

# Hivos International

people unlimited

## Development cooperation: pushed onto the free market?

As exciting as the free market may be, its excesses are common knowledge, and even first-year economics students know better than to entrust public goods and public needs to the whims of the market. In spite of these risks, the Dutch government appears determined to use this approach as a panacea for tricky problems. After taking this approach with telecommunications, public transport and utilities providers, the government is about to turn



Photo: Marleen Kortekaas

other services in the Netherlands over to the free market, including health care and development cooperation. These changes appear in the plans of Development Cooperation Minister Van Ardenne for new financing arrangements for private development organizations, which are to take effect in 2007. The minister intends to use the '25 percent rule' as a vehicle to bring market forces into play. Any development organisation hoping to obtain a grant will need to raise at least 25 percent of its budget independently. Few development organizations in the Netherlands are able to meet this requirement at this time. If this rule is indeed implemented, fierce competition for the favours of private donors appears inevitable.

Hivos considers this development as exceedingly undesirable. Most likely, the market will dictate supply – far from an ideal prospect for development cooperation. In development cooperation, catering to demand is absolutely essential to achieve lasting results. Hivos is a classic example in this respect. At present, Hivos depends on the Dutch government for 90% of its funding. Active in fields such as culture, ICT and human rights, rather than food aid and medical care, Hivos has no opportunities for raising enough additional revenues through private donations to meet the new standard. Should we abandon our strengths – innovation, individualistic themes, risk taking – and focus our energies on 'lucrative' marketing activities? Obviously, the question is rhetorical. Hivos will not pursue such a course. These principles may come at a high price, if parliament approves the idea that allocating grants in development cooperation should be made contingent upon good marketing rather than upon high quality.

Some competition – even in development cooperation – is not a bad idea. Such competition should, however, revolve around what really matters: quality and results in the South! Not the favours of private donors in Dutch society.

Manuela Monteiro  
Managing director



### Hivos-NCDO Culture Fund supports artistic expression in developing countries

The Hivos-NCDO Culture Fund is dedicated to supporting initiatives in the Netherlands that promote artistic expressions from non-Western cultures. Hivos and the NCDO (National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development) have established the fund to help Dutch cultural organizations that encourage cultural productions in developing countries and present them in the Netherlands. Eventually, the fund will also organize activities for the Dutch public, involving artists, journalists and film makers from the South.

Hivos and the NCDO perceive combining means and cultural expertise as an opportunity for operating more efficiently and transparently. Hivos has a record of providing financial and substantive support to cultural organizations in developing countries based on the principle that culture enhances cultural awareness and paves the way for critiquing one's own society. The NCDO has experience with public relations and raising support for international cooperation and promotes cultural expressions in the Netherlands that convey visions and views from developing countries.

The Hivos-NCDO Culture Fund will accommodate social changes in its work and will approach art and culture as essential components of global citizenship today. The new fund hopes to use this strategy to highlight the vitality and innovative attributes of art and culture.

## Join the Dgroups community

Dgroups is a free and user-friendly tool for exchanging information on any development topic. Dgroups facilitates sharing of knowledge via the Internet or by e-mail between all kinds of people involved in similar activities and facing similar challenges all over the world.

The EFF list, moderated by Hivos partner IIAV, is an example of a dynamic and successful Dgroup. The objective of this online space is to promote human rights for women in Europe. Participants work towards the possible establishment of a European Feminist Forum. Since this Dgroup was launched in October 2004, almost 200 people have joined and are actively exchanging information and experiences from all across the continent. Another example is C3Net, a network for exchanging knowledge on effective use of ICTs as a means for earning a livelihood. Almost 150 people, most of them based in

developing countries, participate in C3net. This group is moderated by two practitioners in Tanzania and Uganda. The high level of trust between the participants in this group allows them to exchange openly and with confidence. Thanks to yearly face-to-face events where participants meet and continue their discussions, the group has proven to be a valuable network. The group's next meeting will take place in April 2005 in Uganda, with support from Hivos.

As these examples illustrate, Dgroups can evolve into a community of practice, helping people find peers everywhere in the world, who may provide help and share opinions, resources, etc. A sense of who people are in a group makes for a thriving environment in which messages are sent, information is shared, and knowledge is acquired. The Dgroups platform currently hosts almost 1,200 groups and 32,500 users. Hivos offers its partners free web



spaces on the Dgroups platform to host their own discussion forums. E-mail [dgroups@hivos.nl](mailto:dgroups@hivos.nl) for an application form.

*You can also join existing groups or discussions as a user. See [www.dgroups.org](http://www.dgroups.org) or [www.hivos.org](http://www.hivos.org) (news) for additional information.*



Photo: Linear

### May 10 + 11 Civil society and the state

At the end of 2004 Hivos signed a partnership agreement with the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), a renowned post-graduate research institute for development studies. The partnership aims to link the ISS' theoretical knowledge about civil-society-building with Hivos' practical experience. The main component of the collaboration is a 'knowledge network' linking NGOs in developing countries, Hivos and ISS in a programme comprising research, training, a web platform and an annual seminar.

This year's seminar on May 10 and 11 is entitled *Confronting the State, Engaging the State: Civil society building in adverse political conditions*. The seminar will focus mainly on the relationship between civil society and the state and will analyse civil society strategies in post-conflict, transitional and oppressive states, and states where corruption, debt or capacity shortages marginalize civil society efforts.

[www.civilsocietybuilding.net](http://www.civilsocietybuilding.net)

### Readers survey

Several partners have completed and returned the Hivos International reader survey as requested. This survey was included in the previous issue and appears on the Hivos website as well. The responses to the reader survey will enable Hivos to accommodate readers better than ever. We hope that many readers will tell us their views about the newsletter. Completed reader surveys may be returned through 1 July 2005.

The reader survey is available at:

<http://www2.hivos.nl/questionnaire/survey.php?sid=28>

## Defending human rights

European diplomats and politicians will be receiving a special manual in the next few months. The manual contains suggestions towards implementing the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders. The suggestions are the outcome of an international conference about these guidelines held in late 2004, after the EU had adopted them under the Irish presidency earlier that year. As the upcoming EU president, the Netherlands initiated the gathering. The manual and the conference reveal that the Amnesty International Netherlands and Hivos lobbying campaign has been successful, reports Chris Collier of Hivos. Chris, Senior Policy Officer for Human Rights, coordinates the Hivos campaign. 'Partner organizations all over the world are telling us that activists are being threatened and attacked.' Hivos has combined its traditional financial support to human rights activists with lobbying for the past two years. Chris Collier: 'European policymakers and diplomats are becoming increasingly interested. The Dutch government has positioned itself within Europe as a defender of human rights defenders and hopes to organize a conference again this year to assess what the implementation of the guidelines has achieved thus far.' During the months ahead, one of the priorities of Hivos and Amnesty is to raise awareness about the guidelines among other international NGOs, Hivos partner organizations and local human rights defenders.

## Revolution in Kyrgyzstan

Following the example of neighbouring former Soviet republics Ukraine and Georgia, part of the population in Kyrgyzstan has revolted against the political authorities. President Askar Akaev left the country after the revolution on 24 March. Hivos partners in this Central Asian state are following the course of events closely.

Hivos Central Asia Programme Officer Marcel van der Heijden describes Kyrgyzstan as a poor country with a largely rural population. 'Poverty has increased under Akaev's semi-authoritarian regime in recent years. This is especially true in the South, where unrest is greater. In the North of Kyrgyzstan the population is more affluent. Most of Akaev's supporters come from the North.'

Hivos has supported several NGOs in Kyrgyzstan since 1994. Hivos now has sixteen partners in the country, dedicated to different areas of policy, such as human rights, culture, gender and economic development. They include the Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KABHR), the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), the Center Interbilm (CB) and Civil Society Against Corruption (CSAC).

'The revolution in March happened very quickly and fortunately without any bloodshed,' explains Marcel. Like the Hivos partners in Kyrgyzstan, he has mixed feelings about the future. 'I see many challenges ahead. No one knows who will win the presidential elections scheduled for 26 June 2005. After the elections, establishing political stability will become one of the main concerns.'

## After the tsunami

### Partner organization SIFFS coordinates relief efforts in India

After the tsunami, the afflicted Indian district of Nagapattinam was flooded with volunteers and emergency supplies. The South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies and its fellow organization Sneha opened a centre to coordinate the relief efforts. The local Hivos partner averted chaos and prevented agencies less familiar with the area from taking over the reconstruction.

Deputy district head Ranvir Prasad is delighted with the coordination centre. He is particularly pleased about the computer programs that the SIFFS IT team has designed to record where relief efforts are in progress in Nagapattinam, and where they are still needed. The team also controls the flow of supplies from the warehouse to the refugee camp. Everything that goes astray is traceable. The programmes have effectively prevented corruption and inefficient use of resources.

Ranvir Prasad: 'The government needs help deploying manpower and allocating financial aid, especially with over 30,000 new homes under construction.' The ambitions of SIFFS and Sneha extend beyond implementation. They want a say in government policy on housing, education, healthcare and economic development. They hope to secure the future for the local population.

Ultimately, the coordination centre might serve as a site for regional policy development.



Photo: Hilde Janssen

## A wave of aid

On 26 December a deadly tidal wave flooded the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean. Approximately 300,000 people from 49 different countries drowned. In the Indonesian coastal zone of Aceh alone, the death toll amounted to 230,000. Casualties were high in Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives and Somalia as well. Hundreds of thousands became dependent on national and international relief efforts. Aid has poured in from everywhere. Hivos, among many other organizations, supports partners and projects towards reconstruction, including the National Fisheries Solidarity in Sri Lanka, the South-Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies in India and the Sintesa farmer organization in Indonesia. Following the initial stage of emergency relief, the focus is now mainly on reconstruction and prevention of corruption. Hivos believes it is essential that the population participate in these efforts. Local partners are entitled to use Hivos grants previously acquired, in addition to the three million euros that Hivos has given them. These funds are part of the proceeds of a national fundraising drive of Dutch relief organizations. Hivos also provides technical support and encourages partnership arrangements and lobby towards policy development.

## 3 defenders

Enclosed with this Hivos International you will find the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders. English, Arabic, Chinese and Russian versions of the guidelines can be downloaded from the Internet:

<http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/GuidelinesDefenders.pdf>

From the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders:

- EU diplomats and politicians should make their recognition of human rights activists visible through publicity, visits or invitations
- The situation of human rights activists should be a standard item on the agenda of diplomatic and political dialogues between the EU and third countries.

## Hivos Culture Fund celebrates its tenth anniversary

### 'Art nourishes the spirit'

**They come from different cultures and need interpreters to communicate. But the artistic leaders of the Indonesian theatre group Payung Hitam and the Dutch group The Lunatics are on the same wavelength. They are working together on the drama production Black Moon, which will premiere in the Netherlands in early June, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Hivos Culture Fund.**

Hivos uses the Hivos Culture Fund (HCF) to encourage the cultural sector in developing countries to influence in society. Creative expression, intercultural interactions and reflection on identity are the main themes. In keeping with these goals, Hivos invited The Lunatics to join forces with an Indonesian group to develop a theatre production in celebration of HCF's anniversary. The objective of this performance is to interest a broad and especially a young audience in the relationship between international cooperation and culture. Partner organization Kelola, dedicated to professionalizing Indonesian art, helped The Lunatics find Payung Hitam. 'Their theatre resembles ours. And they are very experienced. This enables us to work together as equals.'

#### Flexible

'We use little text and few traditional storylines in our work. The message is left up to the audience.' Koos Hogeweg describes his style of theatre: his modern theatre is often performed outdoors, thus making the natural surroundings part of the play. Abstract concepts are elaborated through visual and physical metaphors.' Artistic director Rachman Sabur describes Payung Hitam's work in almost identical terms. 'We are similar to The Lunatics. We convey the same messages, even though our native languages are different. This is what makes our joint product flexible and inspirational.'

'Payung Hitam' means 'Black Umbrella' in Bahasa Indonesia. Rachman Sabur continues: 'When we had to think of a name for our first performance, I happened to be holding a black umbrella. The striking symbolism continues to figure in my performances. Umbrellas are comforting: they protect us from wind and rain – metaphors for sorrow. Our plays address the struggle between mankind and nature. And with ourselves as a part of this nature. However insignificant mankind may be, we can transcend this struggle. Herein lies the comfort – and hope – of our theatre. The objective is to reveal the power of mankind. Above all, theatre should be entertaining.'



Photo: Payung Hitam

#### Strength

Koos Hogeweg: 'Indonesian theatre makers include a lot of simmering anger in their plays. Their humour has social-political connotations, although they might not even be aware of it. They are so used to social discontent that they probably include it in their plays without thinking.' Like Hogeweg, Rachman Sabur says that he has no social-political agenda. 'Theatre and politics are separate entities to me.' Only when the conversation turns to the cultural policy of the Indonesian government does he become more agitated. 'The few grants provided are allocated to traditional art, an art which confirms the old identity of Indonesia. Innovative theatre such as ours hardly stands a chance.' His group has existed for over two decades thanks largely to support from abroad, thanks to the fact that all staff work at full-time jobs alongside their theatre careers and – as Koos Hogeweg explains – 'the discipline and creativity to make scarce resources go a long way. The Lunatics can learn a lot from these practices.' Suppose the Indonesian government had more money. Would it not be better to use such resources to fight poverty and hunger? Surely, bread is more important than acting. 'No,' replies Rachman Sabur. 'Art nourishes the spirit, which is as important as nourishing the body. We need to have enough of both.'

Jens Middel

Hivos is a development organisation which stands for emancipation, democratisation and poverty alleviation in developing countries. For this purpose financial and political support is given to more than 750 local private organisations in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and South-East Europe. Their operations concern economics, culture and the arts, human rights and Aids, sustainable development and gender, women and development: the five policy spearheads of Hivos. Part of the work has been decentralised to four regional offices in Zimbabwe, India, Indonesia and Costa Rica. They take care of an important part of the contacts with partner organisations.

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