



**HIVOS**  
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

**Hivos**  
people unlimited



# VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES

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## Our Vision

Hivos believes that every human being has the right to live in freedom and dignity, and that we are all free to be who we are, with respect for our individual gender and sexual identity. Living such a life means feeling free to believe and say what you want, to challenge governments and influence the established order. In exercising that freedom, we also carry the responsibility of not impinging on the freedom of others, and of respecting the natural limitations of the earth.

We believe in *open societies*, in which freedom and diversity are valued individually and collectively. Such a society welcomes diversity and offers equal opportunities to all. We also believe in *green societies*, in which the environment and the planet's natural resources are protected and used sustainably to the benefit of every living creature on the planet. Open and green societies are interwoven: together they create a free, fair and sustainable world.

## Our Mission

Based on a track record of 50 years of partnering with frontrunners in daring, innovative and impactful development programmes, Hivos seeks new and creative solutions to persistent global problems; solutions created by people taking their lives into their own hands.

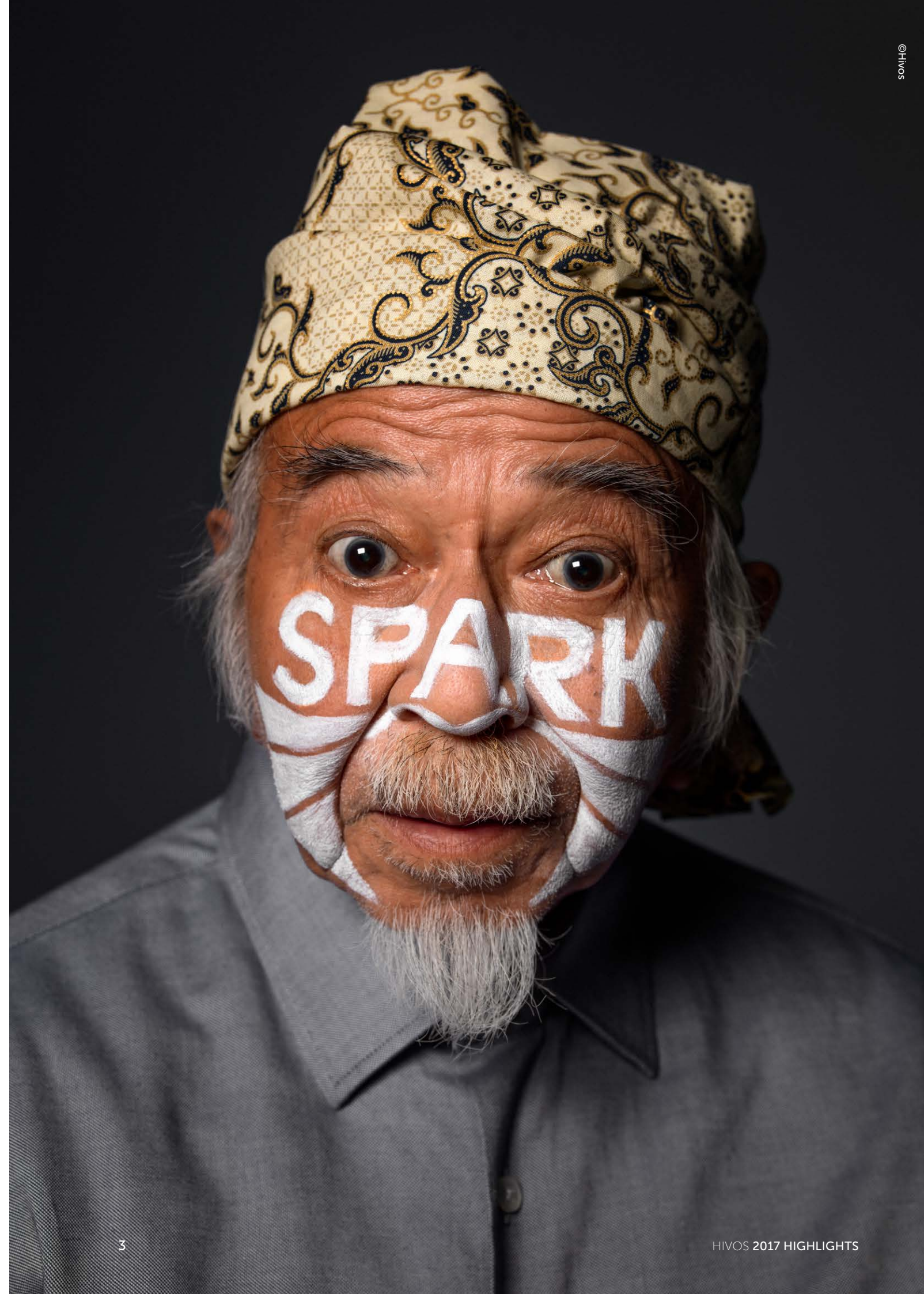
We offer a positive counterbalancing force against discrimination, inequality, abuse of power and the unsustainable use of our planet's resources. Our mission is to innovate for social change. With smart projects in the right places, we work towards more open and green societies.

## Our Core Values

We believe that human life in its many forms is valuable, and that people are filled with potential. Living a life in freedom and dignity, with respect for each other and the planet, leads to greater individual wellbeing and fair, vibrant societies.

Our core values are:

- Freedom & Dignity
- Sustainable Use of our Planet's Resources
- Self-determination & Diversity
- Equality & Social Justice
- Responsible Citizenship







## OUR WORK

Hivos strongly believes in the power of people to take their lives into their own hands, once they are given the chance. 'People Unlimited' actually says it all: we believe in the frontrunners we partner with and in their ability to find new and creative solutions to persistent global problems. These partners include the food entrepreneurs we coach in our Disrupt!FOOD! events, for instance, or Helem, the first LGBTI organisation in Lebanon.

We believe in the willingness and ability of different people (stakeholders) to jointly explore innovative ways to break seemingly vicious circles. Inspiring examples can be found in the wide range of parties we bring together in our Food and Energy Change Labs, and the eleven organisations we connect in our Central American human rights initiative Nexos.

Together we challenge powerholders and counter discrimination, inequality, abuse of power, and the unsustainable use of our planet's resources. Hivos advocates at all levels to bring about the enabling environment for the people, organisations and networks that work towards a free, fair and sustainable society. In our Women Empowered for Leadership programme we support women in challenging patriarchal norms and structures in media, trade unions, political parties, and tribal leadership. And in the international funding arena, we convince development banks and governments

to redirect financial flows, in order to live up to their promise of energy access for all.

Hivos has a keen eye for innovative developments, and tweaks and twists them until they are ready to work for social change. Think of the concept of open-source software which we designed into open-source seed systems, countering the seed patents of agri-multinationals such as Monsanto and bringing seeds back into the hands of farmers. Or the 178 projects through which MAVC delivered evidence on the effective – and less effective – uses of tech to enhance democracy.

While innovating for social change, we increasingly cross the 'borders' of our green and open domains and our thematic areas. Our Open Contracting programme is benefitting our HIV/AIDS work in, for example, Latin America by using open data to eliminate barriers to quality and affordable antiretrovirals. And in Hivos/ENERGIA's Women's Economic Empowerment programme we kill two birds with one stone by supporting female entrepreneurs who realise renewable energy solutions in remote areas.



## IN FOCUS

### CHANGE LABS ENHANCE INCLUSIVE SOCIAL INNOVATION Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Fort Portal is a small town in Uganda, slated to grow from 50,000 to 500,000 inhabitants by 2040. Yet the food system of the city and the surrounding Kabarole district is unprepared for such rapid growth. In a Food Change Lab organised by Hivos, IIED and convening partner Kabarole Research and Resource Centre, small farmers, urban food dwellers, street vendors, city planners and municipal authorities jointly explore the related problems and come up with innovative solutions. Now, after more than two years of co-creating positive change, the city is well on its way to adapting the food system and Lab members successfully advocate for national policy changes to support these interventions.

#### Hivos's lab history

Hivos's history with social innovation labs goes back a long way, to the many creative spaces, tech hubs and cultural centres we have supported all over the world. In our labs, we combine this experience with our rich history in working with frontrunners and multi-stakeholder platforms. In 2015 Hivos and IIED launched three Food Change Labs and an Energy Change Lab, followed by a Living Wage Lab which was set up with Fairfood in 2016. The latter brings together Netherlands-based stakeholders in the agri-food sector, to explore ways to realise decent wages in their supply chains.

#### Citizens in the driving seat

In essence, a Hivos Change Lab is a social innovation process. It offers a safe and inclusive space where a rich variety of stakeholders mutually explore a complex problem, and jointly prototype solutions. Problems such as lack of access to food and energy affect citizen's daily lives, but these citizens are rarely given a seat at the decision-making table – our Labs tackle this by putting citizens in the driving seat and connecting them to decision-makers.

Hivos's long track record of dealing with change processes pays off in the way we are able to bridge sectors, discourses and target groups in our current Labs. Bringing together both the usual and unusual suspects ignites new change and inspires people in an unprecedented way. In Fort Portal this resulted in local authorities and informal street food vendors burying the hatchet and moving to collaboration. Starting in 2017, the municipality began to provide safe and hygienic spaces for selling food, while the newly-formed street vendors association has committed to selling safe and nutritious food to low-income consumers.

#### Inclusive lobbying

In Hivos labs, participants think and do; they process relevant research, discuss options and angles, and join each other on food learning journeys or energy safaris. Through this intense process of immersion and co-creation, the solutions they come up with enjoy broad support. Most Hivos labs result in both concrete interventions and advocacy messages. In Zambia, for instance, the Food Change Lab has focused its attention on national food policies, as these support the problematic practice of maize mono-cropping. Putting 'the food system in one room', from young farmers to national authorities, resulted in Zambia's Minister of Agriculture publicly supporting the need for diversification with her historic phrase: "I don't want to be the Minister of Maize."

This so-called 'inclusive lobbying' is an integral part of the Hivos Change Lab approach. Most lab-developed solutions cannot do without the legislative and regulative support of the authorities. For this reason, we invite decision-makers into our Lab process from early on. The Energy Change Lab invited a representative of the Tanzanian regulator to visit community-owned mini-grids in Bangladesh. The Lab is developing a bottom-up people's grid in Tanzania that connects solar home systems in a remote village, enabling citizens to generate extra income by selling their surplus energy. This idea is being hampered by government regulations, so mutually exploring possibilities with the regulator involves inviting them to get involved at an early stage in the innovation cycle.



Energy Change Lab: Tanzanian youth visiting an innovation space to test a prototype they developed during the Energy Safari.

#### Food for innovation and advocacy

Experimenting with the lab approach has also served Hivos's own innovation and exploration ambitions. The Energy Change Lab is exploring decentralised energy in urban and peri-urban areas and accountability mechanisms in energy, which has informed our broader strategic plan. The Food Change Labs assess a consumption perspective to our food programmes and move Hivos into the city's food system. In addition, the labs provide a wealth of new knowledge, insights and networks which feed into and strengthen the lobby and advocacy work of our major food, energy and Women@Work campaigns. Our next challenge is to accelerate change and bring the Labs to scale, change their outcomes into impact, and make our lab approach available to others.

“ I don't want to be the Minister of Maize, I want to be the Minister of Agriculture”

Zambia's Former Minister of Agriculture, Dora Siliya.



## TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Governments and their institutions should support citizens in taking control and shaping their society, but in most countries this is merely a paper reality. Poor people in particular suffer from a lack of basic services, corruption, and poor access to information. This creates a dangerous vicious circle of governments losing credibility and citizens losing trust; governments, businesses and civil society therefore have a mutual interest in closing this gap. Transparency and accountability are key to restoring citizens' trust and creating a truly open society.

### International initiatives: OGP and MAVC

Closing the gap between governments and their citizens has been – and continues to be – a major goal for international initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Hivos hosts the civil society engagement team of this multi-stakeholder initiative, which aims to make governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. Another large Hivos-led programme aimed at supporting effective and accountable governance came to an end in 2017: Making All Voices Count (MAVC).

Designed in an era of great tech optimism, MAVC provided a reality check for the assumption that new technologies can enhance citizens' agency and governments' responsiveness. After four-and-a-half years we concluded that although tech is not a 'one size fits all' solution, MAVC definitely ended on a high. The 178 projects implemented across twelve countries delivered a great number of innovations and positively impacted the communication between citizens and governments. There was Amandla.mobi for instance, an information platform that allows ordinary people in South Africa – and marginalised black women in particular – to monitor government performance. Or the Accountability Lab, through which MAVC enabled Pakistani youth to bridge the gap between government spending and the actual needs of their communities.





### Actionable information

Transparency is key to informing people of what is happening; only informed people can effectively enforce change. Hivos applauds the widespread recognition of the right to access information that has spread the last decade, culminating in the adoption of SDG 16. Yet citizens who want to hold governments and businesses accountable, and to fight corruption and poverty, need actionable information: data that can easily be obtained and are understandable. The next step is therefore to translate this transparency into accountability.

This is exactly what Pakistani youth are doing in the Accountability Lab: their first step is to get an accurate picture of what is happening on the ground. These young women and men gather evidence of public service delivery and share their findings through blogs, photos and short videos. By mapping specific service delivery progress and failures on their website – regarding health, education, water and sanitation – they help ordinary people to obtain a clear view of what their government is achieving (or not achieving) on their behalf.

Hivos has been at the frontline of the global open data movement for a long time, supporting it in exerting pressure on governments to be more transparent. We engage with and connect 'infomediaries': independent journalists, hacktivists, artists, academics and civic watchdogs who help citizens to use data, and to reveal and denounce abuses of power and business scandals. We support independent media outlets that reveal corruption and hold powerholders to account, through whistle-blowers and investigative journalism.

### Open Contracting engages citizens

The UN Office of Drugs and Crime reports that corruption and fraud account for 20 to 25 per cent of governments' procurement budgets; this is all wasted taxpayers' money. Hivos is convinced that more transparent, smarter and fairer government contracting will help to modernise governments, fight corruption, reform markets, and foster business innovation and entrepreneurship. In our Open Contracting programme, we empower local civil society groups, journalists and other infomediaries to uncover open contracting information and public

revenue flows, and translate these into meaningful information for citizens.

In 2017, eighteen carefully selected and well-trained partners in Indonesia, the Philippines, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Guatemala started to disclose and use this information for public scrutiny and advocacy campaigns. Bantay Kita in the Philippines, for instance, has developed local learning resource kits that transform relevant mining data; these data can be used by indigenous communities to demand accountability from their governments and the mining companies. Given the five main sectors targeted by Open Contracting – health, extractives, construction, energy, and food and water security – the work of partners like Bantay Kita can have a huge impact on the lives of the citizens to whom they provide actionable information.

### IN FOCUS

## ALL EYES ON THE AMAZON

Donor: Dutch Postcode Lottery, Swedish Postcode Lottery, People's Postcode Lottery (UK)

In 2017 Hivos and Greenpeace launched a very ambitious programme to stop deforestation in an Amazon rainforest area of eight million hectares and protect the indigenous people living there. We mutually developed All Eyes on the Amazon with the Co-ordinator of Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA), the International Institute of Social Studies, Digital Democracy, the World Resources Institute (Global Forest Watch), the University of Maryland, INTERPOL LEAF, Both ENDS, WITNESS and ARTICLE 19. All coalition partners have a long history of fighting environmental crimes and working with indigenous people. In a unique attempt to deal a serious blow to the drivers of deforestation, we decided to strategically link up and integrate our actions, from local to global and back.

Training in monitoring territories, Amarakaeri Communal Territory, Peru





## Expose forest crimes and protect indigenous people

In a nutshell, our plan is to work with indigenous communities to collect evidence of forest crimes using satellite images and indigenous monitoring teams on the ground. We will train these teams to safely produce videos and images with smartphones and drones, and to digitally map and document these data so that law enforcers and local authorities can undertake appropriate action. If law enforcers and local authorities fail to respond, we can lobby at all levels, offer legal support, involve national and international authorities, investigate supply chains and money streams, expose forest destructors, and mobilise our supporters.

Since All Eyes on the Amazon aims for sustainable solutions, we lobby for the acknowledgement and enforcement of land rights of indigenous peoples both nationally and internationally. Moreover, we will record and share our lessons and new insights through systematic linking and learning, thus enabling eventual upscaling to other regions.

## The challenge: eleven organisations

Once the Dutch Postcode Lottery awarded us their exclusive Dream Fund in February 2017, we started to prepare for the implementing phase. We realised that the number of hectares we strive to protect would not be our only challenge; ensuring effective co-operation amongst eleven partners is no less challenging. Despite the fact that we are all very experienced and have collaborated in complex environments before, our main internal challenge was to build a strong partnership. We have to get used to each other's ways of working, and learn to trust both each other and the (local) organisations that each partner has brought into this relationship.

One important achievement was the agreement that all partners reached in June, covering fifteen technical criteria for the selection of project sites; these criteria range from an urgent need for support and high external pressure on intact forest landscapes, through to a minimum level of active communities with the capacity to lead local processes. Combined with analyses of geographic information systems – how accessible is the area, how much forest cover is left, are we able to spot mining activities nearby, etc. – we

delivered a useful set of criteria to prioritise nine project areas in Brazil, Ecuador and Peru.

## Indigenous Forest Guardians

We designed implementation plans for all sites and partnered with fifteen local and national indigenous organisations, five NGOs and a research centre, creating a network of practitioners to make the struggle of indigenous people on the ground more visible. A good example is the Turiaçu and Araribóia Indigenous Lands Mosaic (TAILM) in Brazil, 1.9 million hectares of conserved forest. TAILM is seriously under threat from illegal loggers, land grabbers and mining companies, who are emboldened by the current Brazilian government's weakening of forest protection and indigenous rights. The 11,000 indigenous people living in this territory have a long history of activism; they organised themselves as Indigenous Forest Guardians, recognised at both the national and international level.

In TAILM, at least five national, regional and local indigenous organisations with strong advocacy and engagement capacity have joined forces with our coalition. Brazilian NGOs have already taught them how to use technologies and mapping for environmental monitoring and reporting, and they are experienced in community monitoring. Combined, these factors make TAILM a good case for the broader struggle for rights and forest protection in which we can prove the unprecedented added value of All Eyes on the Amazon.

## Foundations for a unique co-operation

The partners were able to demonstrate this added value in 2017. In June INTERPOL created a forestry crime working group in conjunction with civil society organisation, with forty member countries taking part. Prior to COP23 in Bonn, COICA joined an international indigenous peoples' tour in Europe to emphasise their crucial role in forest protection and combatting climate change. We presented our programme and explored co-operation with the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Ministries of Environment. Later, when the Brazilian government opened up seven national parks and two indigenous reserves for mining, Greenpeace Brazil, indigenous federations and the Brazilian Attorney General successfully lobbied the Supreme Court to suspend the mining

concessions. By the end of 2017, we were able to jointly lay the foundations of a multi-annual strategic plan including impactful actions for the coming years.

## IN FOCUS

## MAKING ALL VOICES COUNT CAN TECHNOLOGY CREATE MORE DEMOCRACY?

Donors: DFID, USAid, Sida, Omidyar Network

In December 2017, a large and important Hivos-led programme came to an end: Making All Voices Count (MAVC). For Hivos, MAVC was one of the most challenging programmes of the past four years, causing us both headaches and moments of great pride. Looking back, we learned a great number of lessons from managing MAVC, while the programme provided an extensive evidence base for civil society, tech communities and governments on the role of technology in enhancing citizen engagement. What works, and what doesn't? MAVC provided a reality check in times of high expectations concerning what tech innovations could contribute to promoting transparency, fighting corruption, empowering citizens and making governments more effective and accountable.

## Innovate, scale and research tech solutions

Hivos learned important lessons at the organisational and management levels. How should we work effectively with a large, international consortium, organise efficient decision-making processes, and ensure performance-based resource management? Yet the biggest change we made was strategic; after a year of struggling with the disappointing results of a global open call for proposals, Hivos made drastic changes to its strategy and team. Not only did these changes benefit MAVC, but they also gave Hivos the confidence that we are well-equipped to run such a complex programme.

MAVC worked in twelve countries across Africa and Asia, using a €38 million fund (which was reduced to €34 million in the final year) to support the development and spread of innovative approaches to amplifying citizen's voices and enabling governments to listen and respond. The managing consortium consisted of Hivos, Ushahidi and the Institute for Development Studies. MAVC made grants for innovation, scaling and research projects, brokering unusual linkages between techies, NGOs, governments, social activists and the private sector. But the programme also included an important research component, led by the Institute for Development Studies, aimed at testing whether technology actually had the power to make governments more open and responsive and engage citizens in improving policies.

## Impressive results

After four-and-a-half years in operation, MAVC has delivered extensive research and an impressive number of impactful cases. From its inception in June 2013, the programme enabled 178 projects:

- 72 innovation projects, focused on finding and testing new ideas;
- 38 scaling projects, taking proven concepts to scale;
- 7 tech hubs, supporting a wider technology for development environment;
- 61 research projects, exploring the roles that technology can play in securing responsive, accountable governments.

Throughout its life cycle, MAVC communicated lessons learned from publications, events and fora, to inform new grant cycles and shape action on the ground. At the end of 2017 MAVC presented its legacy, harvesting fourteen key messages that reflect the most important – operational and substantive – lessons learned. These range from 'Transparency, information or open data are not sufficient to generate accountability' to 'Technology can help to empower citizens and strengthen their agency for engagement'.





© George Osodi

### MAVC's legacy: lessons learned

Message five, for instance, says 'Technologies can support social mobilisation and collective action by connecting citizens'. An example of this is the multifaceted campaign implemented by Local Empowerment for Good Governance (LENGGO) in Kenya, sensitising the public to the county budgeting process. The campaign included murals, theatre, a 'digital bus' and a two-way SMS platform. This platform sent bulk messages with budgetary information to targeted groups and crowdsourced citizen-generated updates. Citizens used the online platform to mobilise themselves and participate (offline) in budget hearings. The SMS platform has a database of 100,000 users, which increased LENGGO's legitimacy and has significantly improved the government's responsiveness to, for example, complaints about public services.

Message nine states: 'Technologies alone don't foster the trusting relationships needed between governments and citizens, and within each group of actors'. In Indonesia, Suara Kita ('Our Voice') empowers ordinary women to play a role in the shaping of policies. Amongst other things, it gathers their views on local priorities by conducting SMS surveys. An evaluation of the project found substantial increases in mutual trust between citizens and the local government. However, a government representative described how, even once social media channels with citizens had been opened, he needed to carefully 'nurture' the communication through repeated responses and encouragement, in order for people to become 'braver' in approaching him.

The conclusion (which was endorsed by the independent Evaluation Management Unit) of all this programming is that the initial "tech optimism can now be reappraised", thanks to the wealth of experience and documentation delivered by MAVC. MAVC's legacy is a large and rich contribution to this body of evidence, which may in turn enable a more sober and mature position of tech realism.



## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In October 2017, after four months of imprisonment, Ali Ghavari and Peter Steudtner were released from their Turkish prison. The two were arrested during a Hivos-funded holistic safety workshop on digital security and information management for eight Turkish human rights defenders. All trainees were detained and only seven of them were released in October; the president of Amnesty Turkey was still imprisoned at the time of writing.

### Shrinking online and offline space

According to Freedom House, 2017 was the seventh consecutive year of overall decline in internet freedom. One of the more invisible – and therefore often neglected – digital threats is the increasing online surveillance carried out by governments. Other threats, such as blocking websites, shutdown of mobile internet services, cyberattacks and online harassment, are part of their more visible toolkit of censorship and oppression. On top of that, fake news – or disinformation – pollutes the content of both digital and print media. Hivos's Digital Defenders Partnership exists to counter this repression and defend online freedom of expression; in 2017 we supported almost 3,000 individuals and over 300 organisations worldwide.

Online and offline, shrinking civic space is a global problem. Civic space is being seriously curtailed in 106 countries, over half of which are United Nations (UN) members. Attacks on freedom of expression range from sheer violence to legal barriers against civil society activities. If we are to realise free and open societies, the reclaiming and expanding of public space is imperative. We need daring, creative minds, people who push the boundaries of imagination and restrictive legislation, coming up with new solutions to complex problems.

### Disrupting mainstream narratives

Hivos strengthens the countervailing power of independent media, social activists, creative entrepreneurs and human rights defenders, who monitor the exercise of power in societies, investigate mainstream media narratives and popular beliefs, and





question notions of truth. We support creative hubs and makers' productions that disrupt mainstream narratives in the public debate, link them up to multi-stakeholder platforms and jointly advocate for policies that enhance the freedom of expression.

Hivos collaborates with frontrunners like Girls in Tech Indonesia. In 2017 we connected this group to women's organisations and organised Hacking for Humanity, a global initiative centred on women facing sexual violence and street harassment. It was the first time that the female techies had worked with established women's organisations. As a result of the collaboration, they developed a new app to support victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Hivos is now developing a platform for female makers, women from the creative industries, and women's organisations, to allow them to work together to design innovative interventions and campaigns that address women's issues.

### Collaboration for human rights

In Central America, Hivos is well-connected to the growing number of infomediaries such as online news outlets Nómada, El Faro and Confidencial. These use new technologies and business models to keep the public informed on issues like corruption and human rights violations, and they hold decision-makers to account. In Nexos, Hivos successfully strengthens the regional collaboration between these independent media outlets and a wide range of human rights defenders, which is quite a new phenomenon in Central America. In East Africa, where press freedom is increasingly under siege, Hivos was one of the organisations that supported a regional conference in November 2017. We brought together 120 delegates from ministries, media associations, civil society and regulatory bodies. As a result of the conference, the parties agreed on regional parameters for establishing national mechanisms for the safety of journalists.

Hivos offers safe breeding grounds where creative frontrunners can share resources, explore, exchange and experiment. Our Mideast Creatives programme provided co-working spaces for young designers, app developers, small media enterprises and other creatives in the MENA region, focusing on non-capital cities. In 2017 we organised the third edition of the

global Co-working Summit, where 80 co-working spaces and collaborative hubs exchanged knowledge, built relationships and shared resources – representing spaces from all over Africa for the first time.

As a follow-up of our Expression & Engagement programme, in which we supported hundreds of creative entrepreneurs, independent media outlets, hacktivists and other infomediaries, Hivos started R.O.O.M (Resource of Open Minds) in mid-2017, in partnership with Sida and the British Council. R.O.O.M supports the critical creative work created by artists, musicians and culture producers around the world. Working at the intersection of art, design and technology, R.O.O.M is the place for a new generation of creative futurists with a critical mindset and a do-it-yourself attitude. Among the first projects supported are a Kenyan game examining the conditions of late capitalism in the country, and rappers from Zanzibar who challenge gender stereotypes.

### IN FOCUS

## DIGITAL DEFENDERS PARTNERSHIP: DEFENDING CHAMPIONS OF A FREE INTERNET

Donors: The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Canada, Germany and the Czech Republic, Sida, and the US Department of State.

Operating in an authoritarian or repressive state has always been dangerous for human rights defenders, independent journalists and critical social activists. But in the past few years civic space has been shrinking rapidly all over the world, both online and in real life. Defenders of internet freedom were increasingly monitored, criminalised and persecuted in 2017. More bloggers and online journalists than ever before were physically attacked or even killed for reporting on corruption, crime or abuse.

### EMERGENCY GRANTS

The Digital Defenders Partnership (DDP) exists to counter this repression and defend the freedoms of expression and information. We use grants, fellowships and advice to help activists all over the world to operate more safely on the internet. The DDP provides different types of grants. The holistic security training provided to a transgender organisation from Siberia that was under threat is a good example of the incidental emergency grants (up to €10,000) we made in 2017. In total, DDP awarded eleven grants of this type in 2017.

Our sustainable emergency grants concern more comprehensive advice and support over a larger period of time, for example the grant made to an organisation in Pakistan which has set up the nation's first cyber-harassment helpline. It was initially intended to offer only legal support, but the incoming calls made clear that a more holistic approach was needed. The helpline team has now been expanded to include a digital security expert and a mental health counsellor, and has a referral system for victims of online harassment. The helpline provides a judgment-free, safe & confidential, gender-sensitive environment for all its callers. Thanks to the DDP grant (one of the four provided in 2017), the team was thoroughly trained as well as expanded, enabling them to extend their opening hours. This increased the monthly calls from 82 to 123, bringing the total answered calls in 2017 to 1,551.

### Holistic trainings

The DDP aims to provide holistic training, offering internet users essential skills for managing information safely, but also awareness of and tools for dealing with stress and trauma. Many of our trainees face high workloads and are confronted with death, violence and threats on a daily basis; this seriously affects their personal wellbeing and their professional capacities. These trainings are often part of the capacity-building grants DDP offers: long-term grants to organisations, covering the costs of things like security audits or software migrations to more secure systems.

Human rights organisations often deal with sensitive information. It is of utmost importance that they have the skills and knowledge to protect themselves and the individuals and communities they serve. In our Digital Integrity Fellowships, digital security experts

guide carefully selected organisations-at-risk through a fully customised digital safety and security transition, lasting eight to fourteen months. To ensure that the organisation does not lose its security focus in the long run, they also train champions like Graciela Pérez Rodríguez of the Mexican association Milynali. After her daughter, brother and three nephews disappeared, Pérez Rodríguez established this citizen-led organisation for families and researchers who, despite incredible risks, investigate the disappearance of their loved ones. In December 2017, the Dutch Government awarded her the Human Rights Tulip.

### Networks of dedicated specialists

The number of threats and attacks on activists is far too large for DDP to handle on its own. For this reason we also broker third-party interventions from our extensive network of lawyers, technical specialists and training organisations. We have strategic partnerships with the Media Legal Defence Initiative (legal support), Front Line Defenders (immediate short-term protection) and VirtualRoad (infrastructural support). Together, in 2017 we supported 2,937 individuals and 318 organisations worldwide.

DDP also co-ordinates the Rapid Responders Network. Through this network, we exchange information and share lessons learned, to offer more effective support and meet the specific needs of groups including women, LGBTI people, and ethnic minority organisations. To increase our visibility to the outside world and our findability for internet activists at risk, we will make more use of storytelling; this is part of our future strategy – which we are currently co-developing with our key stakeholders – to defend a free and safe internet.

### IN FOCUS

## NEXOS: PEOPLE POWER AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Donor: Dutch Embassy in Costa Rica

A unique initiative started in Central America in 2017: eleven organisations from across the region joined



forces to sustainably improve the human rights situation. Central America has never been known for its respect for human rights, but in recent years discrimination, intolerance, and violation of fundamental freedoms have been the order of the day. Human rights defenders, environmental activists and social leaders are being criminalised, threatened and even killed on a frightening scale.

### Effective and broad network

Nexos uses the power of people to oppose this trend. Initiated by Hivos and supported by the Dutch Embassy, Nexos was launched at the end of 2016 and has already achieved an impressive number of results. For example, in Honduras 44 students, activists and human rights defenders were imprisoned, abused and tortured for demonstrating against the National University's authorities. Thanks to the network of lawyers and human rights organisations linked to Nexos, today 43 of them have been released and acquitted of all charges. In addition, we provided psychosocial support through Nexos-related therapists.

Independent media such as Nómada in Guatemala and El Faro in El Salvador are part of Nexos, together with experienced human rights organisations, women's organisations, defenders of LGBTI people's rights, and organisations of indigenous peoples. Hivos is also working to get the private sector on board, in collaboration with Alterna, the Central American centre for social entrepreneurship and innovation. In 2017 we supported a regional entrepreneurship and human rights competition. Next year Nexos will work with companies on more inclusive spaces and initiatives, such as a 'Free of stigma and discrimination' certification for Guatemala's banana companies. This is one of the eight projects selected by Nexos in its second call for proposals in December 2017.

### Shelter city San José

Nexos is a two-year pilot to showcase what co-creation and networking can do to strengthen the rule of law, increase safety and stimulate the investment climate in this violence-plagued region. Nexos is a granting mechanism, a platform, and initiator of (urgent) actions. It is unique not only for its broad regional coverage, but also the solidarity

between groups in society that have not previously co-operated at this level. We now see indigenous people standing up for LGBTI people's rights and vice versa.

Nexos initiates and implements a broad range of activities, meaning that not only do its staff have to work very hard, but they must also operate cleverly and strategically. A good example of this is the first Latin American Shelter City, which was copied from a similar programme in the Netherlands. The Costa Rican capital San José has committed to offering shelter to human rights defenders who have to flee their countries (whether temporarily or permanently), which means the sustainability of this project is guaranteed. Nexos supports the first phase of this Shelter City.

### Making a difference at international and local levels

The programme has become an important intermediary for civil society and human rights defenders at the international level. Nexos facilitated the participation of civil society before UN human right rapporteurs of indigenous peoples, women and LGBTI communities did, and supported these groups' participation in thematic hearings at both the UN and national levels in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Moreover, Nexos organised a meeting of Central American, Dutch, Spanish and Belgian organisations to implement an emergency and protection fund for human rights defenders.

LGBTI women and indigenous people suffer from inequality, racism and scarce access to justice, on top of the widespread violence and impunity that affects all LGBTI people. To hand them the tools to defend their rights, Nexos arranged for mobile units that travelled to remote areas in Guatemala and provided almost 450 people with legal advice in Mayan and Spanish. Thanks to its success, the initiative will be replicated in El Salvador. Nicaraguan women in poor and remote areas such as Corn Island can count on legal support from the 35 defenders, assembled by Nexos to accompany victims of violence and harassment. And in Guatemala some 30 Kaqchikel female community leaders were trained to help prevent violence against women in their area.

Mexican human rights defender Graciela Pérez Rodríguez who received the 2017 Human Rights Tulip award in the Netherlands for her work with the Forensic Citizen Science project.

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Communal assessors who work with Women's Justice Initiative a Hivos partner organisation in Guatemala.



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

An increasing number of countries has adopted positive anti-discrimination policies and legal frameworks to address violence against women. Still, the achievement of gender equality and empowerment for women is largely an unfulfilled promise. Globally, almost half of women are in paid employment – as opposed to 79 per cent of all men – and on average men are better-paid than women. The part-time, low-paid and informal jobs of this world remain reserved for women; jobs that often come with poor working conditions and sometimes physical or sexual exploitation.

### Living Wage Lab

In its Women@Work programme, Hivos encourages companies, governments and civil society actors to enforce better working conditions for women working in global horticulture value chains such as flowers and fresh vegetables. Advocating persistently for decent wages and a safe workplace for women in the flower industry since 2011, we have managed to involve key stakeholders in both East Africa and in the Netherlands. Last year, Women@Work began working in other horticulture sectors and had more than 100 flower farms commit to the sexual harassment policy, which we developed with multiple stakeholders. As a result, women were better-paid, were promoted, and benefited from improved working conditions. In 2017 we expanded this successful programme to Southern Africa.

As low wages for women are a persistent problem in many global supply chains, Hivos and Fairfood set up the Living Wage Lab in the Netherlands. We brought together a wide array of stakeholders to jointly prototype new solutions: producers, retailers, governments, trade unions, NGOs, certification bodies and research institutes. Together these stakeholders test and develop new technologies, policies, business models and other forms of collaboration to address the issue of living wages. For instance, Wagagai, one of the largest plant-cutting companies in Uganda, introduced a plan at the Living Wage Lab to improve its employees salaries.





At the start of 2018 the Living Wage Lab celebrated its second anniversary, and started to explore ways to replicate itself in Africa.

### Meaningful participation

True equality and gender inclusiveness means that women are able to participate at social, political and economic levels. Yet despite this, women worldwide are systematically underrepresented and do not have an equal voice in decision-making processes. In 2017 about 22 per cent of all national parliamentarians were women, and only around 18 per cent of government ministers were women. Just as the number of employed women has increased, but they dominate the low-paid jobs, women's participation in politics has increased, yet they are still only a small percentage of the whole and are rarely in leadership positions. In short, the lack of gender inclusiveness is far from resolved.

In Women Empowered for Leadership, Hivos challenges the patriarchal culture and political structures in Lebanon, Jordan, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. We broker alliances between local civil society, political parties, trade unions and media, in order to increase women's chances to seek leadership positions. Without a presence and voice in sub-national politics or the senior management of influential civic organisations and public administration, women's ability to put their needs and ideas on the agenda remains limited. In 2017 we organised nationwide campaigns in several countries, performed media monitoring, fuelled public debate, and managed to persuade political parties to adopt quota systems and commit to gender audits.

### Child marriage loophole closed

In 2017 Voice supported the most marginalised people, including women who face exploitation, abuse and violence, such as female entrepreneurs with a disability, female little people in Mali, and a persistent fighter against child marriage in Tanzania. Hivos and Oxfam Novib manage this innovative grant facility, which closely involves its hard-to-reach target groups in all its actions and learnings. Although 2017 was its first fully operational year, Voice showcased its added value by reaching out to groups that had not been reached by the mainstream development sector. Over the past few years, Hivos in Southern Africa has

been advocating for a legislative framework to stem the problem of child marriages in Malawi. Hivos has supported numerous community and national initiatives and created spaces and platforms to raise awareness about the negative effects of child marriages. In 2017 this work paid off: Malawi made a historic amendment to the constitution, closing a loophole that still allowed children under eighteen to marry. Yet, despite this legal success, law enforcement will remain a challenge as long as the traditional and cultural practices that promote child marriage remain unchanged.

### IN FOCUS

## WOMEN EMPOWERED FOR LEADERSHIP: WOMEN CHALLENGE THEIR PATRIARCHAL SOCIETIES

Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Middle East and Southern Africa are far from cultural lookalikes. But when Hivos organised the first Women Empowered for Leadership linking and learning event in Zimbabwe in 2017, the eighty women participating were surprised about how much they had in common. The hard-to-eradicate dominance of men in political leadership, the patriarchal culture, the negative portraits of female leaders in the media, but also the high standards women impose on themselves ... Enthusiastically the participants continued to share experiences and information.

### Middle East adopts Southern African gender barometer

As a result, linking clearly prevailed over learning in Zimbabwe. This is a lesson learned that we will bear in mind for the next event. However, there were still some important learning moments. One of these was the gender barometer, which serves as an important lobbying tool for women in Southern Africa, and will now be adapted for use in the Middle East. This evidence-based tool provides information on the real political and economic participation of women in a country or region.



Gender equality camp, Lebanon.

Hivos wants women to have equal opportunities and capacities to fully participate in decision-making processes. Women should be recognised and supported as leaders and agents of change. To this end, Women Empowered for Leadership joins forces with and influences women's organisations, trade unions, political parties, tribal leaders and media in Jordan, Lebanon, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. We train, coach, network and build coalitions, deliberately operating at the sub-national level; this is where decisions are made and policies are implemented that directly affect people's daily lives.

### Stories of success in Lebanon

In its second year, Women Empowered for Leadership was able to build on the solid foundation laid in its initial year. As a result, in Lebanon two major parties committed to a participatory gender audit, as well as

promising to make their internal regulations more gender-sensitive and to work on gender equality. In addition, fifteen women from the Kataeb Party became more outspoken on women's political participation, challenging the scepticism of their male party members.

In 2017 we also launched a nationwide grassroots and media campaign in the country, aimed at changing public perceptions of women's political participation. Some 300 local officials and leaders engaged in often intense debates on gender stereotypes in politics. After a gender equality camp in the summer of 2017, seventy young participants – both men and women – stated they were more supportive of gender equality and women's political participation. Hivos and its partners launched a TV ad challenging traditional gender roles assigned to



women, as well as a corresponding series of online success stories that reached over 20,000 people on social media.

### Fuelling public debate in Jordan

In Jordan, space for civil society is shrinking and it is becoming more difficult to mobilise people on political issues. In this context, our partner 7iber managed to fuel the public debate on women in leadership positions and the challenges they face. On their request, fourteen women published articles such as 'The Double Burden on Working Mums'. In seven governorates we organised Café Talks to stimulate public debate on female leadership. We monitored both municipal and governorate elections and trained 20 elected women in gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting.

### Progress in Southern Africa

As a direct result of the engagement and lobby by our partner in Zambia, in 2017 five out of eight political parties targeted developed gender equality plans with quota systems for women. In Zimbabwe, we managed to cross the party lines with 17 mentorship cafes, enabling 33 aspiring female leaders from different parties to share experiences and knowledge with 17 established female politicians (Councillors, Members of Parliament and Senators).

In Malawi, which ranks 173 out of 188 on the UN's Gender Inequality Index, few women hold decision-making positions. The public statement made by a local councillor (in a 100 per cent male council) was revolutionary: he will not re-contest his seat, but instead will support a female candidate in the 2019 elections. This was a direct result of the advocacy and training of Women Empowered for Leadership in Malawi. Another breakthrough was the appointment of two female chiefs in Northern Malawi, as a result of intensive community engagement by our partner.

In 2017 we revisited Women Empowered for Leadership's theory of change, using it as a tool for reflection. The outcomes confirmed that it is essential for Hivos to work with a variety of partners, and stick to the dual approach of tackling change from the bottom up and the top down.

## IN FOCUS

## VOICE: NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US

Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Voice is an innovative grant facility managed by Hivos and Oxfam Novib. Its grants support the inclusion of the most marginalised and discriminated-against people who are not reached by mainstream development. Voice specifically targets five groups that are in the 'last mile' of the Sustainable Development Goals' aspiration to leave no one behind: people with disabilities, LGBTI people, women facing exploitation, abuse and violence, vulnerable groups facing age discrimination, and indigenous groups and ethnic minorities.

### 10 countries, 5 target groups, 71 grantees

Launched in late 2016, as of March 2017 the programme was fully operational in ten countries in Africa and Asia. In 2017 Voice contracted 71 organisations, informal groups and consortia, allocating €9.9 million from its €35 million grant fund. Illustrative of the programme is that Voice involves its main target groups in all its actions and learnings, whether it concerns empowering their peers or designing the linking and learning process. Voice specifically focuses on people who face double vulnerabilities, e.g. disabled transgender people or young exploited women, and promotes a key role for women and youth in all its work.

Voice's approach gives the buzzword 'innovative' its original meaning back. Voice *has* to be inventive and constantly adapt its way of working, in order to reach out to unusual groups like Indonesian youth with Down syndrome or female little people in Mali. To introduce the grant facility to all target groups, Voice developed animated videos in local languages and in sign language. Organisations can apply for empowerment grants, the smallest of the four Voice grant types, via audio or video, and can report on the results in their local language.

### Little women in Mali

There are 29 grants that specifically support women facing exploitation, abuse and violence. In Mali, for instance, Voice awarded a grant to a consortium of two Malian organisations that support little women. Since it's hard for these women to find clothes that fit (which prevents them going outdoors), the organisations collaborated with Malian fashion designers who created appealing clothes and organised a fashion show for little women, thereby significantly increasing their self-esteem. In November 2017 another grant was awarded to an association of disabled Malian women, funding a programme to have successful female entrepreneurs mentor twenty colleagues with a disability over a two-year period. Initiatives to support these women had previously run aground due to a lack of coaching.

Many target groups lack the information, skills and organisations to make their voices heard. In 2017, Voice strengthened the influencing capacities of 71 organisations at all levels. In Tanzania, for instance, the girls' rights organisation Msichana won a landmark legal case to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls to eighteen (bringing it in line with boys). Now Msichana is advocating to have this High Court ruling enforced; the government has refused to change the law accordingly. With the Voice grant, Msichana was able to have the juridical language translated into accessible information, thus enabling everyone to understand what the ruling means.

People  
unlimited





Two participants of My Voice, My Story: an LGBTI project of CamASEAN Cambodia

©Hivos

### LGBTI couples present themselves

Influencing at the community level is also extremely important for the people to whom Voice strives to give a voice. In Cambodia, Voice grantee CamASEAN found 100 LGBTI long-term couples who were prepared to tell their stories and pose for photographs of their daily lives. The couples organised photo exhibitions in their homes and invited their neighbours, representatives of police and local government; in most cases all invitees showed up. This is a small but important success: making discriminated people visible and 'human' is a crucial starting point in overcoming obstacles which hamper their societal inclusion.

Besides grant-making, Voice's main goal is to link and learn across countries, organisations and target groups. To enable this, Voice opened a specific call to recruit organisations and social enterprises interested in national level linking and learning ('Making Noise for Voice'). In the first Inclusion Innovation Indaba and now through storytelling on the Voice website, grantees and stakeholders are encouraged to jointly explore, test and scale innovative approaches and new knowledge. Voice takes learning seriously, which led to the unusual move at the end of 2017 to explicitly change grant criteria and processes based on the feedback from prospective grantees who had been turned down. 'You shared, we listened' was Voice's message to them, and Voice publicly listed the changes made.

“Voice involves its main target groups in all its actions and learnings, whether it concerns empowering their peers or designing the linking and learning process”



## SEXUAL RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

In Lebanon LGBTI people waved their rainbow flags celebrating the 13th Pride Week in 2017, in Kenya transgender people were for the first time able to vote with a new name on their identity cards and in Costa Rica same-sex marriages are now legally recognised. In recent decades LGBTI communities and their organisations have become stronger, more diverse and more visible. Supported by Hivos from early on, they now are better able to claim, defend and promote their rights. An increasing number of countries recognise and respect LGBTI rights, and this is reflected in their laws and policies. And even in countries such as Lebanon, surveys show increasing public support for the LGBTI community.

### Breaking down silos

However, there is still a world to gain for LGBTI people when it comes to the right to live their lives in freedom and dignity – especially in countries where conservative forces join hands with extreme religious groups. LGBTI organisations in Lebanon organised Pride Week on a joint platform for the first time, but this strong movement also encountered a strong backlash from extremist groups. In Kenya, authorities continue to obstruct High Court rulings that order them to adhere to the law and respect the rights of LGBTI people.

In this context Hivos continues to support LGBTI communities around the globe. We strengthen their organisations, facilitate networking and cross-regional learning; we support safe spaces where people can freely express themselves and be who they are, as well as initiatives to get out into the open and work on public support. We support courageous people like the long-term LGBTI couples in Cambodia who organised local photo exhibitions about their daily lives (see the Voice highlight under Women's Empowerment). And on a larger scale we support the Southern African networks of key populations, such as sex workers, men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women, and transgender people, who broke down their silos in the KP REACH programme to build a stronger, collective voice.



This voice will be heard throughout Southern Africa, thanks to the engagement of communication company M&C Saatchi. Together with key populations, the company co-created an innovative campaign to tackle stigma and discrimination against LGBTI people and sex workers. The campaign will be launched in 2018.

### Human rights approach to HIV/AIDS

Central to KP REACH's approach is Hivos's human rights perspective towards HIV/AIDS. In our view, the world's global targets on health for all (SDG 3) will never be met without addressing the underlying drivers of the epidemic, including discrimination against and stigmatisation of key populations. Key populations are often excluded from access to health services due their continued marginalisation. This huge programme, funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, is therefore of major importance; the same is true of the Latin American programme ICW Latina, which was also made possible by funding from the Global Fund. To empower key populations, ICW Latina successfully linked women with HIV to the experienced feminist movement. At all levels, from basic self-help groups to the regional ICW organisation, unique women's alliances were built in eleven Latin American countries.

"Many women have had to shut up. But while I am alive I will continue to raise my voice for women with HIV. They will not silence me," is how a Salvadoran woman stressed her strong engagement with the programme. ICW Latina strengthens women with HIV to advocate for their human rights. In 2017, this resulted in women's sexual health rights and HIV issues being incorporated into the policies of at least seven countries, and the creation of a virtual tool that gathered all data from the extensive mapping studies carried out by the women. Furthermore, 124 women were trained to facilitate the 59 HIV+ women's empowerment groups currently operating in the countries.

### Sexual health rights of youth

Young people often lack access to sexual rights and health rights services. Governments and conservative groups in many countries effectively block these rights, supported by deeply rooted biases among the general public. Hivos, in a coalition of seven parties led by Rutgers, supports the LGBTI community, girls and young women in promoting and claiming their rights at the



political level. 'Right Here, Right Now', a strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, works in ten countries and one region. In 2017 we formed country-tailored and inclusive platforms, connecting hundreds of community-based organisations to local and national governments; this kind of linking and incubating is an excellent fit for Hivos. We work with unusual allies such as religious groups to create an enabling environment for the solutions devised by the platforms.

## IN FOCUS

### KP REACH: KEY POPULATIONS UNITE TO COUNTER STIGMA

Donor: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

One year after the start of KP REACH, an innovative programme to reduce HIV infections among key populations in eight Southern African countries, the efforts and achievements of the four combined regional networks and their partners at community level are truly impressive. KP REACH effectively broke down the silos of the LGBTI communities and networks, built their capacities and provided the resources to change from volunteer-run groups into strong professional networks, ready to make a real difference in the lives of LGBTI people and sex workers.

Not only do the networks now have a stronger, collective voice and platform, KP REACH also managed to create a new regional network for the transgender community. We have developed joint advocacy plans and a well-functioning regional mechanism for sharing and learning. Furthermore, we built an evidence base on health services and human rights violations for informed lobby and advocacy, filled with 275 cases by November 2017.

### Professional communication to fight stigma

In KP REACH, Hivos engaged the regional networks of AMSHeR, ASWA, CAL and Gender DynamiX to join forces and partner with Positive Vibes, SAfAIDS and M&C Saatchi. Together, we aim to shift the social norms and attitudes that keep alive the stigmas attached to key populations. This really is a huge challenge in a region with some of the most hostile environments towards the groups we particularly target: transgender people, sex workers, men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women. Having renowned communication company M&C Saatchi on board was key to a successful response to this challenge. In close co-operation with the key population's networks, M&C Saatchi co-created an innovative communication campaign to reduce stigma and discrimination. The campaign will be launched in 2018.

### Six key findings

So this story is not about the amazing results of this well-crafted campaign, but about the way it was co-created. Key population representatives collected their peers' own experiences, while M&C Saatchi performed formative research, including an extensive survey on how people respond to different messages. An important eye-opener was that the rights-based discourse often used by NGOs proved unhelpful for reaching out to the public; interviewees were much more receptive to the benefits involved in the community of key populations having access to health services, rather than to 'what's best for the individual'.

This revelation and five other key findings that came from the working group's testing of hypotheses and creative concepts proved that the winning route was role-modelling change of 'people like them'. In real life this meant: telling stories that touched on universal feelings and emotions, humanising key populations, and at the same time leveraging positive values. The stories told were disruptive stories to remind people – especially the 'moveable middle' – of their belief in being non-judgemental and in the common humanity of all people, and to help them to reconcile and adopt new behaviour, embracing LGBT people and sex workers.



A photo from the Unheard Voices Campaign, which is one of the initiatives supported by the KP-REACH Project, which seeks to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Sex Workers.

### Key correspondents share unheard voices

Nineteen citizen journalists ('key correspondents') were trained to produce these types of stories, and they shared them locally, regionally and internationally via [keycorrespondents.org](http://keycorrespondents.org). The tales included stories of parents making different choices when confronted with their child's homosexuality, and a story about a lesbian couple who adopted a child and shared their experiences of the everyday trials of parenting. Stories that portrayed key populations with confidence and agency; Unheard Voices which, supported by national communications toolkits, formed a sound basis for the upcoming social change media campaign.

Meanwhile, the key population communities began to fill the KP REACH platform with data and case studies on their experiences with building connections to non-key populations, to enable linking and learning. Botswana women's organisation

H.E.R., for instance, shared how its members collected school uniforms for underprivileged children who faced humiliation, just like H.E.R.'s lesbian and HIV-positive members. The effective campaign increased H.E.R.'s visibility in a positive way. Furthermore, KP REACH selected a total of 48 champions from health, justice, political, religious and traditional sectors who now speak out and take action when acts of discrimination or human rights violations occur.

KP REACH ends in December 2018, but is determined to continue – if sufficient funding is obtained – the successful co-operation between the united networks. Their plans and actions offer good opportunities to counter stigma and discrimination, thereby removing one of the greatest barriers to key populations' access to quality health care services.





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## STAKEHOLDER

### A pioneering approach to tackle HIV/AIDS

**César Núñez**, Regional Director UNAIDS Latin America and the Caribbean

A pioneering approach to tackle HIV/AIDS  
César Núñez and Hivos go back a long way. A few years after 'long-standing friend' Hivos opened its office in Costa Rica in 1994, it co-organised a meeting on the rights and health needs of sex workers at a time when this was still a real taboo, Núñez recalls. "This absolutely was a pioneering approach," he affirms, "While the media were reporting very negatively and condescendingly about sex workers, Hivos was basically giving a voice to the voiceless."

Hivos's vision on tackling the HIV epidemic is strongly rights-based, focusing on the human rights of key populations and vulnerable groups, including women and young people. Núñez sides with the approach which Hivos is putting into practice in collaboration with ICW Latina, a network of women living with HIV/AIDS: "For instance, we acknowledge that the relationship between violence against women and HIV is evident, and that it is important to lift women out of the 'HIV-silo'." Tackling stigma and involving youth are two more of the priorities that Hivos and UNAIDS share.

"Stigma is a killer, it is the hidden epidemic," Núñez states clearly. He has witnessed how parents are afraid to reveal HIV status to children who have been born with HIV: "I know a case of a mother who gave her daughter antiretroviral medication, but told her it was just vitamins or something. Now the daughter has grown up and is aware of her health situation. She is active on social media and deals with it in such a natural way."

As a result, Núñez is happy to see that ICW Latina and Hivos both consider 'succession planning', by securing a space where youth can voice their concerns. "[It's important] to make sure new, especially female leaders are prepared to stand up and are well aware of their rights in an often conservative environment."



## SOGIE: ADVANCING THE RIGHT TO BE WHO YOU ARE

Donor: Arcus Foundation, Hivos private donors

LGBTI communities have become stronger and more visible in recent decades, raising awareness amongst decision-makers and to a broad audience, and fighting for their recognition and legal rights. Hivos is proud to be among the first organisations to have supported the few courageous LGBTI activists in the 1990s and thus to have helped build LGBTI movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Despite this, a lot remains to be done when it comes to advancing human rights related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE).

### SOGIE human rights

In September 2017 the project 'Advancing SOGIE human rights in the global south' took stock of its achievements. In this two-year project, Hivos accompanied and supported LGBTI organisations in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) and Kenya, amongst other places, in taking significant steps forward. Despite the ever-narrowing civic space for these issues, LGBTI frontrunners and movements managed to engage new allies and supporters, influence decision-makers and successfully use strategic litigation.

“I never realised how difficult and complicated the sexual and reproductive lives of women living with HIV are.”

Participant at a training workshop on Latin American women living with HIV

### Lebanese LGBTI activists

In Lebanon, for example, we supported the new community centre for Helem, the country's first LGBTI organisation. With the centre, Helem provides a safe space for Beirut LGBTI people to meet, helps to build national alliances, and organises campaigns. Helem is open each weekday for LGBTI visitors (on average 65 per month) who need basic services like a shower, the use of a washing machine or a kitchen to cook their meals, but it is also a place for them to receive legal support and meet with peers, and is somewhere that they do not have to hide who they are. The centre offers an increasing range of activities, such as movie screenings, sexual health information and women's activities. An emergency committee provides crisis assistance when people are, for example, kicked out of their homes or facing detention. Helem's hotline receives 150 calls a month, more than the anticipated 120.

Helem deliberately encourages visitors to move from 'beneficiary' to activist – and with success: over 50 per cent of the current volunteers initially visited the centre to take advantage of its services. People are able to find each other in Helem's safe space, which has resulted in unanticipated positive effects such as the emergence of a youth group and a transgender group; this increases the strength and diversity of the LGBTI community. The volunteers' engagement was clearly visible during Lebanon's 13th Pride Week. Following threats by conservative religious groups and inaction of security forces, the event venue's owner decided at the last minute to cancel an event to celebrate IDAHOT (International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia).

Within twelve hours, volunteers and staff organised a successful counter-campaign. Livestreaming the blocked event on Facebook got them over 50,000 viewers and garnered overwhelming public support. An online campaign video was viewed 126,000 times and was highlighted in the evening news on LBCI, Lebanon's most-viewed TV station. Private donors from Hivos made a significant contribution to Helem's success by adding €50,000 to the Arcus grant.



© Courtesy Helem

### Sudanese video

The Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE), which operates across the MENA region, supported five smaller projects which contributed to raising awareness of LGBTI communities. In Sudan, for instance, a short video was launched at the end of 2017 that showed LGBTI people talking about their daily lives and experiences. Fear of repercussions led to many people withdrawing their co-operation, but the persistent project co-ordinator managed to realise the film anyway.

Hivos supports groups that operate in highly volatile and violent contexts, which sometimes means that we are not able to realise our objectives, or realise them only partially. Such was the case with IraQueer, an LGBTI organisation in Iraq, which was forced to cancel a training session. However, the organisation was nonetheless able to maintain its website, providing much-needed online support and advice to its at least 8,000 monthly visitors.

### Legal recognition in Kenya

In August 2017, twelve transgender people in Kenya voted with their new identity cards for the first time in their lives. This landmark moment was the result of years of persistent lobby and advocacy by Transgender Education and Advocacy (TEA). Supported by Hivos, TEA and five transgender people sued the state for failing to recognise their chosen names on their identity cards. As a result the High Court ordered the Registrar of Persons to process these applications and issue new identity cards within fourteen days. In 2017 TEA won another court case, obliging the NGO Co-ordination Board to approve their registration as an NGO; this made TEA the first formally registered transgender-led organisation on the African continent.



## RENEWABLE ENERGY

Let's start with the good news of 2017. Amongst the global energy fora that count, there is widespread agreement that we need decentralised renewable energy solutions in order to fight climate change and achieve energy access for all. And in the development fora that count, decision-makers know that without energy access for all, poverty reduction – and consequently all Sustainable Development Goals – will remain a distant dream. It is also encouraging to see the growing awareness among governments, donors and businesses that women play a crucial role in delivering the so-called 'last mile' energy solutions; solutions that provide the hardest-to-reach people with clean, affordable and reliable energy.

### Funding energy access for all

Despite this, there is still a long way to go before these ambitions are put into practice and we achieve green and inclusive energy access for all. In 2017, Hivos/ENERGIA and IIED continued to advocate for one of the most important prerequisites to energy access for all: public funding for decentralised renewable energy solutions. It is imperative that institutions such as the World Bank actually 'walk the talk' and move away from the huge, centralised energy projects they continue to finance. At international conferences Hivos showcases the ways this can be done, joining forces with influential private sector parties and national governments in our newly-established Brooklyn Coalition. At the national level, we are pushing governments to deliver on the Paris Agreement and enable rapid uptake of decentralised renewable energy.

### Female entrepreneurs

Meanwhile, there is a quiet but steady revolution going on in the renewable energy field: female entrepreneurs are slowly taking over. Supported by Hivos/ENERGIA's successful Women's Economic Empowerment (WE) programme, some 4,000 women have overcome major barriers to establish micro- and small energy enterprises. These frontrunners don't wait for the big money to come in; they have already started to distribute their renewable energy solutions to the remote areas in which they live and work. By the end of 2017 they had reached 2.6 million consumers in Africa and Asia.







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## STAKEHOLDER

### Practical think tank enables citizens' agency

Liz Carlile, Director of Communications IIED

Hivos and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) had their collaborative breakthrough when they started the knowledge programme Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market in 2009. The three-year programme integrated the knowledge of researchers and practitioners working or trading directly with small producers across three continents.

IIED's current Director of Communications Liz Carlile considers this to have been the starting point of a great partnership: "It was quite an innovative programme that brought together the best of our combined skills." Carlile reflects on the variety of expertise as being an added value for the partnership: "Hivos leans more towards an advocacy approach, whereas IIED as a think tank looks to support policy-making with evidence. It is a very nice complementarity, it plays to both our strengths."

IIED is currently involved in strategic partnerships with Hivos on sustainable food and renewable energy. Carlile feels comfortable in these partnerships, as they enable close and active engagement between IIED, Hivos and local citizens. "Citizens' agency is what makes us interested in this work; we want to make sure that the voice of local people is fairly represented in decision-making."

Although Carlile is enthusiastic about the partnership, it can be challenging to create enough space for all actors to have sufficient input into collective results. "We have a challenge between taking the time to implement the programme, ensuring genuine participation with all our stakeholders while representing different partner perspectives."

Carlile values the shared belief of taking enough time to achieve better bottom-up results: "What we like about working with Hivos is that there is a commitment and energy to keep things moving, but there is also the courage to say let's give this time. Hivos has a flexibility and openness, meaning that we have been able to stick with an idea and see it materialise rather than running away from it."



Whether we're talking about energy access for all, gender equality or poverty reduction, the WE programme has clearly proven the business case: investing in women and their energy enterprises pays off. In the second half of 2017 we therefore explored the potential to replicate the WE programme in Central America. We are convinced that female Latin American entrepreneurs can, just like their African and Asian colleagues, enhance energy access for all while empowering themselves and reducing poverty.

### Biogas market development

Entrepreneurship is also one of the focal points of our biogas programmes in Africa and Asia. In Indonesia alone, the BIRU programme constructed over 2,200 biodigesters in collaboration with the 49 biogas masons it had trained, and it instructed more than 2,600 biogas users in 2017. Moreover, research indicates that an independent biogas market is developing, which is a major goal of Hivos's biogas programme. For every three biodigesters built within the programme, one BIRU model is built by a BIRU-trained constructor outside the programme. People are becoming increasingly aware of the added value of bioslurry, a by-product of biogas and a powerful fertiliser, and this is creating new business opportunities. In 2017, we supported 825 farmers in four Indonesian districts – of whom 525 were women – in applying integrated farming and waste management systems, and creating small businesses from the processing and trade of bioslurry.

The African Biogas Partnership Programme continued its steady rollout in five countries. One remarkable success in 2017 was the Burkina Faso government's promotion of bioslurry as an efficient means of mitigating desertification. Burkina Faso even began to support neighbouring countries in introducing biodigester technology; the regional conference organised by the country led to ten governments committing to promoting the technology.

### Energy Change Lab

In our Energy Change Lab in Tanzania we explore complex energy problems and prototype innovative solutions with local stakeholders. As a result, in 2017 we piloted crowd-grid electricity in a remote Tanzanian village, connecting solar home systems that together are able to deliver energy for productive use. The pilot was set up with local partners and a German enterprise, and we are now working to bring the Tanzania regulator on board before embarking on a larger-scale implementation. The involvement and collaboration of all parties is key to our renewable energy approach, for which Sumba Iconic Island continues to serve as a successful example (for example at COP23 in Bonn).

“ In our newly-established Brooklyn Coalition, we are pushing governments to deliver on the Paris Agreement and enable rapid uptake of decentralised renewable energy”

## IN FOCUS

### GREEN & INCLUSIVE ENERGY: SPEEDING UP DECENTRALISED RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Donor:  
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Access to energy is a human right and is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015. But 'energy access for all' will remain a hollow phrase as long as these leaders fail to significantly invest in decentralised renewable energy; that is the only way for more than a billion people to obtain access to reliable, affordable and clean energy.

#### Two lobby battles won

On taking stock of several years of intense lobby work, Hivos/ENERGIA and IIED – partnering with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 'Green and Inclusive Energy' Strategic Partnership – conclude that we have 'won' two important battles. First, there is now widespread agreement that we will not achieve energy access for all without decentralised renewable energy solutions. Second, and more recent, is the acknowledgement by institutions such as the World Bank that there is an enormous lack of funding for these solutions. Yet, as Hivos and IIED reported back in 2016, only a few 'walk the talk': the bulk of energy funding is still directed towards large-scale, centralised energy projects in middle-income countries.

This was confirmed by a 2017 SEforALL report, which stated that only one per cent of financing commitments went to affordable decentralised energy solutions. This fact seriously hampers the uptake of decentralised renewable energy solutions. On the basis of this, Hivos decided to do what it is good at: to demonstrate to reluctant investors the ways that this problem can be solved. How can we scale the financing of decentralised renewable energy? What new financing models have been developed by frontrunner countries? Hivos found that both Kenya and Nepal had developed structures

and mechanisms to redirect financial flows from centralised to decentralised energy solutions. Best practices, which we presented at international and high-level conferences along with our partners, showing other countries and donors the way forward. We advocated for comparable solutions with key stakeholders such as the World Bank, regional development banks, the UN, the EU and the Dutch government.

#### Brooklyn Coalition

We managed to increase our advocacy power at the international level by joining forces with like-minded private sector parties in 2017. At the SEforALL Forum in April, Hivos worked hard to establish the Brooklyn Coalition, which consists of representatives from the Dutch, Nepalese and Kenyan governments, Schneider Electric, SELCO India, ENERGIA and SNV. Together we intend to speed up progress towards universal energy access by promoting existing and new solutions. Both SELCO and Schneider are private sector frontrunners who push for market activation and better regulations, with the aim of expanding the solutions available to the currently underserved poor living in remote areas. One of the coalition's key objectives is to break down the financial barriers – such as the availability of major funding, while it is small local solutions that are needed – that prevent this expansion.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an important entry point here. We followed up the successful lobby of recent years – for an SDG on clean and affordable energy – with a strategy for raising political awareness of the co-benefits that SDG 7 has for other development areas, such as health, jobs, and food security. A recent review of all SDGs indicates that energy is interconnected with 74 per cent of them. Monetising these co-benefits could serve as an incentive to enhance a non-profit approach to serving the extreme poor. We will therefore intensify our co-operation with non-energy partners, and train and support media on the subject. In addition, at the beginning of 2018 Hivos and the Brooklyn Coalition will bring these co-benefits and the need to fund decentralised renewable energy to the table at the Global SDG 7 Conference.





Agnes Wahero sells solar lamps from her stand at the market in Kenya.



## Dutch National Climate Fund

At COP23 in Bonn, it became clear that many National Determined Contributions (NDCs), as agreed under the Paris Climate Agreement, were of poor quality. This means that it will be difficult for them to obtain funding from, for example, the Green Climate Fund. Hivos and its partners have stepped up their efforts to influence NDCs and other policies in countries such as Indonesia, Tanzania and Guatemala, in order to enhance the finance options for decentralised energy. A notable Hivos lobby success was the approval of a motion in the Dutch parliament to focus the new National Climate Fund on climate and development projects in low-income countries, including renewable energy for the poorest. This motion will most probably serve as the basis for the design of the new Dutch National Climate Fund.

### IN FOCUS

## ENERGIA: FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS GO THE LAST MILE

Donors: Sida, Norad, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

When it comes to energy access for all, women are an important part of and route to the solution. This is basically what ENERGIA's Women's Economic Empowerment (WE) programme has convincingly demonstrated in the four years of its existence. With the right support, female entrepreneurs are eminently qualified to scale up the delivery of energy products and services to remote areas.

## Training and hand-holding support

But what is the 'right support'? This is where ENERGIA, a global network of which the international secretariat is hosted by Hivos, has collected an enormous amount of experience. ENERGIA works with five key partners: Energy 4 Impact in Senegal, Kopernik in Indonesia, Practical Action in Kenya, the Centre for Rural Technology in Nepal, and Solar Sister in Nigeria and Tanzania. In all countries, female entrepreneurs face gender-related sticking points such as low education, difficult access to finance, and restricted mobility. For this reason, collective training is mostly followed by individual mentoring and hand-holding support. Step by step, our partners guide the women through the process of building up a profitable, resilient and scalable business.

The women learn to promote and sell their modern lighting, off-grid electrification solutions, and clean cooking technologies and fuels. WE supports them in exploring markets, developing sound business plans and obtaining finance, but also in solving specific gender-related challenges such as not being able – or allowed – to drive a car and transport their products. WE links them to suppliers, informing these about the mutual advantages of opening up this 'last mile' energy market, and about the specific payment conditions that work for poor female entrepreneurs. In addition, ENERGIA connects the start-ups to savings and credit groups and other networks in which women encourage and support each other.

## Replicating successes

Sharing and learning is an important aspect of the WE programme. Despite working in different countries the partners still have a great deal in common, as is showcased during annual meetings, online information-sharing, and visits to each other's project sites. One example of this is the specific knowledge acquired by Energy 4 Impact on issues such as payment systems, which was then shared and followed up with the other partners. Another is the successful door-to-door selling introduced by Kopernik, which led to partners coming to Indonesia for a learning visit.

An important lesson was learned in Senegal, where the local economy, including the energy businesses of women WE supported, centred on a gold mine. But when the gold mine closed everyone lost their jobs – and the women's enterprises went down along with them. In this case ENERGIA realised that it had acted like an NGO, beginning with baseline studies rather than the market assessment it should have carried out.

## Spectacular results

ENERGIA's goals are ambitious. Besides contributing to energy access for all, the network strives to empower women and alleviate poverty. The impact of women selling energy products and services is huge – not only on the levels of energy access, but also on their own lives and those of their families and communities. WE engaged over 4,000 female entrepreneurs, who employ more than 5,000 people and sold almost 600,000 energy products; 70 per cent of the women run a profitable micro- or small enterprise.

In total these women-led enterprises brought solar lanterns, fuel-efficient cookstoves, and solar water pumps to the doorsteps of 2.6 million rural customers. All these clean energy products and services saved their consumers half of the time usually spent on collecting wood for fuel, and reduced their expenditure on fuel for cooking and lighting by approximately 50 per cent. Running their own businesses brings the women income, but it also gives them a stronger position in the household. Over 70 per cent of the female entrepreneurs now co-decide on household investments and purchases.

## Enabling environment

The evidence built up on the ground in the WE programme serves as an important advocacy tool in the national, regional and international energy arenas, in which ENERGIA plays an active and influential role. As an active member of the SEforALL advisory board, ENERGIA plays a prominent role in the SEforALL People-Centered Accelerator, launched in 2017. At the regional level, ENERGIA's persistent advocacy work in West Africa paid off with the adoption of gender mainstreaming in all energy programmes of the ECOWAS member states. Furthermore, ENERGIA launched public campaigns in all countries to advocate for and raise awareness of the important role of female energy entrepreneurs, reaching more than fourteen million people.



## SUSTAINABLE FOOD

"I don't want to be the Minister of Maize," the Zambian Minister of Agriculture Dora Siliya states firmly in the Hivos-IIED video Life Beyond Maize. She is very much aware of the threats the current maize mono-cropping poses to both food security and nutrition. A stunning 40 per cent of the children in her country suffer from malnutrition, while overweight rates are at 23 per cent. Yet, despite her awareness, most government agricultural funding is still spent on programmes promoting maize production.

### Radical change

If we don't radically change the current food system, many African Ministers of Agriculture will remain Ministers of Maize. Our global food system not only causes hunger, but also a lack of diversity on the plates of millions of people. Moreover, it depletes ecosystems and erodes agro-biodiversity, threatening future food security. Climate change and a growing world population will only put more pressure on our food system.

In its sustainable food programmes, Hivos strives for a world where all people have access to 100 per cent sustainably-produced food. This requires a total reshaping and rethinking of the current systems. Starting with the soul of agriculture, seeds, Hivos promotes the belief that seeds should remain in the public domain: open-source seed systems. At the core of this belief is the ability of farmers, local breeders and seed companies to save, reuse, exchange and improve their seeds. Many governments fail to protect open-source seed systems; instead they allow big agricultural companies to monopolise seed selection and even patent seeds.

Being at the mercy of these commercial giants means that farmers cannot breed the seeds they need in order to adapt to climate change or the shifting tastes of their customers, and to provide their communities with nutritious food. Still, when world leaders agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they included SDG 2, acknowledging that maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds is key to ending hunger, achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture.





### Diverse, high-quality diets for all

Open-source seed systems like the one Hivos supported in India can help to restore diversity in the fields and on people's plates; they promote the freedom to use seeds and they stimulate breeding, diversification and resilience. In 2017, Hivos took its Indian experience to East Africa, where we returned diversity to the fields of 1,000 farmers in a first pilot and engaged governments, farmers, breeders and frontrunner seed enterprises in coming up with joint alternatives. Hivos believes in the power of frontrunners and multi-stakeholder initiatives to create the food system we need: a system that produces diverse, high-quality diets for all.

In our Food Change Labs, we use and build upon the knowledge and practices of all stakeholders – and in particular citizens – to reshape food systems. In Zambia we brought together over 60 different stakeholders, obtaining the public support of the Minister of Agriculture, amongst others. The Food Change Labs are part of the Strategic Partnership that Hivos and IIED have with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Sustainable Diets for All. This five-year advocacy programme uses evidence such as the outcomes of the Food Change Labs to help low-income communities in Zambia, Uganda, Bolivia and Indonesia to improve their access to sustainable, diverse and nutritious food.

Our international advocacy efforts connect our national agendas to global policy forums. Co-leading the United Nations Sustainable Food Systems Programme under its ten-year framework, Hivos contributes to reshaping the international debate on food.

### Green entrepreneurs

Innovative, micro-, small and medium-scale entrepreneurs play an important role in enhancing a future-proof food (and energy) system. In 2017 Hivos and strategic partners enabled impactful enterprises to fulfil their role as agents of change. We invested in local business support structures such as co-working spaces and digital platforms; we offered direct and online training and mentoring; and we provided access to finance, expert knowledge and markets.

During Disrupt!FOOD!, we coached twelve food entrepreneurs to strengthen their businesses and helped them to link to potential investors. In 2017 we also launched the Hivos Food & Lifestyle Fund, which supports promising start-ups in the food sector. Hivos and Welthungerhilfe are the first investors in this lean impact investment fund.

### IN FOCUS

## OPEN-SOURCE SEED SYSTEM SPREADS ITS WINGS

Donor:  
Open Society Foundation,  
Benefit-Sharing Fund of the FAO  
Plant Treaty

In recent decades, the world has neglected one of its most valuable assets: the diversity of seeds. Since time immemorial these seeds have been selected and improved by farmers, mostly women. But today seed selection has been monopolised and varieties are even patented by profit-driven companies, supported by governments that focus on the productivity of just a few major crops. By now only 25 per cent of the varieties of important food crops like rice and maize remain.

### From India to East Africa, farmers need access to seeds

To make things worse for farmers in places like East Africa, in an effort to guarantee uniformity and quality, governments only permit registered seeds to be sold. Since farmers manage 80-90 per cent of all seeds that are used and bred – and without any government support! – this leaves them at the mercy of illegal or semi-illegal channels if they wish to sell their seeds. Without access to a rich diversity of seeds, farmers cannot adapt to climate change, new diseases or consumer preferences.

Hivos promotes and initiates open-source seed systems in which farmers have the freedom to save, breed and sell seeds, thus allowing them to increase

Farmer in Kenya with her stockpile of seeds



© Sven Torfinn

their access to diversity. The first open-source seed system that Hivos supported was developed in India in 2015; Apna Beej is now a thriving and successful network which has registered twenty open-source varieties of crops and grains to date. Hivos then took this experience to East Africa, where we joined forces with Bioversity International and several national gene banks. In 2017 this partnership piloted field trials in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, aimed at bringing important, 'forgotten' food crops back to the fields and plates of smallholders and their communities.

### Multiple actors improve seed systems

In 2017, a total of 1,000 farmers received over 400 different seeds so that they could try them and select new varieties of millet, sorghum and beans. The trials clearly showed farmers' ability to enhance the use of high-quality seeds that grow into nutritious, tasty, climate-resilient crops. At harvest time we found them rigorously selecting the seeds that best served their requirements. Community seed banks play an important role in preserving and disseminating seed varieties. Given that Apna Beej has a lot of valuable experience in developing and managing seed

diversity, we invited farmers and staff from seed-saving networks in Tanzania and Kenya to travel to India and exchange experiences with their open-source seed colleagues.

Open-source seed systems need supportive policies and legislative frameworks, as well as buy-in from various parties. In 2017 we set up multi-actor meetings in all three countries in order to improve current seed systems in favour of open-source seeds; this was supported by broad media attention which significantly increased awareness on open-source seed systems in East Africa. In Kenya, the Seed Savers Network now leads the documentation and registration of farmers' varieties in order to safeguard the seeds, ensure that other users are made aware of their best characteristics, and ensure that they remain in the public domain. Unfortunately our meeting in Uganda failed as a result of insufficient preparation and planning. However, a noteworthy result here is one community seed bank's plan to declare a specific bean variety to be open source. This is due to take place in 2018.



### Social seed enterprises

Socially and environmentally responsible seed enterprises can play a key role in scaling up access to seeds for smallholders. To support these frontrunners, we organised the first Disrupt!SEEDS! event in early 2017, in collaboration with the Kenya Climate Innovation Centre. Eight social seed entrepreneurs with scalable initiatives enjoyed this business acceleration training and exposure to impact investors. As a result, the Seed Savers Network was able to develop a tissue lab to increase the quality of planting material; this lab will eventually serve over 40,000 member farmers.

Hivos plans to expand the programme to Southern Africa, a region which also suffers the disadvantages of not taking care of its seeds. We are also establishing a global alliance of open-source seed networks, through which we will kick-start initiatives in other countries. The alliance opposes a food system in which a handful of multinationals dictate what millions of people around the globe produce and eat. Hivos wants to enable farmers, socially responsible companies and concerned consumers to take care of valuable seeds again, to improve harvests and feed the world with a wide range of tasty and nutritional products.

“Hivos leans more towards an advocacy approach, whereas IIED as a think tank looks to support policymaking with evidence. It is a very nice complementarity, it plays to both our strengths”

Emma Harvey,  
General Manager Zambezi Pineapples

### IN FOCUS

## DISRUPT!FOOD! Funded by Hivos Innovation Fund

Hivos is convinced that social entrepreneurs can help to bring about the radical change in food production and consumption that the world so urgently needs. Through Disrupt!FOOD! we scout and support agri-food initiatives that banks are not (yet) interested in, but that are at the forefront of a new generation of social food entrepreneurs. Disrupt!FOOD! is an inspiring part of a broader approach to support Green & Social Entrepreneurship. In Disrupt!FOOD!, Hivos helps entrepreneurs to take their first steps or roll out their innovative solutions and learn how to scale their impact and value.

### Southern African food entrepreneurs

People all over the world want to eat healthier, more tasty food. Just as they do everywhere, innovative entrepreneurs in Africa are developing new, market-based solutions to existing food problems. Zimbabwean Jennifer Mayer, whose Hutano Foods produces healthy, high-quality and easy to enjoy snacks, is one of these. She uses local ingredients such as millet, sorghum and marula nuts, sourced directly from the farmers. By creating a new market for these crops, she contributes to the desperately-needed diversification of the maize-dominated food system. Mayer is one of the entrepreneurs Hivos supported through Disrupt!FOOD! in 2017 to become a change-maker in the Southern African agri-food sector.

Nonhlanhla Ajayi also took part in the Hivos event. Her Umgibe Farming is a carbon-saving, ecological, organic, income-generating vegetable growing system which provides a platform for market vegetables grown by grassroots farmers from the underprivileged townships of South Africa. The two passionate entrepreneurs share a dream with many other green business owners: why not combine social and business objectives and earn a decent living out of solving social and environmental problems?



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### Business acceleration training

Hivos believes that the Southern African food future lies with frontrunners like Mayer and Ajayi. They can provide the necessary shift towards a local, more sustainable and diverse food system in their increasingly food-insecure region. Yet while many decision-makers agree on the importance and role of these players, governments and investors rarely offer the necessary long-term support. This is where our support programme steps in.

In July, twelve entrepreneurs from Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, sourced from our extensive local networks, enthusiastically joined us at Disrupt!FOOD! in Harare, Zimbabwe. In this business incubation and acceleration event, we brought together the best of traditional business training and new insights and tools from design thinking. In our view, entrepreneurs' drive and passion are just as valuable as the financial viability of their business plans. During the three-day masterclass we not only supported the development of their business plans, but also had them tell their stories: why are you in this business and what is your business model? What problem in the food system are you addressing? What is your social value proposition?

### Proving that Africa can look after itself

Supported by mentors and high-level trainers, financial experts and communication specialists, the entrepreneurs strengthened their value propositions,

developed essential business capacities, improved their investment readiness, and gained confidence and skills on how to present their stories. On the third day, the freshly-trained entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to pitch their tweaked business ideas in front of a crowd of experts, practitioners, investors and interested spectators. By then, they had already learned so much and gained so much more confidence, that they all felt like winners. "We all learned something from each other. We are now connected and I would not be surprised if we already see some inter-company trades between Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. If that happens, as was the ultimate goal, then everybody goes home a winner."

During the Southern African Disrupt!FOOD! event, Hivos and Welthungerhilfe launched their co-operation in the Hivos Food & Lifestyle Fund. This lean impact investment fund is one of the financial instruments we initiated to support the growth plans of entrepreneurs like those who joined us at Disrupt!FOOD! Exceptional business owners like Emma Harvey, the overall winner of the pitch in Harare and the owner of Zambezi Pineapples. Harvey is not only looking forward to scaling up her business and reaching many more members of the local community, but also "to setting the standard", as she puts it. "We are proving that Africa can look after itself, that we are able to do it with each other, for each other and by each other."



## STAKEHOLDER

### Social entrepreneur wins Disrupt!FOOD! pitch

Emma Harvey, General Manager at Zambezi Pineapples

Young social entrepreneurs are bursting with innovative solutions to existing food problems. Emma Harvey, General Manager of Zambezi Pineapples, is one of the twelve social entrepreneurs scouted by Hivos for its Disrupt!FOOD! event (see In Focus: Disrupt!FOOD!). Emma was the proud overall winner of the pitch. Her company solves the problem faced by local farmers whose pineapples rot away because the costs of transportation are too high and the distance to the markets is too far. Zambezi Pineapples pays farmers a fair price and processes the fruit into affordable and healthy juice and dried pineapple snacks, which are sold in supermarkets in the region and in Lusaka.

Emma Harvey was excited to win the pitch as the strongest business case. "It is a validation that what we are doing is the future, and that was most incredible feeling for me." After the workshop she says she felt like a completely different person, more confident about herself and her brand and, even though she always has faith in the product, the workshop reinstated her feeling. During the workshop, money could be "a scary thing hanging over [her] head" but the Hivos team was there to refocus her in the right direction: remembering how much she loves what she does and the people that she serves.

Many other innovative entrepreneurs presented their businesses at Disrupt!FOOD!, ranging from beauty products to earthworm farming for alternative fertilisers. Emma underlines the importance of the great network she is now part of: "Being diverse made us better. We all learned something from each other." Thanks to the experts' support at Disrupt!FOOD!, she can expand her business and is excited to do so: "We are just really looking forward to upscaling and being able to reach so much of the local community we serve and look after."

