



# SHARING STORIES, EXPLORING NARRATIVES AND BUILDING LANGUAGE

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## Introduction

*“What are our stories, and which stories do we want to tell?”*

A central aim of the SWIFT project is to contribute to **changing the narrative in agriculture**. Women-led innovations (WLIs) as grassroots organisations acting for change in rural areas across Europe represent groups of farmers, gardeners, seed producers etc. that are already living by other narratives.

The aim and purpose of this participatory video process is to enable WLIs to share their stories and to build language for a counter narrative to the dominant patriarchal agricultural narrative that silences our diverse and rich realities.

*“We need to find the linguistic glue”*

Stories represented the “raw” and situated accounts of specific events in our day to day realities, while narratives represent the underlying logic and understandings embedded within these (Vercher, 2020). Sharing stories can reveal the things that drive us and help us forge connections.

The participatory video process combines community building with academic analysis. The academic analysis should serve to facilitate the process and provide deeper insight into the narratives shared and how these interact with other narratives in agriculture.

### Research questions:

- What are narratives of female agroecological farmers?
- How do these interact with other agricultural narratives?
- How can agroecological narratives be strengthened?

## Method

The process was initiated as a result of exchanges between Els (Toekomstboeren) and Charlotte (BOKU) at the SWIFT inception workshop in Agres, 2023. Following this, frequent exchanges took place to co-create and adapt the method and process. Following the SWIFT principles, we take a Participatory Action Research approach that is centred on collaboration between farmers and academics for emancipatory social change (Cornish, 2023).

### Recording stories

Films were recorded by individual farmers with a camera that travelled from one farmer to the next (“travelling camera”). Technical tips and tricks, supplies and support were provided by the SWIFT team. Individuals were able to tell stories in the way they wanted.

Guiding question: **What moves you as an agroecological farmer?**

### Sharing stories (Kletsen & rijgen)

The individual stories of the five filmmakers were shared in a group screening and discussion at one of the farms. While watching the film connections were woven together with yarn to visualize connection and the interconnected tapestry. We then unravelled the yarn and shared the things that moved us in the films of the others. For the academic analysis we will also conduct individual interviews to provide more context on the filmed material.



## First insights and paths for analysis

### First insights

- Weaving exercise and discussion enabled inner and outer reflection
- It highlighted the importance of taking charge of own narratives instead of reacting to pressure.
- Show beauty of own story outside of dominant patriarchal agricultural narrative that silences our diverse and rich realities.
- Community building and connection is essential voicing counter narratives – re-politicizes farmers in a different way
- There is a strong desire to connect across borders - videos offer a rich means to share stories

*“connecting is what we do; and we also need it ourselves!”*

### Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) – possible analytical approach

Positive discourse analysis is a form of critical discourse analysis that focuses on discourses, that inspire and move us, rather than focussing only on unjust power relations and oppression. It looks at those alternatives that are already acting for change (Stibbe, 2018).

Positive discourse analysis combines the deconstruction of existing narratives with a reconstruction. A search for new ways to use language that enable us to tell different stories.



*Impressions from the process with Toekomstboeren and different video formats*

Have a look!

QR Code

Join!

Would you like to tell and share your story through video?  
Contact:  
[charlotte.voigt@boku.ac.at](mailto:charlotte.voigt@boku.ac.at)

### References

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