

# Hivos International

people unlimited



Photo: Marleen Kortekaas

## Should we be applauding an extra 50 billion euro in aid?

Africa and the debt issue were high on the agenda at the G8 summit in Gleneagles last July. At first glance, the outcome sounds quite decent: the leaders

of the rich Western countries promised 50 billion euros extra in aid and said they would waive the debts of eighteen impoverished countries. 'Surely a good thing', said my neighbour. But insiders know that appearances are deceiving. The extra funds will not be available until 2010, and the debt alleviation applies only to some of the debts in a small number of countries. Even more disillusioning: the debt cancellation will be deducted from the regular aid budgets.

So they are paying for it themselves in a roundabout sort of way. It is tempting to wallow in cynicism and take to the barricades, railing against international politics. But it is easy to criticize, and this attitude does not do justice to the great vitality surrounding the summit. For example, last July there was finally proper attention to

the Millennium Development Goals. Thanks to the Live8 concerts, two billion people all over the world learned about these goals. Millions of people sent instant messages, signed petitions and wore white wristbands to remind their government leaders of their promise to make the millennium goals become reality. Millions of people put pressure on politicians to achieve the MDGs. And this pressure actually had an effect on politicians. And so it is very important that we foster this vitality, that we seize the 'disappointment' of Gleneagles to put even more pressure on politics, both in our own country and internationally. We will have another chance in September, when the balance will be drawn up in New York of our progress towards the MDGs, followed in December by a new WTO round in Hong Kong. A lot of talking is done in intergovernmental circuits. Now is not the time for the international movement of world citizens and civil society organizations to fall silent.

Manuela Monteiro, Managing Director



Foto: Ilya van Marle

## Yvonne Vera (1964 – 2005)

Author Yvonne Vera passed away in Toronto on 7 April 2005. Yvonne belonged to the new generation of Zimbabwean writers. Fifteen years old when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, her youth had only one subject: the national struggle for liberation. It forms the background to her literary work.

Today she is Zimbabwe's best-known female author, and in the meantime has perhaps become even more important than her male colleagues. Five novels of hers were published, as

well as a collection of short stories, in the space of thirteen years. Her breakthrough came in 1994 with her third book *Without A Name*. It received Zimbabwe's highest literary prize. All of her works to appear after that were awarded international and African literature prizes. Yvonne Vera is credited with breaking down the barriers between women's private and public lives. Her books are about the effect of political choices on 'ordinary' women. And they revolve around the many taboos that women must live with.

Yvonne Vera served as director of the National Gallery in Bulawayo from 1997 to 2003. In a few years' time the Gallery became Bulawayo's most important cultural centre. The exhibitions she organized brought the township residents over the threshold and into the museum.

Hivos was a major financier of the cultural activities organized by Yvonne Vera during her more than six years as director of the National Gallery in Bulawayo.

In 2000 she was one of the Hivos guests at the celebration of Hivos Culture Fund's fifth anniversary. Yvonne Vera died too young and this is a huge loss. She leaves a rich cultural heritage.

Ireen Dubel, April 2005

## Annual report for 2004 in three languages

The Hivos annual report for 2004 has been published. As in previous years, both the paper and the digital versions are available in three languages: English, Spanish and Dutch. The report gives an overview of the activities of Hivos and its partner organizations. Hivos partners may order a paper version or a CD-ROM of the annual report at the e-mail address [info@hivos.nl](mailto:info@hivos.nl). The annual reports can also be downloaded at [www.hivos.nl](http://www.hivos.nl).

## Sex Selection Leads to Millions of Missing Girls

In February 2005, the India Regional Office of Hivos organized a Round Table on Sex Selection in India: Issues and Approaches. Participants from the women's movement, the health movement, the child rights movement, and other social movements addressed the question: How can we carry forward in social and political practice a history of serious actions that will lead to fundamental changes in the present social systems of increasing gender inequality and stop the practice of sex selection? Census and other data presented at the Round Table showed that there has been a precipitous decline in the child sex ratio (number of female children per 1000 male children in the 0-6 year age group) in India. In 1971 there was only one district out of 602 with a child sex ratio of less than 849. In 2001, there were 14 districts where the child sex ratio was below 800, and between 1991 and 2001, the number of districts with a child sex ratio between 800 and 849 had increased from one to 31. Until the 1980s, declining child sex ratio was seen primarily in north and west India. The southern and eastern states were considered to be insulated. The 2001 census data show that this is no longer the case. Participants concluded that:

2-child norm + high gender bias + availability of technology for sex selection = missing girls

Though sex selection is illegal in India, there are serious problems in the implementation of the law. More fundamentally, changes in attitude and an end to discrimination against girl children are urgently needed. Clearly, broad-based alliances and coordinated action are necessary to tackle a problem of this complexity and magnitude. Participants drew up an action plan and made commitments to strengthen the campaign to end sex selection and sex selective abortion. Hivos pledged its support to the campaign by procuring financial support and by playing a social linking and information clearing house role. Ask for a copy of the report of this meeting via [himalatha@hivos-india.org](mailto:himalatha@hivos-india.org).

*(Jamuna Ramakrishna, Hivos India Regional Office)*

## Hivos studying paddy chain

The importance of paddy rice for Asia cannot be underestimated. 'And not just because many of the farmers work on rice fields', says Bishwadeep Ghose, Programme Officer for Sustainable Production of the Hivos Indian office. 'Another reason is because this rice is traded and consumed on a very large scale.' Hivos wants to gain a thorough understanding of the steps from paddy rice production to consumption in order to determine how interventions in this chain might improve the living earned by small producers. An international workshop on this topic was held in Hyderabad on 6 and 7 July. The workshop was part of an initiative of Hivos to study crops that are important in areas where there are many partners, such as coffee in Latin America. Participants – from activists and academics to bankers and policy makers – stressed the advantages of organic over conventional paddy production. Bishwadeep Ghose: 'Good quality, organically produced rice has potential for local markets. And it is cheaper because it uses fewer chemicals and pesticides.' The necessity of shortening the paddy chain was also pointed out. Participants recommended that Hivos make possible support, quality standards and certification, as well as access to information, resources and markets. And fair wages and safe working conditions: factors that are now often absent in paddy production, certainly among migrant workers and women. 'Hivos is currently investigating how to incorporate these elements into the paddy chain', says Bishwadeep Ghose.



## Situation in Bolivia is tense

Early elections were held in Bolivia on 4 December. Heavy pressure from the popular movement in which indigenous leader Evo Morales played a leading role forced President Carlos Mesa to step down. One reason for the tense situation is the growing self-awareness of the country's indigenous population. They are demanding a new constitution, one in which their rights are better anchored. Moreover, new energy legislation, in which the government proposes limiting taxation of foreign oil com-

panies, has aroused much unrest. The primary focus is the export of natural gas: only a small amount of the income from this now accrues to Bolivia. The regional contrasts between the highlands and lowlands also play a role. Hivos supports a variety of partners in Bolivia focusing on sustainable forest management and strengthening indigenous organizations. APCOB is an NGO that works with several indigenous organizations for sustainable forest management. In the coming five

years another association, PROMAB, will assist farmers and indigenous communities in the northern Amazon region in Bolivia in the sustainable management of tropical forests. CEJIS provides legal support to various indigenous and farmer organizations so that they can obtain legal title to land and territory. Together with Alliance2015 partner IBIS, Hivos also assists in the preparatory work of indigenous organizations for their participation in the meeting to amend the constitution in 2006.

## Microinsurance for HIV/AIDS affected people discussed

Hivos has the intention to facilitate the development of microinsurance for HIV/AIDS affected people and their local communities. In preparation of a workshop on HIV/AIDS and microinsurance, Hivos conducted a survey amongst 20 microfinance partner organisations in seven African countries. One of the outcomes was the huge need for more resources to further the development of effective and viable microinsurance products. This workshop, jointly organised by partner organisation African Microfinance Network Afmin and Hivos, has enabled the sector to share experience. It has offered an opportunity to see how various approaches and strategies can be used by microfinance institutions, complementing other types of interventions by other organisations. It was agreed that health insurance is highly need-

ed but that quite a few challenges in how to operationalise it in various local circumstances are still ahead of us. Action plans were drawn up by the participating implementing microfinance institutions and network organisations. The next step for Hivos is to bring in this experience into a high-level international working group meeting in the German city of Munich in October. The object of this meeting is to discuss the main findings of 24 case studies of microinsurance operations from around the world in order to come to recommendations for the sector at large.

Download the report on the workshop in Addis Abeba at [www.microinsurancecenter.org](http://www.microinsurancecenter.org). There you will also find the latest news on the meeting in Munich.

## Kenya's constitution in danger

The adoption in Kenya of a new constitution has become uncertain. The draft that will be presented to the people in a referendum in December has been amended by parliament at the behest of government ministers. Several civil society organizations feel the amendments go much too far.

The present Rainbow Coalition, which is led by President Mwai Kibaki, came to power at the end of 2002. For many people this was an enormous liberation after the many years of corruption and human rights violations by the ruling KANU party. Kibaki made many promises, among them that he would fight corruption and introduce a new constitution within one hundred days. But in 2005 the euphoria turned into disappointment. According to many people, little has come of the promises made by the Rainbow Coalition. The draft version of the new constitution, the outcome of work by Kenyans from all parts of society in recent years, has been amended beyond recognition. Politicians were unable to accept the propos-

als for matters such as decentralization of power and introduction of a new post of prime minister, which would limit the president's power and eliminate his immunity. Several organizations, including Hivos partner Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change (CCCC), have initiated legal proceedings to declare the amendments to be unconstitutional. Via the media, they are also attempting to keep the debate going. Other organizations, such as Hivos partner National Convention Executive Council (NCEC), are calling on supporters to take to the streets. If the amended draft of the constitution is nevertheless presented to the population in December, its opponents will ask residents for a massive 'no' vote.

For further information:  
[www.ncamovement.org/home/index.asp](http://www.ncamovement.org/home/index.asp)  
[www.4cskenyatuitakayo.org](http://www.4cskenyatuitakayo.org)



## Breyten Breytenbach: 'Creative expression keeps politicians on their toes'

He defied the South African apartheid system with his resistance movement. Long years of imprisonment were intended to silence him. But Breyten Breytenbach has never held his tongue. He is still receiving prizes for his prose and poetry. The South African author was a guest speaker in early June at the Hivos symposium 'Beyond Diversity, Moving Towards MDG no. 9', where he spoke about the role of culture in development cooperation.

### *What does culture do for development?*

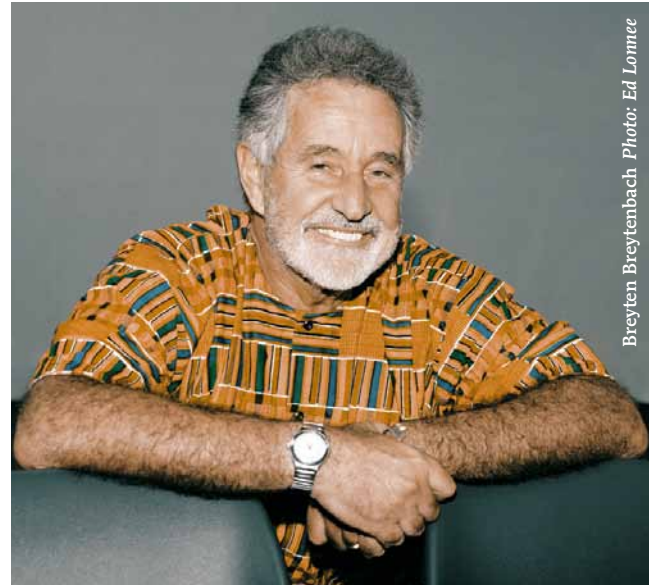
'Culture is primarily a policy concept. It sounds important, but it is frequently without substance. I prefer to talk about creative artistic expression – concrete political activities that touch on issues such as identity, ethics, diversity and injustice. Art reflects the fundamental need of human beings to express their consciousness, their understanding of life. Because art makes people aware of what is going on around them, it transforms society. Sometimes it entails a critical attitude. Or the mobilization of the people. Art contributed to the fall of apartheid in this way. Creative expression keeps politicians on their toes, which is always good for a country. Moreover, it can have economic influence. Just think of the bi-annual art festival Bienal Dak'Art in Senegal: a huge source of income for Dakar.'

### *How should creative expression be encouraged?*

'By offering artists the requisite resources, such as materials, studios and skills. And by encouraging national and international exchange of knowledge and experience. The latter is often forgotten, but not by Hivos. Their Hivos NCDO Culture Fund focuses on both aspects. A good example of intercultural exchange between North and South is the theatrical performance 'Black Moon', the Indonesian-Dutch co-production that had its premiere at the end of the symposium.'

*The symposium 'Beyond Diversity, Moving Towards MDG no. 9' celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Hivos Culture Fund. The main issue was whether 'culture' should be made the ninth UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG). Is this a good idea for Africa?*

'As for all development aid, when it comes to generating scope for creativity in Africa, support should go directly to civil society. It



Breyten Breytenbach Photo: Ed Lonnee

should not go through the UN, UNESCO or African governments. In exchange for dollars, UNESCO sticks a label on regions and monuments saying they have 'World Heritage' protection. But when they crumble and fall, there is no money to restore them. An example is the island of Gorée, where I work as adjunct director for the Pan-African Centre for Democracy, Development and Culture in Africa. The Millennium Development Goals too are basically just words. If we have a heart for culture, we will never let it become an MDG. It would be just one more empty promise, words that soothe our conscience but that hold no one responsible. World leaders know that the goals will not be attained. But do you think that even one of them will go to jail in 2015 because he lied to his people? In Africa, finally, financial aid often ends up in the pockets of corrupt politicians. Corruption is one of the biggest problems in the world. It is what we ought to address before all else.'

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.

Alliance 2015

TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

**Hivos Head Office**  
Raamweg 16, 2596 HL  
Den Haag  
Postbus 85565  
2508 CC Den Haag  
The Netherlands  
tel. + 31(0)70 376 55 00  
fax + 31 (0)70 362 46 00  
e-mail hivos@hivos.nl  
www.hivos.nl

**Regional Office Southern Africa**  
20 Phillips Avenue  
Belgravia  
P.O. Box 2227  
Harare / Zimbabwe  
tel. + 263 (0)4 706 704 /  
727 197 / 706 125  
fax + 263 (0)4 791 981  
e-mail chuma@hivos.co.zw

**Regional Office India**  
Flat no. 402, Eden Park  
No. 20 Vittal Mallya Road  
Bangalore – 560001 /  
India  
tel. + 91 (0)80 2227 03 67  
/ 2221 05 14  
fax + 91 (0)80 2227 03 67  
e-mail hivos@hivos-india.org

**Regional Office Central America**  
Del Centro Comercial Plaza  
Mayor, 320 este, sobre el  
Boulevard Rohrmoser,  
Pavas, San José / Costa Rica  
tel. + 506 231 08 48 /  
296 07 06  
fax + 506 232 29 74  
e-mail hivosro@hivos.or.cr

**Regional Office Southeast Asia**  
Jl. Brawijaya Raya No. 12A  
Kebayoran Baru  
Jakarta Selatan 12160  
Indonesia  
tel. + 62 21 724.4432  
fax + 62 21 723.0774  
e-mail hivos@hivos.or.id