



GLOBAL DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
FOR DEMOCRACY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Selma's Journey

An interactive online text-adventure game

HANDOUT



Access to the game: www.learn2change-network.org/online-game

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www.learn2change-network.org/our-voices-our-planet

Selma's journey was developed by the Büro für Eskapismus together with VNB e.V. and Learn2Change – Global Network of Educational Activists in the frame of the project **OUR VOICES –OUR PLANET. Global Dialogue and Learning for Democracy and Sustainability.**



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1. Introduction

Selma's Journey is an interactive html-text-adventure-game about challenges and possibilities of democratic engagement for a sustainable future. The players interact with through a chat, search for clues, and solve riddles and tasks in order to assist Selma in her journey to overcome obstacles and challenges. Along the way, they receive short video messages from Selma, audios of other people appearing in the game, photos of locations where the story takes place and some complementary videos with background information on some topics.

In this handout, you can find a short overview about the topics of the game as well as some instructions that might be helpful for playing it. As Selma's Journey is all in English, including some video and audio messages developed specific for this game. For those whose mother tongue is not English and who might have some difficulties in understanding, the handout includes transcripts from all those messages to make it easier to follow.

Selma's Journey was developed in the frame of the project [OUR VOICES – OUR PLANET. Global Learning for Democracy and Sustainability](#). In OUR VOICES - OUR PLANET, the Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen VNB e.V. and the "Learn2Change - Global Network of Educational Activists" develop analog and digital educational formats, through which the connections between democracy and sustainability can be discovered. With [quizzes](#), [video interviews](#), [a self-learning module](#), [workshops](#), [this game](#), with [a conference](#), [symposia](#) and [online talks](#), the project opens up discussion and learning spaces for young people as well as for adults, teachers and trainers. Experts from the Global South are directly involved in all educational activities. The global dialogue and the learning from and with each other inspire to deal with the topic. Encouraging practical examples from around the world motivate people to become active in transformation processes for democracy, sustainability and global justice.

2. Selma's Journey – an introduction into the content and background

Story

Selma is a law student and an environmental and human activist from Malawi. She discovers environmentally harmful and human rights violating practices of a multinational company operating in Malawi: The Elvo Mining Company engages in open pit coal mining right next to her home village, causing health problems, water and food shortage for her family and neighbors. To fight these practices, she posts a video online. Shortly after that, two strange men, who were sent by Elvo are chasing her. She manages to escape but has to leave Malawi. Her neighbor, who used to be an activist, sends her to a fellow activist in Ecuador, where Selma will be safe. In Ecuador, she visits a village of indigenous people have successfully fought a similar multinational firm. They tell her about democratic measures she could apply.

However, Selma receives a message from home, telling her that her younger brother is in prison for allegedly „trespassing on Elvo land“. Selma know she has to act immediately to help her brother. She flies to Germany, where the shareholder's meeting of Elvo takes place. With the help of a German activist, she manages to sneak into the meeting and deliver a speech, telling the shareholder's about the practices of Elvo. She is thrown out of the meeting before she finishes her speech and is very disappointed. But then, she had luck and...

The content of Selma's Journey was repeatedly fed back with partners from Malawi and Ecuador, so that the story is realistic. Lydia Banda, a young actor from Malawi, performs the role of Selma. She has recorded short videos that you will see in the game.

Curious? Then start playing the game directly here: <https://eskapistin.itch.io/ovop-1>

Background

„Selma's Journey" is fictional yet close to reality. In the face of current crises, the protection of human rights and global sustainable development are more important than ever. However, many multinational companies still stand for the opposite. Often, their headquarters are located in countries of the Global North and their production branches are outsourced to the Global South. There, they often contribute to bad working conditions, child labor and a destroyed environment. The profits usually do not remain locally, but flow back to the corporate headquarters in the Global North. However, even if it seems difficult, there are many initiatives and possibilities to fight against it. Civil society organizations around the world are campaigning to stop extractivism, for sustainability and climate justice. Often these movements are endangered, their work hindered, and even threatened. Through the text-adventure-game "Selma's Journey", the players will learn playfully about the connections between environmental destruction and human rights, democracy and sustainability. They will be sensitized to the interconnections between multinational companies, governments and local populations. And they will get to know diverse forms of civic engagement for sustainability, democracy and the preservation of human rights.

3. Selma's Journey – how to play the html- text adventure game?

General information

The interactive html-text-adventure-game Selma's Journey is developed with [Twine](#), an open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories.

The players interact with through a chat, search for clues, and solve riddles and tasks in order to assist Selma in her journey to overcome obstacles and challenges. Along the way, they receive short video messages from Selma, audios of other people appearing in the game, photos of locations where the story takes place and some complementary videos with background information on some topics.

The game consists of six chapters (chapters 1 and 2: Malawi; chapters 3 and 4: Ecuador; chapters 5 and 6: Germany and back in Malawi). It can be done in one go or in stages in different chapters. It is possible to interrupt and continue at any time.

Playing the completely game lasts about approximately 1,5 hours. The length varies depending on the reading speed, on the time needed to solve the riddles and on whether all videos have been watched completely.

You can play the game at home, in school or in any other place with internet connections. It is best played on a computer, laptop or on a tablet with internet connection. It does not work that well on a smartphone.

There are no costs than the costs for the internet connection.

Instructions for playing the game and solving the riddles

The main tool of the game is an interactive chat with letters appearing on the screen as if someone is writing. The player interact with Selma mainly by this chat. If you have the feeling that the letters are appearing to fast, just wait until everything is written on the screen. You will have your own time to read everything, and you determine when the game continues, by clicking of the words that are highlighted in blue. Only then, the next parts will open.

Whenever there's more to tell, some words appear highlighted in blue. Just click on those words and more details on the topics will be provided.

Sometimes several sections of a sentence or paragraph appear highlighted in blue. Then you have to choose one option. But most of the time you have the possibility to select the other options in the course of the game.

There are some riddles to solve in the course of the game. It might be complicated to solve some of them at the first time. However, you will always be taken back to the different options if you haven't found the right solution yet. Don't give up. Sometimes it's just the spelling. Try to write / phrase your answer a little differently. If you don't manage to solve the puzzles at all: We have hidden the answers at the end of this handout :-).

Throughout the game, you will meet Selma in person. She has recorded short video messages throughout her journey that explain where she is and what she is doing. You may not understand everything Selma tells you, because her English pronunciation may be different from yours or you may not know some words. That's why in the next section we have written down all the videotext for you, so that you can read what Selma wants to tell you. If English is not your native language and you want to translate the texts, just copy and paste them into a digital translation system, e.g. www.deepl.com/ or <https://translate.google.de/>.

Additionally, in the course of the game you will find some audio files with conversations from other characters that appear in the game. You can also find these in the next chapter as text version.

4. Texts of Selma's video messages and audio conversations

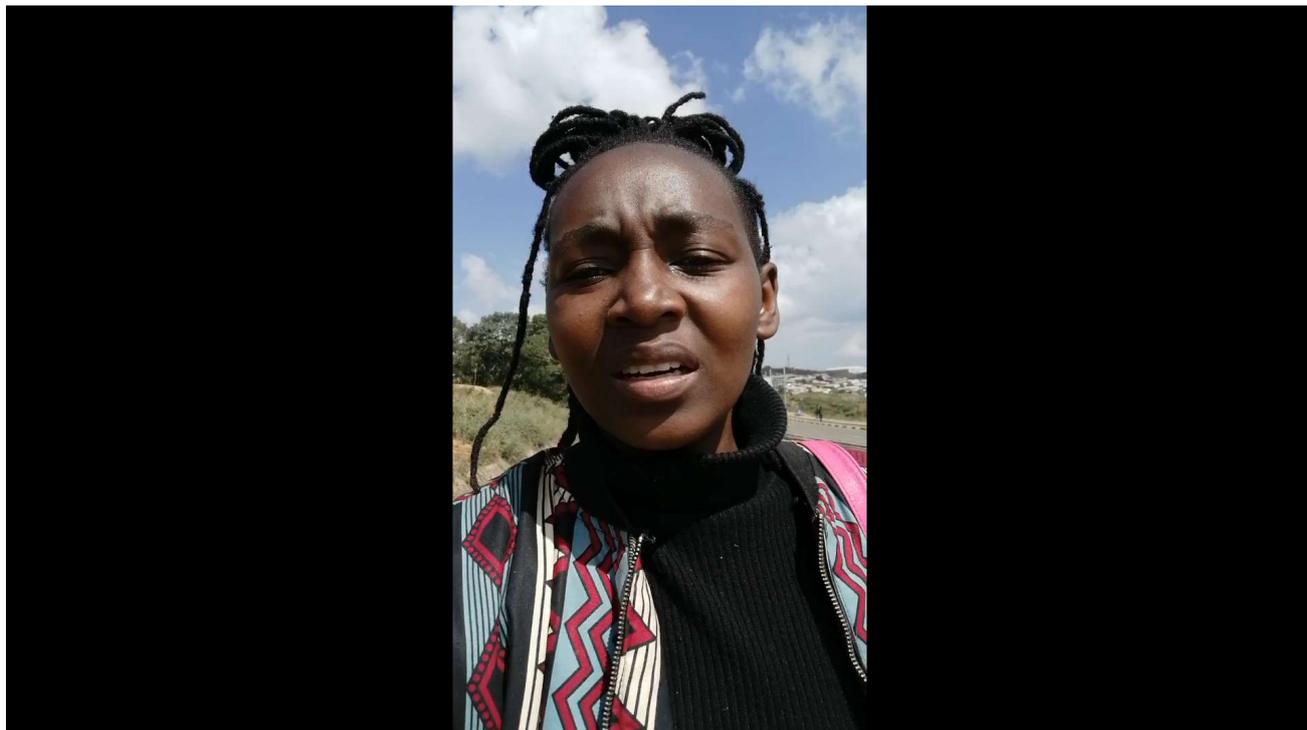
Chapter 1: Video-message 1 – Introduction of Selma and the situation of coal mining in Malawi



Situation: This is a video, that Selma puts online as a form of activism: to address the issues of coal mining and inform the public of this problem.

Text: Hey there! I am Selma Nagombe and what you see here is a small little village Balazomba in Northern Malawi, close to the city of Karonga. I grew up on my family's farm, right over there. You can see it. That's where I grew up. Although I live in the city of Karonga now I am still very attached to my home. And to the people who live here. But recently, we have had some problems here. And I don't know what else to do anymore to get some –some justice. Northern Malawi is very rich in natural resources, natural resources like coal for example, in open pit mining. You don't dig tunnels underground. The coal is very close to the surface, so mining companies just dig a big hole and can extract the coal right there. That sounds like good news, doesn't it? This is exactly what we thought as well, when we saw the first truck of the Elvo Mining company arriving in this village. We figured it would bring jobs to our jobless youth in this village, and better infrastructures, like schools, because school is very far from here, and hospitals, hospitals are very far. And we saw this as an opportunity, an opportunity that could help everyone. We saw a lot of potential benefits. We realized that the benefits weren't for us but other people. And, none of these promises, that Elvo made, were fulfilled. Instead, the company buys more and more land, their coal pits popping up everywhere. Even close to our houses where we sleep, where we live. Families who have been living on this land for generations and generations were being pressured to move. You can imagine, that's out mothers ground. he mining is contaminating the soil of farmland, which results in poor harvests or even people or farm animals getting sick. Another huge problem is that the entire village of Balazomba is cut off from water supply since Elvo's machines damaged a pipe. Which means, the only source of fresh water is a well, that is half an hour by foot. If you are interested to learn more about what happened to our village Balazomba or if you just want to get in touch with me, just click "contact me"

Chapter 2: Video-message 2 – Escaped from university



Situation: Selma just managed to escape from two armed men who were looking for her at her university. While talking, she walks along a street, sometimes she looks back over her shoulder to see if she is being followed. She is slightly out of breath and talks directly into her phone, her voice a little hushed as if she is trying to prevent other people from hearing.

Text: „ I made it! I made it out! I’m so glad you helped me escape! You know, the police arrived and the men were distracted long enough for me to sneak out of the back door. But now I really have to get home to my family to warn them. See you soon!“

Chapter2: Audio 1 - Argument between two neighbors

Situation: The two speakers Stanley (man) and Erika (woman) both live in a village, close to which the coal mining company Elvo does open pit mining. The two speakers are neighbors, who used to get along really well but because they have different opinions on the question of mining, their relationship is strained. Before this scene happened, the protagonist, called Selma, who publically accused Elvo, arrived at the village. Both neighbors try to convince her either to act in a certain way – keep up the resistance and even go further with it, or to apologize to Elvo. At the point, where Selma starts recording the conversation (that is where this dialogue starts), their discussion has turned into a full-blown argument.

Text:

Man: You don’t know that for a fact.

Woman: Right, because this information wasn’t made transparent.

Man: They did build a well instead.

Woman: That well is an hour by foot!

Man: It's just for now. Every company is demanded to give back to the community and they will do it. Elvo is the future. It's in our best interest to cooperate with them. If we are forthcoming and show them what this region has to offer, they will be more willing to invest.

Woman: We can't just wait for things to get better. Harvests are going down. Those past few years, our farm hardly yielded enough to feed my family.

Man: If you feel your farm isn't good enough for you anymore, why don't you move away? Go to the city, if you despise it so much to live here.

Woman: Don't you understand? Our land has been feeding the family for generations. The yield is going down now BECAUSE of the mining. Elvo is contamination the land with their wastewaters and the coal lying around that's washed onto our fields when it rains. I doubt they even carried out an environmental impact assessment. They are legally obliged to do that, you know?

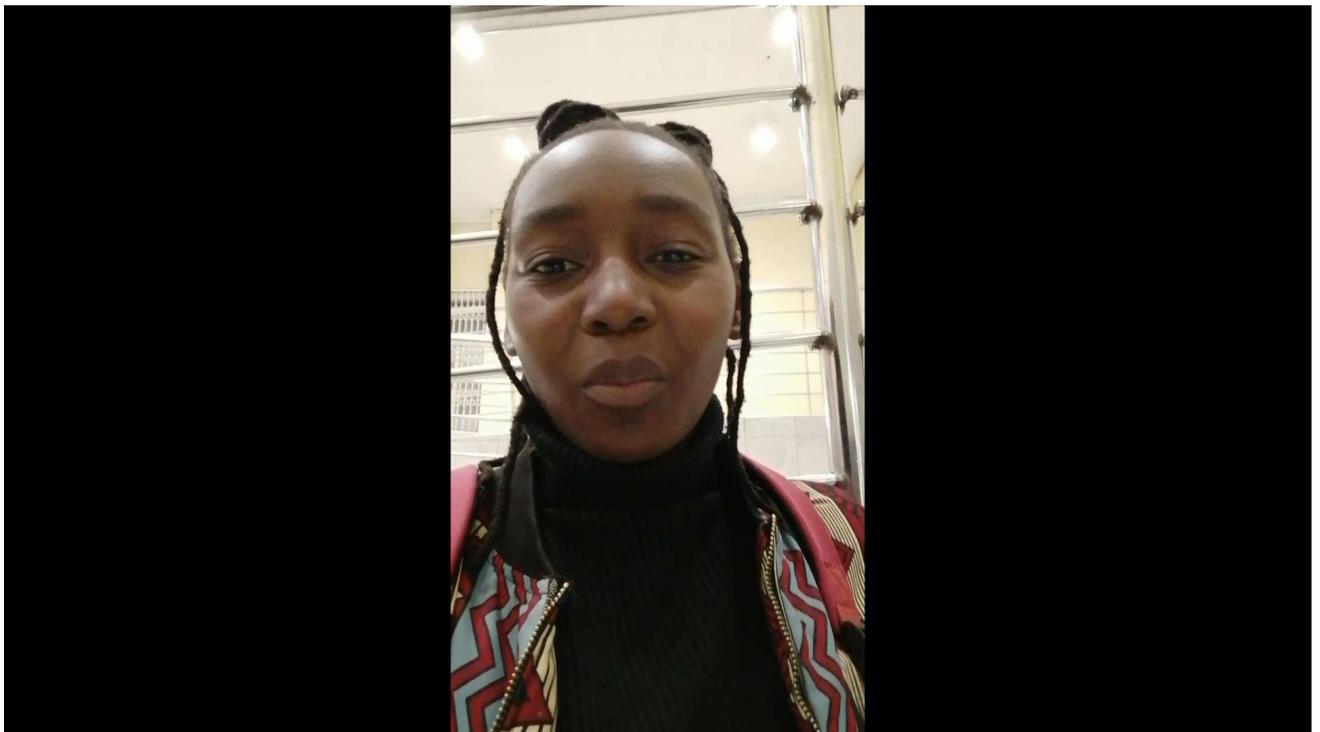
Man: Well, why don't you just leave? If you're lucky, Elvo might even pay you off for your land.

Woman: Like they did with Susan and George?

Man: Exactly.

Woman: Oh, they did pay them, all right: 50,000 Kwachas

Chapter 2: Video-message 3 – Lilongwe airport



Situation: Selma is about to leave Malawi for the first time in her life. She is anxious because she is heading towards an unknown future.

Text: Well, I'm at Lilongwe Airport now, about to board a plane for the very first time in my life. But, I feel quite guilty for those carbon dioxide emissions I'm causing. But, I guess there's no way around it this time, and Erika was pretty clear about this. And speaking of guilt, I feel so bad about all this money! My neighbors and my family they have been saving this money for years, and they have giving it all to me. But I'm so grateful ... yeah but I'm also absolutely freaked out. All their hopes are resting on me now. This is scary, to say the least. I really need to do right by them. Yeah, that's my flight now. I need to go.

Chapter 4: Video-message 4 – Amazonian rainforest



Situation: Selma is in a small village in the Amazonian rainforest. She sits in front of the lush underbrush of the rainforest. From her perspective, she can see the village square. A meeting is about to start and people are gathering, the little square is filling up with ten or so people. Also, there is her accomplice, Julio, who is seated close by and who explained the concept of Buen Vivir to her just a few minutes ago. She sometimes looks at him to see if what she says is right. I will add loud birdsongs.

Text: Yeah, alright, so Julio here is a shy person on the camera, so I hope I sum up these things correctly. So Buen Vivir is actually not unlike Ubuntu. The original concept is from indigenous people and has many different names. Buen Vivir means "good life". However, if you live according to Buen Vivir it doesn't mean your highest goal is your personal well-being or comfort based on economic growth. It does not put humans central stage but aims to achieve a balance between all that exists on this planet. Nature itself is considered a subject and has rights of its own, you can imagine, interesting. What is interesting is, since 2008, Buen Vivir is enshrined in Ecuador's Constitution. That means, if someone - an individual, a company, or a government for example - is violating those rights, they can be legally sued in court. However, Julio also told me, he told me that it's still not that easy and the political reality often falls short. I guess it's an important first step but still a long way to go from there. And, did I explain this correctly? All right, Julio over here looks to be a happy man – and that's makes me happy too. He's giving me thumbs up.

Chapter 5: Audio2: Discussion of two shareholders

Situation: Two shareholder are sitting in a café in front of Elvos headquarter. They see the demonstration against Elvo. And they start to discuss if investing in Elvo shares in the future makes sense if Elvo do not respect environmental and social standards in countries like Malawi.

Text:

Woman: "Why now though? Value's going up, I doubt the upward tendency will weaken any time soon. I'd stay on board."

Man: "I don't see this working in the long term. The world is changing, everyone's getting more and more concerned about all kinds of issues..."

Woman: "What issues?"

Man: "Haven't you noticed those people? Yeah, there always used to be the odd bearded guy lurking around at shareholder meetings, weaving some kind of banner, being all morally upright and what not. But this time, it's a full-blown demonstration, right around the corner. The cars can't even pass because they are crowding the street."

Woman: "They certainly caught YOUR attention."

Man: "Well no, I'm just saying, I'm not the only one who notices. Even regular people nowadays get concerned about ESG standards being met, they want it all environmentally friendly and socially sustainable."

Woman: "You can't make actual money if you have to keep everyone's interest in mind all the time. If a company like Elvo had to consider environmental and social interests on every step of the way... And anyway, isn't it still good to invest into a state like Malawi - even if the practice isn't all perfect, rather than not investing at all?"

Man: "I completely agree. All I'm saying is: If the majority of investors step back from investing in non ESG portfolios, Elvos stock will fall. So isn't it in our best interest to..."

Woman: "Excuse me, but this is... don't be ridiculous!"

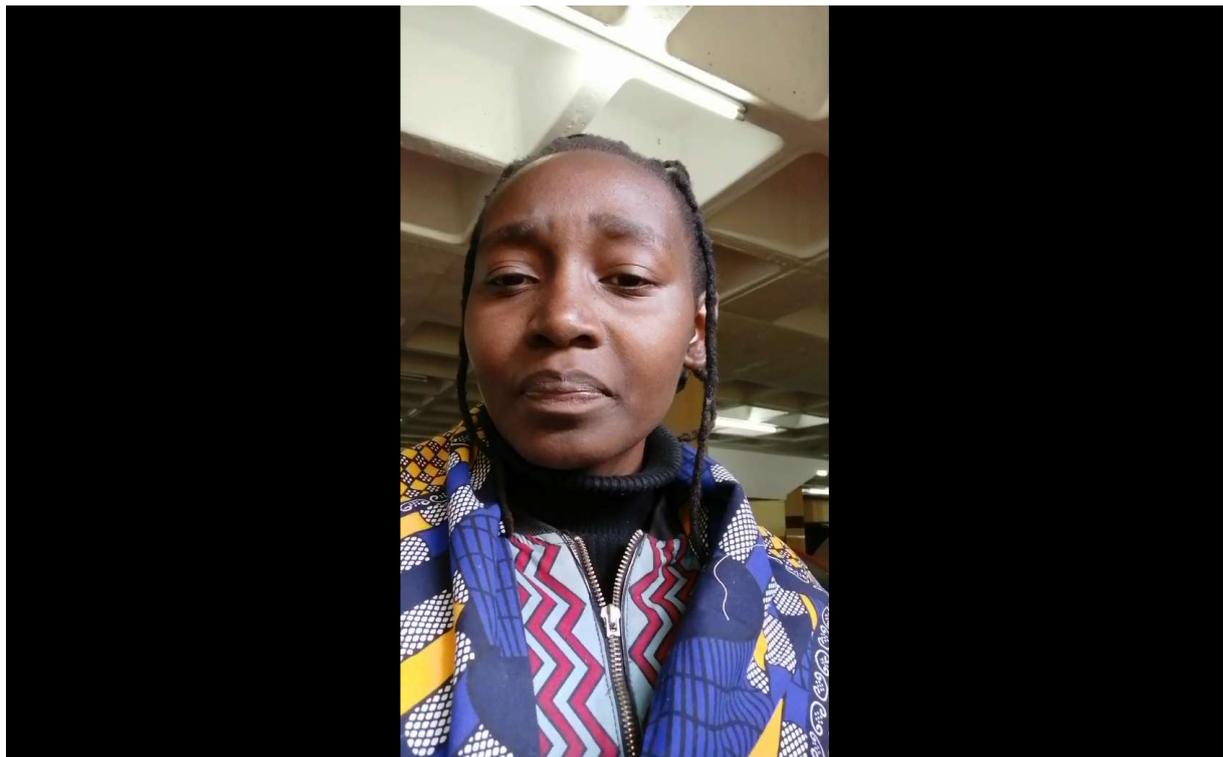
Chapter 5: Video-message 5 – Elvo Headquarters



Situation: Selma sneaked into the building and is about to deliver a speech at a shareholders' meeting. She is quite nervous about it, and a bit nervous, that people might find out that she doesn't belong here. She hides in the toilet cubicle to practice for this speech and get some last minute advice from the players.

Text: I made it in! Thanks to you! But I've been so focused on getting into this building, I completely forgot to prepare what it is I actually want to say. So I came here first, where I'm alone, no one is here, I am alone to have a moment to think. I'm super nervous, I'm really super nervous to talk in front of these shareholders and the Elvo representatives. Basically, a crowd full of rich people who are more and more powerful than I am and probably they won't like me at all. So at least I have to have some notes on what to say. As Sarina told me, I probably have just a few minutes to get my perspective across. So I have to choose carefully, which points to cover. Pleeeeease, can you help me?

Chapter 6: Video-message 6 – Frankfurt after shareholder’s meeting



Situation: Selma was forced to leave the shareholders’ meeting and unsure whether her speech showed any effect at all. She feels miserable. It’s raining, she’s cold and she thinks all her efforts were in vain.

Text: So, I walked up on stage, my knees actually shaking - I'm not kidding. But once I started talking, I felt really calm. My voice was loud and very clear. In the second row, there was one short haired lady with a Gucci handbag, who smiled at me. Everyone else seemed... Well, I can't even tell. It was difficult to read their faces. So myself, I did what you told me to - I delivered my points. Or at least the first two, but then some security officers came running towards me and pulled me off the stage. Apparently, they realized that I was not Sarina, imagine. Some shareholders got up from their seats as well, suddenly everyone was talking loudly, the whole situation got really heated. But I couldn't see what was actually happening because Security shoved me out through a back door. They wrote down my name – my actual name, that is – and all my personal data. They said they will forward it to the police. I thought they'd lock me up immediately, but they just kicked me out her in the ground parking lot underneath the Elvo headquarters. I guess I should be happy about it, but I just feel lost, I feel totally lost. I just don't know. I don't know if this speech helped my cause at all or if it just made everything worse. The shareholders seemed really angry. Of course, no one likes to be told that they assisted in such awful thing, you know. Knowingly or not. No one likes that I mean, who likes to be held responsible? No one. I'm afraid this was all just...how did I think I could change anything? I'm just one person, just one single person, no one cares about my opinion. This sucks. “

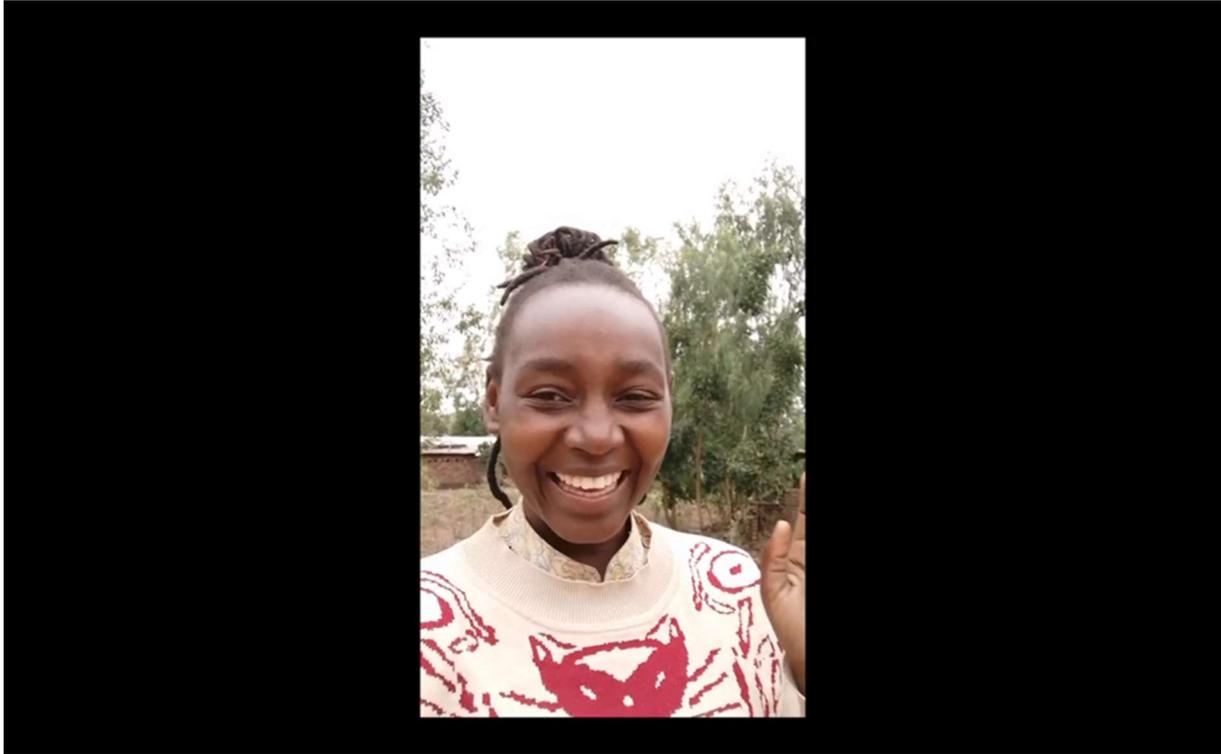
Chapter 6 Audio 3: Lady from Elvo's shareholders meeting

Situation: Selma meets the lady who smiled at her during her speech at the shareholders meeting. The lady talks to her

Text: Aren't you the person who just spoke on the shareholders meeting? Look at you, why make such a sad face? Like you got any reason to feel sorry for yourself, when you just delivered the most spectacular speech I've ever heard. Granted, some people might be angry with you, some might just be scared that stocks will fall now. Others might be sincerely sympathetic. No matter. What's the fact is that quite a few shareholders, myself included, have already started selling which will shortly cause the shares value to plummet, sending Elvo on a downwards trend.

We might look like a bunch of villains to you, who are only after their own profit. And mind you – we mostly are. The majority of us are people, who – by pure chance or due to an economic system that favors those that are already rich – happen to have so much money, we simply lost track of what this money is actually doing while we are busy making more... We are not all bad. But it's so easy to overlook what you are causing when those effects likely are geographically far away or in the future or are just so complex and abstract that they don't immediately resonate on an emotional level. I'm sorry. I sound like I'm trying to make excuses. What I mean to say is: You did exactly the right thing by confronting us with the consequences of our actions and transactions. You know what? There's one thing I might be able to help you with. I have let... money support the wrong cause for too long. Now it's time to invest in something much better. Let me just...

Chapter 6: Video-message 7 - Happy End



Situation: Happy end. Selma is back in Malawi, proud, and happy about what she achieved.

Text: I'm sorry I did not text you for a while now, after all you did for me! I've been just soooo busy putting all that I've learned on my journey into actions. I founded an activist group, together with Erika of course and my brother Jacob. Yes! He was released from prison, because Elvo dropped their charges! Mysteriously just a few minutes after my speech hit the 10.000.000 viewer's mark on YouTube. What a coincidence. It was just the three of us at first, but of course supported by Julio, Micaela, Ramiro, Sarina –you know all these people I was so lucky to have met on my journey. So we're still in touch and they have helped a lot. We became more and more. It was friends first and other family members of course, then the neighbors. So the more we become, the more we can achieve. People stand together. United we stand and divided we fall. That's how it is supposed to be like. Together we've been organizing demonstrations and social media campaigns, once we even blocked the road to the mines so Elvo had to shut down business for two solely days, you can imagine. All the while gathering evidence to be used in court. Even Mr. Gama finally took the time to reply personally. What I really wanted to say is: Thank you! Thank you for helping me. Thank you so very much for helping me. Of course, there are still so many unresolved problems and unsolved issues and so on, and so much that needs to be done. But at least now I know, that it's possible to make a difference and initiate change.

Chapter 1: Who do they work for? – Elvo; Chapter 1: Number of karonnga police? – 0887389288;
Chapter 1: License number: NB 2087; Chapter 2: How much was that in dollars? -60; Chapter 2:
Can you live from that? - not at all; Chapter 3: Supermarket in Quito? - Tia la Luz; Chapter 4:
Democratic measure? – Votes; Chapter 4: Stock market first question? – 100; Chapter 4: Stock
market second question? – 50; Chapter 4: Carmen – votes, polls, elections etc.

Answers to the riddles: