

# Ethnography: what, why, how?

## Ethnography =

Immersing yourself in a person's context. Seeing every day life from their perspective.

## Why?

### Get a feel

for women's everyday context versus prior contexts

Goals

### Understand

women's self-perceived values, barriers, and enablers of change

### Identify

what women see as a good outcome for themselves

### Surface gaps

between where women are now, and where they want to be

## How?

We like to bring food & and have an informal chat. It's not a meeting. We've got no time limits. It's about getting to know women in their own environment and at their own pace.



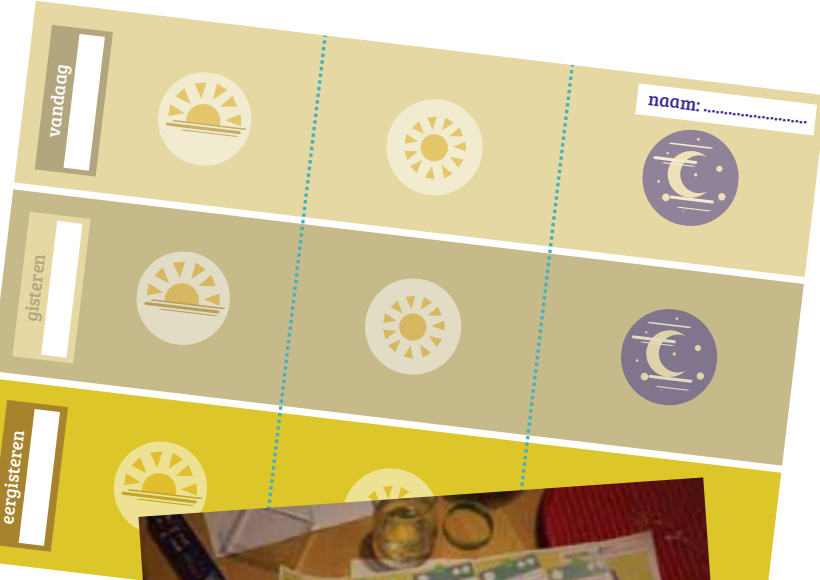
"By having something to do together (in this case, eating) it creates a different contact. You have and take all the time. There's no limit (it seems)."  
Carita

## ① A personal artefact

A personal artefact helps to trigger conversations about our personal lives. We would like to set a precedence for sharing by sharing something of ourselves; clarify why we are here and what happens to the information gathered.



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## 2 Activity map

How the woman spends her time; who & what she interacts with now and who & what she'd like to be interacting with in the future. our goal is to identify where we might be able to intervene to influence behavior: what interactions could we add, take away, shape?



"I like many different things. I just don't know how to do them."

"When I first came here, they asked me what I liked to do. What I wanted to do. I told them how much I like crafts. And they said, 'that's a hobby, not a job.'"



"All my days are the same"

"It's depressing here. There is nothing to do."

"What's a good day? I'd say most days are the same."

"Feels like we're always talking about the past. Not doing things."

"Not everybody knows my stress. The day I dress very well is the most stressful day."

## 3 Fulfillments vs. Frustrations

How the woman perceives the different parts of her life - including the shelter, government services, and professionals. We also want to feed back information in a fresh way, and spark their on-the-spot reflection and analysis.



**leven kosten  
living costs**



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## 4 Value Cards

What values and expectations do women hold about money, work, and relationships. what takes precedence for them? what has shaped their thinking?



Agree?

Disagree?

Het recht van de vrouw is het aanrecht.

*A woman's place is in the home.*

Kinderen opvoeden is een baan.

*Raising children is a job.*

Het is verstandig om je schulden af te lossen wanneer het mogelijk is.

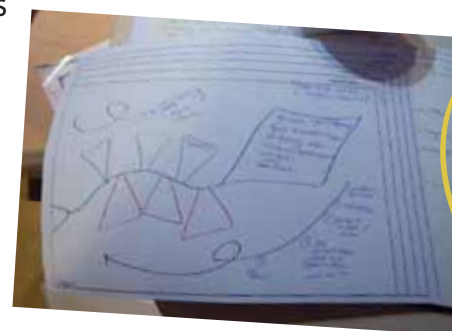
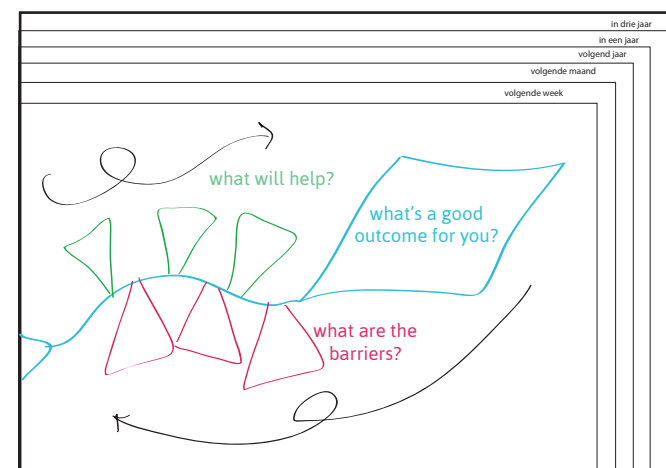
*It's good to pay off debt as soon as you can.*

Het leven is kort, beter om je geld uit te geven en van het leven te genieten.

*Life is short, better to spend money and enjoy life.*

## 5 Outcome sheets

How does the woman conceptualize what's good for herself a year from now, how easy or hard is this conversation, what are her reference points, and how does she see the barriers and enablers. are the enablers and barriers internal or external?



"We do plan here. But it's often planning for the next big obstacle. Rather than planning for what's nice or good."



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# See, hear, smell, taste

What's on TV? What are they watching? What do they like about it?

What are on the sofa?  
Toys for neighbor's kids?

What are put up on the wall? Photos, drawings? Why are they put up on the wall?

What's on the kitchen cabinet? What did the children draw on their drawings?

What's on the kitchen top?  
What kind of food do they make? Do they cook with their friends?

What's on the floor? How do they interact with their kids?



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# Social support

Most of the women we've met (5/8) have narrow social networks. Comprised of other women from the Shelter. Or a family member living nearby, or abroad. Even the women with fuller social networks do not have strong links to the neighborhood, to the community, to other groups. There seem to be no mechanisms for enabling bridging social capital. Only bonding social capital.

“Old friends are the best. My life is not how its supposed to be - and new friends will just hear about all the shit in my life.”

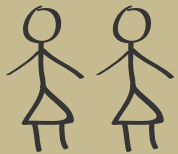
“At the shelter, they really want you to do things on your own. To not depend on them. Sometimes I need more. I'm not able to do things because of the language. I'm thankful that Dutch people have helped me a lot. I just wished I had Dutch friends.”

Societal expectations & cultural norms

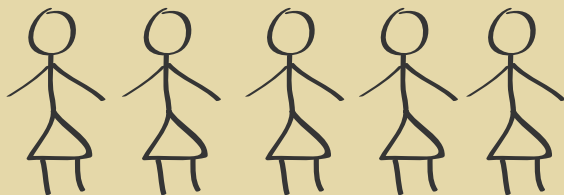
Communities/ groups



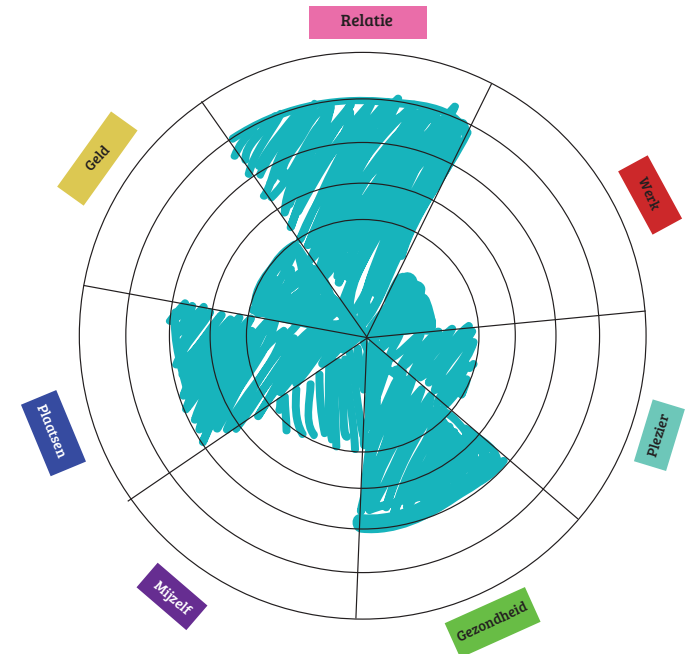
Families & friends



Self & shelter



## Stressor Points



This shape shows how fulfilled versus stressed women are with different parts of their lives right now. So far, the top 3 stressors seem to be work, self-development, and fun. Followed by places and money.

“Here in Holland it seems everyone has their own life, their own work, their own responsibilities. It's much more about the individual.”

“Some of the other women in the shelter are good. Some are not - they see themselves as superior and they want to control you. There is one woman I still keep in touch with from the shelter. But nearly all of my friends come from church. There is one Dutch couple, my son calls them Poppa and Nonna, they come here, I go there, they babysit, they come with me to appointments.”

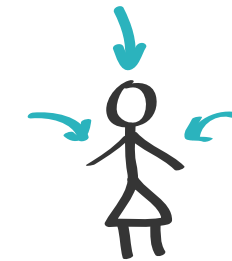
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## How the women spend their time right now



We've met 2 groups of women: those that derive meaning from activities more focussed on self, and those that derive meaning more from activities focussed on others.



**self**

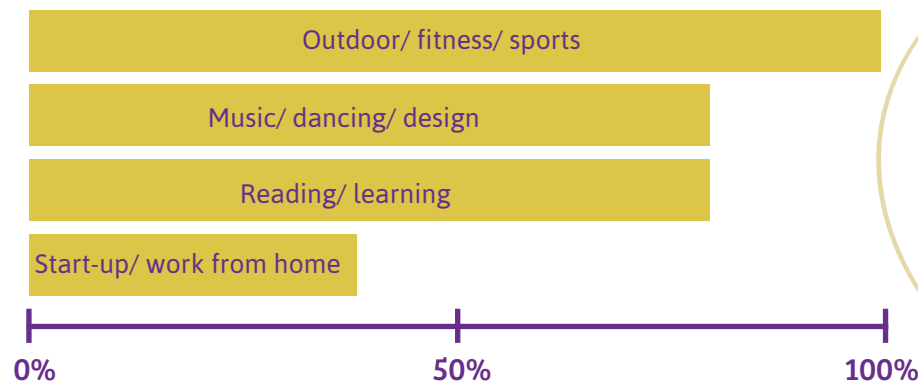
Faith  
Gardening  
Coaching  
Meeting new friends



**others**

Volunteering  
Connecting with old friends

## Here's the top 'hooks' for engaging women:



"Government here is generous. They give us benefits and housing. But I don't think it's enough. I want to be occupied. To do sports, and music, and try new things. But it's too expensive even for the kids to regularly take part."

"Many women here are depressed. But I am not. Why don't we do something? It's irritating that each week they just go over our problems. They constantly ask us how we are doing. Well, if things were good, I wouldn't be here."



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# Disconnects

vs.

Talking	Making the future
Work	Hobbies
Independence	Interdependence
Individuals	Extended Families
Clients	Community Members
Week days	Weekends
Justice	Acceptance
Protection	Isolation
Strengths-based	Availability-based
Skills & competencies	Opportunities & resources
Bonding social capital	Bridging social capital
Finding housings	Catalyzing communities
Controlled	Control

# Order

All the women we've talked to are following the same underlying sequence of events.



What if there was a **different** sequence of events?



# Outcomes-Barriers-What If

We've heard at least 4 different versions of a 'good' outcome.

①

## In terms of children

"If my children are happy and have a bright future, I will be happy"

### Barriers

Traditional familial roles, communication, dynamics

### What If...

What if the extended family was the client group?

Absence of networks

What if there was a create a new 'extended' family service?

Lack of familiarity with Dutch systems

What if there were system apprenticeships?

②

## In terms of place

"Living somewhere I finally feel like I belong"

### Barriers

Shame & stigma

### What If...

What if there were neighborhood introducers - a new role?

Isolation & turnover within the shelter

What if women took on self-designed roles within shelters?

Entering the country

What if there was a 'meet women like you' transition service?

Immigration uncertainty

What if there was a plan B service? What if there was policy change so women could work whilst?



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## In terms of self

“Figuring out how to do what I love”

“Owning my own business”

Barriers	What If...
Absence of language	What if there was home immersion language programs?  What if there was special Dutch language learning TV channel?
Absence of reference points & networks	What if there were work tasters?
Absence of financial capital	What if there were lending circles?
Old narratives of self	What if there was a narrative therapy text & over-the-phone service?

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## In terms of relationships

“I don’t want to have to work. I want to be in a partnership where he does what he promises.”

Barriers	What If...
Cultural conventions	What if there was a safe dating network? Or a new kind of family matchmaker?
Narrow exposure	What if there was no-talk therapy? Where people went out & experienced things together, rather than just talked in the abstract?



# Theory Frames

## Collective efficacy

“Conceptions of human agency have been essentially confined to personal agency exercised individually. But this is not the only form of agency through which people manage events that affect their lives...In many activities, people do not have control over social conditions and institutional practices that affect their lives. Under these circumstances, they seek their wellbeing and security through the exercise of proxy agency...People try to get other people who have expertise or wield influence and power to act on their behalf to get the outcomes they desire.”

*Bandura, 2000, p.75.*



## Relational development

“Traditional theories of psychology have described development as the pathway from childlike dependence to mature independence, emphasizing the importance of a self-sufficient, clearly differentiated, autonomous self. These models have more likely been representative of men’s experience... In contrast, the relational model views development as growth with and toward connection, positing healthy connection with other persons as the means and goal of psychological development.”

*Miller, 2008, p.369*

## Behavioral economics: loss aversion

“Losing something is valued at least twice as highly as gaining something. Studies have shown that telling people they will lose \$350 a year if they don’t use energy conservation methods is more effective than telling people they will save \$350.”

*Thaler & Sunstein, 2008.*



# What's next?

## We'll continue dinners with women in their homes

- Women living in the community
- Women no longer using Moviera services

Want to join? You're invited!

## We'll write-up & share our stories with women.

We'll work with women to identify patterns & extract insights.

We'll look through different theoretical frames, and generate ideas at an individual, community, and policy level.

Want to join? You're invited!

## We'll spend days-in-the-lives of women

- Women new to the shelter
- Women about to transition out of the shelter

## We'll go behind-the-scenes of services

- Moviera
- Gemeente
- Parenting programs
- Tax Office

Want to join? You're invited!

## We'll visualize scenarios of what could be.

We'll make a short film and a publication with women.

We'll campaign & advocate for funding for prototyping.

Want to join? You're invited!

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