Content

Preface

In 1995 Hivos was the first Dutch organisation for development cooperation to have a website. Since then the internet-technology has become more and more important both within the Hivos organisation and in the communication with counterparts in the South. At the end of 1998 the project "Hivos into Cyberspace 2000" was launched with the aim of reaching optimal accesibility to information and a better communication within Hivos as a whole. But also: to support the realization of the general objectives of Hivos, especially to the extent that the internet-technology can increase the success of the activities of the counterparts directly and sometimes revolutionary.
As an elaboration of the above mentioned objective the writing of a policy and action programme Hivos & ICT (Information and Communication Technology) was started in the summer of 1999. A first version was presented during the annual Planning Week in the autumn of 1999. A second version was commented by a variety of actors, among which the Advisory Board of Hivos, East-African counterparts, the internal "webforce" and external experts in the field of ICT and development cooperation. On the third of February 2000 "Access for all: equal opportunities in cyberspace" was offically approved of by the Board of Hivos.

This paper isn't a "traditional" policypaper, but a *policy and action programme*. It describes both the context and the general policy outline for Hivos (chapter 1-4) and concrete targets and strategies (chapter 5-7). These targets are formulated for four years; the year 2000 is a starting year. Hivos.com is the responsible desk for the execution of the programme. Hivos.com is for the time being the structural continuation of the "Hivos into Cyberspace 2000" project.
During the period 2000-2004 ICT will be considered a **policy priority**, because of its relevance for Hivos. Besides, ICT is of crosscutting importance for all sectors and regions Hivos works in. For that reason ICT will be "mainstreamed" – integrated - as much as possible within the regular programme.

Finally the authors hope that the proposed policy will be an important push forward for activities in the field of ICT and development cooperation both in the Netherlands and in the South.

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The Hague, 7 March 2000

1 Background and context

1.1 The ghost of the information revolution

The ghost of the information revolution is haunting the world. It is as intangible, as ephemeral and as stormy as the phenomena referred to by the authors of a renowned (and vilified) historical document of the previous century. They bear witness to the industrial revolution. At the threshold of the next century an information revolution is in full swing, with consequences that have yet to become apparent. Driven by continuous new discoveries, market opportunities and profit prospects, information and communications technology (ICT) connects everything with everything. Traditional boundaries of location, time, volume, medium and distance are disappearing. Wireless communication is replacing cables. The Internet is integrating classical media such as newspapers, radio, television and telephones in the web's unprecedented flexibility. It has completely reversed the roles of sender and recipient: anybody can set up a very personal broadcasting (or rather webcasting) station with little effort or money. Mass communication and personal communication are converging in cellular telephones providing access to the web, e-mail, newspapers, radio and television, by satellite or otherwise. All on *user demand*. *The sky is no longer the limit.*

1.2 Virtual life and reality

The information revolution is forming a new space known as the virtual world (cyberspace) alongside the physical world. Cyberspace features an infrastructure of digital communication networks and automatic systems driven by digital electronics. And cyberspace has more to offer. Virtual life comprises its own standards and values, is largely independent of the physical world and is propelled by electronic commerce and marketing.
At the same time cyberspace is progressively shaking the foundations of traditional operations, management, internal communication and government policy. It drastically narrows the gap between producers and consumers, between employers and employees, between teachers and students, between parents and children. Classical role patterns are being reversed.
The information revolution is both a consequence and a cause of globalization. Major multinational firms and other commercial agents are at the vanguard. To them, the Internet is the perfect networking platform for their international operations that are fully unrestricted by borders.

1.3 The leaky web and other problems

Cees Hamelink, a professor of international communications in the Netherlands, has compared the web to a Pandora's box from which in addition to unprecedented opportunities many barely fathomable troubles escape. Cyberspace harbours covert devices unnoticeable to unsuspecting users to enable monitoring of citizens by governments, of employees by employers and of producers by consumers. *Big Brother is really watching you now*.
Personal data find their way into countless files without anybody realizing. Within seconds these data can even become available to the public. That is the other side of the cybercoin: the web leaks. Smart hackers keep revealing entire files of e-mail messages, *web-based* data banks or credit card numbers and transactions. Individuals and institutions are terrified of dangerous viruses that haunt the Internet and suddenly or insidiously erase complete hard drives or immobilize entire operations.
The information revolution has had sweeping cultural consequences as well. American English is the web's dominant *lingua franca*. In addition to this language, the medium disseminates the American/Western culture to all web corners of the world. This process obviously reinforces Western culture's pre-existing dominance and poses a new threat to cultural diversity in countries and regions.

1.4 Globalization with a human face?

The most recent Human Development Report by the UN development organization UNDP conveys a bizarre impression of growing inequality despite – or perhaps thanks to – that very globalization. Human Development with a Human Face takes stock of the gaping wounds left by globalization. Together, the world's three wealthiest billionaires own more than the 35 least developed countries. The richest 20% of the world population earns 86% of the world income and controls 82% of the export markets.
One fifth of the world population still lives below the poverty level, is undernourished, lacks safe drinking water and has no guaranteed access to education and healthcare. The growing inequality arises from the overly one-sided emphasis on the market outlook. Access to the global village is driven mainly by economic considerations and is consequently reserved for the rich economic elites.

1.5 The Internet as a symbol of the global village

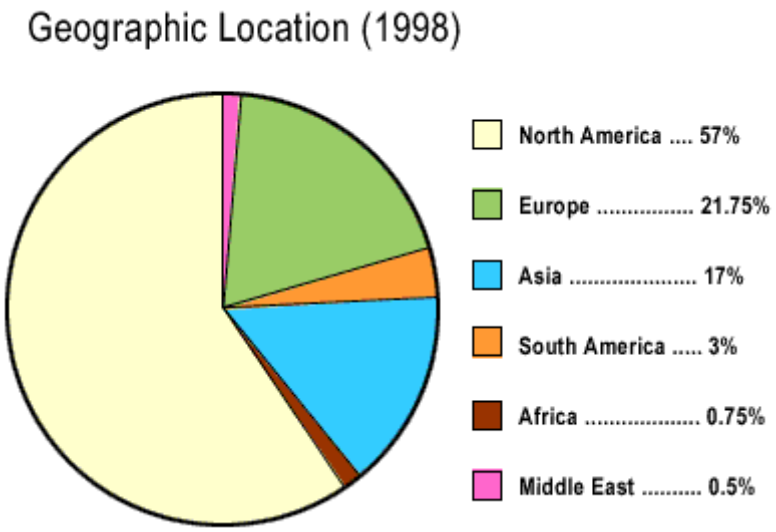
The Internet is growing like bean sprouts. It is expanding faster than any communication medium ever. In February 2000 the number of Internet users is estimated at 275 million.

World Total	275.54 million
Africa	2.46 million
Asia/Pacific	54.90 million
Europe	71.99 million
Middle East	1.29 million
Canada & USA	136.06 million
Latin America	8.79 million

Compiled by Nua Internet Surveys (February 2000)
(for the most recent update: refresh How Many Online?)

The most recent projection is that there will be 717 million users worldwide in 2005.
The front runners are North America (230 million) and Europe (202 million).
Internet use is rising rapidly in developing countries as well. Asia and the Pacific are approaching 171 million, Latin America 43 million, Africa and the Middle East 23.6 million.

INTERNET USERS BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION



Source: Nua Internet Surveys

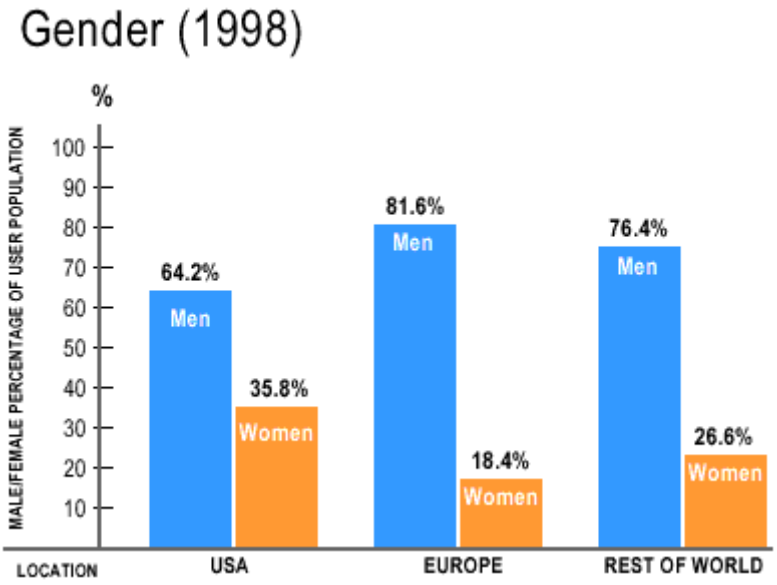
Whereas three years ago in Africa very few countries had access to the Internet, the opposite is true today: only Somalia lacks the facility. The glass fibre network currently under construction around the continent combined with wireless communication via low-flying satellites will offer a major *forward push*, compared with the current often paltry infrastructure. The Internet is also "*booming*" in large parts of Latin America and Asia.
Countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, as well as China and Vietnam, aim to access the electronic highway as quickly as possible with sophisticated technical facilities and a broad scope (in terms of the share of the population to receive access). Nonetheless, the Internet's enormous worldwide growth remains largely economically determined. Internet connections – even according to the most optimistic estimates – are available to only 2.4% (today) to 10% of the world population (in 2005). The Internet is a "*network high society*" of mainly well-educated, well-paid, urban-based, English-speaking young men in affluent countries and the elites in poor ones. In this sense the global village will remain an elite community for some time to come. UNDP has warned that the gap between rich and poor will keep growing unless information technology development is encouraged in poor countries. Massive investments (including state funding) are necessary. The Internet's proliferation should not be left up to market forces. The British research institute Panos has noted that *"if development depends on empowering people and communities to take control of their lives, access to information becomes an essential component for progress"*. To the have-nots, the virtual world will remain an inaccessible and impregnable bastion for the time being.

1.6 Obstacles in the *real world*

Widespread access to the Internet and other ICT applications in developing countries faces major and continuous obstacles:

- access: only 1 out of every 5,000 people in Africa is connected to the Internet (see above). In the Netherlands the number of Internet users is higher than in all of Africa. Moreover, the majority of African Internet users lives in South Africa or in the big cities.
- infrastructure: only 4 out of every 1,000 inhabitants of the least developed countries has a telephone. Worldwide, 1 out of every 3 people has no electricity. In many developing countries Internet access is very slow because of insufficient bandwidth to international Internet connections and obsolete and unreliable (during the rainy season) telephone networks.
- priorities: what is more important, a cow or a computer? Are basic necessities, such as safe drinking water, access to education and healthcare, food security and the like not far more important than investing in the Internet? Will ICT investments compromise other development priorities?
- cost: in many developing countries Internet access and use is excessive. In some African nations the monthly fees amount to 100 dollars (the average in the US is 10 dollars).
- skills: without basic computer skills and basic literacy, the network society is inaccessible. In Guatemala, for example, where the rate of illiteracy is 33.4%, increasing the current number of Internet users (9,200) substantially will be exceedingly difficult.
- gender: social and cultural factors have turned the Internet and ICT into a "man's activity". Three quarters of the Internet users are male. This rate is considerably higher in several developing countries. The trend starts early. In the US boys use the home PC five times as much as girls.

INTERNET USE BY GENDER (source: GVU Users Surveys)



- culture: information from the US and Europe (mainly commercial) dominates the content of the Internet. Only 0.4% came from Africa, according to a study conducted in 1998. Information in English prevails. One out of every ten people speaks the language, but 80% of all web sites is in English.
- censorship: in 20 countries Internet access is heavily censored or even impossible. In another 25 countries censorship is commonplace, according to a recent report by Reporters Sans Frontières. Some countries, such as Sudan, use financial deterrents: connection alone costs 560 dollars.
- *Non-connected* knowledge: information is not the same as knowledge. A non-quantifiable wealth of knowledge is not retrievable via the Internet: indigenous knowledge, traditional knowledge and wisdom handed down from generation to generation and stored in people's hearts and minds. Retrieving information from a database via the Internet is not the same as transforming such information into knowledge.

2 ICT chances and opportunities in developing countries

Despite the many restrictions and obstacles, the influence of ICT is growing, and intelligent, creative and locally adapted applications are emerging in many fields. First, the tremendous success of the Internet's most basic and most popular user opportunity (e-mail) merits a few lines. Many people, organizations and companies without full-scale Internet access do use e-mail. E-mail has become intricately embedded in communication and information transport between North and South and also increasingly in South-South communication. E-mail is inexpensive and quick. It transcends distances, time differences and volume restrictions. E-mail is suited for both one-on-one communication and group and mass communication. Second, the popularity of cellular phones resembles that of e-mail and the Internet. Recently, the number of worldwide cellular phone users has doubled almost every year. Increasingly, companies and organizations are also "going" cellular in developing countries. Third, the Internet is used for access to the World Wide Web. The following examples reflect applications from different sectors.

2.1 Economic: leapfrogging development stages

ICT opens up completely new opportunities for developing countries to operate successfully on economic (global) markets, especially for small market players. Cellular phones, e-mail and the Internet can actually reduce costs and provide quick, direct access to market information and market players. Examples are

already available. In several West African countries, farmers and their organizations use the Internet to gain rapid access to current market information. Grameenphone uses phones as a "weapon against poverty". In India the software industry is the country's fastest growing export and offers skilled work to tens of thousands of people. Electronic commerce is *booming* worldwide: direct trade, services, buying and selling via the Internet.
Time and distance have become virtually irrelevant. Nor are costly intermediaries necessary anymore. Increasingly, small companies and NGOs in developing countries are also becoming aware of new opportunities. Peoplink, a *fair trade* organization based in San Francisco, runs a thriving online shop selling crafts and clothing produced in 30 developing countries. This year and next, Peoplink will be training African Fair Trade partners to use the web to design and sell products via the Internet. Soon institutions for micro-financing will be able to use the Planet Bank web site to purchase all kinds of financial services through micro credits for NGOs.
An other application of which developing countries can profit is online fundraising. A spectacular example is The Hungersite, where you can make a free donation of food to hungry people in the world.

2.2 Social: information and knowledge at your fingertips

Fast and easy access to information and knowledge is crucial in healthcare. Healthnet, a worldwide electronic network that integrates the Internet, e-mail and satellite phone facilities, is an impressive example. Healthnet provides information to healthcare workers in the most remote regions, offers access to data banks containing information tailored to meet user demand and enables sharing of experiences via electronic conferences. Nearly 20,000 healthcare workers in 150 countries are connected to the network. The Hivos partner Healthlink is a similar case. A database that is accessible via the Internet features current information about AIDS/HIV prevention and control and other subjects.
The Internet offers a wealth of new opportunities for education and science as well. The African Virtual University provides remote instruction to students at 22 universities in Africa. In the current test stage, 9,000 students have already attended the virtual classes of this project funded by the World Bank. Many other programmes and projects are under development to connect schools and libraries to the Internet, to provide multimedia and remote instruction to adults and illiterate individuals and to make information sources accessible via the Internet.

2.3 Cultural: digital diversity

The Internet also has a negative equalizing effect, with English as its chief language and an American culture that is becoming progressively more dominant worldwide. Nonetheless, the Internet also facilitates universal, worldwide access to expressions from other cultures and non-Western art. The Internet medium offers unequalled opportunities for bridging the gap between producers and consumers. Increasingly, museums, visual artists, musicians, film producers and the like from developing countries are discovering the opportunities provided by the virtual world. The MADC, for example, is a museum for contemporary art and design in Costa Rica that – thanks to support from Hivos - exhibits works by Costa Rican artists and will soon feature art from other Central American countries as well. Likewise, "Arms into Art" is a dazzling exhibition of works by Mozambican artists and is produced by the Hivos partners Nucleo de Arte in Maputo and Africaserver in Amsterdam.

2.4 Media and politics: more multiformity

The information revolution is the most pregnant and possibly the most revolutionary in media and politics. The Internet has given rise to a wave of new information media, often arising from private initiatives, alternative non-profit sectors, NGOs and small companies. Traditional media, such as newspapers, radio

and television, need to work hard to stand their ground in the struggle for new information consumers. In turn, these consumers can easily use the new medium to become information producers: setting up personal web sites or e-mail news services takes little time. The added value and impact of such initiatives – and their consequent success – depends at least as much on personal creativity and inventiveness as on money or economic power. One such case is Mediacoop in Mozambique, which "used to" supply the daily news by fax and now does so largely by e-mail.
The rise of the Internet has forced international institutions and national governments to be more open and transparent and can be a powerful weapon for democracy movements under certain conditions. Indonesian students used e-mail networks in organizing their revolt against Suharto. Conversely, governments and military institutions are now waging a *cyberwar* on the Internet. The electronic battle over Kosovo and the propaganda war between China and Taiwan illustrate this trend.

2.5 Networks: more power and influence for NGOs

The rise in power and influence of NGOs that operate internationally is largely attributable to effective use of information technology. International environmental organizations and networks such as Greennet and APC were among the "*early adopters*" of e-mail, electronic conferencing, Internet hosting and web campaigning. The facility enabled efficient and inexpensive (i.e. fewer plane tickets are necessary) advance preparation of international conferences via a worldwide network. An environmental scandal in the jungle of Irian Jaya could thus rapidly be subjected to international scrutiny without excessive dependence on the traditional mass media.
Somewhat later on, human rights and development organizations discovered the electronic highway as an inexpensive, rapid and effective medium. IFEX runs an Action Alert Network that alerts associated groups and organizations in 40 countries and the international media immediately via its web site and by e-mail and urges them to hold the responsible authorities accountable for violating freedom of the press and other human rights. Similarly - but through its own news service - Afronet focuses on actions and campaigns against human rights violations in Southern Africa. The web site of Suaram, a human rights group in Malaysia, documents violations in detail and promotes action. In Ecuador, ALAI aims to provide an alternative source of news and documentation for social movements in Latin America.
Women's organizations use this medium as well. The 1995 UN conference in Beijing marked the first widespread use of electronic conferences, e-mail and web pages. Since then, several local and regional organizations have gone *online* as well. The African organization Abantu for Development is a case in point.
(Abantu, Mediacoop, IFEX, Afronet, Suaram, ALAI are Hivos partners).

3 ICT & Development Cooperation

3.1 A shift in the debate

In 1998 the World Bank urged bridging the imminent "*knowledge gap*" between rich and poor in its annual World Development Report. Without access to financial, technical and medical information, poor countries will fall further behind than ever. The bank has claimed to be the Knowledge Bank for development knowledge. Nonetheless, the bank qualifies its own enthusiasm. *"For the poor, the promise of the new information age-knowledge for all-can seem as remote as a distant star"*, submits bank president Wolfensohn in the preface. The bank's claim elicited criticism immediately. Panos accused the World Bank of overlooking the wealth of valuable and productive knowledge among the "unconnected" and the "uninvited", the billions who lack access to computer networks. Nonetheless, the publication by the World Bank marks a turning point in the debate. Previously, many in

development cooperation had dismissed ICT as hype and as a fad that would not be relevant to the developing countries over the short or the long term. Early this year a coalition of 133 developing countries relativized those consequences and asked the UN to focus more on traditional media such as radio. In "Internet and Poverty", one of the best studies published thus far, however, Panos concludes that the consequences of Internet are more likely to prove "underhyped": *"If development depends on empowering people and communities to take control of their own lives, access to information becomes an essential component for progress"*.
The UNDP report published this year and quoted above (see Par. 1.4) also warns that the gap between rich and poor will keep growing unless measures are taken to boost information technology in developing countries.
Such efforts should not be entrusted to market forces, believes UNDP, which suggests levying a special worldwide tax on e-mail to finance the vast investments required. The problem is the general and political reluctance to approve such additional public investments.

3.2 Practice in its infancy

The current Internet has been around for only 5 or 6 years. General awareness of its significance is just starting to become widespread and to penetrate the development sector. International UN organizations, the Worldbank and North American and Scandinavian donors have taken the vanguard in ICT-oriented programmes and projects. The Canadian organization IDRC plays an especially important role.
The contributions from the Netherlands are impressive. In 1997 the minister of Development Cooperation at the time Jan Pronk approved the establishment of the IICD, the International Institute for Communication and Development. The IICD was assigned to "help developing countries keep up with the latest progress in information and communication technology". The institute is carrying out this task on a modest budget.
Several programmes and projects are under development worldwide. Many are still in a research or pilot stage. Most programmes are believed to focus on government and commercial sectors and operators. The exceptions are the programmes dedicated to reinforcing southern NGOs with new, "*webbased*" NGOs, such as APC and OneWorld Online. These programmes have similarly small budgets.
Counterpart organizations in the Netherlands also under-use ICT, except for SNV, which uses the Internet strategically to improve communication with its field office network, and the NCDO, which recently launched a website for the sector featuring information from the associated organizations.
For an overview of current ICT programmes: view or click Annex 1.

3.3 Hivos practice and experiences

A recent survey of Hivos partners revealed that Internet access has surged in recent years. Out of 750, partners nearly 70% now (September 1999) has at least e-mail. That does not always mean that they have (or actually use) full Internet access. The 131 partners that have their own web site (17%) and are accessible via Hivos Online do have full Internet access: see "Partners Online". Continental differences illustrate e-mail access: nearly 80% of the Asian partners has e-mail, compared with 70% of the Latin American partners and 55% of the African ones.
Both rising external demand and especially internally agreed policy (see the preface) have in the past two years led to approval of various project proposals from Hivos partners that are entirely or partially dedicated to the Internet and Internet use or deploy the Internet strategically for other purposes. Below is a current overview:

Hivos-partner(s)	Country	Programme	Amount
ALAI	Ecuador	Portal site social movements	85,000
Media Instit.-Hivos	Kenya/NL	R'dam – Nairobi Connection	40,000
IFEX	Canada	Action Alert Service	200,000
MADC	Costa Rica	Virtual exhibition	80,000
APC / SANGONet	USA / SA	African Women NGOs Online	100,000
GALA	SA	Behind the Mask	45,000
UNEAC	Cuba	Internet connections	122,000
Gate Foundation	NL/several	OneLine: art exchange	20,000
NCA / Africaserver	Mozam./NL	Arms into Arts – exhibition	5,000
ForDIA	**Tanzania**	**Workshop use of ICT by NGOs**	**32.000**
Asociación Infocentros	**El Salvador**	**Cultural part of the infocentra**	**52.300**
One World	**South-East Europe**	**Balkanlink**	**50.000**
	Total	**1998 and 1999 thus far in NLG:**	**831.300**

Another category of partners pays for Internet use or maintains a web site with regular Hivos funds or funding from sources other than Hivos. This is especially true for the partners listed above (see Par. 2.5).

4 Hivos & ICT: objectives

4.1 Access to information = Access to power

The situation described above reveals that the digital information revolution will lead to a new divide worldwide and within national societies, especially in developing countries. Considerable public and private investments are justified in fighting this divide.
On the other hand, arguments exist against spending development funds on ICT. In areas without a reliable supply of drinking water or even a telephone network, the need for Internet access is questionable. Such a facility appears unrelated to the immediate effort to reduce poverty, even though ICT programmes explicitly address this cause (see the examples in Chapter 2). Another danger concerns that of substitution: investing in ICT means investing less in other fields of development.

Considering these factors from the perspective of the Hivos philosophy on development reveals that the link is obvious. The following statements are from the Hivos policy memorandum "Volwaardige participatie of de Toegang tot Macht" [Full participation, a question of power]:

"According to the Hivos philosophy, the main problem of marginalized individuals is their lack of access to the most basic living conditions. The problem concerns distribution of production, income, knowledge and power." (p. 8)
"Accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of a small political and economic elite is to the disadvantage of the overwhelming majority of the population. Controlling and monopolizing access to the factors determining power and wealth - production factors such as land and capital and knowledge and information - maintain the position of the elite and perpetuate the spiral of poverty among the masses." (p. 7-8)

Being deprived of access to information and knowledge is one of the factors that exacerbates poverty. Access to information and knowledge implies access to power. Accordingly, Hivos has a unique opportunity to use ICTs to improve the position of marginalized individuals.

Whereas "Access to Power" is restricted to a national context (a small local political and economic elite versus a marginalized majority), globalization has drastically expanded the context since the memorandum was issued. And this information revolution is totally oblivious to traditional national borders. If developing countries fail to keep up with recent trends in information and communication, the gap between rich and poor will grow irrevocably.
The solution to this problem should not be left up to market forces, as is apparent from the fact that developing countries are way behind in areas such as Internet use (see also 1.5).
The Hivos network's strength and added value in developing countries is concentrated on social development and reinforcement of *civil society*. The nature and mission of the type of organizations dedicated to this cause heightens the importance of access to and active use of ICTs.

While on the one hand ICTs provide Hivos with a unique opportunity for enhancing the power of Southern target groups via access to information and knowledge, on the other hand they are indispensable to organizations such as Hivos, which deal with the global poverty issue.
The Internet and other ICT applications are **means** or **instrument**s for gaining access to information and knowledge, like television, radio and film. These opportunities, as well as the dangers, render these specific opportunities so important that Hivos requires an active policy for them. ICT should therefore be an intrinsic **objective** for Hivos.

4.2 Objective of the Hivos-ICT policy

The preceding sections indicate that ICT has a deep and comprehensive impact on the practice of Hivos and on its network in developing countries. This will lead to the following general policy objective:

Hivos aims to support NGOs (and their target groups) in developing countries actively in using the opportunities provided by the information revolution.
This programme will further the struggle against the imminent worldwide digital divide compounding the existing gap between rich and poor.

Hivos has devised six policy instruments to this end:
- *Access to the Internet for Hivos partners, new partners and their target groups*
- *Capacity building with respect to passive and active use of ICTs*
- *Expansion of Southern "content" and culture on the electronic highway*
- *Use of the network opportunities provided by e-mail and the Internet*
- *Use of the economic opportunities provided by the Internet*
- *Lobbies and campaigns for "cyberrights for all"*

The general objective entails a dual responsibility: on the one hand in both this field and other areas of policy, Hivos will support initiatives taken by the South. On the other hand, it requires that Hivos take a proactive stand where operators in developing countries have little or no awareness of the opportunities described. In Chapter 6, these and other strategic principles are explored.

4.3 Target group

Hivos' ICT policy, as outlined above, includes a logical focus on the people who do not yet use or make very little use of opportunities provided by ICT. Giving them all personal access to ICTs via a computer, however, is unrealistic (and undesirable). Accordingly, Hivos will involve local NGOs that have or hope to acquire ICT expertise. Some may be current partners of Hivos that use ICT in pursuing their mission. Hivos will also approach organizations that regard encouraging ICT use as their mission.
Despite the fact that the targetgroup will be approached indirectly, Hivos will always ask its partners in which way their targetgroups will benefit from the

information revolution. In this there is no difference with the other policy sectors of Hivos though. At any time, the rise of an NGO-elite has to be prevented.
Generally, the partners launching many initiatives will propose innovative ideas that may revitalize the development effort (according to "Access to power", p. 17). In developing countries only 26.6% of the Internet users is female (see 1.5). Apparently, they have particular difficulty benefiting from the opportunities provided by ICT. Hivos therefore intends to focus a substantial share of its ICT policy on women.

5 Policy instruments

5.1 Access

Even with an effort similar to the Marshall Plan, getting large parts of the world population online quickly is neither feasible nor realistic. The infrastructural, social and cultural obstacles are too severe, especially in rural areas and poor communities in general. *Community access* rather than individual access is the key. In many places programmes are under development that provide such access via new or existing community centres, "tele" centres and Internet cafes.
Generally, Hivos does not intend to become involved in this process. Governments and comercial institutions bear chief responsibility for realizing the large-scale infrastructural programmes necessary.
Hivos will, however, support initiatives launched by NGOs and social organizations. It wants to offer all its partners the possibility of internet access. At the same time we're aware that other donors offer this possibility as well. That's why not all costs will have to be paid for by Hivos.

	Access programme	Targets 2000 – 2004	Budget *[1]
5.1.1	Internet access among current partners (a total of 820 in 1999)	From 60 % today to 90 %	2,500,000
5.1.2	Programmes by third parties / new partners for bringing NGOs online	3 programmes / 30 NGOs	750,000
5.1.3	Access of target group NGOs via community centres, tele centres and cyber cafes. Emphasis on women.	3 programmes/ 10 NGOs/ 100,000 people	2,000,000
		Total:	5,250,000

5.2 Capacity building

Apart from infrastructural problems "computer illiteracy" is the most important obstacle for an effective and strategic use of ICT in developing countries. A large series of skills is required: general computer skills, systems-related knowledge, web and content management skills, vision of strategic applications of ICTs within the organization and for the target groups, etc.
Designing a simple presentation site is relatively easy. Dedicating a web site strategically to the organization's mission and *core business* is far trickier but is also more challenging and provides more opportunities. This feature is an important benefit provided by the Internet. Using it presumes awareness and knowledge enrichment of the Internet and of ICT in general.

[1] Budget required for 4 years; the year 2000 is considered a start-up year. Estimates are provisional.

	Capacity building programme	Targets 2000 – 2004	Budget
5.2.1	Courses/training programmes designed for internal staff and target groups at current and new partners	10 courses / training programmes a year with different partners	500,000
5.2.2	Service and training programmes for NGOs / target groups provided by third parties / new partners. Emphasis on women.	3 programmes / 100 NGOs / 5,000 participants	2,500,000
5.2.3	Train the trainers programmes	10 programmes/100 participants	900,000
		Total:	3,900,000

5.3 Content development and management

Getting a web site online is one thing. Keeping it up to date and attractive and technically efficient is quite another matter.
First, in developing countries a lot of information and knowledge is not made available or accessible. Most of the web's *content* is Western and Northern. Hivos is pursuing substantial expansion of the Southern local *content*:

	Content programme	Targets 2000 – 2004	Budget
5.3.1	Active web use by current Partners	From 17% today to 50%	2,500,000
5.3.2	Web site development and Productions by new partners	10 new partners every year	300,000
		Total:	2,800,000

5.4 Networking

Internet is optimally suited for devising intricate information and communication networks through mailing lists, news groups, web conferencing, intranets and extra nets, etc. These methods are also very suitable for the mobilisation of targetgroups around a specific theme.
Increasingly, organizations are using the Internet to build their own *web community* comprising groups of people and organizations that are and are becoming actively involved and maintain many mutual communication lines as well.
Known as *portals*, these sites provide a gateway to specific information or link like-minded and/or comparable sites.

	Networking programme	Targets 2000 – 2004	Budget
5.4.1	Connecting partners to Existing or new networks, Portals, communities, etc	30 partners	15,000
5.4.2	Development and construction of new, preferably Southern networks and portals. Emphasis on gender-related networks	10 new networks or portal sites	1,500,000
5.4.3	Training programmes Designed for web-based networking	3 programmes / 100 participants	30,000
		Total:	1,545,000

5.5 E-commerce

Electronic commerce (trading, purchasing and providing services via the Internet) is *booming*. It requires relatively little investment, and the operating costs are low. It also offers wonderful opportunities for small companies, *fair trade* producers and

credit institutions in developing countries (with respect to both consumer markets and business-to-business trading).

Fair trade producers access the course for electronic trade and sales via the Peoplink mentioned above. The rise of electronic banking and electronic fundraising (see also 2.1) has led to other options that offer opportunities for NGOs as well.

	e-commerce programme	Targets 2000 – 2004	Budget
5.5.1	e-commerce initiatives existing and new partners	2 per year	300,000
5.5.2	e-commerce training programmes and service programmes	3 per year	90,000
		Total:	390,000

5.6 Cyberrights

Recently, a promising telecentre programme in Mexico ran aground. The reason was that the government party did not want the population to obtain information about the opposition via the centres. On the other hand: the mobilisation of students in the Indonesian protest of 1998 was mainly possible because of the use of e-mail.

Many governments in developing countries censure, restrict, filter and monitor access to web pages for fear of oppositional information and movements and to control and repress such movements. Web access, construction of infrastructure, the necessary training programmes, etc. are often entrusted to commercial market parties or monopolist state institutions. As a result, only the urban (and wealthy) elites have access. Governments in developing countries are thus furthering the rapidly growing digital divide.
In the past few years a movement has arisen on the Internet comprising organizations and networks that support *cyberrights for all* (universal access, privacy protection, no censorship). They include the Free Speech movement, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Global Internet Liberty Campaign. Hivos will support such movements in and from developing countries.

	Cyberrights programme	Targets 2000 – 2004	Budget
6.1	Local and regional lobby and network campaigns	2 per year	1.500.000
6.2	International campaigns	1 per year	75.000
		total	**1.575.000**

Action programme 2000-2004	Total costs:	Dfl. 15,460,000

6 Strategic principles

The previous chapter addressed the substance of Hivos' ICT policy. This one indicates ways to achieve these goals.

6.1 Local initiative and local expertise

The principle behind poverty reduction as formulated in "Full participation, a question of power" is that emancipation cannot be achieved by third parties from above but must be attained by the people in developing countries themselves. Hivos consistently addresses local initiatives: our work is *demand driven*.
In ICT the operational decisions will follow the above principle. Thus, Hivos is less interested in exporting Western ICT expertise to its partners in the South than in becoming involved in local initiatives. Many ICT plans are under development, and some are coming our way. The lead of practice on policy is encouraging (see also 3.3).
Another promising sign is the major recent progress in local technical expertise. Southern NGOs are no longer necessarily dependent on Western expertise to obtain an Internet connection, take a course on Internet use or build a web site. Accordingly, the Hivos method can be applied extensively.
What has to be mentioned is that in the field of ICT "local" is no absolute concept. Southern webmasters can build their expertise by using Northern websites, websites from developing countries can be hosted anywhere and users can ask questions to virtual helpdesks all over the world wide web.

6.2 Pro-active policy

Demand driven operations mean more than waiting until organizations approach Hivos for support for ICT initiatives. The fact that NGOs present their action plans to Hivos need not mean that *demand* is greatest in their country or branch. In the relatively recent field of ICT, large groups in developing countries still have little insight into the opportunities arising from the information revolution.
To avoid restricting the use of these opportunities to the NGOs that approach Hivos, Hivos maintains a pro-active policy. We aim to publicize the opportunities described in this memorandum. We will also advise interested NGOs on designing and implementing ICT action plans.

6.3 Cooperation

Even though or specifically because support for ICT initiatives by developing countries is just beginning (see 3.2), entering strategic cooperation arrangements with counterparts in the branch is essential for Hivos. Two important motives are that such partners either have greater expertise (e.g. in technical areas) than Hivos or have already built an entire network and are widely known. Hivos does not, however, intend to outsource its entire ICT policy. Hivos aims to be self-sufficient and independent in this field and to highlight these attributes.
Hivos is considering cooperative arrangements with the following major actors in the field.

IICD – International Institute for Communication and Development

The activities of the IICD include organizing *round tables* in developing countries. The participants receive information about all the ICT options available and advice in drafting ICT action plans for their organizations. This practical experience holds major potential benefits in store for Hivos. The participants in the *round tables*, however, are rarely from NGOs but usually represent government, university, commercial and medical circles. Hivos and IICD successfully organised such a *round table* in November 1999 in Tanzania for Hivos counterparts in East-Africa. A useful exchange of a.o. mutual networks and expertise may originate between Hivos and IICD.

- OneWorld Online

  OneWorld is currently the leading Internet platform for NGOs. If your NGO is not a *member*, you do not exist on the Internet. Hivos joined in April 1999. Organizations that are not from developing countries pay a considerable membership fee. OneWorld's extensive network, its quality web site and reputation as the leading umbrella organization, as well as its expertise in ICT and development cooperation, can be of immense strategic importance to Hivos.
  At the end of 1999 Hivos started to support the OWO programme in South-Eastern Europe. Plans for other forms of cooperation are still under construction.

- APC – Association for Progressive Communications

  APC is a worldwide organization of "non-profit Internet and communication service providers". Members offer a variety of services, from providing access to the Internet to courses about web use and publicity and a great many ICT workshops. Maintaining contact with APC is of strategic value, especially because the organization is a gateway to local expertise.

6.4 Budget

Hivos is primarily a financing organization. Its policy-related priorities are manifested largely through the distribution of available funds. The importance of a Hivos ICT policy for both NGOs and their target groups in developing countries and for Hivos' image in the Netherlands justifies reserving **at least 5 percent** of Hivos' total income for ICT initiatives and programmes. Such a measure would send a clear message to both to the South and to the Netherlands and the rest of Europe regarding the value that Hivos attributes to the opportunities arising from the information revolution.
In addition to funding from the regular Hivos accounts, we will search actively for opportunities to raise complementary or partial financing (e.g. of sections of the policy instruments) through other external sources.

7 Implementation, planning and evaluation

7.1 Hivos ICT policy, insertion within the organization and management

The issue of ICT will be called a **policy priority** within Hivos, at least during the period 2000-2004. It will not become a (sixth) policy spearhead, because of the croscutting character of ICT and therefore of importance to all sectors and regions Hivos works with. In order to give this policy priority the necessary *push forward*, the (supportive) bureau **Hivos.com** will act as a central actor as far as the implementation of the ICT-policy is concerned.

The targets as formulated above will be realized as much as possible via the existing spearheads of Hivos. This will be explained in the next paragraph. The management of the programme will be the responsibility of the concerning programme officers both at the head office and the regional offices.
The role of Hivos.com as far as this so called "mainstreamable" part of the programme is concerned, consists of consultation of the policy, making quarterly reports for monitoring, and – on request – giving advice. The programme officers in their turn have the duty to inform Hivos.com when they receive an ICT-proposal. An estimated one-third of the ICT-programme can not be "mainstreamed", for example: