

Helpdesk Research Report: Alternative Livelihoods

Date: 12.01.2012

Query: Please identify resources on the effectiveness of alternative livelihood support in contributing to stability.

Enquirer: DFID

Author: Huma Haider huma@gsdrc.org

Contents

1. Overview
2. General resources
3. Lessons learned
4. Country cases
5. DDR resources

1. Overview

The links between illicit drug crop cultivation and instability

The literature on 'alternative livelihoods' focuses primarily on efforts related to countering illicit drug crop cultivation. Links between illicit drug crop cultivation and armed conflict are noted in various contexts. Illegal armed actors (and sometimes government forces) often obtain revenues from the illicit drug trade which in turn fuels the conflict (Mansfield, 2006; Youngers and Walsh, 2009; Second generation DDR, 2010). In addition, the involvement of political elites in drug production and trade or natural resource exploitation undermines state legitimacy (Second generation DDR, 2010). In Colombia, the drug trade has generated financial resources for illegal armed groups to maintain military power. In addition, the lack of economic opportunity makes joining armed groups or cultivating illicit crops key economic opportunities for young people (Godnick and Klein, 2009).

Efforts to counter illicit drug crop cultivation are thus considered important to stability and security. Conflicts can be exacerbated, however, by the kind of policy response to counter illicit drug crop cultivation. Over emphasis on crop eradication has contributed to more conflict in Myanmar, Peru and Colombia as households have relocated to areas beyond the control of the state. It has also been reported that government aerial eradication campaigns in Peru and Colombia increased support for armed rebel groups (Mansfield, 2006).

Overview of the 'alternative livelihoods' approach

The 'alternative livelihoods' approach is a comprehensive approach that views alternative livelihoods as a goal in itself, rather than a means. It calls for the mainstreaming of illicit drug crop cultivation strategies in local, regional and national development initiatives. Programmes are designed to provide alternative economic opportunities and sources of income generation; and to improve the overall quality of life of beneficiaries. This includes improved access to healthcare, education and housing; and the development of infrastructure. It is a movement away from the 'alternative development' approach based on simple crop substitution interventions; and in some cases based on a strategy of making development assistance conditional on reductions in illicit drug crop cultivation (IDPC, 2010; Mansfield, 2007; Mansfield and Pain, 2005).

The approach also requires a combination of interventions in the areas of governance, rule of law and security that can deliver the development impact required to increase household access to assets and to reduce dependency on illicit drug crop cultivation. It requires attention to the factors contributing to illicit drug crop cultivation and how these causes can differ among various socioeconomic groups (IDPC, 2010; Mansfield, 2007; Mansfield and Pain, 2005). Evidence from areas in Afghanistan indicates the importance of such structural and institutional factors and agency (Mansfield and Pain, 2005).

Mansfield (2007) cautions, however, that many actors still have a narrow perception of alternative livelihoods, equating it with 'rural livelihoods' or former concepts of alternative development, whereby development assistance made conditional on reductions in illicit drug crop cultivation.

Outcomes

The vast majority of the literature in this area discusses the outcomes of alternative livelihood and alternative development approaches and programming in terms of the effect on levels of illicit drug crop cultivation, without discussing additional effects on stability and security. There is limited explicit discussion of the effectiveness of alternative livelihood support in contributing to stability.

Thailand is commonly cited as a success story and a rare case of where an alternative livelihoods model has been successfully implemented, contributing to the virtual elimination of opium poppy cultivation. Alternative livelihood programmes were integrated into local, regional and national plans, and the whole process took place over a thirty-year period. This allowed for emphasis on providing social services and infrastructure development, which resulted in improvements in farmers' quality of life. In addition, the diversification of income sources and the development of flowers as an alternative to poppy cultivation contributed to greater levels of household income. Crop reduction strategies, such as forced eradication, were not introduced until 15 years of sustained economic development had taken place and other sources of income had emerged. This prevented the problem of re-planting that often frustrates crop eradication efforts, whereby assistance is conditioned on meeting prior crop reduction targets (IDPC, 2010; Youngers and Walsh, 2009; Mansfield, 2006).

The diversification of income sources in Pakistan has also contributed to higher levels of household income. Improvements to quality of life, for example through infrastructure development, have also encouraged a shift toward legal earning activities. The extension of road networks have in turn allowed for government provision of social infrastructures, such as schools and health facilities, and the establishment of law and order in remote locations. The provision of services to remote

communities in Pakistan also helped to promote perceptions amongst those living in these areas of being members of a wider nation state (Mansfield, 2006).

State-society relations also seem to have improved in Colombia from the adoption of alternative livelihood programmes. Farmers perceived a better relationship with the state as such programmes recognised them as citizens with rights – entitling them to training and economic resources, rather than as criminals (Ojeda, 2011). The training courses provided as part of the programmes also encouraged community work, which contributed to the re-establishment of farmers' social networks. The general opinion of farmers was also that these programmes resulted in the reduction of violence generated by the trade of coca and poppy crops, allowing farmers to live in a safer environment. However, farmers situated in areas where armed groups remained present continued to face problems (Ojeda 2011).

Burma and Laos have also successfully reduced opium poppy cultivation. Youngers and Walsh (2009) question, however, whether this is sustainable. They argue that current levels of development aid and humanitarian assistance remain inadequate to offset losses faced by poppy farmers in both countries. Moreover, these countries did not follow the sequencing pattern adopted by Thailand of ensuring that alternative sources of income and improved livelihoods are fully implemented in advance of efforts to achieve crop reductions. Without such sequencing, short-term gains are likely to be reversed as farmers will have no choice but to re-plant.

Similar problems with sequencing are evident in Latin America. In Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, proper sequencing has not been adopted and assistance has been conditioned on the prior eradication of coca and poppy crops. In addition, the implementation of economic development models that favour export agriculture through expanded access to global markets and trade liberalisation has been detrimental to small farmers. 'Mega-projects' have also been criticised for facilitating the consolidation of illegal armed groups and local mafias (Youngers and Walsh, 2009).

Reintegration programmes in Colombia aimed at ex-combatants have also been critiqued. These programmes comprise grants for individual livelihood projects and for collective associative projects; private-sector employment; and educational scholarships. Results have been disappointing and ex-combatants have failed to generate a stable income. This was due in part to the design of the individual reintegration programme, which provided start-up capital to every ex-combatant without regard to their business skills, entrepreneurial talent or the existence of a viable business plan. In addition, the participation of the private sector has been weak; there has been little enthusiasm to provide direct employment opportunities to ex-combatants (Godnick and Klein, 2009; Derks et al., 2011).

There is some evidence of success, however, in cases where those implementing reintegration schemes worked with the private sector and designed the scheme based on the demands of employers and the dynamics of the market. The footwear industry in Colombia was identified as a likely source of employment due to its shortage of key skills and to growing demand. Training was thus established in this area and a number of ex-combatants found permanent employment in this industry. This demonstrates the importance of combining context analysis with viable alternatives to violence (Derks et al., 2011).

Lessons learned

Key lessons from experience with alternative livelihood and alternative development programming include the importance of: (see IDPC, 2010; Youngers and Walsh, 2009; UNODC, 2005)

- **Mainstreaming alternative livelihood approaches and programmes.** They should be incorporated into local, regional and national development plans;
- **Adapting policies and approaches to particular regions and situations.** Alternative livelihoods must be developed based on local knowledge, skills and culture; and based on the specific characteristics of affected communities;
- **Local institution-building and community participation** in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development efforts; and in problem solving;
- **Assessing the factors contributing to illicit drug crop cultivation** and recognising how these causes can differ among various socioeconomic groups. In Ghana, for example, interventions have failed due in large part to a poor understanding of target populations (Banchirigah, 2008).
- **Proper sequencing**, such that sustainable alternative livelihoods are in place prior to crop reductions. Eradication prior to the establishment of alternative livelihoods pushes people deeper into poverty, and fosters social unrest, instability and violence. Forced eradication can fuel local insurgencies and hence civil conflict and internal displacement. In addition, rapid reductions in illicit drug crop cultivation are often reversed as farmers replant, spreading the problems associated with the cultivation of such crops to new areas;
- **Measuring results in terms of the well-being of society**, rather than in terms of hectares of crops eradicated. Impact should be monitored at the household level.
- **Large investments in infrastructure, health, education, and other services** that will improve overall quality of life;
- **Treating farmers as partners** in development, not as criminals;
- **Prioritizing small-scale rural development** in agricultural and trade policies;
- **Basic elements of effective governance and the rule of law**, which must be in place for development and drug control efforts to succeed;
- **Reducing violent conflict**, which can create the conditions for promoting sustainable development and hence effective drug control;
- **Long term political commitment.**

2. General resources

Mansfield, D., 2006, 'Development in a Drugs Environment: A Strategic Approach to "Alternative Development"', Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) <http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/en-eod-ae-strategic-approach-2006.pdf>

This discussion paper is aimed at promoting understanding between the wider development community and the drug control community. It highlights the links between illicit drug crop cultivation and armed conflict in various contexts, such as in Colombia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Laos, Peru, Pakistan and Thailand. Conflicts can also be exacerbated by the kind of policy response to counter illicit drug crop cultivation. Experience suggests that over emphasis on crop eradication, for example, has contributed to more conflict in Myanmar, Peru and Colombia as households have relocated to areas beyond the control of the state. It has also been reported that government aerial eradication campaigns in Peru and Colombia increased support for armed rebel groups.

The paper points to the benefits that development efforts can provide in terms of increasing levels of income and improving quality of life. Thailand and Pakistan are highlighted as successful cases, where opium poppy cultivation has fallen significantly after the implementation of a series of alternative development initiatives. The diversification of income sources has contributed to greater levels of household income. In Thailand, for example, annual family cash incomes tripled due to diversification of agricultural production and livestock. Substitution of flowers for opium poppy has led to a fifty-fold increase in profits. In Pakistan, household incomes close to doubled despite reductions in illicit drug crop cultivation; the onion has proven to be more profitable.

Improvements to quality of life have also encouraged a shift toward legal earning activities. In Pakistan, for example, physical infrastructure (roads, electricity) combined with the diversification of agricultural production have provided the impetus for many households to shift from cultivation of opium poppy to legal on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm income opportunities. The extension of road networks have also allowed for government provision of social infrastructures, such as schools and health facilities, and the establishment of law and order in remote locations. This also promotes perceptions amongst those living in these areas of being members of a wider nation state, rather than belonging to isolated communities.

Mansfield, D., 2007, 'Counter-Narcotics Mainstreaming in ADB's Activities in Afghanistan, 2002-2006' (January), Asian Development Bank, Country Partnership Strategy
<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Assessments/Other-Assessments/AFG/Counter-Narcotics-Mainstreaming.pdf>

This paper provides an overview of the 'alternative livelihoods' approach. This approach recognises that no single project or programme can address the various reasons behind why households engage in illicit activities; and that no single institution can have sole responsibility for implementation of the approach. It is a movement away from the 'alternative development' approach based on simple crop substitution interventions, implemented primarily by drug control agencies and focused solely on the reduction of opium and coca production. Success under alternative development is often measured in terms of hectares of opium poppy reduced rather than sustained improvements in quality of life and livelihoods of rural communities.

The 'alternative livelihoods' approach sees alternative livelihoods as an end state. It requires attention to the factors contributing to illicit drug crop cultivation and how these causes can differ among various socioeconomic groups. Coordination across a range of sectors and ministries is necessary, with particular attention to a partnership between development actors and drugs and development specialists. The approach also requires a combination of interventions in the areas of governance, security and economic growth that can deliver the development impact required to increase household access to assets and to reduce overall dependency on illicit drug crop cultivation.

The paper cautions, however, that many actors still have a narrow perception of alternative livelihoods. For many development actors, it is seen as synonymous with 'rural livelihoods'. The assumption here is that merely increasing licit livelihood opportunities will automatically result in the reduction of opium poppy cultivation. Others see alternative livelihoods as a way to engage in alternative development, whereby development assistance is used as a lever to negotiate reductions in opium poppy cultivation.

International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), 2010, 'Drug Policy Guide', International Drug Policy Consortium

http://www.idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/IDPC%20Drug%20Policy%20Guide_Version%201.pdf

Section 4.2 (pp. 95-102) of this drug policy guide discusses the promotion of 'alternative livelihoods'. It draws from experiences and lessons learned in South America (Colombia, Peru and Bolivia) and Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos and Burma). It states that: 'Alternative livelihoods programmes are intended to provide legal and economic opportunities to farmers cultivating coca and poppy crops in order to reduce their dependence on the cash income these generate. The concept evolved over time from a simple focus on crop substitution to an alternative development approach, carried out in most countries with a combination of rural development and law enforcement efforts. An alternative livelihoods approach – a more comprehensive development strategy now promoted by some international donors – is designed to improve the overall quality of life of peasant producers. This includes improved access to healthcare, education and housing; the development of infrastructure and other public services; and income generation, such as the industrialisation of agricultural produce and off-farm employment opportunities.

This approach calls for the incorporation, or mainstreaming, of alternative development programmes into comprehensive rural development and economic growth strategies. Specifically, it calls for embedding coca and poppy crop reduction strategies in local, regional and national development initiatives. It will only be possible to successfully reduce or eliminate the cultivation of crops destined for the illicit market once the overall quality of life and income of the local population has been improved. In areas where poppy farmers receive advances from traffickers to buy poppy seeds, farmers need to be offered the same advantages to enable them switch from illegal to legal crops. At that point, crop reduction should be voluntary, in collaboration with the local community. This approach means seeing coca or poppy growers not as criminals but as partners in promoting development. Nation-building and promoting good governance and the rule of law are also essential components of an alternative livelihoods approach. These are particularly necessary to foster the legitimacy and credibility of the government in areas where state presence is often limited to security and/or eradication forces' (pp. 98-99).

**Mansfield, D. and Pain, A., 2005, 'Alternative Livelihoods: Substance or Slogan?'
Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit**

<http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/9806/1/Alternative%20Livelihoods%20Substance%20or%20Slogan%202005.pdf?1>

This paper argues that the key to achieving counter narcotics objectives in Afghanistan and elsewhere is the promotion of broader development goals, including the establishment of institutions required for formal governance, promotion of a strong civil society and strengthening of social protection mechanisms. In particular, it stresses that funding for alternative livelihoods should be seen as a goal in itself, rather than a means. As such, funding for alternative livelihoods should not be provided in exchange for a reduction in the area of land used to cultivate illicit drugs, a strategy that has been adopted in Latin America in order to contain high levels of counter narcotics spending. In addition, the concept of livelihoods should not be limited to that of income, microeconomics and farmers as profit maximisers. Evidence from areas in Afghanistan indicates the importance of structural and institutional factors and agency. Attention thus needs to be paid to the drivers of narcotics production and to the risks that different actors face in order to properly assess the likely counter narcotics and development impact of a programme.

3. Lessons learned

International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), 2010, 'Drug Policy Guide', International Drug Policy Consortium

http://www.idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/IDPC%20Drug%20Policy%20Guide_Version%201.pdf

Section 4.2 (pp. 95-102) of this drug policy guide, cited above, argues that despite growing acceptance of an alternative livelihoods approach, it has rarely been implemented in practice. It points to Thailand as a rare case where such a model has been successfully implemented, contributing to the virtual elimination of opium poppy cultivation. A long term perspective was adopted and the whole process took place over a thirty-year period. After recognising that agricultural alternatives in Thailand were insufficient, alternative livelihood programmes were integrated into local, regional and national plans. This allowed for emphasis on providing social services such as health care and schools, and infrastructure development such as roads, electricity and water supplies. This led to improvements over time in farmers' quality of life. In addition, the development of flowers as an alternative to poppy cultivation ultimately resulted in a significant increase in profits for local producers. Key lessons from the experience of Thailand include:

- The importance of local institution-building and community involvement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development efforts; and in problem solving.
- The importance of proper sequencing. Crop reduction strategies, such as forced eradication, were not introduced until 15 years of sustained economic development had taken place and other sources of income had emerged. This prevented the problem of re-planting that often frustrates crop eradication efforts, whereby assistance is conditioned on meeting prior crop reduction targets.
- The importance of measuring results not in terms of hectares of crops eradicated but rather in terms of the well-being of society.

Youngers, C. A. and Walsh, J. M., 2009, 'Development First: A More Humane and Promising Approach to Reducing Cultivation of Crops for Illicit Markets', the Washington Office on Latin America

<http://www.idpc.net/fr/node/610>

This report promotes a comprehensive understanding of the concept of 'alternative livelihoods', emphasising alternative livelihoods as a goal, rather than simply a programme or set of activities. It involves recognition that sustainable legal economic options are contingent upon improved security and governance; and that alternative livelihoods must be developed based on the specific characteristics of affected communities and on local dynamics in order to be successful. It considers Thailand and Bolivia as cases that demonstrate the importance of promoting sound economic development and democratic institution building in order for targeted drug control interventions to work. In contrast, experience has shown that rapid reductions in coca and opium poppy cultivation are often reversed in the absence of real economic alternatives already in place.

Thailand is also cited here as the one country considered to have most successfully implemented the alternative livelihoods model. It has virtually eliminated opium poppy cultivation due to comprehensive and participatory economic development and nation-building efforts (see IDPC 2010 in this report for further details). The lessons that it draws from the Thailand case are the importance of (p. 13):

- The integration of alternative development programmes into local, regional and national development plans;
- Large investments in infrastructure, health, education, and other services that will improve overall quality of life;
- Local institution building;
- The involvement of local communities in all stages of the development process and in crop reduction efforts; and
- Proper sequencing, such that alternative sources of income are in place prior to crop reductions.

The report also discusses Burma and Laos as having successfully reduced opium poppy cultivation. In the case of Laos, this has been attributed to the provision of alternative sources of income and the incorporation of drug policy concerns into national development plans, which ensured greater impact and greater coordination with international donors. However, it argues that current levels of development aid and humanitarian assistance remain inadequate to offset losses faced by poppy farmers in both countries; as such it is questionable whether the reductions in cultivation are sustainable. It finds that in both countries, the governments failed to take into account one of the key lessons from Thailand involving sequencing: alternative sources of income and improved livelihoods must be fully implemented in advance of efforts to achieve crop reductions. Without such sequencing, short-term gains are likely to be reversed as farmers will have no choice but to replant.

The report is particularly critical of strategies that have been adopted in Latin America. In Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, proper sequencing has not been adopted and assistance has been conditioned on the prior eradication of coca and poppy crops. In addition, the implementation of economic development models that favour export agriculture through expanded access to global markets and trade liberalisation has been detrimental to small farmers. The flood of cheap imports, stemming from liberalisation, can result in significant declines in the living standards of the rural poor. The promotion of large plantations owned by large companies also tends to be more capital-intensive than labour-intensive, failing to provide viable agricultural or employment alternatives to coca farmers. 'Mega-projects' have also been criticised for facilitating the consolidation of illegal armed groups and local mafias. Further, this market-driven, private sector led version of development often differs from local visions of development.

There have been some changes in strategies in recent years. In Colombia, for example, USAID has more recently attempted to implement alternative livelihoods policies; however, these programmes are said to have reached very few families cultivating coca. In Bolivia, the Morales government has been providing incentives for rice and corn production in order to reduce coca production and improve food security; and has reallocated money for food imports toward support for crop diversification. In addition, the government has invested improving social services and economic development in order to create jobs and improve incomes.

The report outlines ten lessons learned for promoting alternative livelihoods (see pp. 27-32):

- **Proper sequencing is crucial: development must come first.** Viable, sustainable livelihoods must be in place *prior* to significant crop reductions.
- **Eradication of coca and opium poppy crops is counter-productive unless alternative livelihoods are already firmly in place.** Eradication prior to the establishment of alternative

livelihoods pushes people deeper into poverty, and fosters human rights violations, social unrest, instability and violence, undermining already tenuous government legitimacy and nascent institution building. Forced eradication can fuel local insurgencies and hence civil conflict and internal displacement. It also reinforces reliance on growing illicit crops, as farmers without other viable economic alternatives are forced to replant, and spreads the problems associated with the cultivation of such crops to new areas. Adopting cooperative crop reduction strategies carried out in collaboration with local communities could encourage an array of organizations with sound track records in promoting sustainable development to begin working in areas where crops are produced for illicit markets.

- **Farmers should be treated as partners in development, not as criminals.** One of the many reasons that forced eradication is counterproductive is that it alienates the very population whose support and involvement is needed for development efforts to be successful. Small farmers typically grow coca or poppy as a last resort; it is a means of obtaining limited cash income for food and other necessities. Meaningful community participation is a cornerstone of any effective development programme.
- **Development assistance should *not* be contingent on the prior elimination of crops deviated to the illicit market.** Often, the farmers that chose to participate in such programmes end up returning to coca production — often deeply cynical of alternative development efforts. Many donor agencies now believe such conditionality is counter-productive and can generate perverse incentives to grow certain crops in order to get assistance.
- **Alternative livelihoods goals and strategies should be integrated into local, regional and national development plans.** Such an integrated approach should incorporate all of those involved in rural development, including multilateral and international development agencies, the relevant government ministries, regional and local officials, and community and civil society organizations. Some donor agencies refer to this as “mainstreaming counter narcotics into development programmes” or “undertaking development in a drugs environment.”
- **Agricultural and trade policies must prioritize small-scale rural development.** Following the Washington Consensus policies, Latin American governments liberalized trade and opened up their economies to foreign investment and goods. Yet decades of pro-urban economic development models and trade liberalization policies have proven to be seriously detrimental to the rural poor. More recently, international institutions such as the World Bank are recognizing the need to support agricultural policies geared toward the small farmer (in contrast to the promotion of large-scale agricultural production for export). Failing to do so runs the risk of pushing more farmers into coca and poppy production and can undermine alternative development efforts.
- **The basic elements of effective governance and the rule of law must be in place for development and drug control efforts to succeed.** Effective local governance entails provision of basic services, including security and the administration of justice. Where alternative livelihoods programmes are being carried out, law enforcement operations should be kept institutionally and politically separate from development efforts. Civil society participation in government policy-making can build trust in government and improve the government’s credibility.

- **Reducing violent conflict creates the conditions for promoting sustainable development and hence effective drug control.** Drugs and conflict feed off of each other; illegal armed actors (and sometimes government forces) obtain revenues from the illicit drug trade which in turn fuels the conflict. Pervasive violence makes implementing development programmes difficult at best and poses security risks to those who participate. This leads many drug policy officials to conclude that disrupting the drug trade — and hence the flow of profits to armed actors — is a necessary first step. However, an increasing body of research underscores the opposite: Reducing violent conflict establishes the conditions needed to pursue sustainable development and drug control efforts.
- **Progress toward development goals and crop reductions should be measured using human development and socio-economic indicators.** The U.S. government has traditionally measured success of counter-drug efforts in terms of the number of hectares of coca eradicated, the amount of cocaine processing labs destroyed, the number of drug traffickers arrested, the amount of cocaine seized, and the like. However, these are indicators of activities carried out; they do not reveal much about the impact of policy on the drug trade.
- **Development and crop reduction strategies must respect the traditions of local cultures.** Any crop reduction strategy must clearly recognize the traditional, cultural, medicinal and other attributes of plants such as the coca leaf.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2005, 'Alternative Development: A Global Thematic Evaluation', Final Synthesis Report, United Nations

http://www.unodc.org/pdf/Alternative_Development_Evaluation_Dec-05.pdf

This study reviews alternative development strategies and activities in Latin America and Asia. Alternative development here refers to 'the sustainable reduction of drug crops by improving livelihoods' (p. vi). The study's findings and recommendations include (see pp. vi-vii):

- The formulation of alternative development policy worked best when all stakeholders participated and came to a consensus.
- The formulation of policy required flexibility to adapt to particular regions and situations. It must accommodate local knowledge, skills and culture.
- Community participation throughout the project cycle was vital.
- Decentralised, participatory decision-making and the empowerment of local communities increased the quality of development assistance as well as the chances of sustainability.
- Impact must be monitored at the household level. Only by understanding the processes by which households moved from illicit to licit livelihoods could policy development become evidence-based and accountable.
- Political commitment could not be ad hoc. It implied long-term commitment of financial resources to human development, reasonable drug control laws, respect for human rights and a coordinated inclusion of illicit crop reduction (law enforcement and alternative development) in national and regional planning.
- Alternative development projects led by security and other non-development concerns were typically not sustainable—and might result in the spread or return of illicit crops or in the materialization of other adverse conditions, including less security.
- As growers of illicit crops agreed to participate in alternative development projects, they needed to be allowed a transition period until alternative development activities (on- or off-

farm) proved to be suitable to their agro-ecological environment and local knowledge and started generating income that would contribute to improving the quality of their lives.

- Alternative development requires an appropriate policy/legal framework, one that allows growers of illicit crops to be treated first as candidates for development rather than as criminals.
- Alternative development is more effective and more sustainable as part of a wider development scheme whose goal is to improve the livelihoods of marginal rural populations.
- The eradication of illicit drug crops on peasant farms lacking viable alternatives undermines development.
- Law enforcement is vital to successful alternative development but, to be effective, it must use strategies to reduce demand at the farm gate rather than directly target peasant farmers. Such strategies include strengthened capacity of law enforcement to interdict illicit drugs and chemical precursors used for the illicit manufacture of drugs.

4. Country cases

Colombia

Ojeda, S., 2011, 'Alternative Development from the Perspective of Colombian Farmers', Drug Policy Briefing No. 36, Transnational Institute
<http://idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/brief36.pdf>

This briefing provides local perspectives on two alternative development programmes that were implemented between 2003-2010: the Forest Warden Families Programme and the Productive Projects Programme. The goals of these programmes were to: 'consolidate the eradication of illicit crops, offer alternative stable income to communities, generate state legitimacy and strengthen social capital through the participation of society'.

- The Forest Warden Families Programme was targeted at families located in areas of illicit plantations or those that were at risk of becoming involved. Government assistance was conditioned on 'prior eradication, not sowing or re-sowing illicit crops, and the implementation of alternative production of legal crops and/or environmental projects aimed at the sustainable management of forests'
- The Productive Projects Programme (PPP) worked with farmer organisations within the agricultural sector with the objective of establishing a local economic base, which could then provide stable and legal sources of work and income through the sustainable use of natural resources.

Key benefits and weaknesses of the programmes specified by the farmers include:

- **The relationship of the farmer with the state:** these programmes recognised farmers as citizens with rights, rather than as criminals. It entitled them to training and economic resources. Data indicates, however, that follow-up contact with the state was weak and many farmers did not receive any training. In addition, the provision of public and social services was also weak.
- **Reduction of conflict:** the general opinion of farmers is these programmes resulted in the reduction of violence generated by the trade of coca and poppy crops. This allowed farmers to live in a safer environment. However, farmers situated in areas where armed groups remained present continued to face problems.

- **Re-establishing social networks:** the training courses provided as part of the programmes encouraged community work. This contributed to the re-establishment of farmers' social networks. Over time, more formal organisations aimed at the improvement of the community environment were developed by the communities themselves.
- **Meeting subsistence needs:** money given from the Forest Wardens programme was important for the subsistence of families that eradicated their illicit crops. The risk remained, however, that families would later return to the production of crops for illicit use. The limitation of the PPP is that the majority of farmers do not have land ownership; as such, there were concerns that supporting productive projects would benefit other people. Another weakness of the PPP was insufficient community participation.
- **Environmental issues:** the programmes contributed to the re-establishment or maintenance of traditional care of the environment, including the use of good farming practices. This relationship that farmers already have with the environment was not sufficiently taken into consideration, however, and again the projects failed to promote effective community participation.

The brief stresses that in order to ensure eradication of crops intended for illicit use, alternative development programmes need to first address the reasons why farmers began cultivating them in the first place and to offer solutions to the problems.

Godnick, W. and Klein, D., 2009, 'The Challenges of Supporting "Alternative" Economic Opportunities for Peacebuilding – Perspectives from Colombia', International Alert, London
http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/LEO_Colombia.pdf

This report discusses international cooperation frameworks for economic development and peacebuilding in Colombia, focusing on 'alternative development' programmes aimed at reducing the attractiveness of illicit crop cultivation for economically vulnerable populations. Such programmes are considered important to security as: (i.) the drug trade has generated financial resources for illegal armed groups to maintain military power; and (ii.) the lack of economic opportunity, in rural Colombia, in particular, makes joining armed groups or cultivating illicit crops key economic opportunities for young people. Alternative development programmes in Colombia include:

- **Productive Project Programmes:** productive project of livelihood programmes are implemented in line with the government's policies for rural development and involve the production of various agricultural products (see Ojeda 2011 for more information). It is important, however, to ensure that the promotion of agro-export in some cases do not reinforce long-term conflict dynamics, nor put food security at risk.
- **Forest Ranger Families Programme:** this programme aims to incorporate rural villagers, Afro-Colombians and indigenous families into voluntary and manual eradication of illicit crops through the provision of subsidies for their labour (see Ojeda 2011 for more information).
- **Peace and Development Programmes (PDPs) and Peace Laboratories:** both share traditional alternative development programmes' general goals of reducing poverty and increasing economic development opportunities that can contribute to sustainable peace. They differ from traditional programmes, however, in that: they are multidimensional and incorporate social, cultural and environmental factors in addition to economic factors; they respond to bottom-up proposals from citizens; they promote long-term solutions to economic development and income generation; they integrate concepts of human rights, citizen participation and sustainable development

- Reintegration programmes aimed at ex-combatants: these programmes comprise grants for individual livelihood projects and for collective associative projects; private-sector employment; and educational scholarships. The participation of the private sector has been weak, however; there has been little enthusiasm to provide direct employment opportunities to ex-combatants. A broader framework for income generation is required that includes medium and large national and multinational enterprises as well as the public sector.

The paper finds that there is to date little evaluation of these initiatives. While the PDPs and Peace Laboratories are designed to provide different options to standard alternative development programmes, there is little evidence of the depth, breadth and sustainability of the programmes despite some positive evidence observed at the level of individuals and households.

Afghanistan

Office of Inspector General, 2010, 'Audit of USAID/Afghanistan's Alternative Development Programme Expansion, South West', Audit Report No. 5-306-10-011-P, 29 July, Manila, Philippines

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACS013.pdf

USAID/Afghanistan launched the 2-year Alternative Development Programme Expansion, South West programme in 2008. The objective was to counteract illicit poppy cultivation by providing alternative development programmes, improved economic opportunities, and diverse regional economic growth. This report finds that the programme has made progress in achieving this objective. Declines in poppy production have been attributed to such factors as anti-poppy messages from provincial governors, increased interdiction activities, an overproduction of poppy in prior years that suppressed market prices, and provision of alternative economic opportunities in targeted districts within each province. Such opportunities comprised cash-for work projects, high-value agricultural activities, and business development activities. The report stresses that the poppy reduction resulted from all the pillars of the U.S. Government counter-narcotics strategy working in unison; and that no single intervention could have been successful on its own. The report cautions that in order for reductions in poppy cultivation to be sustainable, a follow-on alternative development programme must be implemented. In the absence of continued economic gains to local communities, farmers may return to poppy cultivation.

Ghana

Banchirigah, S. M., 2008, 'Challenges with Eradicating Illegal Mining in Ghana: A Perspective from the Grassroots', Resources Policy, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 29-38

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301420707000724>

This paper discusses the experience of illegal artisanal mining activities in Ghana and why formalisation, alternative livelihood projects and military intervention to tackle illegal mining have been ineffective. It finds that interventions have failed due in large part to a poor understanding of target artisanal and small-scale mining populations that have resulted in the design and implementation of inappropriate technologies and support services. The paper argues that countering illegal mining requires an understanding of why miners are illegal in the first place.

In addition, the government and large-scale mining companies have often made the flawed assumption that all individuals will pursue alternative income-earning activities if they are available.

Projects have sought to develop such activities, including vegetable farming, snail cultivation and grass-cutter rearing, alongside training in account-keeping, conflict management, resource management, and teacher training. Research has found that often more vulnerable people, including many women, children and the elderly abandon arduous mining activities given the option of farming or engaging in other trades. It finds that it is unrealistic, however, to assume that men who have been mining for most of their adult lives will abandon their activities in favour of such alternative activities.

5. DDR resources

Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations: A Contribution to the New Horizon Discussion on Challenges and Opportunities for UN Peacekeeping, 2010, Report commissioned by United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

http://unddr.org/docs/2GDDR_ENG_WITH_COVER.pdf

The report is primarily based primarily on four field studies (Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and Liberia) but also draws from experiences of other DDR settings. There is broad acknowledgement in all of the countries examined that political elites are involved in drug production and trade or natural resource exploitation, which undermines state legitimacy. In addition, natural resource exploitation continues to fund violence, in the case of Afghanistan, and illegal activities, in the cases of Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and Liberia, which undermines statebuilding. Each of the four countries also suffers from economic insecurity, which impacts on the sustainability of DDR and wider stabilisation efforts.

The report briefly discusses emergency employment programmes and reinsertion programmes adopted as part of post-conflict stabilisation measures. Emergency employment programmes are adopted in post-conflict settings to provide economic incentives as an alternative to violence. They often involve labour-intensive activities, such as rehabilitation of infrastructure, as well as smallholder agriculture and manufacturing schemes. The report recommends that the government should be involved in such projects in order to facilitate confidence building and state legitimacy; and that such schemes should be linked with long-term employment creation, labour market demands and development goals. Such linkages, however, are not often made.

Reinsertion programmes comprise assistance to ex-combatants during demobilisation but prior to longer-term processes of reintegration. In some cases (Côte d'Ivoire), it has extended beyond transitional safety allowances for basic needs to include micro-finance, small and medium enterprise development, vocational training linked with labour market demands, and job placement where possible. This is seen as an example of integrating early economic interventions with long-term goals. Strategies must be based on labour market realities.

Derks, M. Rouw, H. and Briscoe, I., 2011, A Community Dilemma: DDR and the Changing Face of Violence in Colombia', Peace Security Development Network

http://www.nbiz.nl/publications/2011/20110700_briscoe_derks_colombia.pdf

This report highlights some of the challenges faced in Colombia's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme. In terms of reintegration, it finds that one of the key weaknesses was the assumption that offering alternative livelihoods to ex-combatants would ensure their full return to civilian life. Instead, the results were disappointing and ex-combatants failed to generate a stable income. This was due in part to the design of the individual reintegration programme, which provided start-up capital to every ex-combatant without regard to their business skills, entrepreneurial talent or

the existence of a viable business plan. This was also due in part to insufficient demand by private sector employers. Although the programmes provided ex-combatants with professional training, there has often been limited interest by the private sector in employing ex-combatants. Some companies expressed fears over safety and possible retaliation by armed groups.

There is some evidence of success, however, in cases where those implementing reintegration schemes worked with the private sector and designed the scheme based on the demands of employers and the dynamics of the market. The footwear industry was identified as a likely source of employment, for example, due to its shortage of key skills and to growing demand. Training was thus established in this area and a number of ex-combatants found permanent employment in this industry. The report thus stresses the importance of combining context analysis with viable alternatives to violence. It also recommends the deployment of powerful publicity machines to remove the stigma associated with ex-combatants.

Scott, Z., 2010, 'Reintegration Best Practice and Guidance', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre

<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/HD660.pdf>

There is a wealth of information available on best practice in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes. This Helpdesk Research Report focuses on the most recent literature (mainly post-2004) from authoritative sources that focus on reintegration processes and operations.

Unfortunately, DDR programmes have often been judged as largely unsuccessful and several of the resources below emphasise that they are not suitable for every context. Lessons learned in relation to reintegration cited across the literature include:

- Reintegration is a long process and programmes must be part of a wider security sector reform strategy
- Reintegration should be nationally led and take a participatory approach, including various stakeholders.
- Planning for reintegration should begin early.
- Clear selection criteria should be established from the outset.
- Reintegration programmes should have a clear end date and move quickly into broader development programmes that incorporate the needs of ex-combatants.
- Programmes should not solely benefit ex-combatants to reduce the likelihood of resentment in the community.
- Programmes should be tailored to the local context.
- Reintegration is most likely to be successful if carried out in a context of strong political will and local community level support.
- Reintegration programmes must be well resourced.
- Vocational training has been shown to have limited success. Education and training should always be matched to the market dynamics of the community to increase chances of long-term employment. Apprenticeships have shown promise.
- Ex-combatants should not be treated as a homogenous group. In particular, the needs of women and children must be taken into account.

Haider, H., 2009, 'Reintegration in Aceh/Post-Conflict Environments', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre

Reintegration in education and livelihood services in Aceh has centred upon alternative education in the form of vocational skills training and small business development. Information Counselling and Referral Services (ICRS) have been established to provide information to former combatants on accessing health services, small business opportunities, training courses and searching for job opportunities. These have been very useful as health referrals have contributed not only medical care but also to rebuilding trust in government services. The training and small business programmes established in Aceh are essential services, given the difficulties that former combatants have in accessing jobs and adopting civilian livelihoods. These have been critiqued, however, for paying insufficient attention to apprenticeships, mentoring and on-the-job training (often deemed more effective than standard vocational training) and to the development of 'life-skills' (e.g. communication, conflict mediation, civic education). In addition, training programmes must match the education levels of former combatants, who may have greater difficulties with reading and writing. In some cases, training modules in Aceh were considered too advanced and technical. Training programmes have also suffered from a failure to link them to longer term support mechanisms (e.g. local training institutes) or to base them on thorough market analysis. In the absence of a proper market assessment - which establishes employer needs and market demand - as well as efforts to foster job creation and access to capital, the participants of training programmes are often frustrated by the lack of outlets for their newly learned skills.

In many ways, the issues identified in Aceh are similar to those in other post-conflict environments. The general literature on reintegration elaborates on these and provides additional recommendations:

- Reintegration programmes must be designed holistically, recognising the inter-relationship of social, economic and psycho-social aspects. For example, providing training and employment facilitates not only an income, but can also foster a sense of pride and purpose among former combatants and reconfigure their role and identity in a civilian setting.
- It is important to assess and draw on the existing skills of former combatants. Skills such as infrastructure construction, loyalty, discipline and teamwork are often common among them and can be transferred into a civilian role.
- Skills training must also include knowledge of market structures, capital structures and accounting information. In addition, teaching life skills and assisting in acculturation to civilian life and addressing psycho-social needs should also form part of training programmes.
- Government and community consultation in the planning and implementation of donor programmes is essential. This leads to more targeted programmes and greater community ownership.
- It is useful to test-pilot training programmes before they are implemented on a larger scale in order to ensure that they are well designed and implemented.

About helpdesk research reports: Helpdesk reports are based on two days of desk-based research. They are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues; and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts are contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged.