

Workshop 13: Building the narrative and making the case for Agroecology

Convenor: Janneke Bruil (Cultivate!, the Netherlands)

Impulse talks:

- Stanka Becheva (Friends of the Earth Europe, Belgium) – “Elements for a narrative on agroecology discussed at the 2016 European Forum on Food Sovereignty and Agroecology”
- Margriet Goris (University of Viçosa, Brazil and Wageningen University, The Netherlands) – “Building an agroecological peasant identity through the use of video in Brazil”

To counter the mainstream narrative of conventional/industrial agriculture, building the narrative of agroecology was highlighted as a priority by the 2016 Nyeleni Europe Forum on Food Sovereignty and Agroecology. The challenge is to “enter” people’s houses, to go to the street, and to diffuse another narrative. To develop this narrative, artists can be used to broadcast this message on a wider scale. In Brazil, these strategies are already in use: educational practices to support repeasantisation, movement building practices using pastors and sports events and community art practices based on short movies, to make the case for agroecology.

The question of the goal of agroecology was discussed in this workshop: is it about fixing the current system or creating other systems? The answer shapes the communication strategies. A list of key audiences was created by the participants and the main ones were families and kids, politicians and farmers and consumers who are currently far from agroecological practises and consumption habits. Participants performed short drama scenes which highlighted that it is important to use concrete terms that people can relate to and to connect to elements that matter to them. A new narrative should provide these elements, but words and emphasis depend on the specifics of your audience.