

# Hivos Knowledge Programme (2007-2010)

October 2007

Hivos is initiating a fully-fledged knowledge programme. The strategy used for this experiment is knowledge integration. Hivos has set itself the goals of improving its performance and becoming a knowledge hub on specific themes. Hivos will work closely with its partners in the South and academic centres worldwide to address emerging issues in the developing world.

Recently, Hivos has designed a new role for itself: that of **knowledge integrator**. In recent years Hivos has become aware that haphazard financing of knowledge creation and stimulating knowledge sharing falls short of addressing the many (complex) challenges it is faced with. The sector needs new knowledge, and more specifically, applied knowledge to tackle particular gaps. To this end, Hivos has initiated a fully-fledged knowledge programme focused on specific themes. But what sort of knowledge and what sort of deliverables do we need then and how should we address the tensions between the different forms of knowledge (tensions stemming from the various actors and stakeholders, each having different objectives and time frames)? And what role should Hivos play in knowledge production? It is strongly felt that by integrating various forms of knowledge - academic knowledge, activist knowledge, educational and cultural expressions of knowledge – new insights can be created and strategies formulated that contribute to the development of new policies and practices for the development sector. This is not a linear process of knowledge production, but a rather muddled continuum of integrated interactions.

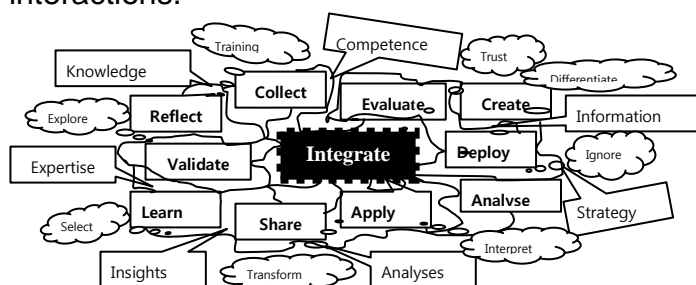


Fig. 1 Knowledge Integration Process: A Continuum

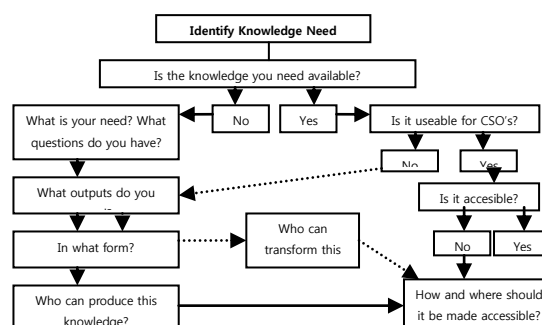


Fig.2 Identifying the knowledge need

Whether the knowledge generated caters to our needs, depends to a large extent on the organisation of the knowledge production process. We are convinced that an inclusive environment for knowledge integration should be created with high quality **knowledge generation, learning** and **capacity-building** being its main components. Thus, in its knowledge programmes Hivos envisages four stages: generating (new) knowledge, disseminating this knowledge, transforming new and existing knowledge in appropriate and effective strategies, and facilitate the application of these knowledge based strategies (amongst others by training civil society actors therein).

The programme will deliver **manifold outputs** including a framework for knowledge integration, stimulate debate, publications, conferences, training, lobby and advocacy strategies and activities, an interactive website, a knowledge network.

Hivos is striving to become a **knowledge hub** which can contribute to the advancement of the global development sector by propagating innovation in knowledge production, application and dissemination. Hivos will integrate (some of) the outcomes of the thematic programmes by fostering links, create cross-fertilising networks and disseminate results. In due course the hub will also disseminate information on Hivos's expertise and highlight a selection of best practices. This knowledge will be made accessible to all stakeholders and

to its partners in the South in particular, through the website, e-based publications, seminars, training programmes and so on.

In the period 2007-2010, Hivos plans to support a maximum of six **thematic knowledge programmes**. Five themes have been identified, namely *Civil Society Building* (in conjunction with the Institute for Social Studies in the Hague), *Promoting Pluralism* (in conjunction with the University for Humanistics and the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore), *Sustainable Economic Development*, *Closed Societies in West Asia*, and *Freedom of Expression*.

The Knowledge Programme on **Civil Society Building** (CSB), a cooperation between the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) and Hivos, will contribute to the debate on CSB in order to improve our understanding of CSB as well as our CSB interventions and strategies. More specifically, it aims to answer three questions:

- How can we understand the dynamics of CSB and the role of local actors?
- How do external actors contribute to this process?
- How does CSB contribute to structural change in the unequal balance of power in society?

Methodology includes the creation of linkages between academic and practitioners, the development of innovative research and the stimulation of sector-wide discussion on CSB. In 2008 CSB will further explore the three main research questions, identify potential partners, expand its network, and undertake knowledge activities. Regional workshops and a summer school.

*This programme is part of the Civil Choices programme. Knowledge Officer: Jeroen Mimpfen (593).*

The Knowledge Programme on **Promoting Pluralism** has been initiated after several years of Hivos' partners voicing concern about various forms of fundamentalism inhibiting their work. This Knowledge Programme, a cooperation with Kosmopolis (University of Humanistics, Utrecht) and the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society (CSCS, Bangalore) aims to answer the question "Which strategies can civil society organizations apply to counter fundamentalist forces?". This thematic programme consists of a research component, activities to apply research to practice and activities within civil society that work towards the same end of promoting pluralism. Focus will be on India, Indonesia and East Africa. In 2008, the Promoting Pluralism Programme will focus on setting up structural relationships with researchers and other knowledge actors in these regions, convening regional workshops to review topics under investigation, publishing a first round of papers and other knowledge products, and supporting knowledge activities such as summer schools and debates.

*This programme is part of the Civil Voices programme. Knowledge Officer: Ute Seela (595).*

### **Sustainable Economic Development**

Currently an explorative mission has started to explore the consequences of land use change patterns for the livelihoods of marginalized people in the South. Aim is to determine the feasibility of concentrating on this theme and to gain better insight in the consequences of the rapidly growing demand for food, feed and fuel. Based on the results of this study and further discussions, Hivos will be able to decide on a possible knowledge programme in this area in 2008. *This programme is part of the Access to Opportunities programme. Focal point: Marieke Kragten (545).*

In 2004 Hivos started its civil society support programme in West Asia, first in Iran and Iraq and later also in Syria. In the - often dubbed 'closed'- societies of Iran and Syria individual self-determination and freedom of speech are under great pressure. Local civil society

activists and organisations, journalists, students and workers' unions who have the courage to criticize, to claim rights and even demand transparency, are under repression, both through formal regulations and by intimidation and harassment. This situation resembles circumstances in other countries with closed societies. The aim of the Knowledge Programme **Civil Society in Closed Societies** is to integrate knowledge about roles and opportunities for civil society organizations in closed societies by (a) fine tuning the concept of closed societies, (b) studying the dynamics of civil society in closed societies based on case studies, (c) studying experiences/best practices of civil society groups/movements in former closed societies and by (d) analyzing different approaches/strategies of foreign/international organizations that support civil society organizations in closed societies. In 2008 the framework of the knowledge programme will be further developed and case studies will be explored.

*This programme is part of the Civil Choices programme.*

**Freedom of expression** is under pressure in many countries. On the whole it is not only governments and intolerant social groupings that tend to leave little room for culture and the arts, also the commercial, media and culture industries suppress independent artists and small-scale, local expression. The Knowledge Programme will address both freedom of speech as well as freedom of cultural and artistic expression through media and ICT. In 2008 this theme will be discussed with a wide range of stakeholders from various realms both in the North and South to come to a concept paper for the programme based on which relevant knowledge partners will be contacted for cooperation and an activity plan may be drafted.

*This programme is part of the Civil Voices programme.*

In order to achieve its objectives, Hivos and its partners will create an **environment** in which this initiative can develop and grow. They have to open themselves to new, sometimes contesting ideas and perspectives. What is needed is a willingness to go beyond the conventional, to widen the horizon and to be challenged. Only when our defences are down will we be able to learn and critically rethink our strategies.

For **further information** please contact the respective Knowledge Officers or the Coordinator of the Knowledge Programme, Josine Stremmelaar (548).