFFS-concept, let us now present and sum up on some of the expected reconciliatory impacts of the OFFS, while putting them into a narrative perspective.

According to CCPA one of the expected impacts of the OFFS is the "*fostering of relations between people and institutions that do not normally interact or share interests due to ethnical, political, cultural or social divisions*". Furthermore, CCPA believes that the OFFS facilitates

"communication, mobility and social interaction across community divides" (Background and

fundamentals of the Open Fun Football Schools, CCPA, 2010:1).

When explaining the goals of the OFFS, CCPA refers to narratives and draws on elements from social constructionism. For example CCPA refers to how all people can be viewed as actively constructing stories about their lives. Furthermore, they explain how these stories not only describe, but also shape the way we perceive ourselves and others and thereby constitute the fundament for our actions. Accordingly, they argue, an event such as the OFFS can be said to contribute positively to the narratives that exist in a community (Background and fundamentals of the Open Fun Football Schools, CCPA, 2010: 2). For instance CCPA states that the OFFS can contribute to the production of new 'stories' in the community such as: "*the story of the joint interests that exist between children, families, local clubs, schools, authorities and sponsors across gender, social, ethnic and cultural divides*" (Background and fundamentals of the Open Fun Football Schools, CCPA, 2010: 2). Seen in the light of narrative theory we will therefore argue that one of the goals of OFFS can be understood as: A change in the narratives of the participants: from 'divided' or 'conflict' narratives to new narratives of reconciliation and joint interests. In the following chapters, this is what we will refer to when we talk of the goal of CCPA.

Chapter 3 – Narrative theory

In the following chapter we will be focusing on narratives in a context of conflict and reconciliation. We will start out with a brief introduction to how to understand narratives within the theory of narratives. We will look at how narratives are thought to be constructed, how they become the truth through which we live our lives, and how they guide the way in which we understand the world around us.

We will then move on to narrative theory in a context of conflict. This means looking deeper into concepts such as culture, discourses, group-narratives and positioning to see how these are determining in the construction of conflict-narratives.

From there we will move on to mediation in conflicts. This means investigating in which ways the work of the CCPA can be said to contribute to new and reconciling narratives. This is done by looking at various theorists who work with narrative mediation, to see in which ways they use narratives as a tool in reconciliation. This section will lead us to the identification of some important focus points of narrative mediation. These focus points will be central when we introduce ways of identifying shifts from conflict-narratives to narratives of reconciliation in our guidelines to narrative mediation.

Narrative theory: A brief introduction

As mentioned in the introduction, we find narrative methods to be an interesting approach to help CCPA evaluate the more complex changes hoped for through their programme; the OFFS. In this section we will introduce the theory behind narrative methods to create a basis for the further discussions of the applicability of narrative evaluation methods.

Narratives, understood as storytelling, have been present in cultures throughout time, from early cave-paintings to present day novels. It is also present in our daily interaction with other people, when we tell of how our day went, of our vacation or an experience we had. But how we view these stories, especially within psychological and social science, have varied a great deal, in particular concerning the truth of narratives. Geir Lundby (2005) uses Donald Spence to divide this variety

into two different categories: 'Historical truth' and 'Narrative truth' (Lundby, 2005:55). "*Historical truth*" views narratives as a representation of 'what actually happened', which is derived from an idea of truth as external from people. 'Narrative truth', on the other hand, focuses on the construction of a story around events and the emotional reactions to these events and the way these stories give coherence and make sense to the individual. When this is achieved, the narrative can be said to be true (Lundby, 2005).

This distinction points to the core of narrative theory, which builds on a social constructionist approach to science (Winslade and Monk, 2008). In this truth is not something that can be reached objectively and which exists in a reality outside social context. Instead narrative theory emphasizes the narrative truth, where the truth and reality are seen as constructed in social interaction, and therefore rely on the historical and cultural context in which they are constructed. In this sense the language becomes central; because it is through language that most human interaction take place (Lundby, 2005). If we return to the narrative perspective, it becomes clear, why narratives are important in this line of thinking, because narratives are not a mere reflection of what goes on in 'reality', but a way in which we construct our lives as well as constitutive for how we live it. As John Winslade and Gerald Monk (2008:1) describe it: "*Taking stories seriously, to us, means treating them as having power to shape experiences, influence mind-sets, and construct relationships*".

Disregarding the idea of an external reality that we can reach, does not mean that social constructionists see stories as constructed out of thin air. We are in a constant interaction with the world around us which provide us with endless experiences. In narrative theory, narratives build on these experiences and are at the same time seen as a way of structuring the experiences and making sense of them:

"stories give people the reassuring sense that life is not just a series of events happening one after the other without rhyme or reason. In terms of individuals' sense of themselves, stories enable people to have a sense of coherence about who they are" (Winslade and Monk, 2008:4).

This point to another important aspect of constructionist theory. In the same way that truth and reality are social constructions, so is the individual. People do not enter into the world as autonomous entities, but rather enter into a world of discourses from which we draw meaning (Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999). In this way narratives can be said to frame our experiences and give

us a sense of a cohesive I, but our social context and the discourses within this is what frames and structures our narratives (Lundby, 2005). To give an example; most of us are born into a national discourse, and in our case, this constitute us as Danes. What it means to be a Dane depends on the historical and social context, it might vary over time, and there will probably exist contradictory discourses within it. Nevertheless it provides us with symbols, institutions and a language, that all structures how we perceive our self and the world around us.

In this way, discourses can be said to be a set of more or less cohesive stories about how the world is or should be, or as Jørgensen and Phillips describe it in 'Discourse Analysis, as Theory and Method', as creating a world that seems real or true to people (1999:112-113).

As seen in the above narrative theory rejects the idea of people having an essence that defines them, but instead points to narratives as a way of creating a sense of selfhood. It is generally accepted that rather than thinking in terms of individuals, we are subjects in the sense that the story we tell of who we are, varies depending on the situation and on whom we are telling it to (Drewery and Winslade, 2006:64). Nevertheless, they also seem to agree that some stories are more persistent and dominate how we structure our life, but it vary between the theorists as to how we should understand the sense of selfhood. Lundby points to Polkinghorne (1991) who says:

“That peoples´ understanding of selfhood can best be understood as consisting of a self-narrative, which tells the story of the whole life. Such a self-narrative gives coherence to the multiplicity of episodes, events and possible expectations of an ending” (Lundby, 2005:81).

This understanding, according to Lundby, is problematic, because it draws on a positivistic idea of the individual; that a coherent and autonomous being is to be desired (Lundby, 2005). Instead Lundby refers to Jerome Bruner, who talks of a 'story made' folk-psychology as what frames our construction of the world and our place in it (Lundby, 2005:75). Drewery and Winslade points to something very similar when trying to understand the 'self', but calls it our social history: *“We understand our life in connection with our social history, when we construct stories of the groups that we belong to, and how it came about, that we became the one we are, the way we are, and where we are”* (Drewery and Winslade, 2006:59). In this sense our social history becomes a background story of who we are, which lends meaning to our daily actions, interactions and ways of ordering our life (Drewery and Winslade, 2006).

Whether it is called a self-narrative, folk-psychology or social history, they all point to the fact, as mentioned before, that we are part in the construction and reconstruction of some dominating stories that gives us a sense of coherence. The dominating stories can also be said, to be a mechanism in which we arrange our experiences. Some experiences might not seem important in relation to the dominating ones and therefore never put into a narrative. Some might, at first sight clash with our understanding of the world and ourselves, in which case they are constructed to 'fit' in with the dominating stories, Lundby refers to these as 'exceptional stories' (Lundby, 2005:70-71). That we do not articulate every experience does not however mean that they do not influence us, according to Lundby: "*narratives builds on lifelong learning and experience, where most is forgotten or not articulated, but still with an influence on the experiences and therefore also the stories*" (Lundby, 2005:40). It is important to remember, that the dominating stories are in themselves neither a static size, nor resistant to change. They themselves are in a constant construction and reconstruction as new experiences are had, and in that sense they stand in a dialectic relation to the new narratives.

But then, how free are we to move around in a world of stories? We can actively choose to tell a narrative in a way that seems productive to us, this will, however, often be defined by our dominating stories and the discourses we are in. But even though we are imbedded in discourses, we are always imbedded into several from which we can draw upon. There is a disagreement within the different theorist and branches of the theory, concerning the extent of 'freedom of movement' within the discourses. Within discourse psychology in which narrative theory is founded, it is emphasises: "*that people use discourses as a resource [...] In speech, the users of a language draw on different discourses which they bring in from mass media and interpersonal communication. The result can be a new hybrid-discourse. In a production of new discourses like that, people become active participants in discursive and cultural changes*" (Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999:27). This does not imply that a new discourse automatically leads to a deletion of an 'old' discourse, rather that it will challenge it.

Conflict and Reconciliation

Until now, we have mainly focused on some of the theoretical assumptions within the theory of narratives, and how the individual can be placed within this. The intention of this section is to put

narrative theory in a context of conflict; how does narrative theory explain the rise of a conflict, what are the mechanisms that keeps a conflict going, and how does one resolve it? While trying to answer these questions we will keep in mind that when working with conflict resolution through narratives, it is not the cause of the conflict or the conflict in itself that is of interest, but the effects of it. This can be explained by the theoretical standpoint, that we can never reach the 'core' of a conflict objectively, so it is how it affects the people involved that are of main concern. It also have to be noted that attaching conflict to narratives, and pointing to meanings as social constructions, is not in any way, an intention of downplaying the role of violence in conflict which is indeed very real to people involved. But rather a way of understanding these actions as a consequence of conflict as seen in a narrative framework (Moghaddam et al., 2008:3).

At the same time, it is important to note, that by conflict we refer mainly to larger scale disputes between groups of people, which has been the case in the settings of which CCPA operates in. To understand conflict in this context, we now turn our focus towards the relationship between different cultural groupings.

Culture, discourses and groupings

Until now, we have explained that what frames the narratives is our social context and discourses. But when working with narrative theory, these will often be referred to as culture, as Winslade and Monk describe it: "*individuals are not unitary creations who speak only for themselves. Rather, they are bearers of and reproducers of the cultural patterns that are given to them from their cultural world*" (Winslade and Monk, 2008:103). It is not entirely clear as to the relationship between cultural patterns and social history referred to earlier. However, as Drewery and Winslade define culture as a set of dominating discourses that people in the specific culture share (Drewery and Winslade, 2006:70) while at the same time underlining, that people belong to not only one culture. We must therefore assume, that the social history is a combination of the cultural belongings and therefore unique to the individual. This also points to another main concept within narrative theory in which culture cannot be separated from its context or the people in it, and then be studied and understood. Rather than being a static size, culture is perceived as a much more complex concept; it does not unify the people within it, so that we can say, that this is how Danes are to be understood, because we are never just Danes. To exemplify the complexity and relation of culture, social or cultural groups and the individual we can draw on a story of Amin Maalouf

(2000), in which a man: “*proudly stands up as a Yugoslavian in 1980*”. Due to the Bosnia war some years after, he denies his identity as Yugoslavian and instead defines himself as Muslim. Today he is still Muslim, but also Bosnian which might be his primary identifier (Maalouf in Drewery and Winslade, 2008:105). This shows how nothing is static but only fixed momentarily. The dominating stories that this man identifies with, and therefore also the cultural groups he enhances a belonging to, changes as the context in which he is placed changes. He might have been a part of a Muslim culture all of his life, but the significance of this grouping has varied. This example does however, not provide a sufficient understanding as to why some stories become more dominating than others and with them, the sense of social belonging.

We hope to have shown, that which story dominates is very much dependent on the social context in which we are situated. In this way, when we go to a lecture, we are primarily students, but when with our family we are primarily daughters, mothers, girlfriends etc. As described earlier, the stories of who we are build on the cultural worlds in which we are placed. Our identities are therefore tied up and dependent on different cultural narratives or the cultural groups we can be said to belong to (Louis, 2008). These variable identities and cultural narratives can exist side by side without ever causing problems. However, when a situation calls upon more than one identity or cultural belonging a struggle can arise between these (Jørgensen and Philips, 1999). A good example could be an election. The different parties all fight over the votes and in this struggle they draw on different discourses and narratives which they hope the voters will identify with. The voter is therefore faced with having to make a choice of what is more important to them, being a student and therefore voting for the party that looks out for the wellbeing of students, or voting as a mother and voting for the party that wants to give more money to schools. This struggle might not cause open conflict, and the struggle might end the minute Election Day has passed. The reasons as to why a struggle over identities and discourses begins and ends in a conflict are many and might be the result of years and centuries of build up: “*reproduced generation to generation, such as conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland*” (Moghaddam et. al., 2008:3-4). However, as narrative theory identifies the conflict as lying within the stories we tell, we will return to mechanisms of group narratives (Winslade and Monk, 2008).

If we return to the notion of the background story as what creates a consistency in our experiences and helps us navigate in all of the options given to us, it follows from this, that to keep this consistency we have to leave parts out and forget certain aspects of the stories: “*To a certain extent*

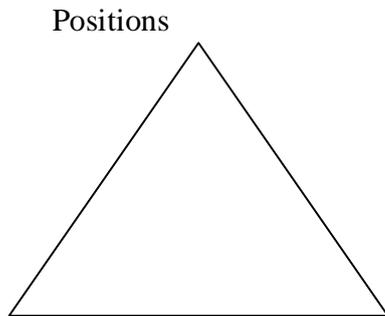
we become prisoners of our own perspective or personal story in such a way, that we at the same time have problems with seeing other perspectives or other sides of the story” (Lundby, 2005:39).

The same can be said of group narratives. Groups are constructed through the narratives we tell of it and when a: *“group member tells a story, he or she confirms the right to be a member of the group”* (Lundby, 2005:74). Whether we choose to be a member of a group or positioned in it by others, a group formation can be seen as a reduction of options: *“people are constituted as a group when some possibilities of identity are highlighted as relevant and others are ignored”* (Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999:56). In a conflict where the belonging to a certain group becomes the dominating narrative to which we adhere, we can be said to close off from alternative identities and stories. It thus becomes difficult to see the alternative identities or stories which we might have in common with the ‘other party’, or the differences within the group (Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999:57).

Another mechanism in group formation is that what the group identifies with and the stories they tell, always stands in opposition to something else (Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999). Being something or belonging somewhere, means that there is something you are not, and somewhere you do not belong. So if the group narrative is build around an ethnical discourse, the group will stand in opposition to other ethnicities. Winslade and Monk problematise this fixed categorization of groups as it can *“invite people into polarising positions and into judging others’ worthiness to belong to a category of persons or into determining whether others’ claimed level of oppression is legitimate or not”* (2008:109). Another problem with fixed categorizations of groups is that in ensuring that one group narrative dominates over others, a group narrative might be constructed around stories of supremacy or natural given rights over others. It might also draw on a narrative found in most cultures, namely the ‘good guy’ against the ‘bad guy’ dichotomy (Moghaddam et al., 2008:3). In this way little option is given to ‘the others’ as it follows from that that they must be subordinated, less privileged to rights or the ‘bad guys’. Within narrative theory this is referred to as positions within discourses. When people are positioned within in a certain discourse, certain expectations follow, as to how the person can and should act. Within positioning theory this is referred to as ‘rights and duties – to act and speak’: *“Positions have this in common with roles that they pre-exist the people who occupy them, as part of the common knowledge of what is right and proper in a community, family, sports teams and so on. However, positions are not supported by regulations, edicts and laws.”* (Moghaddam et al., 2008:11). As mentioned in the quote, positioning share

common features with roles⁸, but is not supported by conventional rules; attached to positions is rather a social idea of what is acceptable and expected.

To exemplify the relation between positions, narratives and action, we will borrow the ‘positioning triangle’ from positioning theory:



Actions/acts

Story lines

The triangle is a way of showing the effects of social interaction. The story line, which can be understood as narratives, gives certain options for positioning, and in return, how one is positioned or positions oneself gives certain options as to how one can act. In this way they all affect each other mutually. The triangle can help us to understand the narratives, the positions taken or the actions of a group and the relation between these. An example of this relation is given by D. Rothbart and T. Bartlett in the book ‘*Global conflict, resolution through positioning theory*’ (2008), in which they examine the Rwandan genocide of 1994, through positioning theory. The examination, in brief, shows a Hutu narrative of suppression by the Tutsis, eventually culminating, fuelled by Hutu extremist, in a positioning of the Tutsis as: “*‘power-hungry’ and ‘terrible warriors,’ an ‘intelligent,’ ‘tricky,’ ‘double-dealing,’ and ‘dishonest’ people whose presence in Rwanda served as a direct threat to the Hutus as genuine Rwandans*”(2008:228). These positions in return, served as a legitimization for the Hutus to eliminate the Tutsis from Rwanda in order to assure Hutu survival. In this way an action performed by a group can be explained by the narratives drawn on and the positions taken within a conflict.

How people are positioned by others, and how they position themselves is a constant negotiation. Therefore the three points of the triangle might shift several times in the course of one conversation.

⁸Positioning theory has a lot in common with role theory, and as seen draws on it, however, we will not venture into great details of the differences of role and position.

It is also important to keep in mind that the meanings assigned to an act and to what is going on in an interaction might vary greatly between the parties involved in an episode. And as Moghaddam et. al., point out, this is often the prime source of conflict, but often also the key to resolution (2008:10).

Conflict mediation

After having presented some of the mechanisms in which we construct a selfhood, cultural narratives and categories, and the potential conflicts that might arise out of these, we turn our attention towards mediation in a conflict situation. Seeing as our main focus is narrative evaluation methods, this chapter will be concerned with only a fraction of the extensive work done within the field of narrative mediation and therapy. However, we do believe it is important to understand some of the mediation work done by the CCPA within a narrative perspective in order to set a frame for the evaluation method. As narrative mediation and therapy mainly deal with conflicts through conversations with the people involved, we have taken the liberty, in certain areas, to interpret our theorists to suit our purpose. This is done firstly because CCPA does not work within a conflict situation but in a post-conflict context, and in this sense their work focuses on reconciliation rather than mediation. Secondly, CCPA does not work through sessions of conversation, as most narrative mediation and therapy do, rather, they hope for reconciliation through experiences.

In order for narrative mediation to have an effect, it is implied, that people are willing to resolve the conflict. However, as people willingly attend the OFFS, we base this section and the next on the assumption, that the participants of the OFFS are open to change.

What separates narrative mediation from several other mediation theories, is not only the emphasis on the stories told but also the focus that is laid on the mediators themselves. Within much traditional mediation work, it is assumed, that the mediator stands outside the conflict, and with a neutral and knowing eye, looks in on the conflicting parties (Winslade and Monk, 2008). In narrative mediation the position taken by the mediator, and which cultural discourses he or she draws upon when mediating, is seen as having great influence on the work being done and the stories he or she is told by the conflicting parties. Within a constructionist stance, a mediator is never neutral and it is therefore important for the mediators to: “*remain curious and open-minded within their own discursive and moral location (which is always a cultural location)*” (Winslade and Monk, 2008:114). In the same way as the mediators have to be aware of their own point of departure, they also have to be open to new information given by the conflicting parties that might

challenge the assumptions held by the mediator about the parties. Having a open mind does not mean that the mediator can come to understand the experiences of the parties, but rather, that he or she can become familiar with some of the discourses drawn upon, when the parties position themselves in their stories.

As already mentioned, CCPA does not perform mediation or reconciliation in a traditional sense, where they sit down with the conflicting parties to ‘work things out’. This, however, does not mean, that the assumptions held, made by the organisation about their own position and their target group, do not influence their work. As pointed out in Point of departure within theory of science, CCPA seems to have some general assumptions underlining their work. These assumptions are for example that ‘football is a fun and neutral sport for everyone’. However, they also point out that people might participate in the OFFS for other reasons. Their reasons for joining are of no great importance, however. What is important is what they take home with them (CCPA’s conflict management approach 15.5.2011). That the OFFS supposedly builds on a bottom-up, participatory approach, is also a way of, not presuming to understand exactly what the target group ‘wants’ and ‘needs’, but rather leaving them to discuss and define the content.

As presented earlier stories do not represent mere reflections of an external reality, rather they are the reality; it is in the stories that reality is constructed and reconstructed. This means, that to mediate between conflicting parties, one has to turn to the stories as the cause of the problems:

“we prefer to start from a different psychology, one that builds on an outside-in approach [as opposed to an essentialist approach]. From this perspective, we can see people’s interests, their emotions, their behaviours, and their interpretations as produced within a cultural or discursive world of relations and then internalised. Thinking this way leads to a study of how power operates through discourse to produce expectations of people’s places in the world. It also leads to an understanding of narratives as setting up positions in a conflict, as constructing relations, as producing the feelings and emotions in these relations” (Winslade and Monk, 2008:6-7).

As Winslade and Monk point out, this does not mean, that what people feel is not real or not painful, but it opens up to the possibility, that by changing a story, or the persons position in the story, *“the emotions will follow”*(2008:7).

But how does this come about? How does one change a story or a position? When narrative theory refers to the changing of narratives and positions within these, it is not the same as when a novel is

being written. One cannot suddenly decide to be a superhero in a story of saving the world, however tempting. As mentioned earlier, our stories build on events and experiences and these are bound by the cultural discourses we belong to, as well as to the self-narrative and cultural-narratives that all provide us with a sense of coherence. So when narrative theory talks of changing narratives in a context of conflict, it arrives from the assumption that:

“Most relationships are made up of hundreds and thousands of events, inevitably the parties will be able to marshal many events together to support a story of the relationship that present the conflict in bright lights. Equally inevitably, however, other events will be left in the shadows simply because they do not fit with the brightly lit story of the conflict” (Winslade and Monk, 2008:26)

This points to the idea, that our stories can make us blind to alternatives and it is thus the job of the mediator, to look for the events left out in the cold, and try to introduce them back in. This can be done in a number of ways. Some of which we will present some as focus points of narrative mediation at the end of this chapter. But seeing as CCPA does not mediate through conversations, we will, for now, turn our attention towards the work done by CCPA, to see in which way it can be said to contribute to new and reconciling narratives.

As CCPA does not take their departure in the conflict stories, they can be said to jump a step ahead in the mediation process, as they attempt to take focus away from the conflict and away from the cultural categories that put the parties in opposition to each other. Instead they place them in a context where new roles and positions are offered such as: caring parent, a community worker, a football enthusiast etc. The hope is that these roles will position the parties in relation to each other rather than in opposition, and thereby construct new and reconciling narratives of common interest. This goes well in hand with narrative mediation where it is important not to close options by thinking of fixed cultural groupings, but rather to cease possibilities/openings in regards to talking into new narratives in which the parties might take up new positions.

It is important to point out, that a new narrative, or as Winslade and Monk call it ‘a counter story’ does not necessarily eliminate the story of conflict, but like a counter story will always exist parallel to the conflict story, the same can be said the other way around. The goal of narrative mediation is therefore not to erase the story of conflict but rather to get the counter story to dominate.

To achieve the domination of the new narrative the time element is of essential importance. A story is not considered a: *“one-time event but something that moves through time”* (Winslade and Monk,

2008:32). In order to establish a new relation between the parties in which they are not positioned as opposites, there has to be several occasions that tell of a relationship between them which can then be linked together in the new narrative. As we explained earlier, narratives is what gives us a sense of coherence in life, but in order to do that, they must refer not only to the present, but also to the past and the future. This means that for the new narrative to compete with the one of conflict, the new relationship of the parties has be found in the past and not just the present, as well it has to be related to the future. A simplified example of this could be that they have established a new relation through the game of football. This relation might well be found in the past, as they support the same team, have been to the same football matches or had the same dreams of becoming a great football player. If the new relationship can be said to have a future, it might be found in dreams of continuing the OFFS in new forms in their community and so forth.

Focus points of narrative mediation

We have now presented some of the basic ideas behind narrative theory and also how to see conflict and reconciliation in the narrative perspective. The intention of this section is to sum up some of the focus points in narrative mediation. This is done in order to recognize the important aspects of narratives, when trying to identify a change from conflict narratives to narratives of reconciliation through an evaluation⁹. The focus points will therefore guide us in the construction of possible questions for collecting narratives and analysing them.

Background cultural narratives and discourses

When a narrative mediator conducts mediation, one of the things he or she will pay attention to is the cultural narratives and discourses that might not be explicit but none the less lend meaning to the story of conflict. This is done in order to understand which narratives and discourses dominate, how the parties position themselves accordingly and what options of action this gives.

It is also done in order to make these dominating narratives and discourses visible to the parties, where they might otherwise work as common sense assumptions or ‘taken for granted’ assumptions and therefore control and lock the situation, making no room for new narratives.

⁹ The focus points are derived from narrative mediation and therefore build on a conflict situation and conversational mediation.

Externalisation

In order to change a narrative or make room for a new one, the problem or conflict has to be externalised in order for the parties to be able to reflect on it. In a conflict situation, the problem is often attached to the parties involved such as ‘they are the problem’ or ‘they are bad people’, it might also refer to oneself as ‘am I just too stubborn?’ (Winslade and Monk, 2008:13). The job of the mediator is thus to get the parties to see the problem or conflict as a third party, and therefore something they can be together in being against.

Mapping the effects of a conflict

Retelling the story of conflict is generally avoided in narrative mediation because this might arouse the emotions concerning it, leading the conflict to grow in proportion in people’s minds (Winslade and Monk, 2008:14-15). Instead, and as a link to externalising the problem, they get the parties to talk of the effects that they can see the conflict is having. According to Winslade and Monk, people will often begin with the emotional effects it has on themselves. It is, however, important to also focus on the wider context, meaning the effects the conflict might have on others, even those who are not even necessarily involved in the conflict

Double listening

Within narrative mediation people are considered to be situated within multiple story lines. This multiplicity of narratives is according to Winslade and Monk to be seen as a resource: “*rather than a complication to be integrated away*” (2008:8). It is assumed in narrative mediation that within a story of conflict there are also contradictory stories running parallel to this, in this sense a story of anger also implies a story of remorse, a story of despair also implies a story of hope. When double listening: “*to an expression of anger at being wronged, they [the mediator] can also hear in the background a statement of what the speaker values, believes in, hopes for, cherishes, or desires to protect*” (Winslade and Monk, 2008:10). It is thus the job of the mediator to hear these implicit stories and bring them forward, and by turning the focus away from the conflict and on to the hopes of reconciliation, trying to build these stories up to become the dominating ones.

Chapter 4 – Evaluation

The four dimensions of evaluation theory

We will now turn to the subject of evaluations. First, we will introduce Dahler-Larsen's four dimensions of evaluation theory. The purpose of this is to give us some theoretical tools that will help us understand the concept of evaluations. Second, we will turn to evaluations that deal with impact and effect. In continuation of that we will also present how CCPA's donor Sida argues that evaluations that deal with impact and effect should be conducted.

The demand for evaluations – and knowing what ‘works’ and what does not has grown in recent decades. In fact in a Danish context one might even speak of an evaluation *wave* flooding us with demands for evaluations (Dahler-Larsen and Krogstrup, 2001:13).

At the same time, as the demand seems to be growing, the debate concerning what constitutes good evaluation methods and which purposes evaluations should meet is becoming increasingly complex. The classical, positivist ideals that defined the early evaluations of the 1960's have increasingly been questioned and supplemented by ideals grounded in hermeneutic, phenomenological and constructivist ideals. This has happened much in line with the general debate that has taken place within many other social science disciplines within recent decades. This has opened the evaluation field to a multitude of new methods, stakeholders and objects to evaluate on. (Dahler-Larsen and Krogstrup, 2001:13, Dahler-Larsen, 2010:168). In spite of the complexity there are, however, still some common issues at play in most understandings of evaluations. According to Dahler-Larsen one can distinguish four dimensions that are inherent in most definitions of evaluations (Dahler-Larsen, 2010: 167).

Dahler-Larsen names these dimensions: 1) the knowledge dimension, 2) the values dimension 3) the practical/”use of” dimension and 4) the “object” dimension.

In the following we will describe these four dimensions one by one. Further on in the report, these dimensions will guide us when we discuss what sort of issues CCPA should be aware of when conducting an evaluation using narrative methods. In order to exemplify the four dimensions Dahler-Larsen quotes evaluation theorist Evert Vedung (1998), who defines evaluation, as a: *“systematic judgement of outcomes, performance and organisation in connection with public*

activity, and a judgement that has the intention of playing a role in giving practical directions for action” (Vedung quoted in Dahler-Larsen, 2010: 167).

The first dimension – **the knowledge-dimension** - can be deduced from the word *'systematic'*. In order to collect knowledge in a systematic way, Dahler-Larsen argues, one needs a *method* and in order to have a method one needs to have a standpoint in regards to *how* data is collected and what constitutes valid knowledge. If for instance a researcher subscribes to a positivist ideal, he or she would probably use other methods for collecting and analysing data than a researcher subscribing to a constructionist ideal. The knowledge dimension is thus the part of evaluations that is most closely related to science and controversy remains as to which scientific demands evaluations should be subjected to (Dahler-Larsen and Krogstrup, 2001: 15).

The second dimension – **the values dimension** – can be deduced from the word *'judgement'*. Inherent in the word e-valu-ate lies the fact that evaluations are used to judge whether something – most likely a programme or some other form of intervention – is having the intended results. The question is of course – *whose* values that should be used for setting the standards and deciding which results that are desirable. Traditionally, evaluation criteria have been set by external evaluators or by the politicians in charge. Today, a much wider range of stakeholders can be involved in defining the values that an evaluation should be based upon. Examples could be beneficiaries of a programme over employees to executives¹⁰ (Dahler-Larsen and Krogstrup, 2001: 15). However, the question of values can also refer to the way the evaluation is conducted. An example is that an evaluation method can rest on democratic values – emphasising equal participation of all stakeholders regardless of their position (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:168).

The third dimension – **the practical/use of dimension** – is exemplified by Vedung's reference to *'practical directions for action'*. This underlines the fact that most – if not all - evaluations have a practical dimension. Meaning that the knowledge they create and the judgements they pass are intended to be used for some practical purpose. However, notions of what sort of purposes evaluations can and should meet have expanded in recent decades. Today, not only the evaluation results, but also the evaluation process can be used for giving practical directions for action (Dahler-Larsen and Krogstrup, 2001:15). Other sources speak of evaluations having for instance either

¹⁰ See for instance participative or responsive evaluations

‘formative’ - or ‘summative’ purposes. Meaning that they can be used to either pass judgement or facilitate learning amongst stakeholders and improvement of a programme (Mohr, 1995: 32).

The fourth dimension – **the object dimension** – deals with the fact that evaluations by definition must have an object to evaluate on. In evaluation lingo this is known as the *evaluand*. (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:167). The evaluand can be a multitude of things, ranging from processes, structures and results, to persons, organisations and systems. Furthermore, what from the outside appears to be the same intervention can be viewed in a lot of different ways depending on how one defines the evaluand to be evaluated on (Dahler-Larsen and Krogstrup, 2001:16).

Evaluating on impact and effect

A central concern in many evaluations is whether the intervention evaluated on has had any effect. The questions of effects and impacts of the OFFS was also what made CCPA put up the student project proposal that this report takes its point of departure in. CCPA wanted to find out, whether their football schools lead to the results that they were hoping for.

In this section we will first explain a key concept in regards to impact and effect evaluations¹¹. Secondly, we will present CCPA's donor the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida's, approach to impact evaluations¹².

The question of ‘cause and effect’ or causality is central in most evaluations¹³ that seek to answer what effect or impact a programme has had. Hence, if one wants to show that an intervention has had an effect, the idea is that one must establish the causal relation between the intervention and the effect. In the sense that one must show that it was A) the intervention that led to B) the effect (Rossi et al, 2004:234). Since there are quite a few debates in regards to how one can establish causality, we have chosen to take our point of departure in Dahler-Larsen's notions about the subject.

According to Dahler-Larsen one might approach the question of the cause-and-effect from both a

¹¹ Note that some of these concepts might not all ‘make sense’ coming from constructionist perspective. We will elaborate much more in regards to this dilemma in Chapter 5.

¹² Our reason for doing this is that there seems to be no overall definition of impact evaluations that everyone can agree on and thus it seems relevant to us to refer to a definition that might be of practical relevance to CCPA.

¹³ Note that there are definitional debates as to what the term impact evaluation refers to and what methods are suitable for conducting them. Thus there seems to be no common understanding of the term that is accepted by all. See for instance White (2009). In light of this we have chosen not to go too much in to this debate and use the words effect and impact rather interchangeably.

qualitative and a quantitative angle. He argues, however, that the two approaches are fundamentally different. He differentiates between an ‘impact-approach’, which will most often be used by quantitative researchers and an ‘effect¹⁴ or process-approach’ that will more likely be used by qualitative researchers. One key difference between the qualitative and the quantitative approach is the way that the two approaches deal with the issue of ‘context’. From a quantitative perspective the purpose of the evaluation is to draw a conclusion that is as ‘context-free’ as possible (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:172-173). Something which most qualitative researchers – and certainly those who come from a social constructionist and narrative perspective - would argue is impossible (Abma, 1999:21).

We will now present the two different approaches for dealing with questions of causality one by one. The purpose of this is to highlight, what kind of questions a narrative methods might be met with in practice.

Quantitative ideas about causality

In the quantitative approach to causality the aim is to: *“have as much control as possible with variances in the cause, in order to thereafter as context-free and systematically as possible to compare these with variances in the result. The tighter this is done, the more valid the conclusion is considered to be”* (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:173). One of the core elements in this approach is thus to compare: *“what did appear after implementing the program with what would have appeared if the program had not been implemented”* (Mohr, 1995:4).

In order to do this a so-called counterfactual is constructed representing the hypothetical state of affairs of the ‘what would have appeared’ with the actual state of affairs of the ‘what did appear’. The counterfactual is in most cases constructed by creating a control group – either ‘real’ or statistical – that has not received the intervention. This group is then compared with the group that has received the intervention (Mohr, 1995:4)¹⁵.

The question is of course what sort of challenges the above poses to narrative methods and how narrative methods would deal with issues such as the counterfactual and the idea of separating an intervention from its context? We will look into these questions in Chapter 5.

¹⁴ The word effect is here translated from the Danish word 'virkning' - referring to the so-called 'virkningsevaluering' (Dahler-Larsen, 2010: 173) in English this is known as theory-based or theory-driven evaluation (Dahler-Larsen (2001) and Dahler-Larsen (2007)). This translation can be a little confusing as the English word impact most often will be translated in to 'effekt' in Danish and impact-evaluations are thus called 'effektmåling'.

¹⁵ Note that we will not go further in to explaining quantitative methods for impact evaluation, as we are not using a quantitative method in this report. The purpose here is only to list some of the key elements in order to present which critical questions a narrative method might be met with.

Qualitative approaches to causality

Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach argues that the effect of an intervention cannot be separated from its context. On the other hand, Dahler-Larsen argues, the process that causes the effect will always leave some kind of visible trace that will refer back to the process. By tracing this process, Dahler-Larsen argues, that qualitative researchers are able to give relatively reliable knowledge when it comes to estimating the causal relationship between an intervention and an effect (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:173). He likens the method to that of a criminal trial, where witnesses are interviewed, trails are checked and motives are assessed, until the court is able to say that the accused is guilty 'beyond reasonable doubt'. The court is thus able to conclude on the causal relation between the criminal and the criminal act without knowing what the situation would look like had the intervention – in this case the crime – not taken place. And thus in the same way the process-oriented approach is able to present 'evidence' of the relationship between an intervention and an effect without having a counterfactual (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:173).

Although, qualitative methods are thus able to deal with questions of cause-and-effect, their approach to the matter is different from that of quantitative methods. Evaluators using qualitative methods will most likely deal more with questions that are related to context – such as the way in which various population groups respond differently to an intervention (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:173). One of the most well-known qualitative methods for dealing with effects is the so-called theory-based evaluation method. In this method a programme theory is developed that describes the intended effects of the programme – the job of the evaluator is then to 'trace' in every possible way whether the programme theory can be confirmed (Dahler-Larsen, 2010:173-174).

In the same way as with quantitative methods one might pose the question of what a narrative approach to evaluation would say about the above. As with the quantitative approach, we will look further in to this question in Chapter 5.

Sida's approach to impact evaluations

In the following we will present some of the challenges that we foresee that a narrative evaluation focusing on effects and impacts might be met with.

The section will take its point of departure in the evaluation guidelines from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida (Sida, 2007)¹⁶. The reasons for including Sida are as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Challenge 1: The notion of objectiveness

When describing what constitutes good evaluation standards, Sida emphasises words such as ‘objectiveness’, ‘reality-check’, ‘factual accuracy’ and ‘reality’ (Sida, 2007:11, 12, 14, 20 and 24).

Sida for instance argues that their notion: *“that evaluations should be systematic and objective derives directly from the function of evaluation as a reality test”* (Sida, 2007:11).

We would argue that taken at face value the above quote indicates a positivist way of thinking, where the researcher can be considered to be ‘objective’ and one can identify an external reality. However, we would argue that Sida’s notions about objectivity can also be interpreted in other ways. We will elaborate more on this subject in Chapter 5.

Challenge 2: How to evaluate on impacts and effects

When dealing with questions of the effects and impacts of programmes, Sida differentiates between evaluating on ‘effectiveness’ and ‘impacts’. Effectiveness is defined as:

“The extent to which a development intervention has achieved its objectives, taking their relative importance into account”, whereas impact is understood as: *“The totality of the effects of a development intervention, positive and negative, intended and unintended”* (Sida, 2007:27).

According to Sida an evaluation of effectiveness will thus primarily deal with whether a programme has reached its goals. Whereas an evaluation of impact will have a broader scope as it will also aim to establish un-intended effects, and thus it will in most cases be more difficult to carry out than an evaluation that deals with effectiveness alone (Sida, 2007:30). In both cases, however, Sida stresses that the evaluation should aim to establish the link between the intervention and its effects:

¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that since Sida has not made any specific demands as to how an evaluation of the effects and impacts of the OFFS-programme might be carried out, we are not able to say what sort of concrete expectations Sida might have when it comes to documenting the effect of the OFFS-programme. Furthermore, it is also important to note that Sida is not explicit about their manual’s point of departure within theory of science; hence sometimes statements are made that seem to be founded in contradictory paradigms. Note that it would also be out of the scope of this report to present all the guidelines that Sida has for evaluations. Instead, we will focus on a few select statements, that we would argue pose challenges to narrative evaluation methods.

“For a government or development agency that wishes to invest its resources where they make a difference, knowing that things have changed as expected is not good enough. They also want to know that the evaluated intervention has significantly contributed to the recorded change” (Sida, 2007:31).

When it comes to evaluations of impact, Sida argues that the counterfactual is the best method for dealing with causality, as the task is to find out: *“whether the changes that have occurred since the beginning of the intervention were caused by the intervention, or if they would have occurred anyway”* (Sida, 2007:32). Furthermore, Sida argues that baseline information – in the sense of data that can say something about the state of affairs before the intervention was implemented, and then later on be compared with the current state of affairs - is also necessary in order to make claims about impact (Sida, 2007:32). However, Sida also shows pragmatism in its approach to impact evaluation and states that when the counterfactual cannot be identified with the help of control groups:

”The intervention is often taken to be the cause of the identified changes if such a conclusion appears to be consistent with expert knowledge and there seems to be no better explanation around. Although less compelling than an explanation based on control group methodology in most cases, an argument of this type can be good enough for the purpose of the evaluation (Sida, 2007:34).

We have now identified some of the challenges that a narrative evaluation method might be met with from Sida. We will return to these challenges in Chapter 5, where they will be discussed in the light of a social constructionist and narrative approach.

A guideline to narrative evaluation

After having presented narrative theory and evaluation theory, we will now put these theories in to use by presenting a set of overall guidelines¹⁷ to how CCPA might conduct a narrative evaluation of the OFFS. The idea is not to present the answers, but rather to point to some of the main issues and

¹⁷ By using the term ‘overall guidelines’ we refer to the fact that it would be out of the scope of this report to present a ready-to-use narrative evaluation method that CCPA could take in to use immediately.

considerations when conducting a narrative evaluation. In some cases, however, we will put forward some assumptions as to which choices might be the most relevant for CCPA; this is done in order to be able to present some points of consideration in more detail.

The section will be structured as follows: First, we will present some areas of consideration in regards to the **initial preparations**. In this section we will use the four dimensions of evaluation to guide us in the questions we ask. Second, we will discuss when and how to **collect the narratives**. Third, we will discuss how one can use the focus points of narrative mediation to **analyse the narratives**.

Initial preparations

As mentioned earlier, it is a cornerstone in narrative mediation to keep a constant awareness of one's own position and common sense understandings when mediating, and the same goes for evaluation. Within the theory of social constructionism, there is no point in talking about an 'objective' evaluation, as we can never place ourselves outside of discourse and in that way be said to be neutral or objective (Winslade and Monk, 2008). Instead the evaluator, the organisation, the donors and the target group can all be said to be a part in the construction of an evaluation. This means, that in order to understand the results of a given evaluation and the process of getting there, we find it important, not only to discuss the goal of the evaluation before embarking on it, but also to try as much as possible to lay bare the assumptions that guide the way.

We are not suggesting that CCPA undergoes a full deconstruction in order to evaluate their programme, but that they – in the loose sense of the word: “*explore the assumptions 'taken for granted' in the discourses that underpin a dialogue, a behaviour or an emotional expression*” (Derrida in Winslade and Monk, 2008:115).

As this can be a large task, and because it is not always easy to spot one's own 'taken for granted' assumptions, we find that going through the four dimensions of evaluation given by Dahler-Larsen, could be a useful point of departure before embarking on the evaluation itself. In the following section we will look closer into the dimensions and relate these to the narrative perspective and CCPA.

The knowledge dimension

In this case we have already made the choice on behalf of CCPA, as we have chosen a specific point of departure within theory of science – social constructionism - as well as a specific theory - namely the narrative theory and approach for evaluation.

So what does this mean in practice? It means for instance that one needs a method that is suitable for collecting narratives. Furthermore, it means that the evaluation will never make the claim that it can produce objective facts or truth, as this is considered impossible within social constructionism (Burr, 2003:158). It also follows, that by taking leave in narrative theory, the evaluation subscribes to the idea that change happens, not within the individual, but in social interaction, and that the changes and reconciliation can be 'measured' in the stories that people tell.

The values dimension

The values dimension refers to questions about which values and whose values that underline the evaluation. These values are important to be aware of, because they define what sorts of effects are considered either 'good' or 'bad'.

In CCPA's case it might be related to assumptions about which effects of the conflict that still linger. For instance: 'the conflict has resulted in people still living in divided communities, and this needs to change'. Assumptions like these will affect what an evaluation focuses on. However, if the assumptions of the CCPA are not shared by the participants it can easily result in a negative outcome in the sense that the conclusion might be that the programme has not had the intended effect. It can also be, that the concerns CCPA has about a community are not perceived as negative by the participants¹⁸, so even if the programme is successful in achieving its goals, this is of no great importance to the participants.

In continuation hereof it is therefore also relevant to ask *whose* values are to be used when determining the goals of the evaluation? Are the goals to be defined by CCPA – or would the organisation like to share the definition power with the participants of the programme? In connection with this we note that CCPA often times refers to the fact that (they believe that) the OFFS - programme is build on a participatory approach¹⁹.

Adhering to this 'value' it might be that the organisation would want to include the viewpoints of the programme's beneficiaries when defining the goals of the evaluation. In this regard a narrative method can be useful, because it can be used as a way of giving voice to those the programme is intended to benefit. One of the strengths of narrative evaluation, if the evaluator is successful in keeping an open mind, is also to captivate the effects of a programme that was not directly or explicitly intended. The latter is something which is also considered an important point in most

¹⁸ We of course recognise that there might also be disagreement within a group concerning these assumptions.

¹⁹ For more information see the presentation of CCPA earlier in the report.

definitions of impact evaluations²⁰.

The practical/‘use of’ dimension

Here the purpose is to define what sort of purpose the evaluation should meet. As elaborated on in the above the choices made in the ‘values’ dimension might affect how one defines the purpose of the evaluation and more specifically which stakeholders might be involved, when defining what the evaluation might be used for. However, as to not to confuse matters too much, we will in the following assume that the goal of the evaluation stay the same and that it is; whether the OFFS has contributed to new and reconciling narratives amongst the participants? In this way the evaluation has already been defined as having a summative purpose (Mohr, 1995:32). However, when using a narrative, qualitative approach, one might say that the evaluation will also have a formative purpose, meaning that it can be used for learning or improving a programme. In the process of collecting and analysing the stories CCPA will not only discover which impacts and effects their programme had. One could argue that they will also learn more about – for instance – the ways the participants position themselves and others and then use this knowledge to improve the OFFS-programme. This means that when CCPA analyses the stories, they will not only know whether their programme had the intended effect and what parts of the programme the participants find significant, but also in which ways. They might become familiar with the relation between how people position themselves in the context of the OFFS, the discourses they draw upon and how they act according to these. This information can in return be used, amongst other things, to adjust some of the assumptions made by CCPA and therefore affect future programmes. Within the practical/‘use of’ dimension one can also pose questions such as; in which way should the results of the evaluation be communicated and to whom? Who is it exactly that needs to be presented with the ‘evidence’ of the effects and why? Or who is it who needs to learn and improve his or hers practice?

The ‘object’ dimension

As the purpose of the evaluation is so far defined as finding out which effect the OFFS can have on narratives, the ‘narratives’ are thus the evaluand/object of the evaluation. However, CCPA still needs to define exactly whom they want to collect the narratives from. Is it the parents, the volunteers or some other stakeholder group? When drawing on a constructionist approach as one’s ‘knowledge dimension’, these categories are, as everything else perceived as a construction, a subject position. It would in that sense, also be possible to define the participants differently, and in

²⁰ See for instance White (2009), Sida (2007) and Mohr (1995).

that way say ‘we want to collect narratives from the different ethnical groups, social groups, different sexes, etc.’ However CCPA decides to define the people they want stories from, it is important to be aware of these definitions. To exemplify the consequences’ of defining the subject position: If CCPA chooses to collect stories from the parents, they will most likely position the subjects as such, this might reflect on how they pose their questions, how they expect the ‘parents’ to answer and when analysing, it is done within discourses of how parents should respond to the programme and the questions. The problem with this is that the ‘parents’ might position themselves differently when telling stories – they might draw on different categories. It is therefore important to keep an open mind as to which position the subject takes when telling a story, and that they might shift between several depending on the questions posed. This also implies that the evaluation cannot claim to know the individuals, who they are and what they think (Lundby, 2005:85). Rather it will be able to elaborate on how they position themselves in regards to specific discourses and contexts. In that sense it would also be wrong to assume, that the stories are derived from a specific fixed entity of a culture, that we can study and learn the characteristics of, and in that way be sensible to the meanings in the stories (Winslade and Monk, 2008:99-128). This however, does not mean that the CCPA should not take into consideration, how well acquainted they need to be with some of the cultural patterns that might be drawn upon in the stories. This is closely related to issue of values mentioned earlier, in the sense that, within every discourse there is a certain logic and certain expectations as to how one should act. It might be the case that the evaluator is not able to make sense of a statement given by a participant of the programme, simply because he does not know the logic, or discourse being referred to.

Collecting stories

In the following we will turn our focus towards the collection of stories. The choice of method for collecting the stories will be influenced by factors such as, whether CCPA chooses individual or collective narratives, and how they define the target group of the evaluation. However, in order to narrow the field of this section, we have made the choice of focusing on the narratives of the individuals.

Methods for collecting narratives

According to Abma one can chose between a wide range of qualitative methods within narrative evaluations depending on what sort of narrative one is interested in. When one is interested in collecting narratives, however, methods such as interviews, participative observations and

ethnographic studies will often be the main sources of information (Abma, 1999:22).

In order not to get into too many methodological discussions, we will, however, choose only to present the two methods, that we consider to be the most relevant in the case of CCPA. These two methods are qualitative interviews and written narratives. Qualitative interviews because we would argue that they are less time-consuming and easier to handle for inexperienced qualitative researchers than other qualitative methods such as participative observations and ethnographic studies. The notion that the evaluation should not require too much specialised personnel is one of wishes put forward by the CCPA. For the same reasons, we have included a small section on written narratives, as they would be even less time-consuming and in some ways easier to handle than oral interviews.

How to get people to tell stories

It would be out of the scope of this section to present a full guideline as to how qualitative interviews are conducted. Instead we will present a few points of consideration that we find especially relevant for CCPA and the narrative method.

According to Abma conventional question and answer exchanges do not encourage storytelling. Instead, interviewers looking to uncover narratives reflecting conflict and reconciliation should ask open-ended questions and use an informal conversation style, in which the answers given, guide the next questions. Hence, the interviewer should also be an adept listener (Abma, 1999:22).

Furthermore, it is important that the informant has sufficient time to elaborate on his or her narratives and that interview questions aim to capture 'lived experiences' are concrete and easy to understand (Staunæs and Søndergaard, 2005: 64-65).

The relationship between the interviewer and the informant

According to Kvale there will always be an asymmetrical power-relationship between the interviewer and the person who is being interviewed. The interviewer is the one, who defines the purpose of the interview, who is asking the questions and who most likely controls the situation, and therefore the interviewer will in most cases be the person who has the most power (Kvale, 1997: 131). If the interviewer follows the advice given by Abma and aim at an informal conversation style and take on a naïve curiosity (Winslade and Monk, 2008) it might, however, lessen this divide between the interviewer and the interviewed. In the case of CCPA one could furthermore argue that the evaluator might also be viewed as a representative of CCPA. This could mean that the informant could chose to give the answers that he or she believes that the organisation wants to hear. It might

therefore be worth considering, whether the CCPA should use someone from outside of the organisation to conduct the interviews. However, even when taking this precautionary measure the interviewer might still - to a certain extent - be viewed as a representative of CCPA. In order to counter the effects of this, the interviewer should therefore be constantly aware of the positioning going on between him or her and the participant being interviewed.

Another issue to consider is the fact that coming from a social constructionist perspective – the interviewer will always be viewed as playing an active part in constructing the meaning that is produced in the interview. This means that the questions asked will contribute to the construction of the narrative. It is therefore important not to be guided by one's own assumption but keep an open mind to the direction taken by the interviewed. When dealing with narratives of conflict it is also important not to contribute to the conflict by getting the participants of the OFFS, to talk 'into the conflict'. In Stories of before and after the OFFS we will look closer at ways of avoiding this.

Another issue for CCPA to consider is the fact that in the interview process and the following processing of the material, some meanings will always be lost. This can be due to factors such as language barriers - transcription²¹ and that CCPA works in many different countries. Furthermore, the interviewer, however well-experienced, can never sum up a situation- or a conversation - in its entirety, there will always be meanings lost, body language that is not picked up on, and different understandings of a word or a sentence. The job of the interviewer is therefore to embrace as much as possible, maybe even repeating the answers given to make sure that the meaning is understood correctly (Winslade and Monk, 2008). And might we add: be aware of these limitations when analysing and drawing conclusions.

Written narratives

An alternative to conducting interviews could be to collect the narratives in a written form. Although this method has some methodological constraints when compared with interviews it might still be a suitable method for collecting narratives²². First of all, it might be less demanding when it comes to the resources spent by CCPA. When collecting narratives in a written form, the informant might also feel more anonymous and thereby be more 'free' in his or her presentation.

²¹ Some information and meaning will always be lost when transferring the oral interview in to a written form (Tangaard and Brinkmann, 2010:43).

²² For an example of narratives collectives in a written form, turn to Dart & Davies (2005) and their 'Most Significant Change Technique'.

Furthermore, it is no longer necessary to transcribe the interviews, which means that the issue of meaning getting lost in the transcription process no longer poses a problem (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010:34). Another advantage is that the written form might allow the informant more time to consider the answers - and thereby gives him or her the chance to elaborate over time (Brinkmann and Tanggaard, 2010:36).

However, collecting narratives in a written form also poses some challenges. First of all, it is important to be aware that the person giving the narrative will still be aware of the fact that CCPA is the receiver of the narrative. In this way CCPA still plays a part in the construction of meaning. Both in regards to the phrasing of the questions and in regards to the fact that the informant might still choose to give the narratives that he or she believes CCPA would like to hear. Furthermore, when collecting narratives in a written form, it is hard - if not impossible – to ask further questions and to obtain more details from the informant. In some cases one will thus end up with narratives that are too lacking in detail to be useable or too different in form to be comparable. Accordingly, CCPA would need to consider how to instruct the informants writing the narratives. If given too loose an instruction the narratives might not be usable. However, on the other hand, if the questions are too closed or leading in their form, the narratives given might not be considered valid. Connected questions in this regard are also that not everybody is used to writing and presenting his or hers experiences in a written form.

Stories before and after the OFFS

Having data from before an intervention and after is considered essential by many methods of evaluating impact and effect (Sida, 2007:32). However, within narrative theory collecting before - and after stories with the intention of comparing, poses a critical issue. It can easily be understood as an attempt to isolate the effect of the OFFS, but isolating an effect means taking it out of its context to be able to say something general about the effects of a programme. As everything is considered context-bound and no objective observations can be done within the specific theory of social constructionism (Burr, 2003) – collecting stories before and after and analysing them, has to be done with a certain amount of delicacy. Because CCPA is interested in whether or not the OFFS has contributed to new and reconciling narratives, they need to establish the story of conflict or the effects of a have-been conflict. However, as referred to in the focus points, getting people to retell the story of conflict might contribute to reaffirming it. Since CCPA works in a post-conflict context it might therefore be an idea to reach the story of conflict by focusing on the effects of the conflict.

This, however, leads to the next issue. As mentioned in the values dimension, the effects of a conflict identified by CCPA, might not be shared by the participants of the OFFS. So asking directly to the assumed effects, means that one might miss out on the effects considered to be important by the participants themselves. Instead the questions might take their starting point in a different perspective; namely the hopes and dreams of the participants. Since CCPA hopes that new narratives might open up to communication and new relations in a divided community²³, the organisation might start out by asking question that refer to the participants' communities²⁴. This can be done by asking the participants, 'how they would like their community to be like?', 'what they think a good community consists of?', and so forth. From there they might ask 'whether the participants think that they live in such a community?' If the participants do not think so, CCPA can go on to ask the participants 'what they find to be the obstacles standing in the way of such a community?' As pointed out above, the participants might tell a different story of obstacles than expected, and it is then that it is important to stay open and not try to force the interview in another direction. As the OFFS is a programme of reconciliation, the positioning and in that sense the relational elements of the before –and after narratives are therefore also important for the evaluation. Again it would be wrong, within the narrative approach, to ask directly to the divisions that the CCPA has identified in the community. Rather it is a question of asking 'naïvely' about the relations that they have with people in the community. It could be questions of the participants close relationships such as: 'Who are your friends?', 'why do you call these people friends?' it could also relate to the community such as: 'How do you think people should behave in a community, what is important?' 'Do people in your community behave like that?' Questions such as 'What are your expectations to the OFFS?' and 'What do you think the OFFS can contribute to?' might also be relevant in relation to the formative purpose of the evaluation.

These are all questions related to the interviewing before the intervention, and all points to the use of interviews in the evaluation. If CCPA chooses to collect written narratives instead of interviews, some of the same questions can be used. The same goes for some of the suggested questions of the after-interview. Keeping in mind that it might then miss out on several details (see Written narratives)

A new narrative or a counter story to the one of conflict, or the effects of a have-been conflict, is not

²³ See the presentation of CCPA and the OFFS-programme earlier in the report.

²⁴ Noting that one might have to be more specific as to what 'community' refers to.

to be understood as a new story containing new actors and a new ‘plot’. Rather it is a new positioning and a different emphasis on events – most likely involving the same parties as in the conflict narrative and more than likely drawing on the same discourses but in new ways. It follows from that that if the stories of before and after are to be compared, the questions following the OFFS has to take their departure in some of the same discourses and the same characters that were referred to in the before-interviews. Due to this it is difficult for us to present some concrete questions to ask in the after-interviews. However, we will suggest that the questions posed in the after-interview are related to the OFFS. The main reason for this is that if the evaluation is to draw conclusions on the effects caused by the OFFS, the questions have to have the OFFS as their context. Keeping in mind that the interviewer is aware of the answers given before the intervention and that these will affect the questions of the after-interview. We will, however, try to give some suggestions to what might be asked: ‘Who did you talk to during the OFFS?’ ‘Do you have something in common with the ones you talked to?’ ‘Did you speak to these people before participating in the OFFS?’ and if this is not the case then a question of ‘Why not?’ can follow. It might also be helpful to include some of the events of the OFFS given significance by the participants. Therefore questions such as ‘What was the most significant/important event or experience you have had at the OFFS?’ and ‘Why?’ might also be asked. We will return to these questions in the analysis, as we try to point to some of the important things to notice when analysing the narratives.

Timeframe

We will now turn to the timeframe for the collection of the before and after stories. We would suggest collecting the ‘before’ stories relatively close to OFFS-event, and to collect one set of ‘after’ stories quickly afterwards as well. The reason for this is that even though it cannot be claimed to isolate the effect, it is still a way of narrowing the field. Meaning that a lot can happen in a year, a month or even a week before and after the OFFS-event.

When asking people to put their experiences into a narrative right after the OFFS, it can be argued that this exercise in itself, contributes to a change in perception as it actively asks people to interpret their experiences. It might also be argued, that the effect will be enlarged the minute the experience is put into words. In this way, the act of evaluation itself takes an active part in the construction of

new narratives²⁵. If CCPA collects another set of stories some time after the OFFS, it will – logically – say more about the long term effect. This is due to the fact that the narratives collected at a later stage are not only set in the context of the OFFS, but within the community and the informants' everyday life. It might also show whether the narratives of the OFFS have affected the dominating stories and the everyday actions of the participants. However, these changes will be more easily captured if they can be compared with the narratives told right after the OFFS.

Analysing stories

When analysing the narratives collected before and after the OFFS the first step is comparing the stories of the individual participants. Knowledge of discourse analysis, power analysis, deconstruction and positioning theory will be a great help in doing so. However, we would argue, that using the focus points - and the understanding of conflict within a narrative perspective as a way of identifying narratives of conflict and narratives of reconciliation - will be sufficient, since we are mainly interested in the effects of the OFFS on the narratives of the participants.

As mentioned earlier narratives of conflict and narratives of reconciliation are not to be understood as two completely different entities, but rather as counter stories to each other. When analysing them this means looking at how people are positioned, which cultural narratives and discourses that can be found, and how the problem or effects of the conflict are described?

Positioning of the individual and others can be found in any narrative. However, it might not always be explicit and in the case of CCPA, what might be of main interest is the group positioning. It is therefore important to establish how the individuals position themselves within a group. Who do they connect themselves to in the narrative? As we described in Chapter 3, belonging to something also means that there is something you do not belong to. A thing to be aware of when analysing, is therefore the duality and inclusiveness or exclusiveness of this belonging. Asking questions of relationships is a way to get the participants to describe the in-group; who do they belong to? In a conflict narrative the in-group will most likely stand in a dialectic relation to the out-group; the other parties of the conflict. This means that if the in-group position themselves as victims, the out-group are likely to be considered the villains. Normative dualities like this one are often found in conflict narratives and are exclusive in the sense that it would be very hard for people of the out-

²⁵ However, this can also be said to be the case even if the narratives are collected for instance 12 months later.

group to become part of the in-group. However, the positioning might not be as obvious as this. Therefore it might be necessary to identify the discourses and cultural narratives being drawn on in order to understand the meaning given to a position and which 'rights and duties' it entails (see Chapter 3). It is also important not to overanalyse, meaning that how the individuals' position their group does not necessarily mean that they will position the out-group as the opposite. One has to take the context of the story into account. In regards to a narrative of reconciliation, the in-group is more likely to be inclusive. When people participate in the OFFS, they are, supposedly, associating with people they normally would not associate with. If this is the case, and if OFFS can be said to contribute to new and reconciling narratives, one would expect to find new positions in the after-narrative; positions that include the people that was previously part of the out-group, or positions that do not have the normative dualities of 'good and bad', 'right and wrong' etc.

As mentioned in 'Focus points of narrative mediation', a narrative of conflict is often attached to the parties involved. It is therefore important to look for this when analysing the stories before and after the OFFS. If a change has come about and the problem or conflict has been externalised during the OFFS. This might show in the narratives in the way that the parties, rather than being opposed to each other, are together in being opposed to the problem or conflict. In the externalisation process a thing to look for is also the background cultural narratives. To what extent are these drawn upon as common sense assumptions or as something explicitly reflected on? In order to position oneself in new ways in relation to a discourse, the discourse has to be visible to the participant. An example of this being reflected in the narrative is when a former way of 'doing things' in a community like living divided by ethnicities, religion etcetera no longer seems natural or logical to the informant.

In order to establish whether CCPA and the OFFS has contributed to a counter story that might compete with the story of conflict, assuming that there still is a conflict-narrative to be found in the before-stories, the analysis also has to include time in regards to the relational element. As mentioned in Chapter 3, a story of reconciliation needs to give a sense of coherence to the people telling it in order to become dominating. This means that it has to reach back in time, and present a possible future in order to establish the new relationships between the parties. This means that when analysing the after-narratives and the new positions within these, assuming that these are present, the positions have to refer to a relationship not only in regards to the OFFS, but also something that they can be said to have had in common before. This could for instance be, that they were all

victims of the conflict. The after-narratives also have to point to the future; Are there any signs that show that the newly established relationships will continue into the future?

Since the questions suggested and the following analysis, can only refer to hypothetical narratives, meaning that we do not have the empirical data referred to, we cannot rule out, that several of the answers given, will not provide the material for the suggested analysis. Neither can we rule out, that a counter story to the one of conflict is not already dominating in the narratives given before the OFFS. If this is the case, it might be an idea to phrase the after-questions with the aim of establishing, to a greater extent, whether the OFFS has contributed to the time-element of the newly established relationships.

When the individual stories of before and after the OFFS have been analysed and compared, the concepts of positioning, inclusiveness and externalisation can be used as a way of talking of tendencies with the aim of making some more general²⁶ statements of the overall effects of the OFFS. It might be argued that the OFFS has contributed to new and more inclusive positions. It might also be argued that there is a tendency to externalisation of some of the problems or effects of conflict and that the participants have made reflections in regards to the relation between these and some of the cultural narratives or discourses that exist in the community. As to the formative purpose of the evaluation we would argue that one has to return to the individual stories rather than the general statements in order to include the context which is, in the narrative approach, vital to the understanding.

As a final note, we would like to add that it is important to make the steps and choices/interpretations in the analysis visible in order for the reader/recipient of the evaluation to be able to follow the process. This transparency adds validity to the evaluation. This is an issue which we will elaborate further on in the following discussion.

²⁶ Note that we are aware that qualitative methods are normally considered as being 'weak' when it comes to generalising. (Karpatschof, 2010:428). Note that we are also aware that within social constructionism it would not be possible to transfer the results from one OFFS-setting to another in order to make generalising statements.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Advantages and disadvantages of the narrative method

In this discussion we aim to gather the threads of the report and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a narrative evaluation method in the light of a few key issues that we find to be of central concern.

First, we will briefly sum up why we find a narrative method useful for evaluating in the context of the OFFS-programme. After that we will turn to some of the aspects of narrative methods for evaluating on effect. These aspects are ‘relativism’ and ‘objectivity’, and ‘causality’ - the latter includes a discussion on how – and if - one can measure the long-term effects of the OFFS. In the last part of the discussion we will discuss the ability of narrative evaluation methods to compare narratives and to make statements about the overall effect of the OFFS.

Why we find narrative methods usable

As mentioned in Point of departure within theory of science, we see narrative theory as a way of grasping some of the complexity of conflict. We hope to have shown through the theory chapter, how the actions carried out during a conflict, to a large extent are related to the stories and discourses drawn upon and the positions that these present. Within narrative theory the idea of finding a solution to a conflict that seems to satisfy the parties is therefore rarely enough to resolve a conflict if the stories and positioning do not change accordingly.

We also hope to have shown, that the work done by the CCPA can be viewed as contributing to new narratives and present ways of changing the perception and positioning of ‘the other’. As this is one of CCPAs main goals, it follows from that, that in order to evaluate whether their programme has had an effect, one has to turn to the stories of the participants of the OFFS, and take these stories seriously, as having an effect on action and perceptions of the world. In Chapter 3 and in the Guidelines to narrative evaluation we have argued as to how one might differentiate between reconciling and conflict-narratives, and by using these guidelines, we would argue that a narrative method for evaluation might be used for assessing whether there has been a change in the narratives of the OFFS participants. Furthermore, we have presented arguments as to how a narrative method can help to capture the nuances of the effects of a conflict and a reconciliation programme. This

means that rather than reducing the conflict, or the effects of it in a post-conflict context, as being a matter of fixed groupings, it opens up to the multiplicities of positioning and story-lines that goes on, and therefore also the actions that follow.

To sum up, we would argue that some of the advantages of a narrative method for evaluating the OFFS, is its ability to relate to the post-conflict context that the programme is situated in and its ability to grasp the complexity of the effects that CCPA are trying to achieve. Now, we will turn to some of the demands for evaluations that might pose more challenging to the narrative method.

Evaluation and the social constructionist approach to science

As illustrated by the four dimensions of evaluation theory, the issue of values in the sense of passing judgement on the merits and results of an intervention is of central concern in evaluations.

However, coming from a narrative and social constructionist perspective the question of passing judgement is tricky. This is due to two fundamental issues in social constructionism: The issue of relativism and the issue of subjectivity.

One of the cornerstones in the social constructionist paradigm is, as mentioned earlier, the notion that all knowledge is situated in a historical and cultural context and - might we argue - can thus later be overturned by new research. Therefore many social constructionists would argue - one can neither speak of any knowledge being truer than other forms of knowledge. Nor can one speak of the researcher – or any person for that matter – being able to access a knowledge that is universally true. In contrast to this the traditional modern paradigm of science differentiates between scientific knowledge which is considered to be ‘context-free’ and ‘objective’ and ‘universally true’ and thus of higher value than the knowledge of the non-scientist whose knowledge is understood as context-bound and based on prejudice (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:279).

The problem with the social constructionist paradigm's relativistic stance is of course that if no knowledge or argument can be considered to be better or more valid than any other argument, how is the researcher able to make any solid claims about anything? And returning to the context of evaluations – how is the evaluator able to pass any judgement about the merits and effects of an intervention, knowing that things could always be presented from a different perspective? And if the evaluator is not able to do that, what good will her work then do in an evaluation context? The relativism inherent to the narrative approach can thus – at first glance - be considered to be one of the disadvantages of using a narrative method for evaluation.

In order to answer these questions let us now turn to the question of how one can work scientifically coming from a social constructionist perspective and how one might deal with the dilemma of relativism. When answering these questions we will turn to Marianne Winther Jørgensen and her dissertation 'Reflexivity and Critique' (2002). Winther Jørgensen argues that the relativism of social constructionism can be countered by looking at science as a: "*truth that is up for discussion*" (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:264). By using this definition, she argues, one can acknowledge the practical concern that in order to make any claims about anything, it is necessary to be able to say: "*Right now I say that the world is like this and this*" (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:303). At the same time the "*up for discussion*" embraces the reflexivity of social constructionism in the sense that one should always be open to the fact that new perspectives may arise, which will question the 'truth' of one's findings. In this way, she argues, social constructionism may borrow parts of the asymmetric understanding of knowledge that is inherent to the modern traditional research paradigm, and use it to set a temporary 'full stop' (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:299).

This is necessary, she argues, because without having the possibility of describing the world, it cannot be possible to discuss different perspectives on the world or how the world might be made better (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:304).

The next question is of course how one produces this 'truth that is up for discussion'? Winther Jørgensen recommends some general rules that can be said to be part of the discourse of science, noting that coming from a social constructionist perspective these rules must be viewed as contingent – meaning that they may be contested and changed. She argues that: 1) the steps taken must be as transparent as possible, 2) that the argumentation used must be consistent, 3) that the theory used must consist of a coherent system and 4) that one's interpretations must be founded in empirical arguments (Winther Jørgensen, 2002: 265). In this way she argues that:

"It is the scientificness – meaning the explicitness of - and the use of argumentation for - the specific set of rules, that form the basis of one's knowledge production, that separates scientific knowledge from other forms of knowledge" (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:266).

To sum up, we would argue that there are means of escaping the relativism of social constructionism when conducting research – if not on the epistemological level – then at least on the practical level. However, the reflexivity means that the knowledge one produces must always

be: *"a truth that is up for discussion"*. This implies that scientists – or evaluators for that matter - can never claim to produce universal truths or objective truths. The question is of course if this can be considered an advantage or a disadvantage of a narrative evaluation method? We find this question hard to answer, as it could be said to be a necessary evil, and that working reflexively – meaning being aware of one's own subjectivity is better – than not acknowledging these issues at all.

Objectivity

Let us now turn to some of the more practical dimensions of objectivity and reflexivity and more specifically what sort of barriers these might pose to a narrative evaluation method, when including the notion of 'objectivity' put forward by Sida.

As presented in Chapter 4, Sida mentions 'objectivity' several times. Sida argues for instance that evaluations should be objective so that they can function as a 'reality test' (Sida, 2007: 11). If one takes this argument at face value it would be easy to conclude that Sida's ideas about 'reality' and 'objectiveness' could never be combined with a narrative and social constructionist evaluation method.

However, taking our point of departure in Winther Jørgensen's ideas about a re-thinking of the status of scientific knowledge within social constructionism, we might argue that although the researcher/evaluator cannot be said to be objective, he or she might still be able to produce knowledge that is soundly argued and which is as transparent as possible in regards to its own subjective perspective, and that this may be good enough – or at least as good as it gets.

Furthermore, we would argue, that Sida's remarks about objectivity might also be viewed in a more common sense way. For instance we notice that Sida often uses the word objectivity in connection with statements about impartiality and independence. Stating for example that: *"When assessing the credibility of a statement we routinely assess the likelihood that the person making it is biased by self-interest, loyalties, or other distorting factors"* (Sida, 2007:17). This quote indicates an understanding of objectiveness that we do not find to be in contrast with social constructionist methods. In fact it could be argued to be a logical part of the self-reflexivity that is inherent to constructionist methods to think about, whether one can be said to be biased in these ways. And in

this regard the reflexivity of a social constructionist approach might be viewed as an advantage in the evaluation process.

So what does the notions about ‘objectivity’ presented in this section entail for a narrative evaluation method? Let us start with a practical concern in regards to the quote above. We note that the emphasis on bias in regards to self-interest and loyalties might indicate that some forms of evaluations might have a higher status than others. In CCPA's case it means that they need to consider who is conducting the evaluation – and that an evaluation carried out by an external evaluator might be considered to carry more weight than that of an internal evaluator.

As mentioned before the reflexivity is another way of approaching objectiveness. Throughout the guidelines we have given some clues as to how one might be aware of one’s own subjectivity and how it might reflect on the work being done. However, with the arguments of Winther Jørgensen firmly in mind, we would also stress that a deconstruction of the cultural narratives and discourses that CCPA and the evaluator might be said to belong to, is a never ending spiral. It is therefore necessary to set a temporary ‘full stop’ and say ‘right now, this is how we see it and this we will be responsible for’ (Winther Jørgensen, 2002:303).

Causality

Now let us turn to the issue of ‘cause-and-effect’. As presented in Chapter 4, causality is considered a central issue in evaluations that deal with assessing impact and effect.

We will deal with this task in two steps. First, we will look at the narrative method in regards to how Sida argues that an evaluation on cause-and-effect should be conducted. Second, we will look at the narrative method in the light of qualitative approaches to cause-and-effect. As already elaborated on in the section about Sida’s stance in regards to impact evaluations, Sida argues that the counterfactual-approach is the best method for answering questions about causality²⁷. The question is then whether one can construct a counterfactual using a narrative method? Probably not, we would argue, as narrative methods focus on the particularistic and deal with locating experiences and their meaning in time and space (Abma, 1999:2). The idea of using a control group to compare

²⁷ Sida also states that it is necessary to have information about the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of an intervention. However, we will not go further in to this question in this section, as we have already dealt with this issue in the first part of the discussion.

the intervention-group with thus becomes meaningless as narrative evaluators would argue that both groups are unique and particular and therefore they cannot be compared – or at least that they cannot be compared without taking their different contexts in to consideration. For a narrative method the idea of separating an intervention from its context, thereby creating a basis from which one can generalise and state general laws about cause-and-effect is thus impossible.

The next question is what this means in regards to the usability of a narrative method in the context of CCPA. If we assume that Sida's views about what constitute appropriate evaluation methods are important to CCPA, the fact that a narrative method may not be used for creating a counterfactual is a serious disadvantage.

However, we do also note that Sida is not dogmatic in their approach stating that, when it is not possible to estimate the counterfactual with the help of control groups, then:

”The intervention is often taken to be the cause of the identified changes if such a conclusion appears to be consistent with expert knowledge and there seems to be no better explanation around (...) an argument of this type can be good enough for the purpose of the evaluation” (Sida, 2007:34).

Sida argues that not being able to estimate the counterfactual is a ‘common problem’ in development work.

Now let us look at the qualitative approach to causality and ask ourselves if that is compatible with a narrative and social constructionist approach? First of all, we note that the qualitative approach takes context into account – and in this sense it cannot be said to be in contrast with a narrative method. Furthermore, the qualitative approach does not use a counterfactual, so also in this respect it cannot be said to be in contrast with the narrative method. Let us now then take the preliminary stance that – from the outset – narratives might be used for identifying the causal relationship between an intervention and its effects.

The question is then, how one might go about tracing the causal relation in the narrative? First of all, one could start by comparing the before and after narratives in order to assess if there indeed has been a change in the narrative. Suggestions as to how this is done are presented in the guidelines. Second of all, one would need to link these changes with the intervention – in order to answer whether it was indeed the intervention that caused the changes in narratives. This is the tricky part, because if we argue that narratives are to a certain extent fluid and changeable, that they are highly

influenced by dominating discourses and that one might draw on different narratives in different contexts and position oneself in different ways depending on context, how can one then claim that it was the OFFS that caused the change in narratives?

As we have argued in the guidelines, we find that by collecting narratives immediately before and after the OFFS, one will have a greater chance of linking a change in narratives to the OFFS. In this way, the evaluator will be able to ask questions that are related to the experiences that the informants had, while they are still fresh in the participants' memories. Furthermore, because the narratives are collected immediately after, when the participants have not yet had any other experiences, the argument that it was indeed the OFFS that caused these changes, will carry more weight. However, collecting the narratives immediately after the OFFS also has some disadvantages. First, of all, as pointed out in the Chapter 3, the issue of which story that dominates is to a large extent dependent on the context, we are situated in. Hence, the way we position ourselves and the narratives we tell are therefore also context-dependent. Following this logic, the next relevant question is thus to ask, whether it was just the context of the OFFS that made the participants position themselves differently or whether the narratives told have an impact on the individual beyond the context of the OFFS?

However, as we have argued in the Guidelines, we find that, there are ways of assessing the viability of the narratives told. In the analysis of the narratives one might look at the extent to which the conflict has been externalised, whether the narratives include new and more inclusive positions, whether the narratives show a greater awareness of the dominating discourses that exist in the community and whether past and future of a new relationship can be established? However, while this might give some indications in regards to longevity. It would still pose the problem that any assessment of the long-term effects would be purely hypothetical if based only on narratives collected shortly after the OFFS. However, even if CCPA were to collect narratives after a while had passed, and even if the narratives still showed signs of reconciliation, the passage of time, the multitude of experiences had by the participants in the in-between period and the fluidity of narratives, we would argue, would make it almost impossible to argue that there was a causal link between the OFFS and the new narratives.

We would, however, argue that the assessment of the long-term effects, through the tendencies established could be used as a qualified guess as to the viability of the narratives of reconciliation. First of all we base this on the empirical experiences established by the narrative theorists on which

the theory-chapter is based. The focus points mentioned and the time and space element put forward are based on what they find to be central to a narrative, if it is to become dominating. Second of all, is the amount of people involved in the OFFS-programme. These count several hundred, and if the narrative evaluation finds a tendency to new and reconciling narratives we would argue, that the survival of these is strengthened by the sheer fact, that a lot of people tell it. One might also turn towards the elements of CCPA's programme left out in this report. If the seminars held, and the new football clubs established support the tendencies found in the evaluation, we would argue, that although it might not abide to the more strict sense of causal link between long-term effects and the OFFS. It would, however, support the argumentation that CCPA contributes to reconciliation, also in the long run. Last but not least, the fact that CCPA includes local media and authorities, and sometimes national government agencies, could be said to support the establishing of the new narratives. It might mean an elevation of the stories from the individual level to become dominating group-narratives which might again contribute in the construction of new discourses. However, all in all, we must conclude that it might be hard to use a narrative method, when it comes to questions of causality. In this regard the best one can hope for is to argue that the OFFS has contributed to a change in the narratives and include this the above mentioned elements. The difficulty in estimating causality thus becomes one of the disadvantages of the narrative method. However, we would argue that this is not only due to the method, but also to the complex nature of the effects that CCPA hopes to achieve through OFFS.

Assessing the overall effect of the OFFS

Now let us turn to the ability of the narrative method to bring forward assessments of the overall effect of the OFFS. We will deal with this issue in two steps. First, we will pose the question whether it within narrative theory would be considered possible to make statements in regards to the overall effects of one particular football school. Next, we will discuss whether it is possible to compare the results of several football schools in order to make statements about the overall effect of the OFFS-programme.

First let us say that in order to say something of the overall effects, one has to compare the narratives collected. This poses a challenge within narrative methods, because as already elaborated on previously, narratives are considered to be unique and to a large extent context-bound (Abma, 1999). However, if we are to compare the narratives of one particular football school, we would

argue that because these narratives are derived from the context of the same football school and the participants come from the same local community, this makes it less tricky to compare them as seen from a narrative perspective. Even so a comparison would have to be sensitive as to the particularity of the individual narratives.

The next question is then which parameters one could use for comparing the narratives. Since we are interested in signs of either reconciliation or conflict, we would argue that the comparison should be centred around the focus points that we have already presented in the theory and the guidelines chapters. With the help of the focus points, one might be able to point to tendencies in regards to the overall effects. In order to get an overview of the tendencies in the analysed narratives, we would argue that one would have to quantify them. Although quantification is sometimes viewed as being incompatible with the purposes of qualitative methods, we agree with Burr when she states that: *"it is not empirical methods that are incompatible with social constructionism but the universalistic truth claims that usually accompany them"* (Burr, 2003: 150). Furthermore, we would argue that although – due to their complexity - the collection of narratives could hardly be done via the use of quantitative methods; this does not exclude that one could draw out certain tendencies – based on the focus points, code these tendencies to some extent and then quantify these tendencies in order to compare²⁸.

Related to the above is the question of how many narratives CCPA needs to collect in order to make solid statements about the effects of a particular football school? The process of collecting and analysing narratives can be both time-consuming and costly, and within the qualitative field, it would often be argued that it is better to carry out an in-depth analysis of less data, than a superficial analysis of a large amount of data. On the other hand, a convincing statement in regards to the overall effect might require a certain amount of narratives in order to be considered representative. It is not easy to provide standard answers to this question. However, some qualitative researchers argue that one should continue carrying out interviews, until one feels that the interviews become repetitive and do not provide further insight in to the research field (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010:32).

²⁸ Several qualitative methods draw on quantitative methods in order to gain an overview of the material analysed. The act of counting the occurrence of rituals is for instance used in field work (Hastrup, 2010:56). Methods for coding and counting are also used in discourse analysis (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010).

To sum up, we would argue that it is possible to compare the narratives from a particular football school and that one might even code them and quantify them in order to gain an overview of the material.

Now let us turn to the second question: Whether it is possible to compare the results and effects of several football schools? We would argue yes, as long as one is careful not to use this comparison to make universalistic truth claims about the overall effect of the OFFS-programme. Within social constructionism the fact that the OFFS-programmes in Beirut, Beograd and Kiev all have had an effect – if that were to be the case, would not lead to the generalising statement that OFFS-programmes in every context will have an effect. This means that in order to say something with certainty in regards to the effect of the OFFS in a particular context, one would have to investigate it in that context. That being said, however, if several football schools were found to have effects, this would give more credibility to generalising claims about the overall effects of the OFFS.

Chapter 6- Conclusion

In the following chapter we aim at answering our cardinal question, namely what advantages and disadvantages could a narrative evaluation methods be said to have, if applied to CCPA's programme the OFFS?

We will start by summing up what we have done in the report to answer this question. This will lead us to the discussion in which we have discussed the advantages and disadvantages found throughout the report. We will then zoom out in order to make a general assessment of the challenges a narrative approach to evaluation poses, and what can be said to be its strongest advantages. Finally, we will ask ourselves whether a narrative approach to evaluation is something we would recommend CCPA to use?

Throughout the report we have shown, how narrative theory and methods can be helpful tools to understand how conflicts arise and how they might be reconciled. We have furthermore presented some focus points of narrative mediation and from them and the four dimensions of evaluation theory, given a guideline to a narrative evaluation of the OFFS.

Furthermore, we have presented qualitative and quantitative theories as to how an evaluation can answer questions related to impact and effect. In continuation hereof we have presented Sida's notions about evaluations that deal with impact and effect in order to present some of the challenges that CCPA might be met with if they were to use a narrative evaluation method.

The perspectives presented in the theoretical chapters and the guidelines resulted in a discussion of our cardinal question:

The main disadvantages that we see a narrative evaluation method entails are for one, that they disregard concepts such as one reality and objectivity, concepts that the donor Sida refers to as concepts inherent to an evaluation. Furthermore, there is a disadvantage in that a strict causal link between cause and effect is hard to argue for through this method. And that a counterfactual is, if not impossible than at least very hard to establish within narrative evaluation methods. Last but not least there is the question of relativism that is inherent to narrative methods due to their point of departure within social constructionism. This is something that poses serious difficulties' when general statements needs to be put forward.

On the other hand narrative evaluation methods has a strong advantage when the aim is to 'measure' the more complex effects of the OFFS. The method is able to open up for the multiplicity that it

believes is inherent to human identity. In that sense it avoids simplifying the possible effects of the OFFS. We also find it to be a great advantage that it is able to relate to the post-conflict context that OFFS is situated in. Finally, we find the transparency and reflexivity of the method in regards to the evaluators and the organisations subjectivity as an advantage in the sense that it is a way of avoiding bias and a way of giving credibility to the evaluation.

With these advantages and disadvantages in mind, we hope to have shown throughout the discussion, that the very same things that can be said to be disadvantages to the narrative method, can at the same time be said to be strengths, depending on the epistemological stance one takes. The complexity of narrative evaluation methods in regards to its relativistic and reflexive approach can thus be said to be it's greatest disadvantage. In the sense that these are founded in a epistemology that might not be shared by the recipients of the evaluation as shown in the discussion. The concepts of relativism and reflexiveness might therefore put the method in a vulnerable position in regards to criticism from people, who do not acknowledge or understand the method's epistemological starting point. The deconstruction intrinsic to the method is also a great challenge because it does not give the answers as to when one can put the temporary 'full stop' and leaves open, when the analysis of stories has reached its end.

However, while listing these disadvantages we want to stress, that the complexity of the method, and the relativistic and reflexive approach inherent to is also what we would conclude to be it's greatest advantage in regards to an evaluation of the OFFS. If one adheres to the basic assumptions of the narrative approach, then the narrative evaluation method allows the participants of the OFFS to construct their own meaning of the post-conflict context and of the OFFS. It therefore also provides the CCPA with a much greater knowledge as to whether their programmes is contributing to new and reconciling narratives, and whether these have a chance of becoming dominating.

As a final note we would like to elaborate on the question of whether we would recommend that CCPA applies narrative methods in an evaluation of their programme?

Based on the above, we would say 'yes' because we would argue that a narrative method for evaluation is well-suited for 'measuring' a change in narratives. However, as presented in the above, the narrative method is also complex to use and therefore requires evaluators that are experienced in narrative methods and interview techniques. This is required both in order to carry out the evaluation and in order to 'defend' its epistemological starting point to outsiders.

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