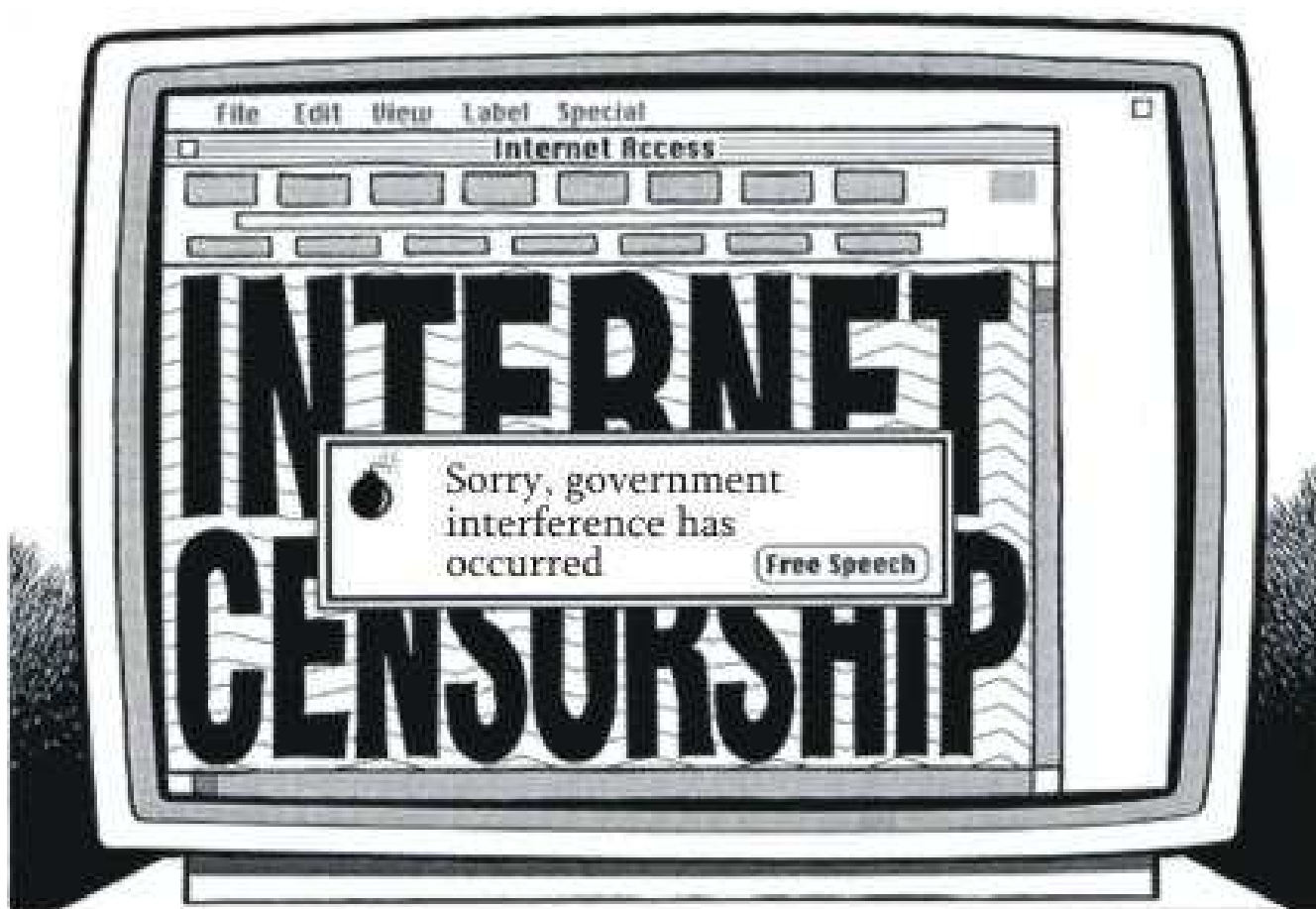


Expression under Repression

- A reflection on Hivos' policy choices in 'Making civil voices heard' -

Masterproduct
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PDOO 2006



people
unlimited
Hivos

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I have strange fantasies
someone asked me one day
And without thinking I looked around
Uttered softly, to speak...
He didn't understand and I could see it in his face
So I said the freedom to speak
A freedom I had lost without knowledge
So much so, I even censored my own thoughts.
Pummelled to the point of thinking I didn't need it
Losing my reality embalmed and put in a coffin.
It is still buried
Sometimes I hear it scratching away, its fingers must bleed
Maybe it is just my fantasy
But should freedom of speech be a fantasy?

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Summary

What

In this research Hivos' positive point of departure considering the role of ICTs in the promotion of human rights in repressive societies, is questioned. Three cases form the core of this paper. Firstly two cases show the public sphere that online journals – blogs - can offer in consequently Iran and Malaysia. Secondly, in Zimbabwe the possible role of ICTs in general in overcoming and counterbalancing repression is questioned.

Why

The activities of commercial ICT companies in repressive societies have been highly covered by the media. An increasing number of cyber-dissidents is arrested for their online activism. In this era the United Nations set up the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS). The last one in Tunis (2005) touched upon the human rights dimension of the Information Society. Hivos has been part of the Dutch delegation at this Summit and is increasing its knowledge in this specific field. Human rights and ICT are hot - and for Hivos important - issues these days.

Where

This paper has followed specific events for collecting data. The first was the Expression under Repression seminar, organized by Hivos in June 2006. Various stakeholders were present at this seminar - mostly in favour of Hivos' approach - and were important respondents for chapter three on 'Blogging'. In August a partner-visit has been organized to Zimbabwe, where fourteen organisations were interviewed. This partner-visit served as the base for chapter four.

Main conclusions

- The level of technological and legislative sophistication of a government influences the room to manoeuvre for expression. The higher the technological and legislative sophistication, the smaller the room to manoeuvre (i.e. the more sophisticated the repression) and the more creativity is needed for expression.
- The infrastructure needs to be there, and people should have access.
- The social and cultural context needs to stimulate people in claiming their space, being creative and taking some risks.

There needs to be room to manoeuvre, but the chances that are there have to be creatively exploited by the people.

List of abbreviations

ICT	Information and communication technologies
WSIS	World Summit on Information Society
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PPPA	Printing Presses and Publications Act
OSE	Official Secret Act
SEAPA	South East Asia Press Alliance
BSA	Broadcasting Services Act
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
POSA	Public Order and Security Act

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Chapter One
Concept, debate and choice;
The elaboration of the Information Society, Human Rights and ICTs

1.1 Outline of Chapter I

The interrelatedness between ICT, development and human rights is highly covered by the media these days; the activities of Google in China, censure as an export product to repressive governments of American ICT companies¹ and the imprisonment of critics in undemocratic states. With the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, ICT and human rights have been put on the international agenda.

Ever since the 1980s, 'information society' has been one of the key terms to describe today's world. Understanding the 'information society' is crucial to understanding the discussions and questions raised in the different debates. Therefore the first paragraph will be dedicated to the exploration of the fundamental characteristics of this concept.

As a yardstick for addressing democracy in a given society, either digital or not, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) is particularly important in understanding global human rights. Article 19 of this Declaration focuses primarily on the freedom of opinion and speech, and the right to privacy. The second paragraph will connect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the digital world.

The second part of this chapter will describe the current debates on ICT and human rights, and will illustrate the different questions that still remain unanswered. The chapter will conclude with Hivos' reaction on these questions in their policy 'Making civil voices heard'. This chapter will present the main concepts, the background of Hivos' policy, and Hivos' policy itself, in order to illustrate the context of the research question.

1.2 Information Society; the concept

The information society is the society in which we live nowadays. Culture, politics and economy have all been touched and affected by the current technologies and ICTs, and have restructured the society as a whole. Often the revolution caused by ICT has been compared to the transformation of society during the industrial revolution. So what does this 'information society' look like and what are its main characteristics? In the following paragraphs this concept will be placed in the current debates on ICT, and be connected to human rights and development.

Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionized ways of working, transformed the economy, have had an irreversible impact on the way people live and have shaped a new 'information society'. Looking at the Wikipedia² definition, the indistinctiveness of the concept becomes clear: "an information society is a society in which the creation, distribution and manipulation of information is becoming a significant economic and cultural activity". Even though this can be seen as an universally accepted definition, the indistinctiveness becomes clear when applying this broad definition in practice. Despite the arguments on its intellectual flaws, the concept of 'information society' has become part of the current international discourse in politics, economics and culture. Cees Hamelink³ responds to the vagueness and indistinctiveness of the concept by stating: "it can be questioned whether an information society exists anywhere in the world today".

The discrepancy between the concept of 'information society' being part of the current discourse and the vagueness of the actual meaning, ask for a more realistic approach to the concept. Based on the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) discourse, which must be underlined since the influence of this discourse is apparent, Cees Hamelink⁴ listed the following characteristics of the information society as it is now under construction. Since a human rights perspective is applied for discussions on WSIS, the following characteristics are closely connected to human rights in the information society.

¹ "Censuur als exportproduct – Amerikaanse bedrijven maken software voor beperken gebruik Internet", NRC 18-04-2006.

² Retrieved from the world wide web on the 21st of May 2006

³ Hamelink (2004); 122

⁴ Hamelink (2003); 289

Table 1 – the information society in WSIS perspective

Characteristics of the 'Information Society' under construction
▪ The fundamental human right to free speech is universally violated through forms of political and commercial censorship ▪ The internet – in particular – has become the focus of censorship initiatives ▪ The movement of citizens are at all times under surveillance from law enforcement agencies and intelligence bodies ▪ The rights to corporate ownership of intellectual property are greatly extended ▪ The access to information and knowledge is increasingly dependent upon the access to purchasing power ▪ This consolidation of power on information and knowledge markets is consolidated in the hands of only a few conglomerates ▪ There is minimal public accountability from the corporate actors controlling most of the technologies and the contents of the information society ▪ Profitability more than human security drives ICT developments ▪ The public sphere is increasingly limited

The characteristics of the current information society, as been listed by Cees Hamelink, are closely related to the debates on human rights issues concerning the use of ICT, that will closely elaborated in the upcoming paragraphs.

1.3 Human Rights in the Information Society

Human Rights, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), currently provide the only universally available set of standards for the dignity and integrity of all human beings. Common interest is being served if these are respected. Internationally spoken, there is a large sense of consensus on these rights and their importance. Three articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are closely connected to the debates on the use of ICTs in the information society. This paragraph will touch upon these most relevant Articles for the information society and their implementation; the right to access to technology, the human rights standard on the protection of people's privacy, the freedom to hold opinion and the freedom of expression (the latter two are covered by one Article). These rights are central in Hivos' policy 'Making civil voices heard'.

A simple glimpse at one of the annual reports of Amnesty International shows abundant evidence for the violation of these human rights in nearly every country. Never the less, the international moral-commitment makes this Declaration the only suitable international political agreement to deal with a globalised phenomenon like ICT and the internet. Since these new technologies have no borders, and therefore lack an alternative law-system they can relate to⁵. In the information society, or maybe even especially in the information society, human rights are being violated and the freedoms of human kind are being jeopardized, but also defended and fought for. The UDHR offers a framework to discuss and address issues in the information society.

The right of access to technology is provided in article 27.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) where it is stated that "everyone has the right to.... Share in scientific advancement and its benefits⁶". The moral principle, on which this Article is based, is the principle that technology belongs to the common heritage of humankind and that all should be enabled to benefit from this. Technology is praised for its benefits, but there is an increased awareness of the potentially harmful effects that new technologies can have on the "physical and mental integrity of people; on the privacy of

5 Dmitri Vitaliev, technical consultant for NGO's en HRA, working for Tactical Tech; interview 7-6-2006. "The big issue is what right does a country have to control information which is not published in their country. The biggest example of that is a case in 2003 when a business guy, who is also a Rabi, in Melbourn Australia, sued a Canadian magazine for publishing information that was defaming him. But he sued them in an Australian court. Even though the magazine was only published on the internet. His argument was that an internet publication is published in every country where it can be seen. So even if you publish and host your website in Canada, and I read it in China, I can sue you under Chinese law, because what you published doesn't fall within Chinese law. And already France and Canada have taken up this method of legislating information that is published on the internet as being published in their country because it can be viewed on a computer in their country.

6 Hamelink (2004); 124

their homes and confidentiality of their correspondence⁷". This awareness on the importance of the privacy of people can also be found in Article 12.

Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks⁸". New types of technology make it easier for governments and business corporations to interfere in the personal lives of people, as will become clearer in the upcoming chapters.

The main Article in the UDHR for 'Making civil voices heard' is Article 19 that deals with the freedom of expression and the freedom to hold opinion, which is highly applicable to the information society and the digital world. In this Article the freedom to hold opinions without interference is recognized. An interesting element of this Article is the separation between the freedom to opinion and expression. This implicates that certain restrictions are allowed when it comes to the freedom of expression. These restrictions are inspired on respect of the rights and reputations of others, the protection of national security and of public order. To conclude, the main difference between the right to freedom of opinion and expression is that the first is considered to be in the private sphere of people's lives and therefore can not be restricted in any way (related to Article 12)⁹.

1.4 Debates on ICTs, Human Rights and development

The influence of ICTs on development and the promotion of human rights is highly debated in literature and on online discussion-newsletters and forums. The major debates will be presented in this paragraph, being the neo-colonialist character of the promotion of ICTs in the South, the efficiency of investing in ICT by comparing the input to the output, the digital-divide and the problems concerning ICT in undemocratic and unequal countries.

The first debate concerning ICTs is on neo-colonialism. Coming from a shared colonial history and paternalism, it is argued by some socialist and Third World countries, that the right to freedom of expression, opinion and privacy in respect to ICTs as promoted by many Northern countries and international institutions, derives from the fact that it could be used to justify the continuation of the existing massive imbalance in information flows and the unrestricted importation of western technology and information and, consequently, western values¹⁰. As Neki Frasheri (2002¹¹) argues concerning the promotion of ICTs; "sometimes we apply wrong solutions using western models". As Hossein Derakhshan adds; "openness, equality and transparency are the three main values that internet carries with it. These can be against values by other countries, even in the West. The hierarchal system is not comfortable with these values". But there is no consensus on the neutrality, or the inherent values of technology. Though this debate is central to discussions on the promotion of ICTs, it is not truly connected to these technologies. The debate is more on the concept of human rights as internationally agreed values, than it is on ICTs.

The second debate discussed in literature is the cost-benefit analyses; the efficiency of promoting ICTs. Considering the development gap between the North and the South, some argue that the South will have to invest unbearable capital in order to successfully implement ICTs. Bert Hoffmann¹² questions the meaning of internet in Latin America under the current conditions; "the internet now implies a series of new and, especially in Third World societies, high access barriers; connection to electricity and telephone networks, availability of necessary hard- and software, know-how in handling keyboards and computer programs, and finally the money needed to buy the equipment and cover the running costs". Ahmed Mohiddin¹³ questions the input-output ratio and the legitimate priorities for ICT related investments in African countries; "African countries are confronted with many competing priorities: roads, HIV/AIDS pandemics, hospitals and clinics, sewage, water, etc." The raised fear is that the vast majority of people will be excluded from the benefits of ICTs, which will make it a costly and risky proposition that will further marginalize the poor and illiterate.

7 Hamelink (2004); 128

8 Hamelink (2004); 141

9 Hamelink (2004); 141

10 Fisher (1982); 34 in Hamelink (2004); 159

11 Frasheri (2002); 9

12 Hoffmann (2005); 30

13 Mohiddin (2002); 14

Investing is always a matter of priorities and the efficiency of these investments is not easily measured. As Andrew Nongogo states; "if you look at the amount of money Southern countries invest in the military for example, to me it is absurd, it is obscene. Because even in terms of food production, manufacturing, if you have a very well developed ICT infrastructure, that can have a great impact on how you produce; new technologies, new ideas, all of that can flow. Because it is ideas that make economies tick. Economy is about ideas; new ideas of farming, new ideas of education that empower communities". Even though it is a valid argument to claim that basic needs should be met before investing in technology, one should think about the added value that ICTs can have in the dissemination of information in supporting development.

The third debate discussed on ICTs for development and the promotion of human rights, is the dual digital-divide debate, both between as within nations. The deployment of ICT is intense in the North, but is weak in the South, which will add up to the gap of the latter being unable to follow up the leaps of the former¹⁴. According to critics, the impact of new ICTs therefore might lead up to new or bigger gaps – the so-called 'digital divide'. On the other hand open-source technologies can close the gap between North and South. Several countries, for instance Brazil, show the power of open-source technologies. Brazil has recently developed open-source technology for all its governmental institutions, in order to make them less dependent on Microsoft technologies.

The other digital-divide is between the different social layers within countries, where certain communities are marginalized, while others are able to benefit from the new technologies. This divide is based on gender, rural-urban and the poor and non-poor. "The national user data conceal: harsh disparities within individual societies, favouring the urban middle and upper classes, with additional biases along the lines of age, sex, level of education, and command of the English language¹⁵". But hasn't the public sphere always been fragmented? Even though the critics argue that ICTs increase the gap, others argue that ICTs enrich and integrate communication means, breaking all geographical and social borders; and creating new conditions for economical and political activism as result of the fusion of globalization, worldwide connectivity and knowledge networking¹⁶. The debate is primarily on the outcome of these new conditions for the already marginalized people and societies; increased marginalization or breaking through the social orders. Does the internet function as a reflection of political systems of representation and participation, or does it offer the opportunity of transforming such political systems¹⁷. Koïchiro Matsuura¹⁸ argues that we should be wary of the downside of, appearing egalitarian, ICTs, since they may in practice strengthen the power of the entrenched authorities, rather than challenging them; in authoritarian regimes, the internet may serve as an agency of state propaganda, strengthening the government, rather than providing a channel for opposition parties and groups". ICTs cannot be divorced from their environment.

Positive thinkers on the role of ICT in development, hold the idea that ICT can bridge knowledge gaps or inequalities of access to technologies, and therewith contribute to the solution of world's most urgent and explosive socioeconomic inequities¹⁹. This point of departure is the base of Hivos' policy choice of supporting ICTs in the promotion of human rights and development, as stated in 'Making civil voices heard'.

1.5 Hivos policy: Making Civil Voices Heard

This programme of Hivos is the successor of Hivos' first ICT policy called "Access-for-All, Equal Opportunities in Cyberspace", from 2000-2004. Different lessons have been learned and integrated in the new programme. Several years down the road, the widespread maturity of ICT-usage has led to the realization that ICTs are first and foremost a communication tool - not an end in itself - but with significant added-value to build capacity, amplify voices, share knowledge and empower people. In other words, the focus now lies on information and communication – technology just happens to be the means. As the role of ICTs for development is increasingly accepted across the scope of development stakeholders, a more mature and realistic understanding of their potential has replaced dreams of ICT-

14 The gap between North and South is not exclusively on ICTs. It is a gap that exists between North and South on many more levels, for instance economically and politically.

15 Hoffmann (2005); 31

16 Frasher (2002); 1

17 Fleming (2002); 2.

18 Mutsuura (2003); 2

19 Hamelink (2003); 283

miracles for poverty reduction, economic development, emancipation and democratization. So the ICT-hype is over, but at the same time this has resulted in a more pragmatic and down-to-earth deployment of appropriate technologies.

Hivos is on the positive side of the ICT-debates as presented in the former paragraph. Hivos believes in democracy and therefore in the democratic values inherent to ICTs and the internet in particular. Hivos acknowledges the needed investments, but these are not seen as 'unbearable'. For instance, with the use of cell-phones from cities to the most remote rural areas possibilities are open. Hivos is a great promoter of open-source software as a counter-power to dependency on multinationals. As with all new developments, indeed it is the 'haves' to engage before the 'have-nots'. But the open and democratic character of ICTs will decrease the gap instead of increasing it. ICTs will open up and broaden opportunities for a free flow of information, for networking and sharing knowledge and for public and democratic spaces for political debate and participation. To conclude, based on these assumptions, it can be said that Hivos has a positive point of departure in its policy 'Making civil voices heard'.

Hivos acknowledges certain downsides to ICTs. The first being that digital media are easily used and abused to spread a wide range of negative messages and violent actions, ranging from the exploitation of children to extreme political violence and everything in between. Secondly, Hivos acknowledges that in many parts of the developing world access is still limited to the urban well-off, and traditional or "old" media are needed to reach a mass audience. Print magazines, journals, newsletters, radio and television remain powerful media instruments.

In repressive non-democratic states, Hivos focuses on improved opportunities to network and share knowledge using civil society owned communication platforms. Therewith chances are given to create alternative and independent media, and public spaces. Individuals and organizations at grass-root and local levels are harnessing the unique opportunities provided by digital media to send out their message to national and international audiences and to interact actively with smaller and bigger constituencies, no matter where they are located. Digital media provides – more than traditional media can ever do – smart opportunities to distribute alternative or censored news where restrictions are in place.

The theoretical debates in combination with experiences of Hivos' partner-organizations active in the field of ICTs and media, have added up to the choices made in 'Making civil voices heard' and its positive point of departure. Hivos will, within this programme, support platforms for public voices that are unheard or neglected by traditional media. Further, attention will be given to initiatives that open up independent and alternative public spaces in the media landscape. It will also support appropriate media channels that meet the specific communication needs of the poor and marginalized. Finally, Hivos will further reflect upon the constantly changing state of technology in this area as well as the shifting security standards. The freedom of expression and opinion in the virtual world offers specific opportunities for the marginalized people and NGO's, to make their voices heard.

1.6 Conclusions

This chapter has given an exploration of the current debates on ICTs, human rights and development. As is emphasized in 'Making Civil Voices Heard'; "...the role of ICTs for development is increasingly accepted across the scope of development stakeholders". Acknowledging the debates and the insights they give, Hivos has taken a positive approach to the promotion of ICTs for development and human rights. The central question raised in the coming chapters is whether this choice is the right one, considering partner experiences in repressive non-democratic states.

The upcoming chapters will focus on the experiences of different stakeholders in the ICT-field, and include an extensive research on partner experiences of Hivos in Iran, Malaysia and Zimbabwe.

Chapter Two
Outset of this research;
Choices made and the reasons why

2.1 Outline of Chapter II

As has been shown and debated in Chapter I, the literature and discussion on ICTs, human rights and development is very broad and diverse. This chapter will further deepen this research by making and explaining different choices in the use of concepts, the assumptions made and the methods used in answering the central question of this paper.

This Chapter will start with the main question, and therefore central theme, in this research, *'is Hivos' policy 'Making civil voices heard' based on the right positive point of departure for promoting the right to privacy and freedom of expression, in repressive non-democratic states?* In essence, this research will question if this point of departure is justified. The different concepts will be defined and explored, using the debates and literature and presented in Chapter I.

In the third paragraph two sub-questions will be raised to enable answering the central question in this paper. These questions are based on the literature as well as on the questions raised within Hivos. Therefore this research will be strengthened by a dual approach, both from a theoretical and a practical perspective,

The political sensitivity of the subject asks for a sensitive selection of research methods. These choices will be handled and explained in the fourth paragraph.

This chapter will round up with a reflection on what has been done and discussed, and how this will serve as the base of the chapters to come.

2.2 Research Question and the concepts used to answer it

One of the most critical debates concerning ICTs and human rights, has been the debate on ICTs in undemocratic and unequal countries; the dual digital-divide. Critics emphasizing that supporting ICTs in states where there is a lack of democratic background, may strengthen the power of the entrenched authorities, rather than challenging them. Or one step further, in the critical words of Neki Frasheri²⁰; "internet as a tool for democracy may become a tool for de-stability." According to Hivos, using ICTs can strengthen democratization processes by the function it fulfils for organizations fighting for human rights and democracy, including networking with related associations and organizations; mobilizing organizers, activists and members using action alerts, newsletters and emails; raising funds and recruiting supporters; and communicating their message to the public via the traditional news media²¹. Hivos' point of departure is: ICTs will open up and broaden opportunities for a free flow of information, for networking and sharing knowledge and for public and democratic spaces for political debate and participation.

This debate is of utmost importance for Hivos and its partner's work, since Hivos work is based on the positive point of departure in this debate. Though no positivist will claim that ICTs lead to democratization, they are seen as an instrument in the fight for democratic developments within society. Therefore the following question will be raised, based on this debate and Hivos' experiences in the South:

- *Is Hivos' policy 'Making civil voices heard' based on the right point of departure for promoting the right to privacy and freedom of expression, in repressive non-democratic states?*

2.2.1 Human Rights

Human rights are a broad and unmanageable concept if these are not being specified. As has been shown in Chapter I, different Articles within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), are of particular importance for the theme 'expression under repression'. Only these rights will be questioned in this research:

20 Frasheri (2002); 5

21 Selian (2002); 33

Table 2 – Human Rights in ‘expression under repression’

Article	Theme	Definition
Article 12	Privacy	“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks”.
Article 19	Freedom of opinion	“Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers”.
Article 19	Freedom of expression	“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinions and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. ⇒ In order to protect societies against possible abuses of the rights to freedom of speech, international human rights law has also provided for a series of limitations on this freedom, such as restrictions necessary for respect of the rights and reputations of others (privacy), and for the protection of national security or of public order (order publique), or of public health or morals, in paragraph 3 of article 19. Other limitations are the provisions of article 20 that demand that any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law and that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

In Table 2 the exact definition of the human rights to be explored in this research are mentioned in order to emphasize their interrelatedness. These rights are at the core, since the main goal of the Hivos’ policy that is questioned in this paper, is the promotion of these particular rights by using ICTs as an instrument. These rights are very broad and universal, therefore the actual filling in of these rights and their meaning will come from the respondents.

2.2.2 Repressive non-democratic states

Much has been written about repression in relation to a lack of democracy and what it entails. Repression in this paper will be governmental measures that work against democracy and the three central human rights mentioned above. Repression has different faces in different contexts. For this research, I will follow the view of Ahmed Mohiddin²² who connects democracy to ICTs and human rights, which in perspective of this research makes his view relevant. According to Mohiddin, democracy could be reduced to the basic principle of effective participation. That what really distinguishes democracy from other forms of governance is the effective and meaningful participation of people in the decisions which affect their lives, livelihood, and life-styles. In other words, rule by the people as opposed to rule by monarchies, aristocracies or dictators.

“The electoral principle in democracy entails the following provisions: adherence to the rule of law, so that people can campaign and vote in freedom without fear of favour; freedom of association so that people can organize to articulate and promote their interests, or defend their rights; fair play, in that all those wishing to participate are subject to similar conditions and equal treatment; a free flow of information and access to publicly owned and controlled media and the press, so that the public is adequately informed with the public issues and policy options; a system of representation that will enable the articulation of a wide range of views and interests; and continuous adjustments of the constituency boundaries to reflect the fluctuating numbers of people living within them to ensure adequate and equitable representations²³”. Mohiddin stresses that in democratic societies the people are free to express their plurality of views and opinions, there is a free press and people organize themselves to defend these

22 Mohiddin (2002); 8

23 Mohiddin (2002); 8

rights. In undemocratic societies, these freedoms are not respected by the rulers and we can talk of a repressive non-democratic state.

To round up; looking at the research question a final remark can be made about repressive non-democratic states. Democracy can be a means, as well as an end. The end is the existence of a society in which individuals are free and able to pursue their interests and vocations, utilizing their talents, intelligence, skills, entrepreneurship and experience, creative and productive capacities within the confines of the rule of law, which is absent in undemocratic states. Democracy is a means because it enables people to create and sustain a democratic society. Hence a dynamic functional relationship exists between the end and the means, analytically separate but interdependent and mutually supportive²⁴. Even though democratic institutions may be present in specific countries, if the fundamental democratic principles are repressed, in the light of this research the state will be characterized as non-democratic. The table below (Table 3) presents the main principles of democratic states as mentioned in this paragraph. It is chosen to present the principles of democracy –and not of repressive non-democratic states - since these are clear and well defined. A repressive state does not respect one or any principle of democracy.

Table 3 – Democratic states

Principles of democratic states	
▪	Effective participation; actual influence on decisions that affect their lives
▪	Democratic institutions are in place
▪	People can campaign and vote in freedom
▪	Freedom of association
▪	Free flow of information
▪	Freedom of expression within the confines of the rule of law

2.2.3 ICTs

Even though it is acknowledged that concepts in general are open to discussion, some concepts used throughout this research will be used in a rather general way instead of being questioned. The true meaning of these concepts will come from the respondents and their experiences. The concept elaborated in this sup-paragraph is ICTs.

ICT literally means Information and Communication Technologies. This is very broad and varies from radio to the newest digital technologies. Within the broad concept a distinction can be made between old and new media, which will both be taken into account in this paper. Old media are the traditional means of communication and expression; broadcast cable television, newspapers, books and print publications. New media is media in which the computer plays a central role as the medium for production, storage and distribution; digital mobile devices, computer networks and virtual reality²⁵. The distinction between these two types of media is vague. Since they are combined at most occasions; for instance emails being printed and distributed or radio being broadcasted online. Hivos supports a creative use of ICTs and the combining of both types of media.

2.3 Sub-questions

This paragraph will define the main sub-questions, which will together lead up to answering the main question. These questions come from Hivos' work as well as the current debates that have been mentioned in the former chapter. As has been mentioned Hivos focuses on both new media as the internet, as on old media. In 'Making civil voices heard', the internet gets specific attention and can therefore be considered to be important in Hivos' policy on ICTs. Therefore the first question will have a specific focus on new media, while the second sub-question will focus on ICTs in general.

- *Can the internet be useful for democratic processes in repressive non-democratic states like Iran and Malaysia?*
- *Is ICT useful for NGO's in Zimbabwe, operating in a repressive non-democratic state?*

In answering these questions the above explored concepts will be used; ICTs, human rights and repressive non-democratic states. This means that this paper will focus on ICTs – both the internet as old

²⁴ Mohiddin (2002); 11

²⁵ Wikipedia, retrieved from the world wide web, 24-09-2006

media – , human rights – the right to privacy and freedom of expression – and it will be shown that the cases explored are non-democratic according to the above mentioned principles of democratic states.

2.4 Research methods

The main research question has been answered by using several methods; literature, interviews and observation. Therefore findings could be verified by using additional methods, which is called triangulation. This has led to a more in-depth view on the results.

The literature research has been done through the internet as well as by printed books and policy papers. The intention has been to get a broad view on ICTs used in international cooperation and human rights. Since the theme was quite new to the researcher, this method has been used extensively before other methods were used.

Based on the data retrieved from literature, in combination with data from interviews with Hivos' employees dealing with the programme 'Making civil voices heard', a questionnaire came about with open ended questions. Seven interviews were taken during the 'Expression under Repression' seminar organized by Hivos in June 2006. The respondents were guests invited for this seminar because of their specific involvement with this issue. These respondents were representatives of international NGO's, partner-organizations of Hivos and independent web-loggers from Malaysia and Iran. The web-loggers served as the main sources of information for the cases presented in chapter three. It must be stated that they have been involved with Hivos' programme and are supporters of this positive point of departure. This first course of interviews served as recourse for answering the first sub-question, and provided additional insights for the second course of interviews to follow.

The second course of interviews was held in Zimbabwe, Harare and Bulawayo. A parter-visit was organized in August 2006, during which interviews were held with fourteen partner-organizations of Hivos (Annex II). Field visits were organized during which observation was the main method. Especially on the issue of repression this was a useful method, since repression can not always be put in words but is also a feeling.

Even though the respondents saw the researcher as a representative of (the donor organization) Hivos, the interviews were open and critical. This paper will follow the main events that were used for interviews; being the seminar on human rights in the virtual world, and the partner visit to Zimbabwe. The first was a good opportunity to meet various stakeholders in the ICT-discussion. Zimbabwe was chosen since Hivos' has a regional office there, which made it possible to safely question human rights in a repressive society.

2.5 What to expect

Chapter three will deal with the first sub-question, being the role of the internet in democratic processes. The interviews with the web-loggers from Malaysia and Iran will serve as resources for the specific cases on these countries as presented in the upcoming chapter. Chapter four will handle the second sub-question and present a case-study on Zimbabwe. Chapter five will go back to the overall research question and come up with conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Three

Blogging

Human rights in the virtual world; the case of Iran and Malaysia

3.1 Outline of Chapter Three

The main focus of Hivos in supporting ICTs in repressive non-democratic states is by supporting civil society activists and organizations in their struggle for respect for human rights and the right to freedom of expression in particular. This chapter will focus on the support to civil society activists in their struggle for the human rights and democratic changes in their states.

Paragraph 3.2 will look at trends on the internet, the role of technology and the balance between expression and repression. What is the trend over the last years and how do civil society activists and technology experts foresee the future?

Paragraph 3.3 will start of by explaining the concept of blogging (web-logging) with a focus on blogging for human rights by civil society activists. This is a fairly new phenomenon, but governments are increasingly aware of the incidence and the influence it has on society. As we are speaking, 59 cyberdissidents²⁶ are imprisoned to date for their activities on the internet. This increases the importance for a security-perspective – the lack of on-line security as well as on the possibilities of ICTs for increasing on-line security - on these issues as well.

Paragraph 3.4 will introduce the outcomes of the interviews with two bloggers from Iran and Malaysia. It will mainly focus on their experiences, their motives, their struggle for change and the role of ICTs in undemocratic countries from their point of view.

In paragraph 3.5 I will return to the first sub-question of this research, extracting from the collected data, can the internet be useful for democratic processes in repressive non-democratic states?

3.2 The trend and future balance between repression and expression

The increasing number of cyber-dissidents underlines that there is a global trend of increasing repression. But what does this mean for online civil society activists and bloggers? In this paragraph the opinions of Dmitri Vitaliev²⁷ and Wojtek Bogusz²⁸, both working on the software package for NGO's and human rights activists 'NGO in a box' to cope with online repression, and the opinions of human rights activists on the future of the internet as an instrument for expression under repression are compared.

Vitalev and Bogusz support NGO's and civil society activists technically in improving their work and raise awareness on the possible dangers of online communication so they can make informed decisions on their online activism. Both are optimistic about the possibilities that open-source software has to offer. Open-source software is unbounded to commercial interests and is therefore a strong alternative for poor countries willing to invest in ICTs and for NGO's. Bogusz states; "the example that comes to my mind is of China and Brazil. Two big countries developing their own information systems based on free software. Brazil is aiming to have free software in all its government offices. I think partly because they realize that they can not be dependent on mostly American commercial companies and on American politics and economy". But open-software develops more slowly than commercial software. Therefore open-source software may not be able to keep up with, and even counter, repressive developments.

Despite the hope on open-source software as a counterforce to commercial dependence and repression, both Bogusz and Vitaliev are more pessimistic on the balance between repression and expression. Fear is expressed about the internet becoming more of a resource for governments and businesses, than a tool for communication. The same tools are being used for expression and repression, surveillance and intrusion of privacy, human rights activists and terrorists. There are always two sides to a coin. Bogusz; "think about the Cold War. It is not won by any of the sides, and that is how it is with the balance between restriction and freedom of expression. It is always a race without an end".

The technical consultants quoted above, are running after new developments trying to decrease the negative side effects of it. Their vision can be seen as pessimistic, since they don't work on possible solutions to the causes, but are trying to diminish its effects. Civil society activist, whose opinions and

26 Retrieved from the world wide web, 9th October 2006, http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=119

27 Dmitri Vitaliev, technical consultant for NGO's en HRA, working for Tactical Tech; interview 7-6-2006

28 Wojtek Bogusz, technical consultant for NGO's en HRA, working for Frontline Defenders; interview 6-6-2006

experiences will be presented below, work on these causes in particular. This difference in perspective should be taken into account.

3.3 Blogging

Blogging is a relatively new way of sharing your experiences, opinions and emotions with anyone who has access to the internet and is interested in reading, and maybe even commend, on it. A blogger is someone who places his articles online, on his or her personal site, with a certain intention. A blog or weblog is a kind of diary or journal posted on the internet²⁹. In the case of human rights and civil society activism, the blogger uses his blog as a forum of expression and/or to bring human rights issues to the fore.

Blogging is a relatively new phenomenon, since even the internet in itself is new, spreading around the world at an enormous pace. In the beginning of the 21st century blogging became an actual movement. Its influence on societal change is recognized. Julien Pain, of the NGO Reporters Without Borders, who defends bloggers worldwide, states; “.....in the beginning seventy percent of my work was in Asia, and within this seventy percent probably eighty percent in China. And what I have been monitoring these years is that more and more governments start realizing that they have to control the internet. So now there is hardly a dictator on earth who is not aware of how to control the internet and how important it became. We have cases of censorship in Ethiopia, and the last one was in Gabon. Amazing places where you cannot believe there is access to the internet, only very rarely, but even there it becomes important”.

Bloggers report and comment on human rights issues which is seen by repressive governments as a threat to their power. The cases of Iran and Malaysia, and the experiences of two prominent bloggers from those areas, will bring some important issues to the fore on the usage of ICTs for democratic change in society.

3.4 Blogs in maturing democracies & authoritarian regimes – Iran and Malaysia

Blogging is not a tool for civil society activists all around the world yet, since access remains a problem in many developing countries. Both of the bloggers, convinced of the power and effectiveness of blogging in processes of democratization, agreed that the basic needs should be met before the right to expression on the internet becomes valuable. As Dmitir Vitaliev of Tactical Tech puts it; “in Russia we used to say that before you have freedom of expression you should have freedom of sausage”. The cases of well educated developing countries like Malaysia and Iran are therefore highly valuable for discussing the use of blogs in processes of democratization. From the perspective of the receivers, being the citizens of a particular state, there is an increasing need to access to alternative media that blogs can offer.

3.4.1 *The case of Iran; blogs in an authoritarian regime*

Hossein Derakhshan (interview 6-6-2006), a young Iranian journalist who moved from Iran to Canada, set up one of the first weblogs in Farsi (native language). He started a complete blogging-movement by creating a how-to-blog-guide online. Today Farsi is the fourth most frequently used language for keeping on-line journals. There are more Iranian blogs than there are Spanish, German, Italian, Chinese or Russian. “According to the 2004 NITLE Blog Census, there are more than 64000 blogs written in Farsi. A phenomenal figure given that in neighbouring countries as Iraq there are fewer than 50 known bloggers³⁰”. In Iran there is no freedom of press and communicating on government-issues is left to the private sphere. People feel the urge to express their

Iran

The country remains the Middle East’s biggest prison for journalists and bloggers, with 13 jailed during 2005. Five were still being held at the start of 2006. Threats, interrogation, summonses, arrests and arbitrary detention are sharply increasing. Journalists can often only stay out of prison by paying very high bail. The accession to power of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has not improved the situation.

Some journalists were released but remained under close surveillance... Their trials are still in progress however and they can be returned to jail at any time. The regime also uses bans on leaving the country as a weapon against journalists.

Figure 1 - Source: Iran Annual Report 2006 – Reporters without Borders.

29 Alavi (2005); 1

30 Alavi (2005); 1

discontent and views with others, and blogs provide a forum where they can. In Iran there are two layers of censorship. The first layer consists of the censorship that the government applies and tries to impose. The other is censorship by editors and publishers. These two layers are connected, but sometimes the last go even further because the government has not drawn clear lines, deliberately, so they play with it all the time. Even though blogs are not a way of directly communicating with government-officials, there are a number of incidents that strengthen the argument that blogs are useful in pushing democratic changes within society.

One such incident was recently covered by worldwide media. Iranian law does not say anything about female visitors in football stadiums, but reality is that they are usually not allowed. As a reaction to this female bloggers with help of others organized themselves using blogs, to *en mass* as a collective movement enter a football stadium. Arriving at the football stadium, they were stopped by the police. Since many female bloggers carried cameras with them, the whole event got intensively covered on their blogs which created global attention. The whole thing resulted in the government having to answer questions on this event; public activism.

Weblogs are, in the case of Iran, the closest thing to a public sphere. The government can not yet systematically control it, since it is chaotic and decentralized. The trend is that government is pushing his control on the internet further, since they recognize it as a possible threat to their power. They have filtered and blocked almost every popular political website and news-website, in particular the ones that are operating outside Iran, and many popular weblogs are being filtered. Iranian government seems to focus its repression especially on the sites and blogs published from outside Iran, as is the case with the blocked weblog of Hossein: "I think they are afraid of the organizational power of internet, for some day, and they are trying to prance that. They only block those that would be influential enough to start some kind of debate. Also social networking websites have been blocked (orkut, flickr.com, yahoo-groups and google-groups have been filtered".

3.4.2 The case of Malaysia; blogs in a maturing democracy

Malaysia is a cultural diverse country (interview Jeff Ooi, 6-6-2006). The three main ethnic groups, being the Malaise, the Chinese and the Indians (Tamil), all own their own media which is either owned by the specific political parties or are subsidiaries of political party investments. Malaysia is very eager to join the developed world and leaving the status of a development country behind. The development of blogging in the country is best captured by the words of Ghandi during his campaign of non-violent revolt: "when you first start they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win". Although the last phase is still to be seen, the others apply directly to bloggers in Malaysia.

Blogging started on a massive base in 2003, the same year when professional blogger Jeff Ooi started his blog, when it was merely ignored. In 2004 general media laughed at bloggers, by publicly singling out bloggers and calling them 'minority people who make noise'. Since the end of 2004 various cases of police-reports towards bloggers have been reported. Being an official democratic society, Malays government is struggling with the trend of blogging, since it is highly debated on the streets and increasing in popularity.

Different types of censorship are prevailing in Malaysia. The first is censorship from publishers and media-organizations. A legal framework governs the licenses for media operators, the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA). Under this act newspapers must renew their licenses on an annual basis. If a newspaper writes on more than three perceived sensitive issues, untrue issues or issues that have the potential of causing racial disharmony, then a newspaper might be subject to questioning and that may cost the license. As Jeff Ooi puts it; "that is the soar hanging over the neck of the media organizations. So they self regulate". Another act is the OSE, Official Secret Act. Events or information marked with OSE can't be published publicly. The last type of censorship derives from the relationship between media and political parties. Media is more or less a mouthpiece for political

Malaysia

The government says the Internet is hugely important for the country and communications and multimedia minister Chia Kwang Chye has stressed that it will not be censored. In practice, harassment and threats make webmasters censor online material.

Minister Chia Kwang Chye said in late 2003 that the 1998 Communications and Multimedia Act needed adapting to the Internet and that principles would have to be applied to online activity. He said he favoured "positive usage" of an Internet that was free of "false news which could cause negative impacts on social harmony" - remarks that were a sign of the strict control of the Internet the government really wants.

Figure 2 - Source Internet under Surveillance - Reporters without Borders.

parties and therefore repressed in what it might want to say. Problems never get reported because of these reasons. Bloggers like Jeff Ooi; "are on a mission whereby we are not disputing, but we want to provide a counterbalance to the real story behind what has caused the failure of the public policy".

In March 2004 a new Prime Minister got elected in Malaysia because of his fight against corruption and the promotion of a civilized type of Islam, even though corruption was prevailing at a high stage in his own political party. Jeff Ooi stated in his online journal that "the Prime Minister was promoting civilization of Islam in which corruption can not be tolerated, and yet in his own political party election corruptive people buy their way to the top. Then civilization Islam and corruption are mutually exclusive. They are like oil and water, they shouldn't mix". A reader reacted saying; "Jeff, your analogy is wrong. You can't say civilization Islam and corruption are like oil and water, it should be urine and faeces". He said that civilization Islam³¹ was man made and did not come from the Prophet; it came from our prime minister. He also said that corruption is forbidden in Islam and so both are useless substance, like urine and faeces. A law in Malaysia says that it is not allowed to censor the internet, so Jeff couldn't delete the comment of the reader. Jeff got called to the authority, got threatened to be put to court, but lack of evidence ended the case. Since then different police reports got filed against Jeff, efforts of the authority to repress the freedom of expression on political issues by Jeff. The South East Asia Press Alliance (SEAPA) spreads the news on the threatening of freedom of expression which offers bloggers a shield of protection.

Censorship prevails in authoritarian regimes, in democracies like the USA under the Patriotic act, and in maturing democracies like Malaysia. Malaysia has been independent for almost 48 years, has a relatively good infrastructure, but is still facing challenges looking at the mainstream media, and the framing and imprisoning of them. "People tend to look at the two extremes; the US intrusion of privacy, and the China type of repression, but you have this centre stuck in between, which is a country like ours".

3.4.3 Blogging in repressive non-democratic states

Taurai Maduna³², Hossein Derakhshan, Jeff Ooi and Andrew Nongogo³³ can be considered to be online civil society activists. They consider the internet, and use the internet, as a tool for expression under repression and are mainly optimistic about the future. The Zimbabwean government just verified the Interception of Communications Bill, which allows the government to monitor the internet. Indeed online repression is increasing, but looking from where the fight for human rights started in the 1960's, the global society has taken a big step forward. As Andrew Nongogo, of Hivos Regional Office in Zimbabwe states; "even then countries like the US, the USSR, didn't think human rights were an issue. And they arbitrarily violated human rights when they thought it was in their national interest. It was not part of the national, international political discourse. But now it is. You go into summits and countries tell you we can't trade with you because of your human rights record. So it has become a very significant resource because clearly the world is improving". The internet, and ICTs in general, will decrease repression on the long term, though on the short term in the fear of losing power the repression might increase, "I think even they will come to a point when they realize that attempting to stop an idea is a futile thing".

What all informants agree upon is the role of businesses to counterforce or to promote repression. Internet companies like Google should take responsibility to protect the inherent strengths of the internet. Pain³⁴ concludes; "I see that there is a new model of internet rising and that is the Chinese model. And that is the internet with borders. The internet with limitations, with censorship, with surveillance, which was the internet we didn't want when it was created. It was supposed to be this nice and open free network".

You can kill a person, but not an idea; eventually the freedom of expression will prevail, as is happening in many countries worldwide. Software and internet companies should take their responsibility in not providing authoritarian regimes with repressive tools. Internet legislation is difficult, Vitaliev asks himself the question; "what right does a country have to control information which is not published in their country?" Repression is increasing and more governments are aware of the power of the internet, but human rights activists cope with repression thanks to open-source software and creative strategies.

31 The type of Islam the Prime Minister was promoting.

32 Taurai, Kubatana; interview 6-6-2006

33 Andrew Nongogo, program officer Human Rights and ICT, Hivos Regional Office Harare, Zimbabwe, interview 8-6-2006

34 Julien Pain, internet specialist of Reporters without Borders; interview 7-6-2006

3.4 Reflection on the sub-question

- *Can the internet be useful for democratic processes in repressive non-democratic states like Iran and Malaysia?*

The respondents have shown enough evidence in Iran and Malaysia to state that the internet has a strong organizational power that in some cases leads to social change and accountability of the government. The internet as a tool for expression is highly popular in Iran and Malaysia, both countries where expression is repressed in social life, strengthening the argument that the internet can offer a new public sphere. The cases of Malaysia and Iran show the popularity of debates on issues that affect the lives of the people, which is the base of any democratic development. The huge amount of weblogs in Iran and the influence they have on society shows that expression is valued. In this authoritarian country people look for other ways of expressing themselves and their content or discontent with society. Even though the online repression is growing at a rapid pace, the decentralized character of the internet makes it hard to control and it therefore still is an increasingly valuable tool for expression under repression. Besides, bloggers are channels of alternative media, providing people with alternative information³⁵ to make informed decisions on powers that control their lives. Critical debates and positive energy can come from the internet as a counterforce to repressive governments.

Even though the internet is not accessible to all in Iran and Malaysia, it is the content discussed online that trickles down to the people that don't have access. The case of the Iranian women virtually organizing protest demonstrations and stories taken up by general media, show this effect. Even though some groups may profit more directly than others, this did not lead to tensions within society that would not have been there without the internet.

Both of the cases show an increase in the online repression by government as blogging gets more institutionalized within society. It seems that Vitalev and Bogusz were right when they mentioned the trend that repressive instruments develop faster than expression instruments. Open source software does provide a possible solution, but efforts should be undertaken in curtailing commercial developments. Promoting the use of internet for expression will in the short term lead to increased attempts to repress and censor.

The next chapter will be a case study of Zimbabwe, one of the most authoritarian countries in this era, with a dying economy. The use of ICTs in general, both old and new media, in the work of development organizations will be elaborated. How do various partners of Hivos cope with repression and what is, or can be, the role of ICTs in their coping-strategies?

³⁵ The current debate on the (non)journalistic and/or subjective character of blogs will not be dealt with in this research. Blogging is seen in the light of freedom of expression, not in its role in the current media.

Chapter Four
The use of ICT for NGO's under repression
The case of Zimbabwe

4.1 Outline of Chapter Four

Hivos characterizes itself as an innovative donor, that supports its partners in the fight against repression and the struggle for democratic processes, and searches for ways to support its partners in their use of ICT for these causes (see chapter 1). This chapter will focus on the second sub-question raised in this paper; is ICT useful for NGO's operating in repressive non-democratic states? The data presented in this chapter has been collected during a field-trip and partner-visits in Zimbabwe, August 2006.

The second paragraph will elaborate the specific situation of Zimbabwe, in the light of repressive laws and practices connected to the (non)-democratic character of this state. The environment in which Hivos partners find themselves will shortly be explored from their personal perspective.

The third paragraph will focus on the experiences of partners in their push for democratic changes.

The forth paragraph will try to look deeper at repression as such, both from a legal as from a personal perspective. What is repression, what kind of coping strategies have Hivos' partners, and how can ICTs be used in this environment.

The fifth paragraph will reflect on the sub-question considering the results presented in this chapter.

4.2 The repressive context of Zimbabwe

Since 1998 Zimbabwe has been experiencing severe economic and political problems. Zimbabwe is far from conforming with its constitutional, regional and international obligations as mandated under the various charters and conventions it has signed, ratified and acceded to in order to foster an environment that respects freedom of expression as a fundamental human right (MISA, 2005; 143). The launch of Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order) in May 2005 dented hopes of a government that is determined to correct its human rights record. Tens of thousands of people were made homeless after the government destroyed their shacks and businesses, effectively killing the country's informal sector. In this paragraph the main obstacles in this context for the freedom of expression will be elaborated, based on literature and interviews with Hivos' partners. To give a small impression of this context, violations towards media workers are presented below. This is just a small portion of civil society in general, and only covers the violations that were reported, but gives an idea of the current situation towards 'oppositional forces'.

Table 4 Number of violations by the government in 2005 on the rights of media workers³⁶

Type of Violation³⁷	Number	Type of Violation³⁸	Number
Detained	6	Beaten	2
Censored	9	Sentenced	1
Expelled	1	Other	2
Threatened	5	Bombed	1
Legislation	5		

All partners interviewed agree that the Zimbabwean context has become increasingly repressive. Four acts are of special interest when discussing freedom of expression and the right to privacy in Zimbabwe; Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and the Interception of Communication Bill. These four Acts were all put in place after the ruling ZANU-PF's near defeat in the 2000 parliamentary elections, which triggered an unprecedented wave of violence against opposition supporters. The real trigger for extreme repression towards civil society organizations, was the negative outcome of a referendum for constitutional reform due to a strong 'vote-no'-campaign causing mass mobilization, from these organizations.

³⁶ Misa (2005); 161-168

³⁷ For full description on the various violations, see Annex.

³⁸ For full description on the various violations, see Annex.

Table 5 Repressive acts for the freedom of expression and the right to privacy

<i>Bill or Act</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Content</i>
Broadcast Services Act (BSA)	2001	This act provides the functions of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe for protecting and regulating the licensing of the broadcasting frequency spectrum . The law has provisions that make it almost impossible for any other broadcasters to get a license. For instance no person who's broadcasting service or signal transmission station is wholly or partly funded by foreign donations or contributions shall be licensed ³⁹ .
Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA),	2003	The Act has provisions that empower the Minister of Information to appoint a commission that will be responsible for the registration of all media houses and journalists . A number of journalists from the independent media have been arrested and charged under AIPPA for offences such as the publication of falsehoods, and failure to register or accredit under the politicised and non professional body of the Media and Information Commission ⁴⁰ .
Public Order and Security Act (POSA)	2002	In 2002 the Parliament passed POSA, which makes great inroads into the rights of individuals and groups. POSA provides for the notification of the regulating authority of any intentions to hold a meeting that is of a political nature. The Act has stifled popular debate, be it political, academic or civic ⁴¹ .
Interception of Communication Bill	2006	The Interception of Communications Bill provides for the establishment of an interception of communications monitoring centre together with the appointment of persons to man that centre. Monitoring and intercepting shall be of communications via telecommunications, postal or any other related service system ⁴² .

Looking not only at the political context, but also at the general context, one would find that the people of Zimbabwe are calm and resilient. As one respondent⁴³ puts it; "there is a sense of calming chaos, people keep things to their own, but inside they are bitter. The government has put out repressive instruments that in a way limit peoples expressions.... The government is really clever. I think what is going on is a well structured plan. They create a certain environment that makes it tough for people". Before all the above mentioned repressive acts, the people had still hope that the crisis would not take so long. As another respondent⁴⁴ concludes; "now the hope is gone for democratic changes. The government showed that it doesn't care about the wishes of the people". The economic crisis, the food shortages and the increasing repression, make the majority of the people on the streets quiet and resilient. The main answer on the question 'how are you', is 'so so'.

4.3 Partners

This paragraph will go more deeply into the partners that Hivos supports, their struggles and their use of ICTs in reaching their objectives. All of these partners fit within the approach of the Hivos Regional Office in Harare, Zimbabwe, being; mobilizing civil society to start to express their discontent about the various levels of censorship, lack of human rights, and lack of access to information⁴⁵. For a full overview of the partners interviewed and their specific objectives and programs, see Annex.

All of the partners interviewed have been directly repressed by the government at a certain point in time, varying from harassments on the phone, till the actual bombing of an office. In the table below, the main results of the meetings with these partners have been organized. These results will be the core of this chapter.

39 Retrieved from the World Wide Web, 9th October 2006, <http://www.radiodialogue.com/the%20station.htm>

40 Retrieved from the World Wide Web, 9th October 2006, http://www.zlhr.org.zw/program/hr_dev.htm

41 Retrieved from the World Wide Web, 9th October 2006, http://www.zlhr.org.zw/program/hr_dev.htm

42 Retrieved from the World Wide Web, 9th October 2006, <http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/media/>

43 Taurai Maduna, Kubatana; interview 6-6-2006

44 Rashweat Mukunda (National Director), MISA; interview 24-7-2006;

45 Andrew Nongogo program officer Human Rights and ICT, Hivos Regional Office Harare, Zimbabwe; interview 8-6-2006;

1. *Police present at meetings*⁴⁶
2. *Associated with opposition*⁴⁷
3. *Type of relationship with government*⁴⁸
4. *Prefer old or new media*⁴⁹
5. *Prefer right to freedom of expression or right to privacy*⁵⁰
6. *Types of ICTs used towards target group*⁵¹

Table 6 – Selected data on expression, repression, privacy and ICT

Organization	Founded	1	2	3	4	5	6
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights	1996	Yes	No	Negative	Old	Both	Bulletin, papers
National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)	1997	Yes	Yes	Negative	New	Expression	Flyer, leaflet, t-shirts, adverts, tapes
General and Agricultural Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ)	1982	Yes	Yes	Negative	Both	Expression	Print media
Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)	1995	N.A.	No	Negative	New	Expression	Books, website, advertisement, pamphlets
Women in Parliament Support Unit (WIPSU)	2001	Yes	No	Neutral	Old	Expression	Print media
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA)	1999	Yes	No	Positive	Old	Both	TV, radio, website, print
Kubatana Trust	2001	N.A.	No	Neutral	Old	Expression	Website, video, advertisement
Radio Dialogue	2001	Yes	No	Positive	Old	Expression	Radio, tapes, print
Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)	1995	Yes	Yes	Negative	Both	Expression	Paper, drama, book
Voice of the People Communications Trust (VOP)	2000	N.A.	Yes	Negative	Old	Expression	Radio, website, tape
Crisis Coalition	2001	Yes	Yes	Negative	New	Expression	E-mail newsletter, website, print
Bulawayo Agenda	2002	Yes	Yes	Negative	Both	Expression	Print media

46 This result was raised by the partner, and not by the researcher.

47 This result was raised by the partner, and not by the researcher.

48 This result was raised by the partner, and not by the researcher.

49 This result was raised by the partner, and not by the researcher.

50 Partners were asked to choose one. Only those who really couldn't got the answer 'both'.

51 Partners were asked to choose one. Only those who really couldn't got the answer 'both'.

Some conclusions can be made from these data. As can be seen, the government is present at all the public meetings organized by Hivos partners. POSA makes it easy for the government to actually know where which meeting is held. In the case there is a demonstration they don't know of, mass arrests will be the result. The NCA is known for applying this strategy in overcoming repression; "we organize demonstrations of 300 up to 400 people. Last week we had five demonstrations in different areas, in which 200 people got arrested. It seemed that in the bigger cities like Harare, people are being detained for a longer period of time⁵²".

Even though not all of the organizations have been associated with the opposition, the vast majority claims a negative relationship with their government. The two organizations claiming a positive relationship, are actively nurturing this relationship as a way of keeping their organization alive and coping with the repression. As the director of one of these organizations says; "one of our strategies is personal contact with the police⁵³".

The choice between old or new media brings some interesting insights to the fore, which are of utmost importance for answering the sub-question raised in this chapter. It can be seen that the two of the three organizations that are highly active in the use of new media in reaching out to their target-groups, prefer old media. Kubatana Trust and Radio Dialogue have their target-groups mainly on the ground, while the Crisis Coalition focuses on policy makers and civil society organizations. The first two prefer old media. This has to do with the lacking ICT-infrastructure in a country like Zimbabwe, where all the media-sectors (telephone, radio, TV, internet and newspaper) are controlled by the government. In order to reach out effectively to the target-groups, they have to deal creatively with the possibilities the environment offers. And these days, it is argued by Kubatana that; "I am worried that new media makes the activists lazy. Our strategies should go back to the basis, to how to use the postal service, the fax machines, graffiti". Creativity is central when organizations want to reach out in ways that are not government controlled.

Even though all respondents emphasize the interrelatedness of the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy, the majority prioritizes the freedom of expression considering the specific situation in which they operate. The high 'privacy' of the government, meaning a complete lack of transparency, has given a negative connotation to the word 'privacy'. All partners find ways of dealing with the intrusion on their privacy and have various ways of coping.

4.4 Coping

This paragraph will look into the strategies of partners to deal with repression and the use of ICTs in that particular environment. This will be done by focusing on the oppositional forces, since they are the majority. The strategy of 'becoming friends with the repressive actor' has already been mentioned. The paragraph will conclude with some remarks on what repression does to civil society and to people, and how this affects the coping.

As can be seen in the table presented above, the main ICTs used by partners are print media. Zimbabwe has an educated population and a state-controlled media. So the handing out of leaflets, pamphlets and flyers expressing your message are often used to target the target groups. The distribution of these papers and leaflets will be mainly during workshops, demonstrations and meetings. The use of the internet is debated, since it is considered useful for the international aspect of their work, but not so much for targeting the grassroots level. The lack of access is the main obstacle.

Advertisements are the only way for NGO's to 'buy their space' in the public media. As WIPSU experienced when trying to cover a human rights issue in the media; "we tried to write an article on this from a women's-perspective, but the media didn't pick this up, so we had to place an advertisement and pay for this". And GALZ; "The Mirror had send out a call to organizations to react on a bill on women and their role in Zimbabwe, relating to the issue of domestic violence. GALZ reacted by writing an editorial and sending out an advertisement. The editorial never got published, but the advertisement did. So then I called them to ask why they didn't publish it. And they said: 'We cannot do that, because the president would not be happy with that'. Now we got an invoice for the advertisement".

The use of mobile phones, including text-messages, is often mentioned in debates on the use of ICTs in the South. Indeed all partners have mobile-phones, though only one mentions to use it in their work. Radio Dialogue keeps in touch during the organizing of its road shows through sms, though not for

52 Lovemore Maduku, National Chairperson NCA; interview 20-7-2006

53 Nigel Johnson, Station Manager Radio Dialogue; interview 8-7-2006

reaching out to constituency. Mobile phones are tapped as well by the government, which might explain why this instrument is not used for communicating sensitive issues. As MISA mentions; “we have only one telecommunication unit, TO1, that therefore is monopolistic which holds back growth and change. The government has licensed a private company but through its paternalistic ways and therefore this company has failed to bring out anything”.

Two other coping strategies in a repressive society are less instrumental, but more strategic in ‘keeping the organization alive’. As the Crisis Group, which is a coalition of Zimbabwean NGO’s, says; “due to the nature of our organization we are free to express ourselves, minding that freedom after expression is not guaranteed”. Networking with other organizations, and spreading your message through the others, is actively promoted in this context. Some organizations as well as people, have a certain status which makes it difficult for the government to seriously and directly harass them. As ZWALA mentioned; “what to me is freedom of expression, is that people on the ground can say what they want. I know people like John Makumbe⁵⁴ can, even though he is arrested every now and then, but can my mother also?”

That specific commend refers to the last strategy, which is not only practiced by organizations, but also by people on the ground; self-censorship. There are different gradations, and self-censorship is extremely complicated, though half of the respondents admit that they censor themselves. In these cases partners don’t say what they think, but cover it up by soft issues that won’t bring the organization in trouble. All partners recognize a self-censorship culture in Zimbabwe. As ZWALA commends; “people these days are struggling over butter and bread issues, and avoid politics and related trouble”.

Looking at the self-censorship characterizing people and civil society in Zimbabwe, it is not possible to conclude here what exactly it is and how it came about. Indeed internationally known people like Makumbe do have a certain space to express their views, partly due to the international protection. But even Makumbe gets arrested periodically. So whether he can express himself because he claims that space, or because his is internationally known, still remains unanswered. Most probably it is a combination of both aspects. And the trend is set; less and less organizations claim, or are in the position to claim, there space for expression.

4.5 Reflection on the sub-question

In this chapter the repressive political context of Zimbabwe has been elaborated, the position of Hivos’ partners, as well as their experiences and strategies. Specific problems came up during the meetings that will be discussed here:

- The use of new media is for a big part targeted at the donor-community. Organizations have difficulties in distributing the information to the grassroots level due to the government control on ICT-sectors as the internet, telephone, radio and television.
- Organizations are stuck in the government controlled structures that repress them, since they don’t have access to the public media unless they pay a lot of money.
- The majority of the organizations have been continuously harassed.
- Self-censorship is highly prevalent, whether this comes from true fear or a less of creativity in claiming their space for expression.
- Organizations are barely aware of the technological possibilities for avoiding the repression.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of Hivos partners in the specific context of Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, it has been made clear, that the basic conditions for promoting the use of ICT are not there. One basic condition is that indeed there is room to manoeuvre within the control of the government. In Zimbabwe, the government has full control on every ICT sector. Another basic condition is access. As MISA made clear; “we have 350.000 telephone lines for 12 million people, and most of these are owned by businesses. Eight percent of the people have mobile phone, two percent has a personal computer, and eleven percent has access to the internet. ICT is an elitist tool in Zimbabwe”.

Another conclusion is the combination between self-censorship and a lack of creativity in claiming space for expression that is characterizing civil society. The strategy of making tapes and

54 John Makumbe is a well known opinion-maker in Zimbabwe.

distributing them through bus-drivers, barber-shops and taxi-drivers, is a successful one. This way old and new media are combined to reach the target group. Creativity is essential in a repressive context like Zimbabwe, but civil society seems fatigued. Countries like Iran show that even though there is repression, there is also creativity and space claimed by civil society and the people. In Zimbabwe people are mainly resilient. And since every person knows a person being harassed by the government, this is not too surprising. Government control is everywhere, even in the minds of the people.

So indeed ICTs can be of use in a repressive environment, as long as the basic conditions -like room to manoeuvre and access - are met. If these are not met, creativity in the use of old and new media can definitely lead to necessary space to express, even under repression. The structures have to be there, and the changes seen and exploited.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Outline of Chapter 5

After an introduction of the issues in chapter one, the questions raised in chapter two, the results on the two sub-questions in chapter three and four, and this chapter will go back to the main question of this research. The main conclusions will be presented in paragraph 5.2.

From the conclusions various recommendations will be presented in paragraph 5.3. These recommendations will be towards Hivos as well as Hivos' partners. Since together they stakeholders in the policy 'Making civil voices heard'.

In paragraph 5.4 I will give the partners interviewed for this research a platform to share some of their recommendations for Hivos in general. Since some of these partners took the opportunity to express their opinion towards their donor.

5.2 Conclusions

Hivos' point of departure is: ICTs will open up and broaden opportunities for a free flow of information, for networking and sharing knowledge and for public and democratic spaces for political debate and participation. And therefore promoting ICTs in the South will support processes of democratization. This point of departure has been questioned: *Is Hivos' policy 'Making civil voices heard' based on the right point of departure when promoting the right to privacy and freedom of expression, in repressive non-democratic states?*

The cases presented in this paper differ from each other. The cases of Iran and Malaysia support the positive point of departure, by showing that the internet is used in repressive societies for public and democratic space for political debate and participation. And even though those with access are the ones to profit directly, the discussions and information trickle down to those who don't have direct access yet. The enormous popularity of blogs in both Iran and Malaysia show the human need to participate, and therefore the need for a public space in which alternative views can be shared.

Zimbabwe is a different story, as has been shown in Chapter four. Zimbabwe is different in many ways, but important lessons can be learned. The main lesson is that the outcomes of promoting ICTs in the South are never clear. In Zimbabwe as it is today, the promotion of ICT might not be the best way to promote human rights and democracy. The room to manoeuvre within the confines of law has to be recognized and claimed creatively. The social and cultural contexts play a role in the case of Zimbabwe; since there is little creativity and high resilience. ICTs, and securing e-mail for instance, are useful for networking with other organizations and international contacts, but not so much for reaching out to the general public and therewith triggering democratization processes.

The most valuable insights derive from a comparison between the success-story of Iran and Malaysia with the story on Zimbabwe. It can be found that in order to successfully promote ICTs in the South in the light of democracy and human rights certain conditions need to be met:

- The level of technological and legislative sophistication of a government influences the room to manoeuvre for expression. The higher the technological and legislative sophistication, the smaller the room to manoeuvre (i.e. the more sophisticated the repression) and the more creativity is needed for expression.
- The infrastructure needs to be there, and people should have access.
- The social and cultural context needs to stimulate people in claiming their space, being creative and taking some risks.

There needs to be room to manoeuvre, but the chances that are there have to be creatively exploited by the people.

To come back to the central question of this research, it can be concluded that the point of departure of Hivos is indeed optimistic. Hivos should pay increasing attention to the social and cultural context in which it promotes the use of ICTs for expression under repression. The top-down character of the programme, since Hivos has the knowledge on this more than do the partners, makes the need for

context-specific interventions even bigger. Hivos should therefore acknowledge that indeed ICTs can have a positive role to play in democratization processes, and the specific focus on the internet is valid and relevant, but that the above mentioned conditions need to be met.

5.3 Recommendations - general

- Hivos should in its policy choices considering 'Making civil voices heard' include the basic conditions that need to be met in order to successfully promote the use of ICTs.
- Partners should creatively use old and new media in supporting processes of democratization.
- Open source software should be promoted, also from a security perspective.
- Additional research needs to be undertaken on the various levels and implications of censorship, including self-censorship and its influence on the work of partner-organizations.
- The international community should be more involved with human rights and democratization, in order to provide the necessary protection for civil society activists.

5.4 Recommendations and current debates – from partners to Hivos

- Be increasingly involved in the debate since the 'war on terror', on the demarcation line between technology used for expression and the same technology being used for repression.
- When supporting blogging, acknowledge the subjectivity of the information shared with others.
- Cooperate with ICT-companies in raising awareness on the human-rights implications of their work when enabling government to censor and monitor their citizens.
- Be involved on the debate on censorship; when can you repress the freedom of expression by censoring and whose responsibility is this?
- Providing technical support to organizations in repressive environments and promote the technical possibilities by applying them first.
- The possibilities of sms in repressive societies need to be further elaborated and questioned.

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Annex I

Killed: this tops the list in terms of severity, and there is no need to explain why. Included under this category, however, are incidents where journalists have been kidnapped or gone missing, and have disappeared. For the purpose of this publication, that means that any incidents involving the latter will add to the statistics of this category. The statistic given is for the number of media workers involved, as opposed to the number of incidents reports.

Beaten; this includes incidents where journalists are assaulted, attacked physically, tortured, or wounded during the course of their work. The statistic given is for the number of media workers involved.

Bombed; this includes incidents where a home of a journalist or the office of a media house/outlet/organization is sabotaged through bombing, arson, vandalism, theft, or is raided or occupied forcibly. The statistic given is for the number of media workers of media organizations involved.

Detained; this involves a media worker being put behind bars. It can be legal or illegal and includes being sentenced to a jail term or being detained (without charge, incommunicado, preventative, arrest). The statistic given is for the number of media workers involved.

Censored; this is where information is suppressed or prevented from being published, or where media workers are somehow or other prevented from getting their information out. It involves straight forward censorship such as a banning, a gagging order, order for excisions, preventing the publication of information through legislative restrictions, e.g. public officials or the courts, and interdicts, court orders or civil litigation resulting in the suppression of information. It also involves a publication or broadcaster or programme being shut down or suspended, as well as incidents where equipment and/or materials are confiscated. The statistic given is for the number of media workers or media organizations involved.

Expelled; this category relates to the free movement of media workers. It involves incidents where journalists are expelled from a country, are prevented from entering a country (denying of visas, work papers or accreditation), are prevented from leaving a country, are barred from travelling into a country or from entering certain areas, and generally inhibited from moving freely in order to perform their work.

Legislation: this relates to all aspects of the legislative process and the application of common law. It includes instances where official proposals are made for new laws, legislation is passed, laws are amended or struck down either in parliament or by the courts, and civil litigation is instituted against media. This category is not all about violations, since there can be legislation that enhances media freedom and freedom of expression. This has been pointed out accordingly through the descriptive terms 'threatening legislation and 'positive legislation'. The statistic give is for the number of incidents reported under this category, as opposed to the number of media workers or media organizations involved.

Sentenced; this is when a judgment is handed down against a media worker involving either a prison term or a fine. The statistic given is for the number of media workers involved.

Threatened; this involves a threat form a public official, a death threat, various forms of harassment (such as veiled warnings, threats of action, or interference in editorial processes), or journalists being questioned or interrogated on their sources. The statistic given is for the number of media workers or media organizations involved.

Other: these are incidents which do not necessarily involve the media, but which affect aspects of freedom of expression or speech in general. These can involve cases of sedition against a member of the public, a general curb on free speech, parliamentary speech or access to information (e.g. matters involving the internet, pornography, hate speech, political speech) a violation of the right to freedom of assembly and protest, or an incident relating to artistic or academic freedom. Incidents involving the media, which do fall under this category, involve that of media pluralism (a publication closing down because of financial reasons) or incidents involving access to the public media. The statistic given is for the number of incidents reported under this category.

Annex II

Organisation	Mission and objectives/ organization description
Bulawayo Agenda	Bulawayo Agenda is committed to providing a platform for different views of people through public meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences. This is achieved through: • Engaging debate on topical and current affairs. • Engaging the media and civic society to promote public rights to fair and accurate information and freedom of expression. Bulawayo Agenda has conducted various public meetings and conferences as a means of advocating for the upliftment of the voices of the citizens of Zimbabwe and we view dialogue as being an instrumental tool for development.
Crisis Coalition (www.crisis.org.zw)	The mission is to enhance Civil Society's Capacity to deal with the socio-economic and political crises through encouraging well coordinated strategic planning and action. And to promote freedom and democratic values through encouraging dialogue, tolerance and the shaping of ideas by Zimbabweans from all walks of life. To respond timeously to government positions regarding various key policy areas To share ideas and information for use by CSOs in the articulation of credible, alternative and practical views To ensure the rapid development of democratic governance in Zimbabwe To amplify the collective voice of civil society in Zimbabwe To cover issues which would otherwise not fall within the mandate of the major CSOs To highlight, debate and research and propose solutions to the multi-layered national crisis
Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) (www.galz.co.zw)	The Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) is a <i>universitas</i> voluntary association. It was founded in 1990 for purposes of serving the needs and interests of LGBTI people in Zimbabwe and pushing for social tolerance of sexual minorities and the repeal of homophobic legislation.
General and Agricultural Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ)	GAPWUZ is a voluntary, democratic and autonomous trade union organisation, which was established to promote, advance and protect the rights and interests of workers in the agricultural sector. It seeks to create a better life and future for farm workers in Zimbabwe.
Kubatana Trust (www.kubatana.net)	The organisation was established in 2001 and its main objectives are to assist civil society organisations and NGOs to be present on the internet. This has been achieved primarily through providing technical expertise in developing web pages, as well as hosting the web page/s on the Kubatana site. This has also included providing back-up services and off line updating of organisational information. The organisation is now also providing training for civil society and NGO organisation in information management and the use of ICTs in human rights, gender and HIV/AIDS.
Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) (www.misa.org)	MISA seeks ways in which to promote the free flow of information and co-operation between media workers, as a principal means of nurturing democracy and human rights in Africa The role of the MISA is primarily one of a coordinator, facilitator and communicator, and for this reason MISA aims to work together with all like-minded organisations and individuals to achieve a genuinely free and

	pluralistic media in southern Africa
National Constitutional Assembly (www.nca.zw)	The goal of the NCA is for Zimbabwe to have a new, democratic and people driven constitution. To achieve this goal, the NCA seeks to: initiate and engage in a process of enlightening the general public on the current constitution of Zimbabwe identify shortcomings of the current constitution and to organize debate on possible constitutional reform facilitate constitutional debates in a way which allows broad-based participation subject the constitution making process in Zimbabwe to popular scrutiny with a view to entrenching the principle that constitutions are made by and for the people; promote ,discuss and debate questions of good governance in Zimbabwe; promote , discuss and debate important economic , political and social issue in Zimbabwe; promote debate and fight to establish a tolerant , just , and transparent political order in Zimbabwe; generally encourage a culture of popular participation in decision making.
Radio Dialogue (www.radiodialogue.com)	Radio Dialogue is a non-profit making community radio station aspiring to broadcast to the community of Bulawayo and surrounding areas. Radio Dialogue aims at providing a channel for debate and information sharing on economic, political, social, cultural and developmental issues.
Reyhana Masters (consultant)	Consultant and former chair-person of MISA.
Voice of the People Communications Trust (VOP) (www.voprado.co.zw/)	VOP lobbies and advocates for political, economic, cultural and social development through alternative broadcasting. To cover issues that would not make it to the state controlled electronic media. To give Zimbabweans an opportunity to look at issues critically. To encourage the input of all Zimbabweans and thus share ideas and information regardless of social, religious or any differences. To promote and protect the principles of pluralism and diversity in the media. To encourage the development of participatory democracy in areas of health, governance, parliament, business development, gender and the environment, specifically following the land resettlement programme. To generally present balanced and impartial news coverage for the overall development of the country socially, politically and culturally. To fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic through the accessible radio medium.
Women in Parliament Support Unit (WIPSU)	The aim is to increase women's qualitative participation in politics, in order to ensure that they influence policy and decision making with a clear understanding and commitment to focus on women's issues. The objectives of the organisation are directed at working with all women in formal elected political positions and strengthening their skills and capacity so that they can represent women's issues and that they are able to take the gender agenda into decision making processes and products.
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (www.zlhr.org)	To strive to protect, promote, deepen and broaden the human rights provisions in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. To strive for the implementation and protection in Zimbabwe of international human rights norms as contained in important international conventions such as but not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African

	Charter on Human and People's Rights. To strive for the adoption of a Southern African Human Rights Charter and the establishment of a Southern African Court of Human Rights. To endeavour to find common ground with and to work alongside other Zimbabwean groups, organizations, activists and persons who share a broadly similar concern for and interest in human rights. To liaise and work with other human rights groups wherever situated but particularly in Southern Africa, and especially those closely linked to the legal profession.
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) http://www.zwla.co.zw	To enable women and children to access the law and assert their rights through the provisions and utilization of relevant and available legal resources." Goal: " A Zimbabwean society where women are empowered and assert their rights within a justice system that treats men and women equally and that is sensitive to the needs of children."