

**WOMEN UNLIMITED**

**HIVOS POLICY DOCUMENT  
GENDER WOMEN & DEVELOPMENT**

**WOMEN UNLIMITED**

**Policy Document**

**Gender, Women & Development**

Approved by the Executive Board  
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## Executive Summary

*fresh momentum to advance women's rights is needed ...*

The acknowledgement that there has been insufficient global progress in closing gender gaps means fresh momentum is needed to advance women's rights. In 2005, governments reaffirmed their commitment to the *Beijing Platform for Action* (PfA), a global agenda for women's empowerment, pledging action towards full and accelerated implementation. In 2000, gender equality and the empowerment of women were *both adopted* as the 3rd Millennium Development Goal (MDG), *as well as declared* a prerequisite for achieving all the other MDGs. At the 2005 World Summit, the scope of MDG 3 was expanded to include a broader range of social, economic, and political rights. Hivos therefore considers it important to revisit its policy priorities, strategies and activities aimed at furthering women's empowerment and gender equality in the light of challenges posed by the shifting global environment.

*...given limited gains and persistent inequalities ...*

In the last decade, some improvements in women's lives have been achieved, largely as a result of activities by women's organisations. On the whole, however, progress has been slow, its effects limited and uneven. Gender inequalities persist throughout the world.

*... a less favourable global context ...*

Moreover, the current global milieu seems less favourable to advancing the agenda of women's rights than a decade ago. Improvements achieved previously have to be defended or re-established.

- The international political agenda is preoccupied with anti-terrorism and security, not with development, human rights or women's rights.
- Extremist, fundamentalist forces are exerting more control over women's existence, particularly over their bodies and sexuality, curtailing their freedom of movement and expression.

Additional challenges are posed by:

- the feminisation of the HIV/Aids pandemic.
- an epidemic scale of violence against women.
- and the persistence of women's poverty.

Information and communication technologies and new media have enabled women's rights defenders to expose the lack of progress and lobby for the reaffirmation of the *Beijing PfA* and the expansion of the scope of MDG 3.

*... and no real evidence of gender mainstreaming*

Gender mainstreaming has been advocated by the *Beijing PfA* as the institutional approach to achieving gender equality. This mandates a dual strategy:

- specific policy, programmes, and resources for women's empowerment;
- integration of women's issues and gender equality perspectives into the mainstream of all policies, programmes and resource allocations.

*Hivos adopted a dual strategy*

In its 1996 Gender, Women & Development (GW&D) policy, Hivos adopted this dual strategy which has since guided programme implementation. However, most actors in international co-operation have emphasised the second track of gender mainstreaming *at the expense of* support for specific policy, programmes, and resources for the empowerment of women. Women's organisations receive fewer resources than before, and fewer donors are willing to support them. The consequence has been a reduction of gender expertise, capacity and advocacy, indispensable for processes of gender mainstreaming.

*reformulation of Hivos GW&D policy ...*

*Women Unlimited* is Hivos third GW&D policy document. It responds to the current challenges and new momentum in a changed and changing world, and notably, in the context of international co-operation. It reflects new priorities, strategies and focus. It is based on lessons learned in the course of implementing the previous GW&D policies. Hivos' vision on the root causes of poverty and gender inequality has not fundamentally changed. Unequal access to and control over material and non-material resources result in unequal participation of women in decision-making processes that shape their lives and opportunities.

*... continuation dual strategy*

The dual strategy will thus be continued:

- Promotion of the rights, interests and participation of women, via support to women's organisations through the GW&D programme;
- Mainstreaming of the rights, interests and participation of women in all Hivos programme components.

*new strategies and cutting-edge activism required ...*

The GW&D programme will be renewed in terms of priorities, strategies and actors, depending on opportunities in the countries where Hivos works. There is a need to increase scale and impact so as to benefit a larger number, and wider diversity of, women. New strategies and cutting edge activism are required to break through the current policy inertia. There is need for fresh blood to enable the participation and leadership of young women, and alliance-building with men and women active in other civic movements. Priority will be laid in the coming years on:

- increased public accountability in respect of gender equality;
- increased leadership and participation of women in decision-making;
- strengthening of the legitimacy, capacity and outreach of the women's movement, including beyond national capitals, and alliance-building with other civic movements;
- promotion of women's bodily integrity, the right to self-determination and freedom from violence, in particular to counter the curtailment of women's reproductive and sexual rights in the name of religion, tradition or culture.

*...and new allies ...*

Both Hivos and partner organisations will have to search for and develop new strategies to rejuvenate the agenda of women's rights. This will imply identification of, and co-operation with, new allies, individual citizens, journalists, artists, politicians, entrepreneurs, men and women, who are keen to be role models and ambassadors for women's rights and interests.

*... and mainstreaming of women's rights in all Hivos programmes*

For the mainstreaming of women's rights, interests and participation in all programmes, Hivos has developed an instrument to measure the gender performance of all partner organisations. Every two years, an assessment is carried out using this instrument. A general organisational target has been set for gradually improving performance in this area. In addition to the allocation of financial resources to the GW&D sector programme, other Hivos sectors are expected to jointly allocate the same quantity of financial resources to activities that specifically benefit women. Priorities and interventions of importance to women within the different Hivos sector programmes have been identified. Finally, as an actor in The Netherlands and Europe, Hivos aims to strengthen public support for women's empowerment and gender equality within international co-operation. We will support and host a proposed new national platform for networking, knowledge-sharing and policy advocacy for women's rights and gender equality. The aim is to increase Dutch and European accountability regarding gender equality in international co-operation, including specific resource allocation for the empowerment of women and girls. *Women Unlimited – Unfinished Business* is the trade name for Hivos' lobby in support of women's rights in international co-operation.

## 1. Introduction

*Beijing inspired Hivos  
GW&D policy: an  
agenda for  
empowerment*

In 1996 Hivos adopted a renewed policy 'Gender, Women and Development', as a follow-up to the 1988 'Women in Development' policy. This was based on the optimistic spirit of the aftermath of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. The adoption of the *Beijing Platform for Action* (PfA) was a major achievement, since it is a global agenda for women's empowerment. The 189 members of the United Nations (UN) committed themselves to taking action towards these far-reaching goals, objectives and measures. It inspired Hivos to revitalize its support to women's empowerment and gender equality. Together with the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1994 *Cairo Action Programme*, it created the major guiding frameworks for women's organisations and Hivos' support to women's organisations throughout the world in the past decade.

*given changes in its  
surroundings ...*

Since 1995 however, the world and the context of international co-operation have significantly changed, both on a global scale and in The Netherlands. Shifts in priorities and aid modalities in international co-operation, including the growing emphasis on anti-terrorism and security, have shrunk the space to advance the agenda of women's rights and gender equality. Changes in Hivos' immediate environment, in particular the restructuring of the Dutch Co-financing Programme that – financially and in terms of policy framework – forms the foundation of Hivos' activities, caused Hivos to reformulate its vision and general policy *Civil voices on a global stage* (2002). From 1995 onwards, Hivos increased its thematic specialisation. In 2005, the organisation itself was restructured to operate on a thematic rather than geographic basis.

*...reformulation of  
Hivos GW&D policy*

Hivos' vision on the root causes of poverty and gender inequalities has not fundamentally changed since the 1996 GW&D policy. Unequal access to and control over material and non-material resources result in the unequal participation of women in decision-making processes that determine their lives and opportunities. Be it in their homes, at community and national levels, or in the international arena. But since the context has become significantly altered, Hivos feels the need to reposition itself in this changed – and changing context – and to revisit its policy priorities, strategies and activity-directions in order to advance women's empowerment and gender equality. At present, a new momentum for the need to advance women's rights is emerging as a response to, and acknowledgement of, the lack of progress in closing gender gaps throughout the world. Hivos considers it important to use the opportunity created by this momentum.

## 2. Context Analysis

### 2.1. Reaffirmation of the agenda of Beijing

*2005 Beijing agenda  
reaffirmed*

The 2005 Beijing + 10 Review, held during the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), reaffirmed governments' commitment to the implementation of the *Beijing PfA*. A pledge was made to undertake further action to ensure full and accelerated implementation.<sup>1</sup> At the 2005 World Summit, the UN General Assembly adopted the *World Summit Outcome*, reaffirming that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the *Beijing PfA* was an essential contribution to achieving internationally-agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.<sup>2</sup> At the Summit, the scope of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3, Gender equality and empowerment of women, was expanded to embrace a broader range of women's social, economic and political rights. As the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stated in its press summary to the *State*

*of World Population 2005: The Promise of Equality, Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals: "It is a simple message but a powerful one: Gender equality reduces poverty and saves and improves lives."<sup>3</sup>*

*a new momentum to advance women's rights is emerging*

This reaffirmation at the highest levels of the UN of the strategic relevance and importance of the Beijing agenda for women's empowerment and gender equality has to be regarded as a major achievement in the present context of having to defend prior gains and re-fight battles previously won. It creates renewed momentum, to work to advance women's rights, and seems to have emerged from combined efforts of women's organisations, at times allied with other civic movements, citizens and politicians. Hivos' partner organisations have contributed to this momentum.

## 2.2. Limited progress and persistence of gender inequalities

*positive changes often instigated by women's organisations ...*

UN agencies, governments and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) published a wealth of data for the Beijing + 10 Review and the World Summit MDG + 5 Review.<sup>4</sup> These indicate some **notable achievements** for women over the past decade: increased visibility in parliaments and state institutions, more girls attending primary schools, a larger presence of women in the labour market, increasing visibility of women in the media, and lower fertility rates. The positive changes in women's position have largely been instigated by women's organisations, including Hivos partner organisations, taking advantage of the political context of the 1990's, which they themselves had helped to reshape. Activism has been amplified at national and global levels via the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the new media. Lobby and advocacy work to achieve legal and policy reform by governments and other policy-making institutions became dominant strategies for change. Major achievements have been setting the agenda on violence against women and issues of sexual and reproductive health. Eighty-nine states now have legislative provisions that specifically address domestic violence, and 20 states have draft legislation on domestic violence.<sup>5</sup>

*... but gains too slow, limited and uneven*

Still, when you compare the gender disparity data of 2005 with that in the 1995 Human Development Report, it becomes clear that the gains for women have been painfully slow, limited and uneven. Despite increased parity in **primary education**, girls make up the majority of the millions of children still not in school. Girls' primary school completion rate is 76 percent compared to 85 percent for boys. Regarding secondary and tertiary education, this disparity is even wider. Yet education beyond primary school has the greatest effect on women's empowerment, income-earning potential, bargaining power in the household, decision-making, self-determination over own body, and participation in public life. Women's representation in national parliaments has increased from 11 in 1995 to 17 percent in 2006. Only eighteen countries have achieved the target of 30 percent women in parliament, and one, Rwanda, has achieved equal representation. The progress that has been made has been limited to less influential political domains.

*globalisation: more jobs for women, deteriorating working conditions*

Economic globalisation has resulted in higher numbers of women entering the paid labour force. But women's access to paid labour remains lower than men's in most countries in the global South & East. The **feminisation of the labour force** has coincided with a deterioration of the terms and conditions of work and increased insecurity in work and income. The trend has been an informalisation of women's work and working conditions. Gender inequality in labour markets is still stark, with higher unemployment levels for women in most regions and a gender wage gap as high as 30 to 40 percent in the South & East. Women work, on average and across the world, more hours than men each week, sometimes as many as 35 hours more, but their work is often unpaid and unaccounted for. Women continue to be the majority of the people living in poverty.

*feminisation of the HIV/Aids pandemic*

Progress with regard to women's **health** has been ambiguous, particularly as a result of the HIV/Aids pandemic that increasingly takes on a female face. Women and girls make up the majority of the estimated five million newly-infected persons each year. Over half a million women die annually from pregnancy-related causes, 99 percent of them in the South & East. Most of these deaths are preventable. Thirteen percent of maternal mortality involves women who had an unsafe abortion. Worldwide, women suffer greater malnutrition than men. Commercialisation of essential services, like health care and drinking water, has a disproportionately large negative impact on women's health and well being, as they have to manage shrinking household budgets by increasing their unpaid workload and vulnerability.

*violence against women: epidemic proportions*

**Violence against women** occurs in epidemic proportions in many countries in the world. Worldwide, it is estimated that it kills and harms as many women and girls aged 15 to 44 as cancer. It is a more common cause of ill health among women than traffic accidents and malaria combined. Violence against women takes many forms, and exists on a continuum, from domestic violence to violence as a weapon of war. One out of three women and girls is estimated to be a victim of violence or sexual abuse.<sup>6</sup>

*deep embedded patriarchal values and new challenges*

The fact that the violation of women's rights throughout the world has not led to widespread public outrage points at deep embedded patriarchal values and behaviour, as well as institutional mechanisms which perpetuate inequality between women and men. Acknowledgement of women's rights as human rights has not yet been mainstreamed. In the last decade, progress has been limited and not linear, at times reversing, whilst women face new challenges and inequalities due to global economic, geo-political, social, and cultural change.

### 2.3. New issues and challenges

*war against terrorism undermines women's rights agenda ...*

The preoccupation with **anti-terrorism and security** - in particular since 11/9/2001- by the most powerful players in the international arena, including the UN itself, has left far less space for issues of development, human rights, and even more so for women's rights, when compared to the 1990s. The United States of America (USA) went as far as legitimising the invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq by claiming it was to rescue women's rights, after many years of USA support to regimes notorious for violating such rights, and with no significant improvement of women's lives under subsequent USA occupation. In actual fact, the interventions by the USA and its allies has resulted in counter-movements that silence critical voices of (women) human rights defenders, claiming the need to prioritise unity against foreign enemies. In the last decade, authoritarian regimes, conflicts, wars and foreign occupations have brought with them old and new forms of violence against women, the ultimate one being rape as a weapon of war. There is evidence of international peacekeeping forces aggravating the plight of women refugees, demanding free or cheap sex in exchange for food or shelter. Women's organisations have been active in naming and shaming peacekeeping forces and have successfully lobbied for the adoption of the 2000 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security. Despite improved instruments for women's representation in decision-making in prevention, management and resolution of conflict, the majority of sexual crimes against women during wartime still go unpunished. The connection between peace, security and women's rights is not adequately made.

*... but notion of human security offers scope*

Recent emphasis on **human security** rather than national security offers possibilities to make these links. The UN Commission on Human Security's definition of human security integrates human rights, human development and human security as three facets of a common ethical base for the protection of human life and dignity.<sup>7</sup> From a gender perspective, the notion of 'human' security provides space for addressing issues of bodily integrity, the care economy, and women's participation, representation and 'voice'.



*fundamentalist forces exert control over women's lives and bodies ...*

Diverse **religious, ethnic, and cultural extremist, (fundamentalist) forces** have gained ground at a global level, exerting control over women's lives, in particular their sexual and reproductive rights, dress codes, freedom of movement and expression, and appropriating women's public and personal spaces.<sup>8</sup>

Fundamentalist movements are found in all major religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. They use religion, and often ethnicity and culture as well, to gain or maintain political power. Violence against women is justified in the name of religion, culture, custom and tradition.

Globally, there is an increasingly hostile environment with regard to women's reproductive and sexual rights. This manifested itself during the 1999 Cairo and 2000 Beijing + 5 reviews, when American and international conservative Christian NGOs allied with the Vatican to oppose the previously-gained consensus on reproductive rights. This has continued with new allies coming on board. The Bush administration reintroduced the 'global gag rule' in 2001: prohibition of using any funding (even from other governments or private donors) to advocate for or provide legal abortion services if organisations want to receive family planning assistance funds from the USA. This neo-conservative USA policy is supported by the Vatican and other conservative Christian and Islamic governments. In 2005, the American anti-abortion rule for NGOs to qualify for development assistance was expanded with the requirement to sign an anti-prostitution pledge for NGOs to qualify for HIV/Aids development assistance. The focus of USA HIV/Aids funding to countries in the South is abstinence until marriage, fidelity within marriage, and opposition to condom use.

*... slowed down progress in respect to reproductive and sexual rights ...*

In spite of Christian and other fundamentalists' efforts to restrict women's sexual and reproductive rights, the past decade has seen fifteen countries expand indications for legal **abortion** while five countries increased restrictions. Since 2001, same-sex marriage and civil unions have been a hard won victory in 11 countries led by The Netherlands, including one country in the South (South Africa), and several states in the USA.<sup>9</sup> Legal acceptance of **women's sexual rights** does not translate itself into widespread social tolerance of and respect for sexual diversity. Gay and lesbian bashing and hate crimes are on the rise, also in the North.

*... legitimise violence against women*

Islamic governments have further obstructed international progress in condemning violence against women. In 2003, they objected to the condemnation of harmful tradition or cultural practices at the CSW, nullifying previously agreed statements, including the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. A recent trend is that an increasing number of Islamic countries reinstate (parts of) *shari'a* based legislation, not only in the Middle East, but also in North and West Africa and Indonesia. In recent years, women's organisations were forced to increase efforts to mobilise support for saving the lives of women threatened by death by public stoning or 'honour' killings. In Indonesia, dress codes and restrictions on women's behaviour in public spaces have been introduced via local and national legislation. In Iran, women's public space and voice continues to be disputed by Islamic regimes. In India the growth of Hindu fundamentalism within the last twenty years has intensified Hindu-Muslim hostility all over the country, culminating in 2002 in a two-month spate of communal violence in Gujarat, of which a significant feature was sexual violence against Muslim women. The growth of fundamentalist efforts to **silence women's voices** about identity, sexuality and abuse is a backlash against the space women's organisations created in the 1990's for the right to bodily integrity. This right to self-determination challenges the core of patriarchal values, privileges and power relations.

*violence, poverty and HIV/Aids are intertwined*

In the new Millennium, the **HIV/Aids pandemic** has taken on a female face, as women and girls become the majority of people living with HIV/Aids, and with frightening high rates of infection for young women in sub-Saharan Africa, three times higher than those of young men. In Asia infection rates for women and girls are also rising. Women and girls vulnerability to get affected is due to a

combination of factors: high levels of domestic and sexual violence; poverty and lack of property rights; rape as a weapon of war; civil conflict resulting in displacement and transactional sex; sex trafficking; and unsafe learning environments for girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the highest prevalence rates, new forms of violence against women have been the result, including: the rape of infants and young girls; widows' loss of marital home and property; and discrimination and hate crimes carried out against HIV-positive women and girls. Violence, poverty and vulnerability to HIV/Aids infection are intertwined and require an integrated response in favour of women's rights and empowerment, which is still absent in most HIV/Aids prevention, care and treatment programmes. Whereas women carry the additional burden of taking care of the sick and orphans, they remain underrepresented in HIV/Aids policy formulation as well as decision-making about programmes and resource distribution.

*corporate social responsibility has potential and limitations*

The last decade of intensified economic globalisation has not alleviated women's poverty. Rather, policy prescriptions involving market liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation have resulted in new burdens and risks for poor women in the South & East. The trend has been an informalisation of work and working conditions. Women are more often found on the lowest rungs of the ladder of employment quality and security, enduring low wages, long hours of overtime, and hazardous working conditions. They are often flexible, seasonal workers, sub-contracted in the informal sector or as industrial outworkers, unprotected by labour standards and without organisation and voice. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies** can be potentially beneficial for women working in global value chains sensitive to reputation damage and quality demands by consumers. However, many of the root causes of workplace gender inequality lie outside its direct sphere. The relevance of CSR for women workers will depend on whether CSR strategies cover women to an equal degree as men, and whether they address non-employment factors that influence employment conditions and issues that women, in particular, confront. Since export industries predominantly employ women, a strategy is essential which links codes with the development of women's organisations and a consumer movement, not only in the North, but also in the South & East.

*micro-finance has potential but is no magic bullet*

**Micro-finance** has been advocated as a strategy to address women's poverty. Poor working women make up around 80 percent of all global clients of micro-finance institutions. Impact assessment studies reveal that access to financial services can and does contribute to improvements in the lives of women, such as increased access to resources and material well-being, reduced vulnerability and enhanced identity. But it can also have negative implications, such as increased indebtedness, workloads, and higher incidence of violence. The implications for wider women's empowerment within the household vary according to context, area of decision-making, and strategies for organisational capacity-building among poor women. Like any other single intervention, micro-finance is not a magic bullet for women's empowerment.<sup>10</sup> It has proven to be more effective in combination with: provision of other services, such as health and HIV/Aids education; legal training; business skills and technologies; market information; and organisational capacity-building through group-based strategies. As a variety of financial institutions become involved with micro-finance, it is important to keep a focus on women's participation, and on products and services that address the needs of poor working women.

*need to secure women's economic rights*

Finally, addressing women's poverty requires interventions beyond CSR and micro-finance to secure women's economic rights, including the right to own and inherit property and other productive resources that reduce women's unpaid work burden and address broader women's rights issues, including violence against women.

*decline of the UN ...*

Global civil society, including women's organisations, successfully expanded its influence in **United Nations** fora and other international institutions in the 1990s,

the decade of large UN conferences. The possibilities provided by ICTs have accelerated participation by women and women's organisations. It has contributed to their wider and more diverse collaboration in global decision-making and the organisation of global action for change. Participation in UN processes provided an important learning and capacity-building opportunity for new generations of women. On encountering government resistance to follow-up on promises made in Beijing, they were able to use UN fora and procedures at global and regional levels to advocate for and monitor the implementation of the *Beijing PFA*.

... as a forum to  
advance women's  
rights

However, the United Nations has lost influence in the world, particularly after the neo-conservative Bush administration took power in 2001. UN reform was on the agenda of the 2005 World Summit and is currently under negotiation. Gender equality advocates are facing an uphill battle to influence these negotiations. The existing gender equality architecture is under-resourced and under-prioritised in comparison with other UN agencies. Funding for gender equality work *both* within mainstream UN agencies, *and* women's specific mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is inadequate for the task at hand.<sup>11</sup> The obvious need is for creation of a well-resourced, independent, women-specific entity mandated to work across the whole UN system, with policy-setting responsibility, operational capacity, and authority to ensure accountability. But this is expected to meet government resistance due to the prevailing preference for gender mainstreaming and the financial deficits existing in UN machinery.

WSF: emergence of  
new global civil  
society space

In the new Millennium, a new global civil society space has emerged as an autonomous space for a diversity of social movements and new forms of citizen action, the **World Social Forum**. Facilitated by ICT, new coalitions and alliances are being built around issues such as the absence of accountability and democratic quality in international economic institutions and international governance bodies. It is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, debate, formulation of strategies and inter-linking for effective action. It offers *both* new opportunities for the women's movement in terms of alliance building with other social movements *and* challenges, given the fact that most social movements are not centred on women's rights.

#### 2.4. Aid architecture

gender mainstreaming:  
a dual strategy and  
transformation ...

**Gender mainstreaming** has been advocated in the *Beijing PFA* as the institutional mechanism for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes so as to achieve gender equality. The *Beijing PFA* acknowledged that gender mainstreaming requires a dual strategy:

- specific policy, programmes and resources for the empowerment of women;
- the integration of women's issues and gender equality perspectives into the mainstream of all policies, programmes and resource allocations (gender mainstreaming).

Over the years the emphasis in international co-operation has been on the second track of gender mainstreaming *at the expense of* resources and attention for the first track. Within institutions such as governments and development agencies, resources for women's organisations and gender equality units have been cut down with the argument that their presence and expertise had been made redundant by the thrust via gender mainstreaming. This has resulted in a reduction in gender expertise, capacity and advocacy-which resides predominantly within women's organisations and gender equality units, and which are indispensable to processes of gender mainstreaming.

... which got lost ...

During the 2005 Beijing + 10 review, the failure of gender mainstreaming was acknowledged by women's organisations and women activists, as well as by staff in mainstream development agencies, predominantly female staff with current or past gender responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> A recent evaluation of Dutch government support to NGOs is also critical of the lack of evidence of gender mainstreaming amongst many of the NGOs supported.<sup>13</sup>

*... with implementation*

The original transformative notion of gender mainstreaming has been reduced to a technocratic approach in practice, which uses instruments such as checklists and guidelines to integrate gender issues into existing agendas and policies. What has been evaded is the question of the need for, and mechanisms to achieve a redistribution of power and resources. Five key preconditions for gender mainstreaming have not been fulfilled: commitment from top leadership; explicit gender equality policy with clear objectives; mechanisms for internal accountability; sufficient and legitimate gender expertise; and gender instruments and resources.<sup>14</sup>

*new aid modalities: 'away' streaming*

The scope for gender mainstreaming has also been influenced by changes in aid modalities, in particular donors' replacement of direct project support and implementation, with recipient-country-led strategies such as sectoral approaches, basket-funding and budget support aimed at increased country-ownership and coherence and coordination of development co-operation. As a policy objective, gender equality has been lost in the sectoral approach. Civil society organisations - including women's organisations- have become more dependent on the goodwill of their own governments; possibilities for policy dialogue with, and direct funding from, bilateral agencies have been reduced. Many recipient governments do not prioritise women's rights, and are not in favour of strong civil society advocacy for justice and equality. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) introduced by the World Bank include **good governance** and **sound economic policies** aid conditionalities, which have not been operationalised in terms of their implications for gender equality.<sup>15</sup> The framework of the MDGs has only operationalised gender equality objectives in a limited fashion, in its targets and indicators. The MDGs themselves did not incorporate the broad empowerment and gender equality agenda of the *Beijing PFA*. Women's organisations have therefore been forced to spend a lot of time and resources defending gains made earlier, rather than advancing their own agendas.

*donors need to revitalise the agenda of women's rights*

But new opportunities present themselves even within this bleak outlook. Reports produced for the 2005 Beijing + 10 review, and research undertaken by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), have helped a number of development agencies recognise that they need to revitalise or make a start with the work for women's empowerment and gender equality.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.5. The Women's Movement

*challenges of legitimacy, effectiveness, direction*

The 1996 Hivos GW&D policy stated that the women's movement emerged as the most significant social movement of past decades, especially because it was based on principles of self-organisation and coalition-building around collective interests. More recently, the women's movement in the North has been deemed no longer relevant, since formal legal equality has been almost achieved, except where it relates to immigrant and refugee women. In the South & East, where formal legal equality is less advanced, the women's movement faces challenges of legitimacy, effectiveness and direction. New ways of working and organising are required to confront the altered context described above. Three decades of global women's activism has revealed that equality is not simply a matter of laws and policies. Gender inequality and discrimination against women are deeply entrenched in people's beliefs, value systems, traditions, culture and behaviour. It is thus important to reflect on the characteristics of the women's movement itself. The issues and challenges it is facing in terms of strategy, capacity, organisation and leadership are not unique, but also confronts other social movements.

### Strategy issues

*disconnect between global, national and local*

Over the years, like other social movements, the women's movement has undergone a process of professionalisation and specialisation, linked to an increasing focus in the last decade on policy advocacy work. The

institutionalisation of development practices has led to a growing formalisation of women's organisations, a process labelled 'NGOisation', which has resulted in the loss of some of their original ethos of participation, empowerment, and long term, qualitative engagement with grassroots communities. This expresses itself in gaps between the focus of capital-city-based NGOs and the grassroots women's initiatives in urban slums and rural areas, and in gaps between organisations involving women of different classes, castes, ethnic or religious backgrounds. At global and national levels, the focus of women's organisations has been to increase their influence in decision-making processes at the expense of wider constituency-building strategies to create support for their demands for policy and law reform. There is a growing disconnect between global and national policy advocacy and local issues, local knowledge, mobilisation and organisation.

*need for broader engagement*

In addition, an exclusive focus on lobby and advocacy for policy and law reform as the sole strategy for change is unsuited to the inertia that currently exists at policy levels. Women's organisations need to search for alternative, creative strategies for advocacy work and agenda-setting, including popular education, organising, consciousness-raising, media and communication strategies, so as to stimulate broader engagement by both male and female citizens with women's rights and gender equality.

### **Capacity issues**

*need to increase capacity ...*

AWID's research on the funding landscape shows that women's organisations from all regions are in a state of survival and resistance, attracting fewer resources than before, and therefore unable to be more pro-active and agenda-setting. Institutional funding is provided by a few donor agencies only. Some organisations adapt their work to fit the agenda of the donors, including their own governments, with consequences for the political nature and activism of their work. For financial reasons, many organisations have opted for service delivery, or to fill the gap in service delivery due to privatisation policies and failing state delivery. This again limits their capacity to address more structural causes of injustice and inequality.

*... and scale*

The issue of limited capacity also manifests itself as a problem of scale and impact. Given the overwhelming demands made on the services and expertise of women's organisations, there is a tendency to undertake too many activities and handle too many different issues, risking staff-burnout and poor-quality work. The overwhelming nature of the problems and issues to be addressed means that, at a global level, women's organisations lack the capacity to scale-up their activities and implement complex, large-scale programmes that have potential to benefit substantial numbers of women in a sustainable way.

### **Organisation and leadership issues**

*need for quality leadership...*

Women's organisations play an important role in leadership development, through the identification, sharing and leveraging of knowledge, and through the experience of organising for collective interest. Many female leaders in the women's movement shift to other positions of leadership and representation: in political office; the public sector; other civic movements; the donor community; and international institutions. Whilst contributing to women's leadership at large, the women's movement itself sometimes experiences a scarcity of leadership, both numerically and in terms of quality. It has proven to be difficult to maintain co-operative relationships with women who have moved out of the women's movement into other leadership positions. Loyalty to party or institution becomes a survival strategy at the expense of advancing the women's rights agenda. And the entry of women's rights activists into other leadership positions does not imply that they stay. Turnover and exit of women in positions of leadership and representation is much higher than that of men.

*... young and more diverse*

An additional leadership issue is the role of founding members, e.g. those not willing to invest in a second generation of leadership, and to share power with new generations of women. Women's organisations can develop into territories of power of individual women at the expense of collective interest representation and alliance-building. Younger women are dissatisfied with not being taken seriously. Diversity in all senses (age, class, ethnicity, race, caste, ability, sexual orientation) is not equally represented and addressed. New strategies for building and strengthening women's leadership are required, beyond individual, personal advancement and technical skills acquisition, enabling collective learning, mentoring and empowerment.

### **Issues concerning alliances**

*importance of internal alliances ...*

Co-operation between women's organisations and alliance-building within the women's movement, across issues and across regions, require further strengthening. Instead of competing for scarce financial and human resources, women's organisations should use collective strategies for resource mobilisation and capacity building.

*... and alliances with other social movements ...*

One of the biggest challenges for the women's movement is the issue of alliances with other civic movements. To be effective in achieving desired changes, women's organisations will always need to build alliances across sectors and issues, with other civic movements such as: the human rights movement; LGBTI movement; labour movement; indigenous and caste movements; and at gatherings of civic movements such as the World Social Forum. The challenge here is that very few other civic movements will take a lead on women's empowerment and gender equality, yet they expect the women's movement to join their agendas, allowing a degree of gender repair as far as they deem fit. The hostile environment for women's sexual and reproductive rights at global and national levels has reproduced itself within civil society coalitions, such as the 2005 Global Call Against Poverty (GCAP). To keep the churches on board, GCAP was not prepared to include sexual and reproductive rights in its lobbying agenda at the 2005 World Summit.

*... and insider – outsider alliances*

Alliances with other civic movements, but also with governments and funding agencies, remain dependent on committed individuals, mainly women, who consider themselves part and parcel of the women's movement. Strengthening of this insider/outsider alliance continues to be a useful strategy, providing mechanisms for networking, knowledge-sharing, regular dialogue, and joint strategising.

### **Opportunities**

*new strategies and initiatives emerge*

And yet despite the state of survival and resistance of many women's organisations, there is critical self-reflection, thinking, and strategising taking place among women activists. Progress is possible and has been made possible by the perseverance of women's organisations, including Hivos partner organisations. Existing and new initiatives are demonstrating new strategies for sharing resources and knowledge, make use of ICTs strategically, in particular in the struggle against fundamentalisms. New initiatives have been taken to build and demonstrate young female leadership. A number of women's organisations are deliberately working towards making the connection between local and global levels, including alliance-building with other social movements. The momentum of opportunities that is currently emerging deserves Hivos' support.

### 3. Hivos GW&D policy 1996 – 2005<sup>17</sup>

#### 3.1. Hivos GW&D policy 1996

*1996 Hivos GW&D policy objective*

The objective of the 1996 GW&D policy was to promote the emancipation and empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality at all levels in society.<sup>18</sup> Empowerment was conceptualised as comprising five interrelated dimensions: material well-being; access to resources and opportunities; self-esteem and gender equality values; participation in decision-making and agency; and control over resources, benefits and self-determination.

Implementation of the policy was guided by a three-track strategy

- Support to women's organisations
- Support to integration of gender equality perspectives in 'mixed' organisations (the portfolio of Hivos partner organisations excluding women's organisations)
- Support to building of gender capacity in the field of organisational development (OD), organisational change and institutional development

#### 3.2. Internal assessment of Hivos' GW&D policy 1997 – 2000

*2001 self-assessment*

In 2000/2001, Hivos undertook a performance assessment in order to assess the validity of choices and the quality of implementation of the GW&D policy.<sup>19</sup> The focus of the assessment was on the three operational choices, which had been slightly reformulated by 2000, combining the former 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> into one, and adding as a third strategy the level of other sectoral policies: So the reformulated three choices were:

- Strengthening of the women's movement and women's organisations
- Integration of gender equality perspectives into mixed organisations
- Integration of gender equality perspectives into other Hivos sectoral policies

The assessment confirmed the relevance of the three operational choices as necessary and complementary strategies. All three strategies are, in their own way, essential for mainstreaming gender equality. The actual contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality was assessed to be quite different for each of the three strategies. Direct support to the women's movement and women's organisations was assessed to be the most effective. Assessment of achievements of the second strategy was more complex due to problems of attribution, process nature of integration strategies, length of time after which results are visible, absence of adequate data and mechanisms for Hivos to monitor performance. Evidence of integration of gender equality perspectives into other Hivos sectoral policies was the least of the three operational strategies.

Given these findings, in 2001, Hivos decided to postpone the planned review of the GW&D policy and instead to give follow-up to the different recommendations of the internal gender assessment. A more recent impetus for the GW&D policy review has been the 2004 Co-financing Programme (CFP) evaluation on 'The Role of Women's Organisations in Civil Society Building'.

#### 3.3. Co-financing Programme evaluation 1998 – 2003

*2004 Programme Evaluation*

In the new round of programme evaluations for the period 2003–2006, three Co-financing Agencies (CFAs): Cordaid, Hivos and Icco, agreed to be assessed on the theme of the role of women's organisations in civil society building.<sup>20</sup> The 2004 CFP evaluation was conducted in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, three countries with distinct political contexts but with similar issues of gender inequality, and covered the period 1998 - 2003.

*Hivos motivation is clear*

Major findings and lessons learned: Hivos is clear about why and how it supports women's organisations with a financial target, set at 15% in the 2003 – 2006 company plan. Hivos' internal gender capacity has remained stable over the years. Hivos was advised to maintain its support to women's organisations and further diversify its support to women's rights in its other sectoral policy areas.

*a stronger civil society*

Hivos' partner organisations contribute to a stronger civil society, in particular by increasing gender justice, creating new norms and values, preserving social cohesion and increased women's participation in public life and decision-making. But effectiveness was difficult to establish, due to lack of data and absence of results orientation. The big challenge for women's organisations is to transform the gains of improved legislation into making the laws work for people in the communities, and to ensure and maintain people's rights of access to services. A persistent division of labour within civil society was observed with other civil society organisations not recognising the political value of women's organisations and not taking responsibility for women's rights.

The findings are context specific, but the context analysis in Chapter 2 in this policy paper confirms that a number of challenges that women's organisations face in East and Southern Africa are quite similar to those for women's organisations throughout the world at this point in time.

### **3.4. Hivos as a learning organisation**

*follow-up to recommendations and lessons learned*

Evidence of Hivos' follow-up to the recommendations, as well as the lessons learned from the 2001 internal assessment and 2004 CFP evaluation, can be found in policy documents approved since then, especially in the 2002 new general policy *Civil Voices on a global stage*. Its mission statement affirms: "The empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality is a primary directive in Hivos' policy."<sup>21</sup> The new Hivos project administration, operational since 2004, includes gender specific data and performance indicators which have made it possible to undertake a gender baseline measurement for all Hivos partner organisations in 2005. This baseline measurement has been used for defining gender mainstreaming targets in the Hivos company plan for the period 2007 – 2010. The 2005 restructuring of Hivos and the new company plan are an acknowledgement of the continued validity of a two-track strategy: specific interventions for the empowerment of women and girls, and integration of gender equality perspectives into all areas of Hivos' policy and programme work.

*insights for gender mainstreaming*

Hivos' capacity to keep women's empowerment and gender equality on its agenda in the last two decades provides a few important insights. Progress on gender equality requires more than the fulfilment of the five preconditions for gender mainstreaming identified by the Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Hivos' experience suggests the following key elements:

- commitment and accountability from leadership and management at highest levels, combined with commitment and accountability at middle management levels, given delegated decision-making;
- explicit GW&D policy and clarity on its status in relation to other sectoral and overall institutional policies;
- responsibility for gender mainstreaming has to be shared, owned and embedded widely throughout the organisation, preferably within each unit of major organisational decision-making;
- availability of gender expertise needs to be of a generalist and of a specialist nature in order to be a useful resource for other sectoral domains. Gender capacity building and knowledge-sharing should be ongoing and consistently refreshed;
- resources and instruments have to be available and applied, and, if necessary, to be developed anew;
- monitoring of gender performance should be part of the annual organisational monitoring procedures. Periodically, at least every 4 to 5 years, a major organisation-wide gender activity should be planned, in order to keep women's rights and gender equality on the agenda. This should include creative and inspiring methods in order to avoid resistance against the watchdog function of internal gender experts;



- success in gender mainstreaming continues to be dependent on visionary leadership and skills of key individuals. Human resources are therefore the most important resource for gender mainstreaming;
- building of insider/outsider alliances, including with women rights activists, enable sharing of new ideas, good practices, peer reviews and development of trust and credibility.

#### 4. Women Unlimited – GW&D policy 2006 – 2010

##### 4.1. Gender Women & Development vision and core objective

*Hivos vision*

*"Women unlimited"* expresses the vision of Hivos' Gender, Women & Development policy. It symbolises Hivos' trust in women's entrepreneurship, capacity and creativity to realise their aspirations for a free, just and sustainable world, with equal opportunities and equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes that determine their lives, their society and their future.

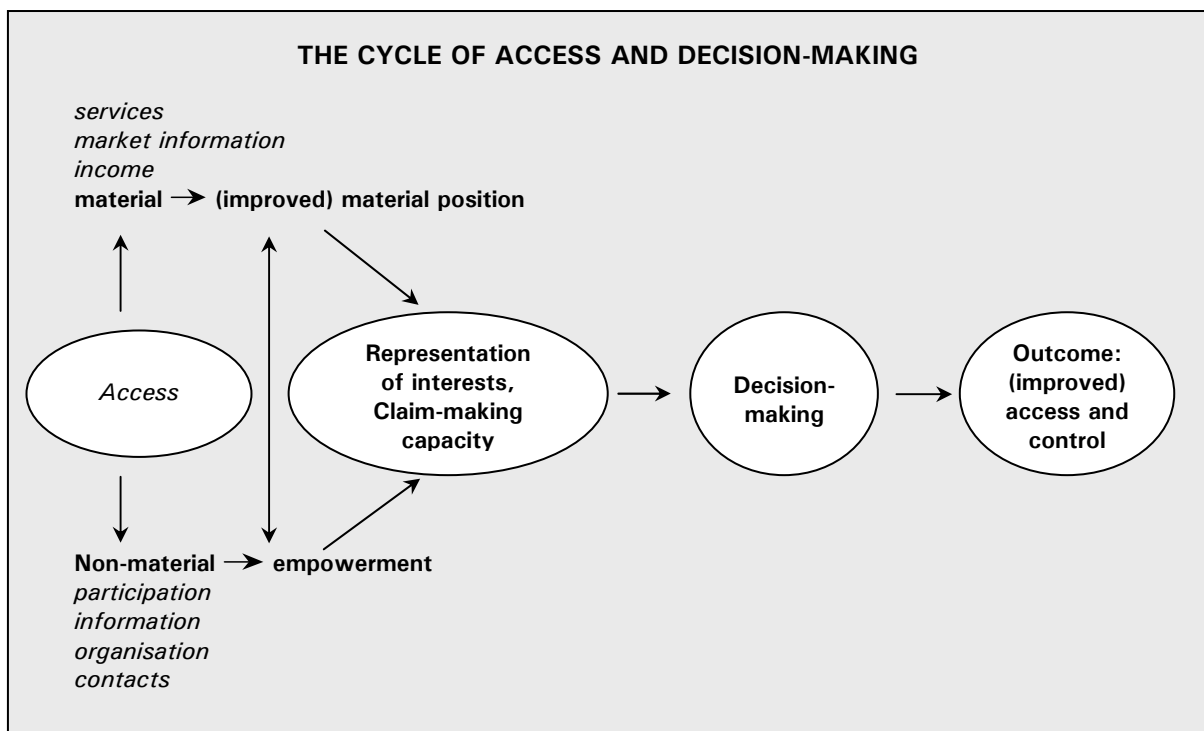
*objective, outcome and impact*

The objective of Hivos' GW&D policy is to promote emancipation and empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality at all levels of society. In order to achieve this Hivos is addressing the cycle of access > representation > decision-making > access in all its stages, targeted at outcome level:

- (i) to improve women's access and control over material resources and benefits (income, services), leading to improvement of their material position (direct poverty alleviation);
- (ii) to improve women's access and control over non-material resources and benefits (participation, information, contact) leading to improvement of their capacities, voice, self-esteem, etc.;
- (iii) to increase women's interest representation and claim-making capacity;
- (iv) to increase women's participation in decision-making.

And targeted at impact level:

to increase (accountability for) gender equality, implying compliance with, and effective implementation of, internationally enshrined women's rights, including effective punitive measures in place for the violation of women's rights.



*continuation of two track strategy*

The two-track GW&D strategy expressed in the previous policy document will be continued:

- Promotion of the rights, interests and participation of women, via support to women's organisations, the Gender Women & Development sub-programme, part of Hivos programme Civil Choices. This track will predominantly contribute to the above identified outcomes (ii), (iii) and (iv).
- Gender mainstreaming of the rights, interests and participation of women in all Hivos programme components:
  - A. Access to Opportunities: Sustainable Production and Financial Services & Enterprise Development. Focus of this programme is on direct poverty alleviation and contributes to outcome (i).
  - B. Civil Choices: Human Rights and Democratisation, HIV/Aids, and Gender, Women & Development. The GW&D sub-programme is part of the first track. The other two sub-programmes also contribute to outcomes (ii), (iii) and (iv).
  - C. Civil Voices: Arts & Culture and ICT & Media. Focus of this programme is on capacity building and voice and will contribute predominantly to outcome (ii).
  - D. Building Bridges: External Relations. Focus of this programme is on strengthening public support and policy advocacy in the Netherlands and Europe. It predominantly contributes to outcomes (iii) and (iv).

*resource allocation*

Gender mainstreaming thus cuts across the three intervention strategies of direct poverty alleviation, civil society building, lobby and advocacy.

Between 2007 and 2010, 15 percent of the unrestricted financial resources received annually from the Dutch government through the Co-financing System (CFS), will be allocated to the first track, the GW&D programme.

By the year 2010, the other programmes will also jointly allocate 15 percent of unrestricted Dutch CFS funding to improvement of the rights, interests and participation of women.

#### **4.2. First track: Gender, Women & Development Programme**

*first track: support to women's rights*

Rejuvenation of the agenda of women's rights is necessary given the persistence of gender inequalities and the new challenges of the present and future global context. Rejuvenation is possible given the emerging new momentum and initiatives that aim to advance the agenda of women's rights. Hivos and partner organisations have to search for and develop new strategies. This will imply identification of and co-operation with new allies outside the women's movement, with individual citizens, journalists, artists, politicians, entrepreneurs, men and women, who are keen to be role models and ambassadors for women's rights and interests.

*more focus given new challenges and context*

The focus of the GW&D programme will be adapted and become more specific than it was in previous years because of:

- current lack of progress with policy and legal reform;
- attacks by fundamentalist forces on women's sexual and reproductive rights, freedom of movement and expression;
- epidemic proportions of violence against women throughout the world;
- the challenges that the women's movement faces, externally and internally;
- deeply embedded patriarchal values, behaviour and institutional mechanisms that perpetuate inequality between women and men.

*scope to improve quality of Hivos support*

A sharper focus of the GW&D programme will enable Hivos staff to improve the quality of support to, and interaction with, partner organisations. A more specific focus of the GW&D programme is also possible given Hivos' strategy of gender mainstreaming, with an increasing number of GW&D organisations and programmes supported within the other Hivos sector programmes. Previously, these organisations, for instance of women artists or women ICT initiatives, were

also part of the GW&D portfolio of partner organisations. Three broad areas of Hivos results have been defined for the GW&D programme.

#### 4.2.1. Strengthening the capacity of women's organisations to promote public accountability regarding gender equality

*a shift to claim making and enforcement of policy implementation*

Given the context of policy and legal reform inertia, renewal and reinvigoration of strategies exercised by women's organisations are a priority in the years ahead. This will imply support to the development of new, and adoption of proven, accountability mechanisms and to innovative strategies for advocacy and agenda-setting. The focus of advocacy and agenda-setting strategies will have to shift from policy formulation to claim-making and enforcement of policy implementation. This requires organising and representation of women to make specific and public claims. And it implies strategies that hold public and private decision-makers accountable for their actions. Citizen action for women's rights has to provide checks and balances and to strengthen accountability mechanisms, from local levels upward to national and global levels and vice-versa. A focus on policy and law reform in itself will be less of a priority for Hivos, except for countries with potential for making headway in this area.

*cutting edge activism and citizen engagement*

There is need for cutting-edge activism that alerts citizens and brings about public outrage, engaging large numbers of citizens, women and men, with the violation of women's rights and gender inequalities. This will imply support to strategies that increase public support through constituency-building and mobilisation, that use effective popular education and awareness raising methodologies, communication and the media. Creativity, courage and perseverance is required to promote adherence to women's rights in contexts of conflict, authoritarian regimes, fundamentalist alliances, and the global preoccupation with anti-terrorism and security. Bridging the gap between the levels of policy and law reform and citizens, will imply a search for partner organisations that can strengthen the interaction between community-based initiatives in urban slums and rural areas and national level claim-making and decision-making processes.

#### 4.2.2. Increased female leadership capacity and strengthening of the women's movement

*new and more diverse leadership*

Women's organisations, women as active citizens, and women in decision-making positions are a major driving force for strengthening accountability with regard to women's rights and gender equality. Women's organisations are vehicles for women's claim-making capacity and for women's leadership. They strengthen civil society at large and increase its representative and democratic nature, while other civil society organisations do not take a lead in representing and claiming women's rights. Information and knowledge-sharing on women's rights are important strategies for the organisation and mobilisation of women, and for capacity-building towards leadership. More diverse and new generations of women's leadership are required for active and full citizenship of women at all levels in society. Respect for women's interests and rights requires women's representation and leadership at all decision-making levels. This will imply support to new innovative models that build and strengthen female leadership, beyond individual personal advancement, enabling collective learning, mentoring and empowerment in support of the agenda of women's rights.

*outreach beyond capital cities*

Hivos' focus on strengthening the women's movement aims to increase its legitimacy and capacity to represent the interests of diverse categories of women. This requires exchange and co-operation between women's organisations active at different levels in society in order to connect local issues and mobilisation with national and global advocacy strategies. Of special interest to Hivos are women's organisations outside (capital) cities, organisations that represent ethnic and social minority women, and strengthening of emerging women's movements in countries such as Indonesia, Iran and Syria.

*alliance-building* In addition, Hivos will promote alliance-building and interaction with other civic movements, in particular human rights organisations, the LGBTI movement, indigenous and caste movements, and the labour movement.

#### 4.2.3. Strengthening the capacity of women's organisations to promote women's bodily integrity, women's right to self-determination and freedom from violence

*sensitive violations of women's rights are priority* Hivos wishes to address some of the more cutting-edge, sensitive violations of women's human rights, in particular in the area of violence and bodily integrity, which often relate to sexual and social taboos. This is in line with Hivos' humanist values of human dignity, self-determination, rejection of dogmatism and authoritarian systems. Of specific interest to Hivos are organisations that address extremist fundamentalist efforts that undermine women's sexual and reproductive rights, that propagate violence against women, and curtail women's expressions regarding identity, sexuality and abuse.

*bodily integrity: safe abortion, safe sex, freedom from violence* It will imply support to the development of new -and adoption of proven- strategies that expose striking violations of bodily integrity in order to strengthen wider public engagement. It will require popular education, media and communication strategies in order to stimulate public outrage and media exposure. Support will be provided to organisations that address issues of culture, tradition, family laws and religious codes that restrict women's rights and mobility. It will require new strategies that enable working with men, facilitate communication and engagement with traditional, religious and political leaders. Women's right to determine their sexuality and to take control over their bodies includes support to organisations that strive for safe and legal abortion and organisations that promote protection against unsafe sex, in particular for the specific target group of sex workers. Interface between organisations working on violence against women and HIV/Aids organisations will be promoted. Women's organisations in Latin America are more prominent in advocating women's sexual and reproductive rights compared to those in Africa and Asia. The HIV/Aids pandemic, however, provides opportunities for opening up discussions on taboo issues of sexual norms and practices on these continents. The widespread phenomena of sex selective abortions in India and the incidence of unsafe abortions and violence against girls and infants in the context of HIV/Aids in Africa pose challenges for agenda setting and advocacy strategies.

#### Core tasks

*Hivos argues the case to invest in women's rights...* Hivos' core tasks consist of funding, development, sharing and leveraging of knowledge, and strengthening of public support and policy advocacy. In 2006, together with AWID, Hivos took the initiative to mobilise interest among international NGOs to revitalise or make a start with funding organisations that work towards women's empowerment and gender equality. Hivos will continue to argue the case for investing in the agenda of women's rights. Women's organisations play an indispensable role as the principal driving force for advancing women's rights and as watchdogs for progress made with gender mainstreaming strategies, in a context of persistent gender inequalities and shrinking resources for the women's rights agenda.

*... invests in knowledge sharing with partners ...* Integration of gender-specific and relevant knowledge is an integral part of Hivos' funding task. Women's knowledge centres are an important component of the partner portfolio, and dissemination of information and knowledge are important strategies of Hivos partners in all three broad areas of results. In addition, Hivos will be pro-active in promotion of knowledge-sharing with regard to the development and sharing of new, innovative and alternative methodologies for effective advocacy work, including constituency building, through capacity-building in women's organisations. Each year in another continent a 'Movement Building Institute' will be organised for this purpose. For the strengthening of female leadership, jointly with partner organisations, new innovative models will be developed and shared with organisations that engage

with capacity building, especially for young women and to assist in leadership transition.

... and Hivos staff ...

For Hivos itself, the GW&D team has the responsibility to contribute to the development and sharing of relevant gender information and knowledge for gender mainstreaming in the other Hivos programmes. The new Hivos-wide knowledge programme, currently being designed, which will focus on the influence of fundamentalist notions and movements on pluralism and diversity, will be of strategic importance to the GW&D programme.

... also in the Netherlands and Europe

Hivos has been pro-active in strengthening public support in the Netherlands for women's empowerment and gender equality in international co-operation, via initiating the NGO coalition, Time for Action! Initiative Beijing + 10 Netherlands in 2004. At the Dutch Beijing + 10 meeting in 2005, Hivos expressed commitment to launch a new platform in the Netherlands to strengthen networking, knowledge-sharing and policy advocacy for women's rights and gender equality. In 2006, Hivos invested in the actual formation and formalisation of the platform. Hivos will be its host during the first few years. *Women Unlimited – Unfinished Business* has become the trade name for Hivos' lobby in support of policy and resources for women's rights in international co-operation.

### 4.3. Gender Mainstreaming

mainstreaming of women's rights in all programmes

Mainstreaming of the rights, interests and participation of women in all Hivos programme components is implemented through two different strategies. The first strategy has been designed to strengthen and monitor the quality of the gender performance of individual partner organisations. The second strategy, is focusing on support to activities that specifically target women, within the other Hivos sector programmes.

#### 4.3.1. Gender performance criteria for all partner organisations

2005 gender performance baseline

Hivos has designed an instrument to measure the gender performance of partner organisations and their programmes. The instrument scores organisations on the basis of 10 essential indicators, 5 at organisational level and 5 at programme level. A baseline measurement has been carried out in 2005 and will be repeated every two years. The number of 'mixed' partner organisations (excluding the GW&D sector partner organisations) with a gender focus has increased from 33% in 1996<sup>22</sup> to 46% in 2005.<sup>23</sup>

four outstanding indicators ...

Out of the 10 indicators, 4 have been identified as outstandingly indicative for gender mainstreaming. Performance against these indicators can be scored as positive, acceptable, insufficient or negative. In the baseline column the percentage of all partner organisations (excluding the GW&D sector partner organisations) that score positive or acceptable have been recorded. Taking into account that annually 10 – 15 % new partners, that often not yet meet Hivos gender standards, become part of Hivos' portfolio, Hivos has formulated the following new targets, based on the 2005 baseline.

...have Hivos-wide targets ...

Indicator	2005 (Baseline)	2007	2010
Gender objectives at organisational level	52%	55%	60%
Gender objectives in programme	50%	55%	60%
Sex-disaggregated data	44%	50%	60%
Internal gender expertise	39%	40%	45%

... and targets for each sector

Actual mainstreaming will have to be realised within the sector programmes. For each sector programme specific targets have been set, based on the 2005 baseline.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4.3.2. Specific interventions within Hivos sector programmes

allocation of resources to women in other programmes

In addition to overall mainstreaming within each sector programme, all other sectors combined are mandated to spend 15 percent of unrestricted CFS resources on activities specifically targeted at women. This target is to be achieved by 2010. With regard to non-CFS resources, it is difficult to set similar targets, as these resources are allocated by other back-donors for specific, delineated programmes. But programmes funded by non-CFS resources are assessed against Hivos gender criteria similar to the CFS funded programmes.

Issues of particular interest for women within the different Hivos sector programmes concern the following.

#### Programme Access to Opportunities

improvement of women's material position

The importance of this programme for women is its contribution to improvement of women's access to, and control over, material resources and benefits, leading to an improvement of their material position.

sustainable production: access to markets, social, ecological and gender quality...

A major focus of the **Sustainable Production sector programme** is improved access to markets for quality products of small-scale producers. Hivos provides support to interventions that aim to improve the social and ecological quality of specific production chains. In order to be of relevance to women, social quality needs to include issues of gender equality. Hivos has been drawing insights from work done for product chains that involve plantations and horticultural farms.<sup>25</sup> For small scale producers, it is far more complicated to promote gender-sensitive certification, auditing and training programmes for quality systems of selected products. Production takes place within family arrangements and introduction and adherence to quality systems involve numerous individual production units. It will require drawing on the expertise of gender specialists and women's NGOs for training and verification processes to ensure that the opinions of women producers are heard.

... biodiversity and energy for women beneficiaries

A second important focus of the sustainable production sector programme is maintenance of biodiversity through promotion of conservation practices, use and protection of local seed varieties, and banning of hazardous pesticides. It will be of importance to revalue women's knowledge of indigenous natural resources and to strengthen their rights to, and use of, local varieties. Banning of hazardous pesticides is relevant for women's reproductive health. A third major focus of this sector programme is increased access to renewable and modern forms of energy to poor people. Poor women have been identified as important beneficiaries, given their workload involved in energy collection. To make it possible for women to benefit from access to renewable or modern forms of energy, women's needs and workloads regarding consumption and production of energy have to be incorporated into the design and implementation of renewable energy projects.

improved access for poor women

Improved access to quality financial products and services, through micro-finance institutions – MFIs, for poor people is a major focus of the **Financial Services & Enterprise Development sector programme**.

financial services: quality products for women

The majority of clients of MFIs are women and this requires that the products and services need to be of relevance to poor women. For this purpose, Hivos periodically undertakes gender audits of MFIs that receive seed capital, loans or participations. The gender audits have revealed that there is both need and scope for improvement of the services for poor women. Women ask for specific financial services, such as health insurance and emergency loans, given their responsibility to care for sick relatives. Opportunities for safe savings are particularly important

for very poor women. The gender audits also point at the importance of good, gender-specific, management information systems and the need for setting gender targets for service provision. Periodic use of the gender audit instrument will be maintained. Hivos' new focus on the development of micro-insurance, including coverage against HIV/Aids, is expected to be of benefit to women clients.

*Women's entrepreneurship: skills, training, information*

The second focus of this sector programme is development of the small and medium enterprise sector through provision of business development services. Women's entrepreneurship requires specific support through business-skills training, access to information on markets and trade opportunities, for instance through ICTs, and interventions that address legal or social barriers to women undertaking independent economic transactions.

### Programme Civil Choices

*improvement of women's choices*

The importance of this programme for women is its contribution to women's participation in decision-making, in representing their interests and respect for their rights.

*human rights: representation, participation, incorporation of women's rights ...*

In the **Human Rights & Democratisation sector programme**, three specific interventions aimed at women will be supported in order to contribute to active citizenship by women and acknowledgement of their rights as human rights. The challenge for the women's movement to build alliances with other civic movements is obviously an equally valid challenge for mainstream human rights organisations. Human rights organisations that engage with election processes, by organising voters education, by observing and monitoring of elections, and by media coverage, will be requested to draw specific attention to promote women's rights issues into their electoral programmes. This goes beyond the issue of numbers, e.g. promotion of women's representation and participation, and has to include incorporation of women's interests into campaigns and election manifestos.

*... access to justice and inclusion of lesbian women's interests*

Education programmes on women's rights will be supported, as will protection and access to justice for women human rights activists in the portfolio of partners that monitor and promote respect for human rights and the rule of law. Hivos' support to the LGBTI movement will include support to initiatives and activities by and for lesbian women, and strategies for inclusion of lesbian women's interests into 'mixed' LGBTI organisations. Promotion of lesbian women's leadership deserves more attention.

*hiv/aids: women's rights and empowerment*

The **HIV & Aids sector programme** is of particular importance to women and girls as they form the majority of people infected with HIV/Aids annually, with frighteningly high infection rates in Africa and rising infection rates in Asia. Organisations that advocate access to treatment will be encouraged to give more priority to issues that obstruct women's access to treatment. Female sex-workers have been identified as a specific group whose rights are being violated in relation to HIV/Aids. They require non-judgemental support in favour of their rights and well-being. Sexual and aids education programmes are supported to counter the influence of religiously-inspired forces that promote abstinence and fidelity as the only options for protection. As women's vulnerability to HIV/Aids infection is intertwined with poverty and violence against women, there is need for an integrated response addressing wider issues of women's rights and empowerment. Within Stop Aids Now! Hivos has taken the responsibility to develop a pilot programme to strengthen the capacity of partner organisations for reducing HIV/Aids infection risks for women and girls. Networking and knowledge-sharing between women's organisations, HIV/Aids organisations and human rights organisations within individual countries is part of the pilot programme. Participation of women living with HIV/Aids needs to be strengthened vis-à-vis HIV/Aids policy formulation and decision-making about programmes and resource distribution. Women's leadership in the HIV & Aids sector deserves further strengthening.

## Programme Civil Voices

<i>improvement of women's voice</i>	<p>The importance of this programme for women is its contribution to improvement of women's access to non-material resources and benefits, in particular information and imagination, leading to an improvement of women's capacities, voice and self-esteem.</p>
<i>arts &amp; culture: talents and voice</i>	<p>The <b>Arts &amp; Culture sector programme</b> has identified the under-representation of women artists in artistic expression and partner organisations as one of the priorities for improvement. Training, residency and awards programmes for women artists will be supported to develop their artistic talents. Given the importance of the arts &amp; culture to express voice, to inspire and imagine alternatives, initiatives that highlight the potential of women's creativity and that challenge stereotype portrayals of femininity and masculinity will be supported.</p>
<i>ict &amp; media: capacity building ...</i>	<p>The <b>ICT &amp; Media sector programme</b> aims at strengthening the core activities of Hivos partners through effective use of ICTs, media and communication tools. For this purpose Hivos provides support to ICT training and media, and communication capacity-building programmes, with women's organisations being a specific target group. The programme also aims to strengthen the conditions for freedom of expression, also in the virtual world, through lobby and advocacy for an enabling environment. Women's organisations will be involved in the ICT &amp; Media policy-making processes.</p>
<i>... and access for women and women's organisations</i>	<p>In the cycle of information strategies: - development, - access, - communication, - strategic use, gender biases exist due to women's lower levels of education and mobility, women's unpaid workloads, and socialisation that inhibits women in their use of available technologies. Content and access remain critical issues for women. There is continued need to combine new and old media, new and old technologies, and new and old methodologies. The combination of participatory methodologies with new technologies, such as digital storytelling and blogging are more enabling for women to create content and to access information.</p>

## Programme Building Bridges

<i>campaigns, advocacy in favour of women and girls</i>	<p>This programme aims to strengthen public support and policy advocacy for international co-operation in the Netherlands and Europe. Of relevance to women will be Hivos' support and advocacy in favour of the importance of investing in women's rights. In two of Hivos' lobby campaigns, the interests of young women play a central role: Act Now, or Pay Later – Young people and HIV/Aids in Africa and Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work. <i>Women Unlimited – Unfinished Business</i> is the trade name for Hivos' lobby in support of policy and resources for women's rights in international co-operation. Follow-up has been given to the recommendations of the Time for Action! Initiative Beijing + 10 Netherlands by providing support to and hosting the new platform in the Netherlands for networking, knowledge-sharing and policy advocacy for women's rights and gender equality.</p>
<i>citizen engagement</i>	<p>The Hivos-supported organisations in the Netherlands actively involved in activities for international co-operation engage many women, including young women.</p>

## 5. Organisation of the implementation of the GW&D policy

### 5.1. Internal

<i>internal organisation</i>	<p>In the new Hivos organisational structure, the GW&amp;D sector team consists of programme officers at both Head Office as well as the 4 Regional Offices. This team is primarily responsible for implementing the first track of the GW&amp;D policy: financial support; knowledge development, sharing and leveraging; and</p>
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strengthening of public support and policy advocacy for the portfolio of women's organisations of the GW&D sector programme. The GW&D sector programme is part of the larger programme Civil Choices, alongside the sector programmes, Human Rights & Democratisation, and HIV & Aids. The GW&D sector team at Head Office is part of the Bureau, Democratisation, Rights, Aids, Gender (DRAG), together with the sector teams, Human Rights & Democratisation and HIV/Aids.

*gender mainstreaming*

The second track of the GW&D policy, gender mainstreaming in all Hivos programmes, is primarily the responsibility of the different sector teams. The GW&D team provides support to gender mainstreaming through advice, knowledge-sharing and periodic monitoring of the gender performance of partner organisations in the different sector programmes. Each Hivos sector team has nominated a programme officer to perform the liaison function between its own sector team and the GW&D sector team.

## **5.2. External**

*partnerships*

Hivos implements the GW&D policy with a wide variety of partner organisations at global, national and local levels, including other donor agencies, international NGOs, research institutes, capacity-building and training institutes, and others. Co-operation and collaborative actions with regard to fundraising, knowledge for development, and public support and policy advocacy will become more prominent in the years ahead.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> UN Economic and Social Council, (2005), 'Declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session', <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw49/documents.html#fin>
- <sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly, (2005), *2005 World Summit Outcome*, p.16, <http://www.un.org/summit2005/>
- <sup>3</sup> UNFPA, (2005), *State of World Population 2005, The Promise of Equality, Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals*, <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/pdf/summary.pdf>, [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/pdf/en\\_swp05.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/pdf/en_swp05.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> Some examples of this literature: UNRISD, (2005), *Gender Equality, Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*, [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(LookupAllDocumentsByUNID\)/1FF4AC64C1894EAAC1256FA3005E7201?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(LookupAllDocumentsByUNID)/1FF4AC64C1894EAAC1256FA3005E7201?OpenDocument); UNIFEM, (2005), *Progress of the World's Women 2005, Women, Work & Poverty*; UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, (2005), *Taking action: achieving gender equality and empowering women*; Social Watch, (2005), *Report 2005, Roars and Whispers, Gender and Poverty: Promises vs. Action*; Tijd voor Actie! Initiatief Beijing + 10 Nederland, (2005), *Did the Beijing Platform for Action Accelerate Progress?, Dutch Beijing + 10 NGO report*, <http://www.beijing10.nl/beijing10/schaduwrapportage-eng.html>
- <sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly, (2006), *In-depth study on all forms of violence against women, Report of the Secretary General*, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/>
- <sup>6</sup> Amnesty International, (2004), *It's in our hands, Stop violence against women*, London, p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup> UN Commission on Human Security, (2003), *Human Security Now*, p. 1 – 14.
- <sup>8</sup> The word 'fundamentalist' has many connotations and is used for a wide range of phenomena: religion, culture, tradition, neo-liberal economic policy, but also enlightenment thinking. In this paper, 'fundamentalism' is used as the belief in absolute truths and the belief in the need to impose these on others.
- <sup>9</sup> Maria de Bruyn, (2005), 'Christelijk fundamentalisme en de inperking van de seksuele en reproductieve rechten van vrouwen', in: *Tijdschrift voor Humanistiek*, 2006/no. 3, (vol. 7), p. 89 - 105.
- <sup>10</sup> Naila Kabeer, (2005), 'Is Microfinance a 'Magic Bullet' for Women's Empowerment? Analysis of Findings from South Asia', in: *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2005, October 29, pp. 4709-4718.
- <sup>11</sup> Aruna Rao, (2006), 'Gender Equality Architecture and UN Reforms', for submission to the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on System-wide Coherence by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).
- <sup>12</sup> See the special issue of the Oxfam Journal, (2005), *Gender and Development, Mainstreaming A Critical Review*, 2005/no. 2, (vol. 13) and Mirjam van Reizen, (2005, *Accountability Upside Down, gender equality in a partnership for poverty eradication*, Eurostep and Social Watch, [http://www.eepa.be/wcm/dmdocuments/publications/PUB\\_Unifem\\_OECD\\_RV.pdf](http://www.eepa.be/wcm/dmdocuments/publications/PUB_Unifem_OECD_RV.pdf)
- <sup>13</sup> Steering Committee Evaluation TMF Programme, (2006), *Evaluation of the Theme-Based Co-Financing Programme (TMF) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Synthesis Report*, p. 5 and p. 68 – 69.
- <sup>14</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, (2001), *Gender Mainstreaming, een strategie voor kwaliteitsverbetering*.
- <sup>15</sup> A review of PRSPs showed that gender issues appear in a fragmented and arbitrary way, some women's needs issues are raised in the sections on health and education, but gender is not integrated or mainstreamed. Ann Whitehead, (2003), 'Failing women, sustaining poverty: Gender in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers', Report for the UK Gender and Development Network.
- <sup>16</sup> Cindy Clarke, Ellen Sprenger and Lisa VeneKlasen with Lydia Alpízar Durán and Joanna Kerr, (2006), *Where is the money for women's rights? Assessing resources and the role of donors in the promotion of women's rights and the support of women's organizations*, AWID in association with Just Associates, [http://www.awid.org/publications/where\\_is\\_money/weblibro.pdf](http://www.awid.org/publications/where_is_money/weblibro.pdf)
- <sup>17</sup> A more elaborate overview of Hivos' experiences with implementing the GW&D policy during the period 1996 – 2005 is included as Annex 2 in this document.
- <sup>18</sup> Hivos, (1996), *Policy Document Gender, Women and Development*.
- <sup>19</sup> Hivos, (2001), *Report Gender self-assessment of Hivos GW&D policy (1997 – 2000)*.
- <sup>20</sup> EOS Consult, Lida Zuidberg, in collaboration with Patricia McFadden and Marianne Nugteren, (2004), *The Role of Women's Organisations in Civil Society Building, A joint evaluation of the programmes of Cordaid, Hivos and Icco in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe in the period 1998 – 2003*, CFP evaluation series 2003 – 2006: no. 2, MFP Breed Netwerk.
- <sup>21</sup> Hivos, (2002), *Civil Voices on a global stage*, p. 16.
- <sup>22</sup> Hivos, (1996), *Policy Document Gender, Women and Development*, p. 31.
- <sup>23</sup> Hivos, (2006), 'Report Gender Baseline Measurement 2005'.
- <sup>24</sup> Hivos, (2006), 'Annex 6: Subsidievoorstel/Programma', *Hivos Aanvraag MFS 2007 – 2010*.
- <sup>25</sup> With input from scholars based at the IDS, a.o. Stephanie Barrientos, Hivos undertook staff-training on gender issues in codes of conduct and certification processes and produced internal memos on the topic.

## **Annex 1      List of acronyms and abbreviations used**

AWID	Association for Women’s Rights in Development
Beijing PfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFA	Co-financing Agencies
CFP	Co-financing Programme
CFS	Co-financing System
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DRAG	Democratisation, Rights, Aids and Gender
GCAP	Global Call Against Poverty
GW&D	Gender, Women & Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Hivos	Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries
HO	Head Office
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OD	Organisational Development
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RO	Regional Office
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USA	United States of America

## **Annex 2 Hivos GW&D policy implementation 1996 – 2005**

### **Hivos GW&D policy 1996**

The objective of the 1996 GW&D policy was to promote the emancipation and empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality at all levels in society.<sup>1</sup> Empowerment was defined as consisting of five interrelated dimensions: material well-being; access to resources and opportunities; self-esteem and gender equality values; participation in decision-making and agency; and control over resources, benefits and self-determination.

Implementation of the policy was guided by a three-track strategy

- Support to women's organisations
- Support to integration of gender equality perspectives into 'mixed' organisations (the portfolio of Hivos partner organisations excluding women's organisations)
- Support to building of gender capacity in the field of organisational development (OD), organisational change and institutional development

For the first track, support to women's organisations, a financial target was set at the 1995 figure, 16% of the total annual Hivos budget. In addition to financial support, Hivos' interventions regarding women's organisations aimed at capacity building through OD support, and promoting co-operation and networking, and linking and learning between women's organisations. Women's organisations were supported at all levels, local, national, regional and global.

For the second track, a baseline assessment was undertaken, which revealed that 33% of all 'mixed' organisations had incorporated a degree of gender focus into the organisation and programmes. For operationalisation of the second track, two interventions were designed. A number of priority gender performance criteria were defined and incorporated into the standard Hivos assessment procedures for approval of new contracts and into the standard Hivos Terms of Reference for Mid Term evaluations. The second intervention consisted of a pilot project of intensified gender integration by providing tailor-made support to a select number of counterparts, 3 to 5, in each of the three continents (Africa, Asia, Latin-America), during a period of three to four years.

The rationale of the third strategy, the building of gender & OD expertise, was to generate local expertise required for advising 'mixed' counterpart organisations how to integrate gender equality perspectives into their organisations and programmes. The third strategy was therefore designed to support the second.<sup>2</sup>

The 1996 policy contained a chapter identifying thematic priorities for integration of gender equality perspectives into the other Hivos sectors: Economic self-reliance; Culture and development; Human rights and Aids; Environment and sustainable development, and Gender, women and development. The organisational arrangement implied that each sector was allocated; a part-time senior policy officer responsible for policy work and management of the portfolio of global partner organisations; and three part time policy officers, one in each of the three Continental Bureaus at Head Office, responsible for continental policy work and management of the portfolio of regional partner organisations. The 1996 GW&D policy is anticipated to be maintained for a period of five years.

### **Internal assessment of Hivos' GW&D policy 1997 - 2000**

In 2000/2001 Hivos undertook a performance assessment in order to assess the validity of choices and the quality of implementation of the GW&D policy. The focus of the assessment was on the three operational choices, which by 2000 had been slightly reformulated, combining the former 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> into one, and adding as a third strategy the level of other sectoral policies: So the reformulated three choices were:

- Strengthening of the women's movement and women's organisations
- Integration of gender equality perspectives in mixed organisations
- Integration of gender equality perspectives in other Hivos sectoral policies

The assessment consisted of two parts: - an internal assessment process among teams of Hivos staff and an external assessment of GW&D interventions involving 10–15 partner organisations, Hivos staff and external consultants, in each of the three continents.<sup>3</sup>

The assessment confirmed the relevance of the three operational choices as necessary and complementary strategies. All three strategies are, in their own way, essential for mainstreaming of gender equality - at the contextual level, at the level of Hivos sectors, at the level of Hivos' portfolio of counterparts, and at the level of individual organisations. The actual contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality was assessed to be quite different for each of the three strategies. Direct support to the women's movement and women's organisations was assessed to be the most effective strategy for women's empowerment and gender equality. Assessment of achievements of the second strategy was more complex due to problems of attribution, process nature of integration strategies, length of time after which results are visible, and absence of adequate data and mechanisms for Hivos to monitor performance. Evidence of integration of gender equality perspectives into other Hivos sectoral policies was the least of the three operational strategies.

It was therefore recommended to:

- Maintain the 16% financial target of support to women's organisations as a minimum within each continent/sub-region.
- Increase the financial target to 20% by the year 2005, by expanding the group of counterpart organisations classified both as a GW&D organisation as well as an organisation working in one of the other sectoral domains.
- Continue capacity-building interventions for women's organisations.
- Apply more rigorous gender procedures for approval of contracts.
- Incorporate gender data, performance indicators and procedures into the new Hivos project administration and internal quality control system.
- Set new quantitative targets with regard to gender integration at the level of individual organisations once the new project administration became operational.
- Incorporate a commitment to gender mainstreaming, e.g. to women's empowerment and gender equality, into Hivos' overall institutional policy and future policies and domains of work.
- Undertake a gender analysis of priority areas of work in each of the Hivos sectors and identify ways to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Monitor the portfolio of counterpart organisations that could be classified as both GW&D organisations, as well as organisations working in one of the other Hivos sectoral domains.

Given these findings and recommendations, in 2001, Hivos decided to postpone the planned review of the GW&D policy itself, and start, instead, by providing follow-up to the different recommendations. A more recent impetus for the GW&D policy review has been the 2004 Co-financing Programme (CFP) evaluation on 'The Role of Women's Organisations in Civil Society Building'.

### **Co-financing Programme evaluation 1998 - 2003**

In the new round of programme evaluations for the period 2003–2006, three Co-financing Agencies (CFAs), Cordaid, Hivos and Icco, agreed to be assessed on the theme of the role of women's organisations in civil society building.<sup>4</sup> This is a follow-up of an earlier evaluation of four CFAs with respect to civil society building.<sup>5</sup> The 2004 CFP evaluation was conducted in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, three countries with distinct political contexts but with similar issues of gender inequality, and covered the period 1998-2003. Two-thirds of the 68 women's organisations supported by the three CFAs in the three countries were Hivos partner organisations.

Major findings and lessons learned of importance to Hivos itself:

Hivos is clear about why and how it supports women's organisations with a financial target, reset at 15% in the 2003 – 2006 company plan, but with no financial target for support to GW&D organisations in the other Hivos sectors. Hivos' internal gender capacity has remained stable over the years, unlike at Cordaid and Icco, and has contributed to capacity and results achieved by partners. Hivos is therefore advised to maintain its support to women's organisations and further diversify its support to women's rights in other sectoral policy areas.

Hivos' interventions to partners, core financial support and information-sharing, promotion of networking, are highly appreciated by partners. But more attention has to be given to organisational capacity-building, which was recommended to all three CFAs.

Major findings and lessons learned of importance to Hivos' partner portfolio:

Hivos partner organisations are working on a broad range of issues relevant for gender equality. They are relatively strong in lobby and advocacy work, and are less-service oriented. Linkages with rural women's organisations and community-based initiatives are weak. HIV/Aids was only recently

incorporated into the core business of most of the women's organisations. Hivos' partner organisations contribute to a stronger civil society, in particular by increasing gender justice, creating new norms and values, preserving social cohesion and increased women's participation in public life and decision-making. But effectiveness was difficult to establish, due to lack of data and absence of results-orientation. In view of the overwhelming magnitude of problems, many women's organisations spread themselves too thinly on the ground, and lack capacity to go to scale. The big challenge for women's organisations is to transform the gains of improved legislation into making the laws work for people in the communities, and to ensure and maintain people's rights of access to services. For the three countries, a persistent division of labour within civil society was observed, with other civil society organisations not recognising the political value of women's organisations and not taking responsibility for women's rights.

All three CFAs were advised to select more partners with a mission to reach out to rural areas and prioritise organisations that combine strategies for organisational development at grassroots level with other strategies for strengthening civil society. CFAs need to strategise for the re-strengthening of the women's movement. and alliance-building with organisations across civil society.

The findings and lessons learned with regard to the partner portfolio are context- specific and are not necessarily relevant for the total portfolio of Hivos' GW&D partners in all regions. However the context analysis in Chapter 2 in this policy paper confirms that a number of challenges that women's organisations face in East and Southern Africa are quite similar to those for women's organisations throughout the world at this point in time.

The 2001 internal gender assessment and 2004 CFP evaluation were both commissioned by Hivos, with Hivos participating in the formulation of the Terms of Reference. Recently, some independent assessments have been published without any direct Hivos engagement. In the July 2005 issue of the Oxfam Journal *Gender and Development*, an assessment was made of the gender mainstreaming policies of 14 international development institutions, including bilateral donors, international finance institutions, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.<sup>6</sup> Hivos was one of the four NGOs assessed, together with ActionAid, Oxfam Great Britain, and ACORD. The authors concluded that there was no consensus on the failure or success of gender mainstreaming, but that the evidence of the implementation of mainstreaming policies is mixed. The challenge for the future is to combine gender mainstreaming with greater transparency of documentation and more robust evaluations of output and outcome. The 2006 AWID analysis of the funding landscape, examines the key trends in funding during the past ten years, 1995–2005, for six different funding sectors. Within the sector of international NGOs (or public foundations), Hivos is named as a trusted and long-term partner of women's organisations, which maintains gender equality on the agenda thanks to its leadership.<sup>7</sup>

### **Hivos as a learning organisation**

Evidence for Hivos' follow-up to the recommendations and lessons learned of the 2001 internal assessment and 2004 CFP evaluation can be found in Hivos policy documents approved since then, especially in the 2002 new general policy *Civil Voices on a global stage*. Its mission statement affirms: "The empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality is a primary directive in Hivos' policy."<sup>8</sup> The new Hivos project administration, operational since 2004, includes gender specific data and performance indicators which have made it possible to undertake a gender baseline measurement for all Hivos partner organisations in 2005.<sup>9</sup> This baseline measurement has been used for defining gender mainstreaming targets in the Hivos company plan for the period 2007–2010. The 2005 restructuring of Hivos and the new company plan are in acknowledgement of the continued validity of a two-track strategy: specific interventions for the empowerment of women and girls and integration of gender equality perspectives into all areas of Hivos policy and programme work. Hivos' capacity to keep women's empowerment and gender equality on its agenda in the past two decades provides a few important insights how this has been possible. It requires more than the fulfilment of the five preconditions for gender mainstreaming identified by the Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Hivos' experience suggests the following are vital:

- commitment and accountability from leadership and management at highest levels, combined with commitment and accountability at middle management levels, given delegated decision-making;
- explicit GW&D policy, and clarity on its status in relation to other sectoral and overall institutional policies;
- responsibility for gender mainstreaming has to be shared, owned and embedded widely throughout the organisation, preferably within each unit of major organisational decision-making;

- availability of gender expertise needs to be of a generalist and of a specialist nature in order to be a useful resource for other sectoral domains. Gender capacity building for (new) staff and knowledge-sharing should be ongoing and consistently refreshed;
- resources and instruments have to be available and applied, and if necessary, to be developed afresh;
- monitoring of gender performance should be part of the annual organisational monitoring procedures. Periodically, at least every 4 to 5 years, a major organisation-wide gender activity should be planned, in order to keep women's rights and gender equality on the agenda. This should include creative and inspiring methods in order to avoid resistance against the watchdog function of internal gender experts;
- success in gender mainstreaming continues to be dependent on visionary leadership and skills of key individuals. Human resources are therefore the most important resource for gender mainstreaming;
- building of insider/outsider alliances, including with women rights activists, enable sharing of new ideas, good practices, peer reviews and development of trust and credibility.

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<sup>1</sup> Hivos, (1996), *Policy Document Gender, Women and Development*.

<sup>2</sup> Hivos policy officer GW&D, co-authored a book on this strategy. Mandy Macdonald, Ellen Sprenger, Ireen Dubel, (1997), *Gender and organizational change, Bridging the gap between policy and practice*, KIT Press.

<sup>3</sup> Hivos designed a Facilitators Manual of Methods for the assessment and produced a detailed report with main findings and recommendations. Hivos, (2001), *Facilitators Manual of Methods for the gender-self assessment of Hivos GW&D policy*. Hivos, (2001), *Report Gender self-assessment of Hivos GW&D policy (1997 – 2000)*.

<sup>4</sup> EOS Consult, Lida Zuidberg, in collaboration with Patricia McFadden and Marianne Nugteren, (2004), *The Role of Women's Organisations in Civil Society Building, A joint evaluation of the programmes of Cordaid, Hivos and Icco in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe in the period 1998 – 2003*, CFP evaluation series 2003 – 2006: no. 2, MFP Breed Netwerk.

<sup>5</sup> Kees Biekart, (2003), *Synthesis Study Dutch Co-financing Agencies and Civil Society Building*, study commissioned by the Steering Committee for the Evaluation of the Netherlands' Co-financing Programme. This Synthesis Study was accompanied by a desk study on 'Gender and Civil Society Building' that recommended further research, including primary data collection, on the specific role of women's organisations in civil society.

<sup>6</sup> Caroline Moser and Annalise Moser, (2005), 'Gender mainstreaming since Beijing: a review of success and limitations in international institutions', in: *Gender and Development, Mainstreaming A Critical Review*, 2005/no. 2, (vol. 13), p. 11-22.

<sup>7</sup> Cindy Clarke, Ellen Sprenger and Lisa VeneKlasen with Lydia Alpizar and Joanna Kerr, (2006), *Where is the money for women's rights? Assessing resources and the role of donors in the promotion of women's rights and the support of women's organizations*, AWID in association with Just Associates, p.64, [http://www.awid.org/publications/where\\_is\\_money/weblibro.pdf](http://www.awid.org/publications/where_is_money/weblibro.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Hivos, (2002), *Civil Voices on a global stage*, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Hivos, (2006), 'Report Gender Baseline Measurement 2005'.