

The Strategic Studies Series

One of UNDCP's principal objectives is to strengthen international action against illicit drug production. In Afghanistan, its principal objective is to reduce and eventually eliminate existing and potential sources of opium cultivation. It is recognised that in order to achieve this there is a need to further the understanding of the diversity of conditions and priorities that different socio-economic and spatial groups take into account when making decisions about their involvement in opium poppy cultivation.

The Strategic Study Series is one of the tools by which UNDCP documents the process of lesson learning within the Afghanistan Programme. Studies in this series focus on issues that are considered to be of strategic importance to improving the design of current and future alternative development initiatives in Afghanistan. Information collection for these studies is undertaken by the UNDCP Drug Control Monitoring System (AFG/C27) in close coordination with the ongoing presence and project activities of UNDCP's Poppy Crop Reduction project (AFG/C28). Recognising the inherent problems associated with undertaking research into the drugs issue in Afghanistan, emphasis is given to verifying findings through systematic information-gathering techniques and methodological pluralism. As such, the Studies are undertaken in an iterative manner, seeking to consolidate preliminary findings with further fieldwork. It is envisaged that this approach will allow panel or longitudinal studies to be undertaken which assess both the changes in opium poppy cultivation and lives and livelihoods amongst different socio-economic, gender and spatial groups over the lifetime of the Afghanistan programme.

The objectives of the overall study series are to: (i) contextualise the illicit drugs situation in South West Asia for the donor community, addressing issues of interest to their development agendas, including poverty, health, gender and the environment, and (ii) for UNDCP to identify "best practice" in the design and implementation of alternative development, law enforcement and demand reduction initiatives.

Strategic Studies include:

- C *An Analysis of the Process of Expansion of Opium Poppy Cultivation to New Districts in Afghanistan.(3 studies)*
- C *The Dynamics of the Farmgate Opium Trade and the Coping Strategies of Opium Traders.*
- C *The Role of Opium as a Source of Informal Credit.*
- C *The Role of Opium as a Livelihood Strategy for Returnees.*
- C *Access to Labour: The Role of Opium in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters Working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.*
- C *The Role of Women in Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan and the Consequences Arising from its Replacement for Women's Economic and Social Standing*
- C *The Role of Opium in the Coping Strategies of Returning Refugees*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The 2000 Annual Opium Poppy Survey recorded an overall decrease in the area of opium poppy under cultivation to an estimated 82,172 hectares. This represents a reduction of just under 10% compared with 90,983 hectares in 1999. Agricultural production in Afghanistan, including opium, has been adversely affected by severe drought, deepening through 1999 and persisting into 2000. UNDCP estimates that as a result, opium production dropped by 29% from 4,581 tonnes in 1999 to 3,276 tonnes in 2000.

The amount of opium poppy cultivation will, of course, fluctuate from year to year according to socio-economic, environmental and political conditions. Two key factors gave cause to expect substantially reduced poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in the 1999/2000 season: the drought, and opium stocks remaining from the bumper 1999 poppy crop. But despite the 10% reduction in area cultivated in 2000, the numbers of poppy growing villages and districts again increased. 21 additional districts were found to be cultivating opium poppy for the first time in 2000, 15 of them in provinces on the northern borders.¹ Added to new cultivation verified in 1998 and 1999, this represents an increase of 59% in the number of poppy growing districts identified in Afghanistan over the past three years.

Although opium poppy cultivation still remains remarkably concentrated in a few provinces, particularly Helmand and Nangarhar, this rate of spread to new districts is alarming. Opium poppy cultivation in those districts cultivating opium poppy for the first time in 1998, such as Qarghai and Mehtarlam, had increased by 1999 from relatively small plots of land cultivated by a limited number of households in just a few villages within the district, to incidences of more large scale opium poppy cultivation in each village across the district. Almost all of the districts in which poppy was cultivated for the first time in 1999, for example Qala-e-Zal, Asadabad, and Sarobi, markedly increased the areas cultivated in 2000.

Fieldwork was initiated in three districts in 1998, to explore the socio-economic and human processes behind the expansion of opium poppy cultivation to new districts. Further work in 1999 investigated a wider geographical area, covering 13 districts and 4 provinces where new cultivation had been measured in the 1999 Annual Opium Poppy Survey. Year 2000 fieldwork presented the opportunity to consolidate the exercise by revisiting 8 districts where opium poppy cultivation was first recorded in 1998 or 1999, and to provide a synthesis in this report of the findings of the three phases of fieldwork on the expansion of opium poppy cultivation.

It is anticipated that by furthering our understanding of the process by which households enter into drug crop cultivation it will be possible to better target alternative development initiatives in order to satisfy both conventional development and drug control objectives. Moreover, it is envisaged that by identifying the various socio-economic, environmental, and political factors that render a

¹ Source: *Annual Opium Poppy Survey 2000*. UNDCP, Islamabad

particular area or district vulnerable to opium poppy cultivation it may be possible to develop early warning mechanisms² that allow preventive interventions to be implemented prior to drug crop cultivation becoming consolidated within the socio-economy of new areas of cultivation.

Methodology

This is the third and final report exploring the motivations and factors that influence the expansion of opium poppy into new districts in Afghanistan. As indicated in the terms of reference, Annex A, these expansion studies focus at the micro-level on farmers' motivations for opium poppy cultivation. The first report, completed in June 1998, covered only three districts where opium poppy had been reported for the first time in 1998: Qarghai and Mehtarlam in Laghman province, and Azro district in Logar province³.

In 1999, a second phase broadened the investigation of expansion to a wider geographic area, consisting of 165 interviews in 13 districts⁴. Fieldwork was undertaken in the district of Sarobi in Kabul province, Tagab district in Kapisa, the districts of Asadabad, Sheegal and Marawara in Kunar province, and Alingar and Alishing in Laghman Province. In the southern region fieldwork was undertaken in the district of Shindand in Farah province and Shar-e-Safa in Zabol province. Confirmation of small scale opium poppy cultivation in Shindand district, and further insight into the process of expansion into this new area was also obtained during the fieldwork for *Strategic Study 4: Access to Labour*.⁵ Follow-up fieldwork was also carried out in the three 1998 expansion study districts.

This final study in 2000 included 99 interviews in 8 districts. Fieldwork covered the northern districts of Kalafgan in Takhar province, and Qala-e-Zal in Kunduz. Districts covered in the eastern zone adjacent to the core poppy growing districts of Nangarhar, were Sarobi in Kabul province, Azro district in Logar, and Tagab district in Kapisa province. Arghandab, Dai Chopan and Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa districts were covered in the southern province of Zabol. All had been identified as new districts in either the 1998 or 1999 Annual Opium Poppy Surveys. The intention was to complement the findings of the two earlier studies, particularly in further developing an understanding of the motivations behind farmers' decisions to cultivate poppy, to illustrate trends in cultivation in the years after poppy is first adopted, and to consolidate the findings of the three phases of fieldwork into a final report.

Coverage in each year was constrained by the sensitivity of the subject and by logistical and security considerations, especially in the north of the country. For example, Takhar province is currently a

² UNDCP has experimented with early warning surveys in 1999/2000

³ See *Strategic Study 1 (1998). An Analysis of the Process of Expansion of Opium Poppy Cultivation to New Districts in Afghanistan*. UNDCP, Islamabad

⁴ See *Strategic Study 2 (1999). An analysis of the process of expansion of opium poppy cultivation to new districts in Afghanistan*. UNDCP, Islamabad

⁵ See *Strategic Study 4 (1999). Access to Labour: The Role of Opium in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters Working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan*. UNDCP, Islamabad.

very active war zone as the Taliban advance north against the forces of the Northern Alliance, and several subject districts of this study figure in the media war coverage. In all three studies, emphasis was given to conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews. To verify findings and distinguish between generic patterns and localised issues, in-depth interviews were conducted over a wide geographical area within each of the districts.

Findings

Fieldwork in the year 2000 has supported and confirmed the findings reported in Study 5, 1999, which are set out below with few additions and modifications. It was further underlined that households' motivations for resorting to opium poppy cultivation are complex and vary markedly across different socioeconomic groups. New findings in 2000 related mainly to the impact of the drought on poppy cultivation and expansion, and to the response of the rural communities to the edicts of the Taliban regarding opium poppy eradication. Of particular interest was the finding of substantial increases in poppy cultivation in 2000 in districts where poppy had first been recorded in 1998, despite the impact of the drought.

- ! **The expansion of opium poppy cultivation to new districts is a consequence of a development crisis in Afghanistan.** The absence of non-farm income opportunities has led to an increasing reliance on agriculture as the only source of livelihood for the great majority of households. However, the agricultural sector is structurally weak, with poor marketing, small landholdings, an absence of formal credit facilities and a shortage of irrigation. Environmental degradation, low quality inputs and poor agronomic practices have led to extremely low production, resulting in annual food deficits of between two and seven months in many areas. Moreover, twenty years of war has led to extensive damage to the nation's physical and administrative infrastructure, and a loss in social, legal and economic services and employment opportunities. The demise of state and local government has been accompanied by increasing economic and political uncertainty. Within this highly volatile socio-economic, political and legal environment, opium poppy cultivation represents a relatively low risk option for an increasing number of households across Afghanistan.
- ! **In its initial year of cultivation in a district, opium poppy tends to be grown on relatively small plots of land by a small number of households in a limited number of villages.** However, the process of expansion in the second and third years can be alarming, with increasing numbers of households emulating their neighbours by cultivating opium across an increasing number of villages within the district. Widespread drought in 1999/2000 appears to have countered the process of expansion to new villages in several districts, but this is almost certainly a temporary setback. It is anticipated that as opium poppy becomes an acceptable source of livelihood amongst a growing proportion of the population in any district, the scale and nature of the interventions required to reduce opium cultivation will become more complex, costly and long term.
- ! **There is uncertainty regarding the final profitability of the crop amongst farmers cultivating it for the first time. However experienced sharecroppers and longer term growers are clearly convinced that opium is several times more lucrative than other cash crops.** The labour intensive nature of the crop is recognised by farmers, and for this

reason they seek to cultivate opium poppy at a level that is commensurate with the supply of household labour or reciprocal labour arrangements. But they rarely consciously assign an economic cost to their own or family labour associated with opium poppy cultivation. As a result, in new districts the opium price, rather than production cost, is the focus, and growers perceive opium to be far more profitable than other crops. The small size of landholdings is a constraint on the amount of poppy cultivated, as is the need to allocate land to food and fodder crops. Hired labour is seldom used in this initial year unless the necessary experience of lancing is not available within the household. A majority of farmers who first grew opium poppy in 1998 or 1999, said that their prime reason for doing so was the price advantage of opium over other crops. Poppy seldom displaces any wheat in the initial years, but farmers did report disadvantages of poppy cultivation, including less time to spend on social relationships, or on care of livestock, and less fodder for their animals. By contrast, in established poppy growing areas, the trend has been for opium poppy to replace an increasing proportion of irrigated wheat as a winter crop.⁶ Also, high seasonal labour requirements in established areas mean that opium production there is highly sensitive to the cost of labour.⁷

! **The breakdown in formal and informal governance in Afghanistan has resulted in a weakening of social and legal constraints on the cultivation of opium poppy.** Whilst many of those interviewed believe that opium poppy cultivation is actually forbidden, or *haram*, under Islam, a more correct interpretation is that the taking of opium, for other than medicinal purposes, is haram. Indeed, this perception may help prevent some farmers from cultivating it. Although economic considerations were often given priority over religious customs, the acceptance of the agricultural tax, known as *ushr*, by *mullahs* and the local authorities, is interpreted by some farmers as implicit support for the cultivation of opium poppy. Quite clearly the issue of *ushr* needs resolution, but declaring opium production to be free of tax might give farmers the wrong message and an incentive to grow more. Within this environment, even those households who might not have cultivated opium poppy, given their relatively privileged socio-economic position, might increasingly resort to opium poppy cultivation as an acceptable means of livelihood.

! **Opium poppy cultivation would appear to represent a viable coping strategy for a number of refugees on their return to Afghanistan.** In the short term, annual crops such as opium poppy can prove to be an attractive option for households seeking to meet the immediate financial costs of returning to their land, such as the building of homes and investing in productive assets. Moreover, opium poppy cultivation can often represent the only source of credit available given the absence of formal credit systems in Afghanistan. Opium poppy cultivation does not represent the only coping strategy for refugees returning to Afghanistan, but there is a need to develop a greater understanding of the particular socio-economic, environmental and political factors that may influence returnees in their decision to cultivate opium poppy on their return to Afghanistan so that appropriate preventive action

⁶ *Helmand Initiative Socio-economic Survey, April 2000.* ACBAR/UNHCS, Peshawar

⁷ See *Strategic Study 4: The Role of Opium in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters Working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.* UNDCP, Islamabad

can be taken. Recent fieldwork for Study 8 does indicate that refugees are more likely to take up opium poppy cultivation if it is prevalent in the area that they return to.

- ! **The interdependent nature of labour markets in Afghanistan has provided a significant number of households in non-opium poppy producing districts with the necessary skills and knowledge required to cultivate opium poppy.** The majority of those interviewed in 1999 had acquired this knowledge whilst working as itinerant opium poppy harvesters in other districts. A number of first time growers indicated in 2000 that although they had known how to cultivate opium poppy for years, they had not been forced to do so until now. In many cases, the varying climatic conditions within regions in Afghanistan has allowed households to introduce opium poppy onto their own land whilst maintaining their off-farm income employment as itinerant opium poppy harvesters in neighbouring districts. It seems clear that the prolonged complex emergency in Afghanistan has created the conditions where households increasingly see at least some opium poppy cultivation as a viable component of a complex coping strategy.
- ! **Increasing population pressure, small landholdings, and insufficient non-farm income opportunities have prompted some households to migrate to other districts in search of cultivable land and the opportunity to cultivate opium poppy.** Many of those interviewed who were undertaking this livelihood strategy obtained land in areas where there was a common tribal bond. Some, such as those from Khogiani, considered themselves as ‘professional’ opium poppy cultivators, and given their experience and knowledge, saw few other options available to them as a source of livelihood. Sharecroppers working in Sarobi district in Kabul had been cultivating poppy for up to 10 years, and would continue to do so elsewhere if not in Sarobi. By illustration, only 20% of the hired labour in Helmand province, which produces the majority of the opium in Afghanistan, originates within the province. The other 80% are potential carriers of expertise in poppy cultivation back to their own districts.
- ! **The search for off-farm income opportunities in opium cultivating areas and sources of opium for trading purposes would appear to operate internationally as well as interregionally.** The proximity of Kunar province in Afghanistan and Bajaur in Pakistan, combined with the porous border and common ethnic links, facilitates a degree of interdependence in opium poppy cultivation and trade between the two areas. Respondents in Kunar province reported in 1999 that they had worked as itinerant labourers on opium poppy during their time as refugees in Bajaur. Upon returning to their own land they had begun to cultivate opium with the assistance of itinerant harvesters from Bajaur. Moreover, the varying climatic conditions allowed itinerant labourers from Bajaur and Kunar to cross the border and complete the opium poppy harvest in both areas. Traders from Bajaur were also reported to be operating in Kunar in 1999, offering advance payments on opium prior to the harvest, as well as purchasing the crop after the harvest was complete.
- ! **The view that households begin to cultivate opium poppy to attract development assistance does not fully reflect the multi-functional role that opium poppy plays in complex livelihood strategies in Afghanistan.** Households consider a number of different socio-economic, environmental and political variables before opting to cultivate opium poppy, including access to land and water; household credit needs; the availability of

household labour, including women and children; access to reciprocal and low cost labour arrangements; the productive status of land; the cost of hired labour; the security of potential markets; and the social and legal costs associated with undertaking illegal and/or socially unacceptable activities. These variables are given different priorities by different socio-economic, spatial and gender groups. Whilst households would undoubtedly accept development assistance if it were provided to them solely on the basis of their decision to cultivate opium, this is not the same as to suggest that households begin to cultivate opium poppy to attract development assistance.

! The widespread drought affecting agriculture across much of Afghanistan in 1999 and 2000 has constrained the cultivation of opium poppy, its expansion to new villages and districts, and especially the opium yield. 30% of new poppy growers interviewed in 2000 indicated that they would not cultivate poppy again next year, in most cases because of poor returns. However 50% said that they would, and although in many districts numbers of poppy growing villages decreased, or did not increase, in 2000, total poppy area for the districts increased. Only 30% of districts overall showed a reduction in numbers of poppy cultivating villages, and despite the drought, 21 new poppy growing districts were identified. In districts where numbers of poppy growing villages did decline, a pattern emerges of established clusters of poppy growing villages, or those with better access to irrigation growing much more poppy, while others are put out of business by the drought. This would indicate a consolidation of expansion in a core of villages where cultivation increased in spite of the drought, as well as the allocation of scarce irrigation water from other crops to poppy. An alarming potential remains therefore for increasing expansion of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, especially when weather conditions are more favourable. FAO sources indicate⁸ that opium poppy now occupies at least 30% of irrigated land in Afghanistan, which in principle could otherwise be allocated to wheat. However, the 2000 Annual Opium Poppy Survey, and the Study 7 fieldwork, indicate that in drought conditions, farmers will not choose to grow a greater proportion of wheat compared to poppy. Opium poppy is the preferred crop in times of adversity.

! The published 1999 edict requiring one third reduction in opium poppy cultivation, and associated destruction of poppy fields and processing laboratories by the Taliban, appear to have had little impact on the 1999/2000 poppy crop. Reaction to the total ban announced in July 2000 has been mixed. Reductions in cultivation or in numbers of poppy growing villages in 1999/2000 can more easily be attributed to the drought. There is no correlation between districts where eradication is reported to have been carried out, and net reductions in area cultivated. Most respondents in 2000 quite clearly intended to continue cultivation of poppy although they were indeed aware of the first, or both edicts. The main justifications given were that there had been no action to enforce the ban in their particular area, and that there was no significant eradication in the core provinces of Helmand and Nangarhar. Also in both 1999 and 2000, farmers raised the issue of collection of ushr on the opium crop by the Taliban as cause to doubt their commitment. It would appear that even if the Taliban had the political capital and administrative capacity to do so, more systematic

⁸ UNDP/FAO Field Document 1, AG:DP/AFG/96/004: *Food Security through Sustainable Crop Production in Afghanistan*. November 1999.

and widespread eradication of opium poppy might face considerable resistance, and would require complementary development assistance. A proposal for such an approach, the Helmand Interagency Integrated Development Programme, has been prepared by UNDCP with the multi-agency Helmand Planning Group in early 2000.⁹

Conclusion

The protracted drought in Afghanistan from 1999-2000 has constrained the expansion of poppy cultivation in some provinces, but this impact is almost certainly temporary, because the underlying socioeconomic environment continues to deteriorate. The expansion of opium poppy cultivation to new districts is a consequence of a continuing development crisis in Afghanistan. The absence of non-farm income opportunities has led to an increasing reliance on agriculture as the only source of livelihood for the great majority of households. However, the agricultural sector is structurally weak, with poor marketing, small landholdings, an absence of formal credit facilities and a shortage of irrigation. Environmental degradation, low quality inputs and poor agronomic practices have resulted in extremely low production, resulting in annual food deficits of between two and seven months in many areas. Opium production fills a seasonal gap in the agriculture calendar, repays debt, and provides ready cash and credit. Effectively, opium poppy cultivation has become the main source of rural employment¹⁰. Moreover, twenty years of war has led to extensive damage to the nation's physical and administrative infrastructure with a concomitant loss in social, legal and economic services and employment opportunities. Continuing internal warfare, and the demise of state and local government, have been accompanied by increasing economic and political uncertainty. Within this highly volatile socio-economic, political and legal environment, opium poppy cultivation will continue to present a low risk strategy for an increasing number of households across Afghanistan.

Recommendations

- ! Wider economic growth, as well as social and political stability in Afghanistan, are essential preconditions for eliminating opium poppy cultivation and illicit trading on a sustainable basis. The sustainable elimination of opium poppy cultivation will require an 'enabling environment' to establish the institutions required for formal governance and civil society, as well as promote alternative income opportunities: effectively, the reconstruction of the state. A cessation of hostilities in the country and a return to regional peace and stability is therefore fundamental to achieving sustainable opium poppy elimination in Afghanistan.
- ! The expansion of opium poppy cultivation to new districts is a consequence of a development crisis in Afghanistan and as such can only be resolved by a more coordinated approach on behalf of the international development community. UNDCP, as the lead UN agency in drug control, should continue to maintain a credible and effective role in the integration of drugs as a cross cutting issue within the development assistance community in Afghanistan. Development agencies should capitalise upon the specialist knowledge and experience of UNDCP in drug producing areas as well as among problem drug users in

⁹ See UNDCP/Helmand Planning Group proposal for Helmand province (2000) Islamabad.

¹⁰ Helmand Initiative Socio-economic Survey. ACBAR/UNHCS. April 2000, Peshawar

Afghan communities.

- ! UNDCP should also continue to collaborate wherever possible with humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR and WFP working in Afghanistan, at both operational and strategic levels. For instance it is important to maintain a profile in focused multi-agency bodies such as the Drought Task Force, and be in place to monitor and possibly influence the short term responses of farmers and displaced populations to drought or other shocks, which may be, to resort to or increase opium poppy cultivation.
- ! Given the increasing fragmentation of landholdings in rural Afghanistan and growing demographic pressures, the development community in Afghanistan needs to give priority to developing labour intensive methods of implementation that provide off-farm and non-farm income opportunities. For instance, reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, including bridge building, canal cleaning and road repairs, should seek to maximise labour inputs and minimise the use of capital.
- ! Where possible labour intensive activities should be conducted over an extended period, prior to, during, and after, the opium harvest each year, so as to provide alternative sources of income for itinerant harvesters. Moreover, a coordinated and focused approach by the development community in Afghanistan has the potential to create local labour shortages and raise the labour costs of opium cultivation. This would possibly serve to change households' expectations of future hired labour costs, and combined with other well-targeted development interventions, serve to reduce opium poppy cultivation and its expansion to new districts in subsequent years.
- ! The timing of the opium harvest is one of several great advantages of the crop to farmers, as it fills a lean period in the agricultural calendar. Therefore the introduction of higher yielding varieties of wheat especially, but also of other crops to raise production and farm income, remains a valid approach to poppy crop reduction. This is only, however, provided that crop substitution is recognised as one element of a wider strategy which includes a clear and credible commitment by the authorities to opium poppy elimination. At the same time it should be recognised that the success of the agricultural extension approach is severely constrained, except at subsistence level, by the absence of well organised and functional markets for produce other than opium.
- ! Most farmers in Afghanistan do not grow opium poppy, yet. There are opportunities to increase the social pressure against with opium poppy cultivation through drug awareness and prevention initiatives. Tribal and village elders, religious representatives, teachers and the local authorities should be targeted to act as change agents in this process. Greater consideration needs to be given to raising the awareness of local authorities and communities of the long term consequences of increasing opium poppy cultivation, given the growing evidence of increasing problem drug use amongst the Afghan population in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The issue of collection of opium by the local authorities as a part of the agriculture tax should be resolved so that the authorities do not benefit from opium poppy cultivation.
- ! Study 5 identified poppy cultivation as a livelihood strategy of many returning refugees. It

is envisaged that Study 8 will provide further analysis and recommendations regarding refugees and drug control. It would however seem clear that drug awareness and prevention activities should be targeted at refugees prior to their return to Afghanistan. These activities should be aimed at raising the social costs that households associate with opium poppy cultivation by stressing the increasing number of cases of problem drug use amongst the Afghan population both in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

- ! Areas of poppy cultivated in new districts is relatively small. Despite the longer term potential of the new poppy growing districts, in the short to medium term they are unlikely to add more than a few percent to the national total. There is a case for focusing on hard core areas. Indeed, five of the *districts* in Helmand province each grew more poppy in 1999/2000 than any other *province* except Nangarhar. In 1999/2000 UNDCP and the multi-agency Helmand Planning Group prepared a proposal for an integrated, interagency development programme for poppy crop reduction in Helmand. Elimination of poppy in just one of these districts, Nad-e-Ali, would result in a 10% reduction in the area of poppy in Afghanistan.
- ! The continued expansion of opium poppy cultivation and its consolidation in new centres should remain, however, of grave concern. Continued monitoring and improved understanding of expansion is recommended, if not through further fieldwork in the Strategic Studies Series, then through additional field-based objectives for the Annual Opium Poppy Survey. Detailed and up to date information about the motivations behind opium poppy expansion in Afghanistan, and its geographical distribution, should help maintain UNDCP's credibility in pursuing the drugs and development agenda with other agencies, as well as with the authorities in Afghanistan.
- ! Taliban edicts against opium poppy cultivation can add to the farmers' perceived risk in growing it. The Taliban authorities should be encouraged and supported in their efforts to counter the national and international threat posed by opium production in Afghanistan. This conclusion must be qualified by the question of whether the Taliban have sufficient political capital, or administrative capacity, to enforce the ban on a national scale. The Taliban edicts against opium poppy cultivation proclaiming that farmers should reduce the crop by one third in 1999/2000, increasing to a complete ban in 2000/2001 were a welcome development, but respondents in the 2000 Annual Opium Poppy Survey, and the expansion fieldwork, indicate that for the poppy bans to be taken more seriously by farmers, more robust and more widespread action should be taken by the authorities. Also, for a sustainable result, enforcement must be accompanied by development assistance targeting the underlying factors which motivate farmers to produce opium.

1. Objective

Fieldwork was undertaken in 1998, 1999 and 2000 in order to further UNDCP's understanding of the structural and motivational factors that lie behind the expansion of drug crop production to new areas of cultivation. Study 7 introduces the findings of the 2000 fieldwork, complements the analysis and provides a synthesis of the three phases of study.

2. Introduction

The 2000 Annual Opium Poppy Survey (AOPS) recorded an overall decrease in the amount of opium poppy under cultivation to an estimated 82,172 hectares. This represents a reduction of just under 10% compared with 1999, but remains a substantial 29% above the 1998 estimate of 63,674 hectares. Also, a net reduction in the area of poppy was recorded in only eight of the twenty two provinces surveyed. UNDCP estimates, however, that the total yield of opium dropped by 29% from 4,581 tonnes in 1999 to 3,276 tonnes in 2000.

Agricultural production in Afghanistan, including opium production, has been adversely affected by severe regional drought, deepening through 1999 and persisting into 2000. Farmers reported average crop damage due to drought of 37%.¹¹ Two key factors gave cause to expect substantially reduced poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in the 1999/2000 season. The threat to food security posed by the drought raised the prospect of a prudent increase in wheat cultivation at the expense of poppy. Secondly, farmers' remaining stocks of opium¹² from the bumper 1998/1999 crop were expected to erode the market incentive for opium production. Despite this, according to the AOPS, 123 districts in 22 provinces were cultivating opium poppy in 2000. This compares to 104 districts in 18 different provinces in which opium poppy cultivation was verified 1998/99, 77 districts in 15 provinces in 1998, and only 5 districts in eight provinces during the first year of the *Survey* in 1994. This represents an increase of 59% in the number of poppy growing districts identified in Afghanistan over the past three years. Reduced poppy cultivation was recorded in only eight out of twenty two provinces surveyed in 2000.

As in other source countries in South East and South Asia, as well as Latin America, new areas of drug crop cultivation in Afghanistan have tended to concentrate in those districts that are adjacent to areas where drug crops have been cultivated for a number of years. These new districts are not necessarily the most remote or the poorest, but their proximity to existing areas of drug crop cultivation means that there is often a high degree of socio-economic, ethnic and cultural interdependence between those districts that cultivate illicit drug crops and those districts that initially do not. In particular, the labour intensive nature of opium poppy cultivation has often led to a labour deficit in drug crop producing areas, particularly during the harvest period, that has been supplemented by an influx of itinerant harvesters from neighbouring areas. This employment in drug producing areas has provided a mobile population with experience of the agricultural practices,

¹¹ *Annual Opium Poppy Survey 2000*, UNDCP, Islamabad

¹² UNDCP experience suggests that as much as 60% of fresh opium is retained by farmers and sold later as dry opium. Dry opium weighs approximately 30% less than fresh.

environmental conditions and the trading relationships required for illicit drug crop cultivation.¹³

To explore the socio-economic and human processes behind the expansion of opium poppy cultivation to new districts in Afghanistan, fieldwork was initiated in 1998. Due to resource and time constraints, this initial fieldwork was limited to three districts in the eastern region. The fieldwork in these districts indicated that the interdependent nature of labour markets and commercial trade between neighbouring districts, combined with cross district ethnic and family links, had led to a high degree of exposure to opium poppy cultivation for those households residing in non-opium cultivating areas. Moreover, this initial fieldwork suggested that the expansion of opium poppy to new areas of cultivation was facilitated by itinerant harvesters working in core areas of opium poppy cultivation during periods of agricultural underemployment on their own land. These itinerant harvesters were subsequently found to be returning to their own districts to cultivate opium poppy on an experimental basis. In its initial year of cultivation, opium poppy tended to be undertaken by owner-cultivators.

Opium poppy cultivation in those districts cultivating opium poppy for the first time in 1998, such as Qarghai and Mehtarlam, had increased by 1999 from relatively small plots of land cultivated by a limited number of households in just a few villages within the district, to incidences of more large scale opium poppy cultivation in each village across the district. Almost all of the districts in which poppy was cultivated for the first time in 1999, for example Qala-e-Zal, Asadabad, and Sarobi, markedly increased the areas cultivated in 2000. A feature of 2000 however was that in many districts, due to the drought, numbers of poppy growing villages actually decreased even where total poppy cultivation increased in the district. Although opium poppy cultivation still remains remarkably concentrated in a few provinces, especially Helmand and Nangarhar, the rate of spread to new districts is alarming, given that less than 3% of cultivated land¹⁴ in Afghanistan is allocated to poppy. The area of opium poppy increased, or was newly recorded, in a total of 14 out of 22 provinces surveyed in 2000.

The second phase of fieldwork in 1999 set out to explore the process of expansion further, drawing on fieldwork across a wider geographic area. In 2000, a final phase revisited some districts such as Azro which had first been surveyed in 1998, as well as districts with new cultivation in the province of Zabul in the south. Although districts in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Takhar were included in the 2000 expansion fieldwork, other northern provinces could not be included for logistical and security reasons.

It is anticipated that by furthering our understanding of the process by which households enter into drug crop cultivation it will be possible to better target opium poppy crop reduction initiatives in order to satisfy both conventional development and drug control objectives. Moreover, it is envisaged that by identifying the various socio-economic, environmental, and political factors that render a particular area or district vulnerable to opium poppy cultivation it may be possible to develop ‘early warning mechanisms’ that allow preventive interventions to be implemented prior to

¹³ See *Strategic Study 4: Access to Labour: The Role of Opium Poppy in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters in Helmand Province, Afghanistan*. UNDCP: Islamabad.

¹⁴ See *FAO (1997) Afghanistan Agricultural Strategy*. FAO, Rome

drug crop cultivation becoming consolidated within the socio-economy of new areas of cultivation. Such mechanisms would require both a coordinated effort by the aid community working in Afghanistan, and a more robust and systematic approach on the part of the authorities. UNDCP has experimented with early warning surveys associated with the Annual Opium Poppy Survey in 2000.

3. Cropping Patterns and Landholdings

Cropping patterns

Wheat and barley were found to be the staple winter crops amongst all those interviewed in the north, east and central regions. As such, opium poppy tended to be one crop in a wider cropping system, a pattern recognised in 2000. Indeed, over the three successive studies, only one respondent was found to mono-crop opium poppy, highlighting the inadequacy of simple models that suggest drug crop cultivation is purely a function of economic rationalism. Fieldwork in 2000 revealed that the most common land allocation in all districts except Kalafgan, where landholdings were larger, was 50% to wheat and the remainder to fodder and vegetables. On average, farmers in Kalafgan allocated 75% of their land to wheat.



Cropping patterns: poppy and vegetables intercropped in Sarobi district, Kabul (March 2000)

All three phases of fieldwork revealed that farmers initiating opium poppy cultivation do so in small test plots which seldom replace wheat, at least in the initial years. Some crops, including opium poppy, are cultivated under orchards. The majority of respondents in the eastern region reported cultivating vegetables, including potato, onion, tomato and cucumber, as well as wheat, barley and opium poppy. For instance, of those interviewed in Laghman province in 1999, almost one quarter cultivated cucumber. Many reported large losses due to a poor market for onions in 2000. In Azro district in Logar, all those interviewed in 1999 also cultivated cannabis, due to its relative profitability and the secure nature of the market for the final crop. It was of concern to note that by 2000, almost all respondents in Azro had switched crops from cannabis into opium poppy, explaining that they had done this because the Taliban had banned cannabis. It is important to note however that poppy has not literally displaced the cannabis, which is a summer crop. Also the Taliban do appear to have the capacity, at least in one district, to eliminate an illicit crop.

As in the eastern region, in 1999 wheat and barley were grown by all those interviewed in the districts of Sarobi in Kabul province, and Tagab in the province of Kapisa. In both these districts, onions were also grown by a majority of respondents, many of whom inter-cropped onions with opium poppy. This practice was also witnessed amongst those households cultivating opium for the first time in Panjwai district in Qandahar province. It is notable that in 1998, this practice of inter-cropping onion with opium poppy was widely practiced in Qarghai, yet in 1999 very few cases were seen. In 2000,

onions remained an important crop in both Kabul and Kapisa, but farmers complained of a very poor market.

In Takhar province, in the north, it was reported by all those interviewed in 1999, that wheat and barley cultivation was supplemented by oil seed production from crops such as *Sharsham*, *Kunjid* and *Zaghar*. Most year 2000 respondents in Kalafghan also cultivated oilseed. In Kala-e-Zal in the neighbouring northern province of Kunduz, melon was an important cash crop which had suffered badly from drought in 2000.

In Shindand district in the province of Farah, in the west, wheat and barley had also been identified as the staple crops in 1999. Rapeseed, alfalfa and clover also featured amongst the responses of most of those interviewed. In Shar-e-Safa, in Zabul province, wheat was the mainstay of food security in the area, with barley, black cumin, clover, and onions also cultivated during the winter season.

The three districts in the southern province of Zabul visited in 2000, Arghandab, Dai Chopan and Jaldak, conformed, more or less, to the cropping pattern of 50% wheat, and 50% fodder and vegetables observed elsewhere. Pulses, peas, melon and maize were common. Where agroclimatic conditions allowed, maize was cultivated as a summer food crop which is largely consumed rather than sold. Where orchards were included the proportion of wheat cultivated dropped to one third. The most common percentage allocation of land to poppy in the 1998/1999 season was 25%.



Intercropped opium poppy and wheat: Khas Kunar district of Kunar province (May 2000)

Landholdings

Of those interviewed in 1999, 93% owned land whilst only 7% reported that they were landless. The landholdings of those interviewed were typically found to be small, ranging from 0.2 hectares to almost 1 hectare of irrigated land. Apart from Kalafgan, a similar landholding pattern was reported in 2000. Only five respondents, in Sarobi district of Kabul province, were sharecroppers. Of all the remaining landholdings except those in Kalafgan district, 74% were between 0.2 and 0.8 hectares, in agreement with the 1998 and 1999 fieldwork. In Kalafgan the average landholding of respondents in 1999 was as much as 2 hectares of rainfed land and 0.4 hectares of irrigated land, though year 2000 respondents averaged larger holdings of 5 hectares, with a range of 1.6 to 8 hectares. Respondents in Kalafgan were the exceptions in the expansion studies, due to their exploitation of rainfed land. By comparison with landholdings recorded in Helmand in 1999, where the poorest economic group of landholders in the largely rainfed northern districts averaged 1 hectare¹⁵, the landholdings recorded in the expansion studies were small. Most of these households would almost certainly require alternative sources of income, probably from seasonal employment elsewhere. Even in Helmand,

¹⁵ Helmand Initiative Socio-economic Survey. ACBAR/UNHCS. April 2000, Peshawar.

small landowners with up to a hectare of land in Musa Qala and Naw Zad, worked additional land as sharecroppers.

Opium poppy: small beginnings

One tenth of the 1999 respondents indicated that they began opium poppy cultivation in the 1997/98 season, whilst almost 90% began cultivating opium poppy for the first time in 1998/99. There were a number of farmers who reported experience of cultivating opium before the war in 1979, but they had only started to cultivate it again in their districts in the 1998/99 growing season. These respondents were mainly concentrated in Kunar, Sarobi, Tagab and Shar-e-Safa. All respondents in the 2000 exercise, except those in Kalafgan, reported that they had cultivated opium poppy for the first time in the 1999/2000 season. As noted above, poppy had been measured in these districts before 2000, but not in the villages selected for the Study.

“We already knew how to cultivate this opium poppy. My father grew it back before the war”. Farmer in Qala-e-Zal, Kunduz (2000).

In each district in which the fieldwork was conducted in 1999, opium poppy cultivation was generally limited to a small number of households. For instance, in Azro only two or three households in each village were found to cultivate opium poppy. As such, opium poppy cultivation was not yet considered part of the socio-economic fabric of village life but a new crop in which increasing numbers of households, in each village in which opium poppy was grown, were showing a keen interest. The largest number of households cultivating opium poppy in any one village in 1999 was found in Qarghai where up to ten households from Khogiani were leasing land from absentee landowners. Poppy cultivation more than doubled in Qarghai in 2000.

The tendency for opium poppy to be cultivated by only a few households in each village differs greatly from those areas where opium poppy has been cultivated for a number of years, such as in UNDCP’s target districts of Ghorak, Khakrez, Maiwand, and Shinwar, and in the “hard core” opium producing districts of Helmand province. In these districts opium poppy cultivation has become an acceptable part of livelihood strategies with the great majority of households growing at least a small amount of opium poppy. Indeed, of those interviewed for the 1998 Baseline Survey, 97% in Ghorak, 67% in Khakrez, 98% in Maiwand, and 98% in Shinwar were found to cultivate opium poppy.

In established districts, households typically dedicate more land to opium poppy. For instance, the average amount of land dedicated to opium poppy was one hectare in Ghorak, 0.6 hectares in Khakrez, and 1.6 hectares in both Maiwand and Shinwar.¹⁶ In Helmand province in 1999, allocation of winter crops was found on average to be 50% opium poppy and 50% wheat on irrigated land and 70% poppy and 30% wheat in rainfed land.¹⁷ Whereas in the expansion study districts, it was rare for the area of poppy cultivated to exceed one half that of the area of wheat, in Helmand province an average of nearly 60% of the total winter crop area was under opium poppy.

¹⁶ *Socio-Economic Baseline for UNDCP’s Target Districts in Afghanistan*(1998). UNDCP: Islamabad.

¹⁷ *Helmand Initiative Socio-economic Survey*. ACBAR/UNHCS. April 2000, Peshawar.

By 1999, it had been broadly established that household opium poppy cultivation in the districts in which expansion study fieldwork was conducted was typically confined to small plots of land. In Shindand district in the province of Farah, only small demonstration plots no larger than 100 square metres could be found. Indeed, it was estimated that opium poppy cultivation across the entire district was between only one and two hectares. By 2000, 146 hectares of poppy was recorded in Shindand, with an average of 3 hectares per village.

The districts of Azro in Logar province and Tagab in Kapisa also had small amounts of household land dedicated to opium poppy, with an average of only .05 hectares in 1999. 2000 fieldwork confirmed a similar allocation of land to poppy by first year cultivators, with Azro farmers cultivating on average only 14.5% of their land in opium poppy. However by 2000, poppy cultivation had increased from 5 to 104 hectares in Tagab, and from 29 to 46 hectares in Azro.

1999 fieldwork revealed that in Asadabad, Marawara and Sheegal in Kunar province, the amount of household land dedicated to opium poppy was generally less than one tenth of one hectare. Limited access to irrigation, poor soils and uncertainty regarding the final profitability of the crop were cited as major constraints on opium poppy cultivation in the area. These districts were not revisited in 2000 expansion fieldwork, but the AOPS 2000 revealed an increase in Asadabad from 18 to 53 poppy growing villages since 1999, and an over fourfold increase in area cultivated with opium poppy. The province of Kunar as a whole achieved an impressive 173% increase in poppy cultivation in 2000, in the face of those constraints.

In Sarobi, Kabul province, opium poppy cultivation was mainly concentrated in Jegdalek and Uzbin villages in 1999. In Jegdalek the majority of respondents indicated that they had recently returned to the area after living as refugees in Pakistan. This area was in contrast to other areas visited during the fieldwork for Study 5 as the majority of households in Jegdalek were found to be cultivating opium poppy, with most fields in excess of one fifth of one hectare. In Uzbin, by comparison, opium poppy cultivation was limited to 4-6 households per village, none of which cultivated more than 0.1 hectares of opium poppy. Inter-cropping opium poppy with onion was very common in this area.

In the districts of Alingar, Alishing and Mehtarlam in Laghman province, the amount of household land dedicated to opium poppy cultivation was still relatively small in 1999, rarely exceeding 0.1 hectares. However, in Qarghai district, an increasing number of larger fields could be seen, some as large as 3 hectares. The major concentration of opium poppy cultivation was found in the Surkhakhan area where around 10 households cultivated opium poppy. Despite this, household opium poppy cultivation in Qarghai district was generally restricted to a small number of families in each village cultivating on average one fifth of one hectare. Amongst respondents in Shar-e-Safa district in Zabul province, average



Opium poppy in pomegranate orchard, Shar-e-Safa district Zabul (April 2000)

household opium poppy cultivation was limited to less than 0.2 hectares in 1999. Again, in keeping with the findings from other new areas of cultivation, opium poppy was grown in a minority of villages within the district by only one or two households. However, the cultivation of opium poppy in Shar-e-Safa was not restricted to any one particular location but scattered across the district in both karez and river irrigated areas. New poppy cultivators interviewed in Jaldak/ Shar-e-Safa in 2000 again reported small, trial plots of opium poppy, but at the same time the 2000 AOPS recorded a 40% reduction in the number of poppy growing villages and a 38% net reduction in opium poppy cultivation for the district. That opium poppy cultivation did not continue to consolidate in a core of villages may be related to the discrete pattern of cultivation described in 1999.

Kalafgan was the only district visited in the course of the expansion studies in which opium poppy was grown on rainfed land. Due to the limited inputs invested in opium poppy cultivation on rainfed land, respondents in Kalafgan in 1999 were found to have the highest amount of land dedicated to opium poppy with an average of 0.60 hectares.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that amongst respondents in Kalafgan, average irrigated land holdings were 0.8 hectares, yet opium poppy was found to be confined to a very limited area. This may suggest that in Kalafgan, as in so many other areas, it is labour and not land that is the limiting factor in opium poppy cultivation. The 2000 expansion respondents in Kalafgan were all year two poppy growers. However opium poppy cultivation now averaged only 0.15 hectares or 3% of each landholding, representing a considerable decline on the average 0.60 hectares recorded in 1999. Much of this decline may be confidently attributed to substantial crop destruction on rainfed land, due to the drought. Even so, despite the drought, the 2000 AOPS recorded rainfed poppy as 61% of the opium poppy area in Kalafgan in 2000. In addition, a further seven new poppy growing villages were recorded. In the light of the evidence of large scale crop losses on rainfed land, it was surprising that the AOPS measured a net reduction of only 8% in poppy cultivation in Kalafgan in 2000.

Whilst a long way from the extent and intensity of opium poppy cultivation in Helmand and Nangarhar provinces, concern was growing over the expansion in opium poppy cultivation in those districts that cultivated opium poppy for the first time in 1998. For instance, by 1999, opium poppy cultivation in Qarghai had increased from relatively small plots of land cultivated by a limited number of households in just a few villages within the district, to incidences of more large scale opium poppy cultivation in each village across the district. By 2000, although only three more poppy growing villages were recorded in Qarghai, the area of cultivation had more than doubled. In Mehtarlam, although poppy villages actually decreased in 2000, the area of poppy cultivation was over two and one half times greater. The rate of replication by other households in these districts is of some concern. Although Afghanistan is a world leader in opium production, the estimated 82,172 hectares of opium poppy cultivation in 2000 still represents less than 3% of the total cultivated land in Afghanistan¹⁹, leaving considerable room for further expansion.

4. The Reasons for the Expansion in Opium Poppy Cultivation

¹⁸ Key informants report that fertiliser is not applied to opium poppy cultivated on rainfed land. As compared to the intensive three rounds of weeding on irrigated land, rainfed opium poppy is weeded only once. The result is rainfed opium poppy is much less labour intensive than irrigated opium poppy, allowing more extensive cultivation.

¹⁹ See FAO (1997) *Agricultural Strategy*. FAO: Rome.

The great majority of respondents in all three phases of the expansion study indicated that they had chosen to cultivate opium poppy due to its perceived profitability. Many indicated that they had been informed by relatives or other farmers that opium poppy could generate two to four times more profit than any other agricultural crop. In Shar-e-Safa in 1999, a number of respondents cited the rumour that in 1999 almost half of the 9,000 Afghan pilgrims for the annual *Haj* were from Helmand province, financed by opium. Of the year 2000 respondents, the four sharecroppers in Sarobi were absolutely convinced of the profitability of opium poppy relative to other crops. Effectively, sharecroppers and itinerant labourers serve as roving advocates of opium poppy cultivation.

“Poppy is our way of life. Poppy is more profitable than any other crop, no argument.”
Sharecropper in Sarobi, 2000.

Typically, farmers include the cost of seeds, fertiliser, and hired labour when determining the profitability of a cash crop. However in 2000 almost every landholder interviewed claimed that seeds and fertiliser for poppy were the “same as for other crops”, for example onions. Since they did not assign economic value to their own labour or that of their family, the sole focus of these respondents was the opium price. Despite the overwhelming use of family labour in opium poppy cultivation by respondents in all three phases of fieldwork, none of those interviewed attributed an economic value to the use of household labour, particularly women and children. In all the districts in the eastern, central and northern regions in which fieldwork was conducted, both women and children were seen actively involved in opium poppy cultivation, particularly in the districts of Azro, Kalafgan, Sarobi and Tagab.²⁰ This, however, was not the case in the south where women were rarely seen working outside the confines of the home due to the conservatism of the tribes in the area. Labour costs have been revealed as a key factor in the cost of opium production, and consequently in net returns on poppy cultivation. It follows that models of the economics of opium production which propose a narrow gap between net income for poppy and for wheat tend to be less valid where farmers do not hire labour, and assign no economic value to their own or family labour. This indeed has been the case for the majority of respondents in all of the poppy expansion studies.



No market: onions sprout in the bag in Tagab district (March 2000)

“We are sitting free. Our own work is free to provide, otherwise the expenses are the same as for other crops”. Farmer in Tagab district, Kapisa (2000).

²⁰ see *Strategic Study 6: The Role of Women in Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan* (2000).
UNDCP: Islamabad

As 90% of those interviewed in 1999 had cultivated opium poppy for the first time in the 1998/99 season, there was a considerable amount of uncertainty over the final results of their crop. For instance, almost half of those interviewed in Kunar province and three quarters of respondents in Shar-e-Safa indicated that they were not sure of the returns on opium poppy. In the 2000 fieldwork, a proportion of farmers expressed uncertainty as to the opium yield and price they might receive, as they would for any cash crop, but a majority were convinced, often through observing neighbouring farmers the previous year, that returns on opium poppy would exceed those of any other crop.

Many of those interviewed in 1999 blamed the high cost of basic commodities in Afghanistan for the need to cultivate opium poppy. Indeed, in Sarobi 60% of respondents claimed that they had decided to cultivate opium poppy due to the high cost of building materials for the reconstruction of their houses and the need to prepare land for cultivation. These respondents were mainly concentrated in the Jegdalek area and had only recently returned to Sarobi from Pakistan where they had been refugees. None of the landowners interviewed in Sarobi in 2000 claimed to be refugees. Almost all reported they had taken up opium poppy cultivation simply because they were desperate for additional income from such small landholdings, and all had heard that profits from opium poppy far exceeded those obtainable from other crops. The four sharecroppers interviewed in Sarobi in 2000 had been cultivating opium from four to eight years in other districts, and had absolutely no doubts about the large relative advantage of opium poppy over other crops.

Similarly, in the districts of Marawara and Sheegal in Kunar province, a number of 1999 respondents claimed that they had returned to their land after living as refugees in Dir and Bajaur across the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. They had worked as itinerant harvesters on the opium crop in Dir and Bajaur before returning to their own land in Kunar. Given their experience in Pakistan and limited on-farm income opportunities on their own land they had elected to cultivate opium poppy. In the southern region, only one respondent claimed to have cultivated opium poppy to assist financially in his family's return to Afghanistan. The issue of size of landholdings and the limits that this placed on production and income from the land was, not surprisingly, raised in all districts except Kalafgan in the 2000 fieldwork. 38% of respondents in Zabul province in 2000 raised the difficulty of achieving an adequate income from small landholdings, and therefore the relative attraction of opium poppy as a crop.

50% of year 2000 respondents in Arghandab reported that the timing of the opium harvest, with immediate cash available at the farm gate, was a great advantage of opium poppy cultivation over other cash crops. The period from April or May to June, depending on agroclimatic zone²¹, was reported in Arghandab, Azro and Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa as a "hard time" for farmers which is relieved by the poppy crop. Grain and fruit are available after June, leaving a hiatus which is filled by the opium harvest at a time when farmers have exhausted their reserves during the winter months. The timing of the opium harvest also allows for a second crop to be grown in districts where the summer growing season is shorter: this attraction was widely reported in Azro. The attraction of "ready cash" for opium, ie from traders at the farm gate, was mentioned in most districts, and a limited number

²¹ See opium poppy crop calendar, *Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1998*, UNDCP Islamabad

of respondents referred to the ease of obtaining advance payment for the poppy crop.²²

“The poppy harvest comes at a hard time for us farmers, before the wheat and fruit. And we can get cash immediately”. Farmer in Jaldak district, Zabul (2000)

In 1999, the loss of off-farm income opportunities, or falling prices for other agricultural crops, was also cited as a reason for the expansion of opium poppy into new areas of cultivation. Deforestation and the loss of income from timber and forest products was reported to have resulted in the need for alternative on-farm income opportunities in both Azro district, Logar province and Marawara in Kunar. The loss of income from forest products and generally the lack of alternative employment opportunities was again reported in Azro in 2000 as a reason for resorting to poppy cultivation. The banning by the Taliban of cannabis, which is a summer crop, had also, said farmers, forced them to cultivate opium poppy as an alternative cash crop.



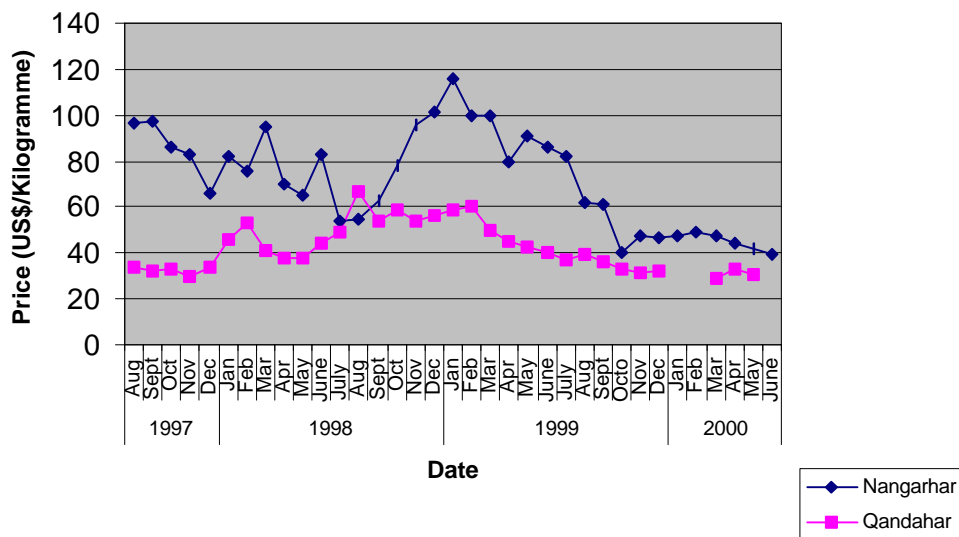
Tagab: poor markets for other crops can drive farmers to try opium poppy cultivation (March 2000)

In Sarobi in Kabul province, and in the districts of Alishing, Alingar, Qarghai and Mehtarlam in Laghman province, the dramatic fall in the price of vegetable crops such as cucumber and onions, was cited by a number of respondents as a reason for cultivating opium poppy in 1998. In the district of Qarghai, 82% of those interviewed reported that they had replaced the land that they had cultivated with cucumber and onion in 1998 with opium poppy in 1999. Reports of crop losses due to the drought were widely reported in 2000. A large proportion of the onion crop spoiled in Sarobi and elsewhere, melon production was poor and marketing was difficult, for example in Qala-e-Zal. The same was reported for fruit in districts such as Dai Chopan. One respondent in Tagab district reported that he had 14 tonnes of onions stockpiled which he could not sell. Crop losses and resulting economic hardship were common reasons given for initiating opium poppy cultivation, and, one may assume, for continuing cultivation in established areas.

It was claimed in 1999 that the shift to opium poppy was due to the considerable losses incurred in the 1998 cropping season after a dramatic fall in the price of cucumbers and onions. These reports were verified by respondents in Sarobi who had experienced the same dramatic fall in prices in the 1999/2000 season.

²² For further information see Strategic Study 3. The Role of Opium as a Source of Informal Credit. UNDCP, Islamabad

**Dry Opium Prices in Jalalabad and Qandahar, Afghanistan
from August 1997 to June 2000
(US Dollars per kilogramme)**



“Things get worse every day. Because of drought our orchards produced little fruit: and even then there was no market for it. What else can we do but grow poppy?” Farmer in Dai Chopan district, Zabul (2000).

Crop damage in the 1998/1999 season was cited by the majority of 1999 respondents in Shar-e- Safa as a major reason to cultivate opium poppy. These respondents reported that they had experienced considerable losses to their black cumin crop due to heavy hail and rain in 1998. Given that black cumin requires three years before providing a return, many respondents indicated a preference for cultivating lower risk, annual crops such as opium poppy in the future. Year 2000 respondents of course reported crop damage due to the drought. According to the AOPS 2000, farmers reported 41% crop losses in Zabul, 60% in Takhar, 20% in Logar, 34% in Kunduz, 13% in Kabul and 11% in Kapisa. Especially with the advent of rains, these figures, to the extent that they are reliable, suggest increased opium poppy cultivation in 2000/2001. Unless there is a sharp decline in the opium price, it is likely that farmers will attempt to recover debts and losses due to the drought through increased opium production. Other than through opium poppy cultivation, farmers will not be able to repay their loans or provide landlords with agreed payments in opium.

“My poppy was 75% damaged by drought, but yes, insha’allah I will grow it next year, because no other crop is as profitable.” Farmer in Arghandab who grew opium poppy on 25% of his land in 1999/2000.

High opium prices during the 1998 planting season were reported by 80% of respondents in Shar-e- Safa as their reason for cultivating opium for the first time in the 1998/99 season. Indeed, analysis of dry opium prices reveals that in the southern region the price of dry opium was the equivalent of US\$60 during the 1998 planting season in October/November, compared to US\$33 at the same time

in 1997. Opium prices over the 1999/2000 season were significantly lower (see chart above), although farmers quite clearly calculated that even at this lower price, opium poppy held an advantage over other crops.

A trend of falling opium prices was recorded in Nangarhar and Jalalabad since April 1999, leading to prices of \$30 per kilogramme in Nangarhar and \$40 per kilogramme for dry opium in Qandahar in July. The July announcement by the Taliban appears to have prompted a sharp increase in the price, currently reported at the equivalent of \$60 in Qandahar and \$40 in Nangarhar. It is likely that these price levels were a significant factor behind the record 1999 opium harvest.

High opium prices were also cited by almost three quarters of respondents in Shindand district in 1999 as one of the reasons for initiating the cultivation of opium on their land. However, the high incidence of weeds was also mentioned by one third of respondents, who claimed that they had cultivated opium to reduce the effect of weeds on their wheat crop. This claim is supported by previous fieldwork in the southern and eastern region which suggested that opium poppy provides households with the physical and financial opportunity to invest in their land over a two year cropping cycle.²³ Land where poppy has been cultivated is relatively weed free the following year for growing wheat.



Opium poppy in Maiwand district of Qandahar hit hard by the drought (June 2000)

Up to four respondents in each of six of the districts visited in 2000 expressed some concern about the status of poppy cultivation in Islam. In a number of districts where opium had been cultivated on a small scale prior to the war in 1979, such as in Tagab, Sarobi and parts of Kunar, respondents had claimed in 1999 that they were unsure as to whether there were any restrictions on opium poppy cultivation. Indeed in Kunar a number of respondents expressed some confusion over the status of opium cultivation within Islam. Whilst most respondents indicated it was forbidden, or *haram*, the acceptance of opium cultivation by the local *mullahs* prompted them to believe it was acceptable within the faith, or *halal*. The *mullahs* and local authorities involvement in the collection of *ushr*, a tax levied on agricultural produce, exacerbated this confusion. In 2000, three respondents in Arghandab and two in Sarobi identified the Taliban collection of *ushr*, including opium, as good reason for not taking the published bans on poppy cultivation seriously. Zakat was discussed in the same light in Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa.

²³ See *Strategic Study 1: An Analysis of the Expansion of Opium Poppy into New Districts in Afghanistan* UNDCP: Islamabad, 2000.

“Since poppy cultivation started in this valley, water and rain disappeared. God is angry with us.” Farmer in Kapisa (2000)

“Heavy wind is drying the land. God is not happy with poppy” Farmer in Qala-e-Zal (2000)

In the eastern region, and in the north, a number of those interviewed in 1999 indicated that the traditional rivalry between peers, and particularly cousins, has prompted respondents to experiment with opium poppy cultivation for fear of losing their comparative socio-economic position with their peers.²⁴ Respondents and key informants indicated that as a greater proportion of households conform to this social pressure, the practice of opium poppy cultivation has increasingly become an acceptable source of livelihood and considered traditional, or *rawaj*, within the area. However, only one respondent in 2000, in Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa, referred to extended family peer pressure as a factor in his adoption of poppy cultivation.

It is notable that some respondents in each year did recognise that opium poppy cultivation might have negative consequences for their livelihood strategies. For instance in Kalafgan district in Takhar, 1999 respondents suggested that the expansion of opium poppy in the area might ultimately lead to a shortage of food crops for both human and animal consumption. In established poppy growing areas, poppy does occupy a significant proportion of irrigated land which could be allocated to wheat instead²⁵. Even so the prospect of farmers starving themselves and their livestock in order to progressively fill their fields with opium poppy is implausible. In a highly uncertain and volatile physical and socio-economic environment, there will certainly be miscalculations, price fluctuations, and weather risks. However farmers will no doubt continue to balance the purchasing power and other advantages of opium against their requirements for food and fodder, making highly informed assessments on crop allocation each season.

“I lost two good horses because I was too busy in my poppy field to care for them. Poppy cultivation takes too much time of farmers.” Farmer in Qala-e-Zal, district, Kunduz (2000).

5. Prior Exposure to Opium Poppy Cultivation

Almost three quarters of those interviewed in 1999 had experience of opium poppy cultivation prior to cultivating it on their own land. Approximately 55% of respondents reported that they had worked in other opium producing districts, whilst almost one fifth of those interviewed had some experience of small scale opium poppy cultivation prior to the war in 1979. Most of these latter cases were from the districts of Asadabad, Marawara and Sheegal in Kunar province, or Sarobi and Tagab. The remaining 25% of respondents claimed to be self-taught, learning the skills and techniques required from opium poppy cultivation from relatives and neighbours during their travels between districts.

²⁴ The *Dari* proverb ‘*Melon gains colour from its nearby Melon*’ was often cited by those interviewed as an example of how the behaviour of individuals is affected by his or her peers.

²⁵ The ACBAR Socioeconomic Survey in Helmand in 1999 found that of 294 responding households, only 20% produced enough wheat to feed themselves through the cropping year.

The pattern in 2000 differed most markedly in that more than half of the respondents claimed to have no previous hands-on experience of poppy cultivation. The majority of these first time growers had seen neighbouring farmers do well growing poppy in the previous season²⁶, whilst others had observed poppy cultivation when passing through established districts. Of the rest, about half had learned about opium from sharecroppers or labourers, and half had actually worked previously in poppy fields in nearby districts. It was interesting to note that a small proportion of first time growers in many districts, eg Argandab, Jaladak, Azro, and Tagab had actually learned about growing opium poppy up to eight years previously, but had not tested poppy on their own land till now.

“We all know how. My brother grew opium years ago in Uzbin.” Farmer in Tagab district Kapisa, asked where he learned to cultivate opium poppy (2000).

Almost one half of respondents in Kunar in 1999 reported that opium poppy had a long history within the region, suggesting that it had been grown in their villages prior to the war. Consequently, these respondents indicated that they were familiar with the agricultural cycle of opium poppy and the necessary skills required for weeding and harvesting. Kunar was not revisited in 2000, but a number of respondents in districts of provinces neighbouring Nangarhar interviewed in 2000 did claim that there was no need to learn about poppy cultivation and that “everybody knows how”. In Kunar, one quarter of those interviewed in 1999 indicated that they had learned opium poppy cultivation during their time as refugees in Pakistan. They had then resided in the opium cultivating area of Bajaur, a tribal area on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border. They argued that their small landholdings, damaged irrigation systems and a growing need for credit made opium poppy cultivation an attractive option on their return to Kunar.

“It’s easy, everybody around here knows how to grow poppy, we are farmers aren’t we?” Farmer in Azro district, Logar (2000)

Almost one third of respondents interviewed in Laghman in 1999 indicated that they had worked as itinerant labourers in the eastern region during the weeding or harvesting season. Areas cited by respondents included Behsud, Shewa and Mohamand Dara. A further 50% of respondents indicated that they had learnt about the cultivation of opium poppy through the arrival of tenants and sharecroppers from areas that had cultivated opium for a number of years, in particular Khogiani district in Nangarhar province. The area of Salaw in the upper part of Alingar was also cited by a number of respondents as a source of information on opium poppy cultivation in Laghman province. Again, Laghman was not revisited in 2000, but a number of year 2000 respondents in nearby provinces referred to large poppy increases in Laghman, arguing that if poppy cultivation is not discouraged there, why should their own small plot be of concern. In fact, the 2000 AOPS estimated a 138% increase in poppy area in Laghman province in 1999/2000. There were 13 new poppy growing villages in Laghman in 2000, but 10 of these were in one district, Alishang.

Similarly, in Azro district in Logar province in 1999, almost two thirds of those interviewed had worked in neighbouring areas as itinerant labourers on the opium poppy harvest during times of seasonal under-employment on their own land. These districts included Khogiani, Hesarak and

²⁶This finding concurs with the expansion model of poppy spreading out from initial pioneer villages

Sukhrod, Khogiani and Hesarak were also cited as districts in which over half of those interviewed in Sarobi claimed to have worked as itinerant harvesters during the previous growing season. The district of Batikot in Nangarhar province and Qarghai district in Laghman were also cited by respondents as districts in which they had worked as harvesters and weeders prior to cultivating opium poppy on their own land. By 2000, the proportion of new poppy growers who claimed that they had learned by working as labourers elsewhere had dropped to 50%. More had learned by observing neighbouring villages. This change supports the argument of Study 5, that initial poppy cultivation in a district will serve as “demonstration plots” in a process of informal agricultural extension. Even so the number of poppy growing villages identified in Azro decreased by 38% in 1999/2000.

In 1999 in Shindand, one third of respondents had worked in Helmand province as itinerant labourers during the opium poppy harvest prior to cultivating opium on their own land.²⁷ Almost one half of those interviewed had learned about opium cultivation from family and friends in neighbouring villages who had worked in Helmand and Qandahar. The final 15% of respondents had been approached by sharecroppers from the district of Ghorak in Qandahar and Musa Qala district in Helmand, to cultivate opium on their land, and thereby learnt from their employees.

Almost half of those interviewed in the southern district of Shar-e-Safa in Zabul in 1999 had worked as itinerant labourers in the opium growing provinces of Helmand, Oruzgan and Qandahar. Indeed one respondent claimed that he had learnt to harvest opium poppy when he was a religious student, or *talib*, in Oruzgan. Respondents indicated that the commercial links between Shar-e-Safa and the provinces of Helmand and Qandahar were strengthened by the prevalence of members of the Popalzai and Alikzai tribes in these areas. Of the year 2000 respondents in Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa only two had worked outside the province in Helmand. More than half had learned by working as labourers in nearby districts of Zabul, while the rest, the majority, claimed to be learning by trial cultivation for the first time.

In the district of Kalafgan in the northern province of Takhar, three quarters of those interviewed in 1999 reported that they had worked in the neighbouring districts of Darayem and Argo during the opium poppy season.²⁸ In contrast, only one of the year 2000 respondents reported learning through working as a labourer in Darayem two years previously. All the rest claimed that opium production had been introduced to the district by sharecroppers from Badakshan. Intense warfare in Takhar between the ruling Taliban and the Northern Alliance raged as far as the northern border through much of September and October 2000, underlining just how precarious rural livelihoods are in the current environment.

Almost two thirds of those interviewed in 1999 in the district of Tagab, Kapisa province, reported that they had acquired the skills required for opium poppy cultivation through observing others whilst travelling through opium growing areas. Tagab is the only district that was found to cultivate opium

²⁷ See *Strategic Study 4: Access to Labour: The role of Opium Poppy in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters Working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan*. UNDCP: Islamabad, 2000.

²⁸ Darayem and Argo were sub districts of Faizabad prior to 1979 but are now considered districts in their own right.

poppy for the first time in 1998, that was not located near to a district in which opium poppy had been grown for a number of years. Consequently, there are fewer opportunities to obtain employment as an itinerant labourer in opium poppy cultivation unless households are willing to travel further afield. Despite this, one third of respondents reported working as itinerant labourers in opium poppy cultivating districts. They had been refugees in the Samarkhail area of Behsud district, Nangarhar, between 1992 and 1996 when there had been an outbreak of heavy fighting in Tagab. During this time, these respondents reported that they had worked as labourers during the opium poppy harvest in Behsud. Respondents in 2000 confirmed continued links with Kabul and Nangarhar. There were several instances of new growers who had been working as labourers in poppy fields in districts of Nangarhar for several years, but had only now decided to initiate cultivation on their own small plots.

6. Family, Hired or Reciprocal Labour

The majority of 1999 respondents used family labour to cultivate their opium crop. 62% of those interviewed reported that they only used family labour to cultivate opium poppy, whilst almost one third indicated that they hired labour either locally or from neighbouring areas. A further 5% indicated that they entered into reciprocal labour arrangements with relatives or friends, rather than hire the labour they required to cultivate opium poppy. An even greater proportion of respondents in 2000 claimed to use only their own or family labour in poppy cultivation. Indeed only 40% of Kalafgan respondents hired labour, and only a handful of respondents elsewhere hired labour at all. Only one respondent in 2000, in Tagab, reported hiring labour from outside the village. The proportion of farmers who reported that they would use reciprocal arrangements with other villagers was similar to 1999, at 7% of all respondents.



Boy lancing opium poppy: starting young in Zamindawar district, Helmand province (May 2000)

The proportion of respondents hiring labour in these new areas of cultivation differs markedly from results obtained in districts where opium poppy cultivation is considered more 'traditional' and an integral part of the local livelihood strategies. For instance, in UNDCP's target districts of Ghorak, Khakrez, Maiwand and Shinwar, fieldwork suggests that 70% of households hired labour during the opium poppy harvest.²⁹ In Helmand province in 1999, only 20% of the hired labour was found to be local (village or district).³⁰

²⁹ See *Socio-Economic Baseline Survey for UNDCP Target Districts in Afghanistan*. UNDCP: Islamabad (forthcoming).

³⁰ See Helmand Initiative Socio-economic Survey. ACBAR/UNHCS. April 2000, Peshawar.

The small amount of land dedicated to opium poppy in Tagab in 1999 was found to mitigate against the need to hire labour, where only family labour was used. Similarly, in Azro district, 80% of respondents were found to use only family labour for the cultivation of opium poppy. Given that household cultivation in both these areas rarely exceeded one twentieth of one hectare it is likely that the amount of land dedicated to opium poppy was commensurate with the amount of labour available within the household. Indeed, a number of year 2000 respondents reported that they did not have the means to hire labour, however the amount of land allocated to poppy was limited by more than just labour availability. As first time growers on their own land, farmers were also uncertain of the outcome of opium poppy cultivation, and were concerned that they should have sufficient staple crops and fodder.

In 1999, the 20% of respondents in Azro that did not solely use family labour, reported that they did not hire labour but entered into reciprocal labour arrangements, known as *ashar*, with family members in Hesarak district. Respondents practicing this arrangement indicated that the difference in altitude and climatic conditions between these two areas allowed households from Azro to harvest opium poppy on the land of family members in Hesarak during times of agricultural underemployment on their own land. They reported that once they had finished the harvest, this favour was reciprocated, with their family members travelling from Hesarak to Azro to assist in the harvesting of opium poppy on the land of respondents. It was reported that this strategy for minimising hired labour costs was also used in the districts of Marawara and Sheegal in Kunar province. Again in 2000, no farmer interviewed in Azro actually hired labour, but 43% indicated similar reciprocal labour arrangements with family members in Hesarak.

The 1999 fieldwork revealed that those areas where opium poppy was cultivated more extensively tended to hire labour either locally or from neighbouring areas. In Kunar, one quarter of respondents were found to hire labour mainly from the district of Narang which, according to the *Survey*, has been cultivating opium since 1995,³¹ and from the tribal area of Bajaur in Pakistan. However, the extent of hired labour differed by district with 40% of respondents hiring labour in Asadabad compared to 30% in Marawara and none in Sheegal. Indeed, all those interviewed in Sheegal, as well as the majority of respondents in Asadabad and Marawara, expressed a preference for minimising their input costs by using family labour.

In Laghman, 45% of respondents indicated in 1999 that they hired labour from neighbouring districts, suggesting that those hired locally did not have the necessary skills and expertise for harvesting opium poppy. Khogiani, Batkot and Shinwar were cited as districts hired labour originated from. However, the proportion of respondents hiring labour differed markedly by district. In Alishing, only 10% of those interviewed hired labourers. Similarly, in Alingar 13% of respondents employed itinerant labourers during the opium poppy harvest. In Mehtarlam and Qarghai, where opium poppy is cultivated more extensively, 50% and 77% of those interviewed, respectively, hired labourers during both the weeding and harvesting season. Laghman was not revisited in 2000.

In the district of Sarobi, almost one half of respondents in 1999 were found to hire labour for opium poppy cultivation. Khogiani and Shinwar were cited by respondents in Sarobi as sources of labour for the harvesting of opium poppy, as well as the neighbouring districts of Hesarak and Sukhrod.

³¹ See *Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1995*. UNDCP: Islamabad.

Local labour in the district of Sarobi tended to originate from Uzbin, an area that has cultivated opium poppy on a very small scale basis since before the war. Indeed, almost 14% of those interviewed in Sarobi hired labour from this area. By contrast in 2000, not one of the twelve new poppy growers interviewed hired labour, all relied on family resources.

In Shindand, the low level of opium cultivation in 1999 meant that households rarely hired labour for either the weeding or the harvesting of opium poppy. However, most respondents indicated that should the extent of opium poppy cultivation increase there would be sufficient labourers available locally from Farah, or from the provinces of Ghor and Helmand. Similarly, in Shar-e-Safa almost two thirds of those interviewed reported that they did not hire labour although it was available from local sources, such as the neighbouring district of Mizan, or from the provinces of Qandahar and Helmand, if it was required. Shindand was not revisited in 2000, except by the AOPS surveyors who recorded 48 poppy growing villages and 146 hectares of opium poppy in the district.

In 1999, almost two fifths of respondents from Kalafgan were found to hire labour for the opium poppy harvest. One third of those interviewed hired labour from the local area, whilst almost one tenth indicated that their harvesters originated from the province of Badakhshan. These proportions were confirmed in the interview results for 2000, even though larger landholdings were included in the sample.

The tendency to cultivate opium poppy on rainfed land in Kalafgan may reduce the need to hire labour, not only due to the fact that the crop tends to be weeded only once, but as a consequence of the smaller number of lances undertaken during harvesting.³² Moreover, in Kalafgan the extensive role of women in opium poppy cultivation, including during all stages of the harvest, may mitigate against the employment of itinerant harvesters.³³ This may explain how, despite respondents in Kalafgan dedicating more land to opium poppy than the other areas in which fieldwork was conducted in 1999, there was a relatively lower incidence of recruiting hired labour compared to other areas. By 2000, this situation had changed. The situation of hired labour in Afghanistan may have been radically affected by the impact of persistent drought. Almost certainly, the opportunities for itinerant labourers in poppy or other crops had been greatly reduced by crop losses in drought affected areas. Farmers estimated an average of 37% crop losses due to drought in the AOPS districts. However in areas with larger landholdings such as Kalafgan, opportunities for work would remain more likely, in spite of large losses on rainfed land.

³² For more details see Annex E, *Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1999*. UNDCP: Islamabad.

³³ For more details see *Strategic Study 6: The Role of Women in Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan*. UNDCP: Islamabad.

Table 1 : The proportion of households hiring labour for opium poppy cultivation in 1999, compared to the average amount of household land dedicated to opium poppy.

Province	District	Proportion of households hiring labour (%)	Average household land dedicated to opium poppy (hectares)
Laghman	Qarghai	77%	0.2
Kabul	Sarobi	50%	0.22
Laghman	Mehtarlam	50%	0.1
Takhar	Kalafgan	40%	0.8
Kunar	Asadabad	40%	0.1
Zabul	Shar-e-Safa	30%	0.18
Kunar	Marawara	30%	0.1
Laghman	Alishing	13%	0.1
Laghman	Alingar	10%	0.1
Kunar	Sheegal	0%	0.1
Kapisa	Tagab	0%	0.05
Logar	Azro	0%	0.05
Farah	Shindand	0%	0.01

Source, Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1999. Note only Kalafgan reported hiring labour in 2000

7. The Role of Tenants and Sharecroppers in the Expansion Process

Whilst the interdependent nature of labour markets in Afghanistan would appear to have led to a high degree of exposure to opium poppy cultivation for those living in non-opium poppy growing districts, it would appear that increasing population pressure, small landholdings, and insufficient non-farm income opportunities have prompted some households to migrate to other districts in search of cultivable land and the opportunity to cultivate opium poppy. Indeed, in 1999 a number of respondents in Laghman indicated that there were an increasing number of tenant farmers and sharecroppers from Khogiani and Shinwar living in the area, particularly in Surkhakhan in Qarghai district, where opium poppy cultivation was at its most concentrated.

Of those interviewed in Qarghai in 1999, one quarter reported that they owned land in Khogiani district, Nangarhar. These respondents claimed that they had insufficient land for their basic needs in Khogiani, so were leasing land in Qarghai and cultivating opium poppy. Due to the differing climatic conditions between the districts these respondents reported that they cultivated opium poppy in each district and, during the season, travelled between Khogiani and Qarghai to tend to their crops.

Opium poppy cultivation more than doubled in Qarghai in 1999/2000.

A similar phenomenon was reported in Shindand in 1999, where respondents indicated that there were an increasing number of tenant farmers and sharecroppers from Qandahar and Helmand provinces cultivating opium poppy. However, the distances between these districts and the similar cropping calendars precluded these sharecroppers working the land in both their district of origin and Shindand.

1999 respondents indicated that there was inflationary pressure on the price of rented land due to the increasing incidence of subletting in Qarghai. Under these arrangements the first tenant was found to lease some of his land to a second tenant at a considerably higher rate of rent than he himself was paying. For instance, one respondent claimed that he was expected to pay the equivalent of approximately 190 kg of wheat per cropping season for every hectare leased. Should he lease the land for both the summer and winter season, he reported that the rent was the equivalent of 125 kg of wheat and 125 kg of maize. In total, this tenant leased eight hectares but rented out four hectares at twice the rate of rent that he was paying, thereby meeting his total rental costs solely through the work of the subtenant.

Indeed, there were increasing reports from respondents and key informants in the districts of Qarghai and Mehtarlam in Laghman province, and in Asadabad and Sheegal in Kunar in 1999 that the basis of tenancy arrangements had altered in their areas over the past two years. Whereas the rentable value of a given piece of land had, traditionally, been determined by its potential wheat production, it was claimed that landowners were increasingly asking for a rate of rent that was based on potential opium production. Respondents argued that these new arrangements compelled tenants to cultivate opium if they wished to lease land in that area. Key informants in 2000 indicated that crop losses due to the drought had plunged many tenant farmers into debt, as they were unable to pay the rent on their land, which had been fixed in expectation of returns on opium. For example, for the 1999/2000 season in Nangahar, farmers had leased land at a rates of 280 to 700 kilogrammes of wheat per hectare. Opium poppy cultivation in Nangarhar was down 14% in 2000.

A number of landowners in Laghman in 1999 viewed the use of tenants and sharecroppers from outside the area as purely a short term strategy. For instance, one respondent from Qarghai claimed that he was cultivating opium on two separate pieces of household land. The first piece of land he tended consisted of only a small patch of opium of only 10 metres by 10 metres, on which he was learning to cultivate the crop. The second piece of land was almost one tenth of one hectare and was worked by a sharecropper from Khogiani. He argued that once he had acquired the necessary skills he would no longer use sharecroppers on his second piece of land but cultivate it himself, consolidating opium poppy cultivation within the socio-economy of the area. This strategy was echoed by the year 2000 respondents in Kalafghan, many of whom had used skilled hired labour from Badakshan the previous year for harvesting, but said they could now manage this themselves.

Only four sharecroppers were interviewed in 2000, in Sarobi. They did not own land in the district but had small landholdings in their home districts of Khogiani or Hesarak. They had all come to Sarobi because of the better availability of land for sharecropping, and were of great interest to the expansion study for a number of reasons. Firstly, they were absolutely convinced, after up to 10 years of sharecropping, that opium poppy would bring returns well in excess of any other crop. They were therefore strong advocates of opium poppy cultivation. Secondly, they grew only poppy, ranging from 0.8 to 2.4 hectares. These four sharecroppers were responsible for 6.8 hectares of opium poppy, whereas the total area of opium poppy for all 11 respondents in Sarobi barely exceeded one

hectare. Itinerant labour and sharecroppers, and the labour and expertise they supply, were identified in Helmand³⁴ as a key factor in opium production. The Sarobi sharecroppers all reported that they would certainly grow poppy next year, if not in Sarobi then elsewhere.

8. The Consolidation of the Expansion Process

An objective of the 2000 fieldwork was to determine the manner and the rate at which opium poppy cultivation would spread from villages where it had been initially established in 1998/1999. Severe drought virtually throughout Afghanistan, deepening into 2000, raised the interesting question of whether opium poppy cultivation would continue to expand in the face of adverse conditions for agriculture. In some districts, numbers of villages cultivating poppy either decreased or remained unchanged, although the total area of poppy in the district increased.

By 2000, the consolidation of the expansion process had quite clearly been curtailed by the effects of drought, even though twenty one new poppy growing districts were identified. According to the 2000 AOPS, 29% of the districts newly identified as growing poppy in 1998 and 1999 actually saw a decline (see Table 2) in the number of poppy growing villages in the district. More than half of those *new* districts of 1998 and 1999 which did see an increase in the number of poppy growing villages in 2000, as one would expect from the model of expansion proposed in Study 5, were located in the two northern provinces of Takhar and Kunduz.

Table 2: The expansion of opium poppy cultivation in new districts from 1998 to 2000							
Province	District	1998		1999		2000	
		Opium Poppy Hectares	Number of Poppy Villages	Opium Poppy Hectares	Number of Poppy Villages	Opium Poppy Hectares	Number of Poppy Villages
Badakhshan	Shar-e-Bozurg	71	39	113	55	19	12
Laghman	Alingar	3	5	26	65	131	68
	Alishang	2	9	71	41	88	51
	Mehtarlam	14	24	72	80	190	78
	Qarghai	58	60	128	74	298	77
Logar	Azro	4	10	29	60	46	37
Nangarhar	Kama	198	46	389	47	589	49
Total		350	193	828	422	1361	374

Source: Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1998;1999, 2000. UNDCP: Islamabad.

³⁴ See *Strategic Study 4: Access to Labour: The role of Opium Poppy in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters Working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan*. UNDCP: Islamabad, 2000.

In Laghman, the 2000 AOPS recorded a decline in the number of opium poppy growing villages only in Mehtarlam district, and a small increase in the other four districts (see Table 2). There was however a net increase in poppy area cultivated in the province in 2000 to 138%. The over fourfold increase in Alishang was achieved in the *same number* of villages as were recorded growing opium poppy in 1999.

When the entire year 2000 AOPS sample of 123 districts is considered, it is interesting to note that districts where the number of poppy growing villages did increase in 1999/2000 are on the whole confined to a just a few provinces. Helmand, Nangarhar and Takhar provinces alone account for 44% of districts where the number of poppy growing villages increased in 1999/2000. Provinces where numbers of poppy growing villages increased by 30% or more in 2000 were Baghlan, Farah, Jawzan, Kunduz, and Takhar. Poppy cultivation in Farah had almost doubled since 1999, but note that this did not entail a large increase in poppy growing villages: in Gulestan district for instance, where the area cultivated increased by 98% to a substantial 849 hectares, there was no change in the number of poppy growing villages. By 2000, there were 48 poppy growing villages in Shindand.

New poppy growing districts were recorded in Takhar, Samangan, Balkh, Jawzan and Faryab and Badghis in the 2000 AOPS. Indeed, these account for six of the nine provinces in which new districts were recorded in 2000, seven if Baghlan is included, and for 76% of new poppy growing districts identified in 2000. Two pictures therefore emerge in 2000, one of consolidation or “filling out” of villages in the established opium producing provinces, and another of a continuation of the expansion process especially in new districts across the provinces of the northern borders.

By 2000 in Azro district, although the number of poppy growing villages had reduced by 38%, the area of poppy cultivated had actually increased. The same situation was reported in Zabul and Nimroz province. In Tagab, the AOPS identified only 6 additional poppy growing villages in 2000, but the net area cultivated increased by nearly 100 hectares. Key informants report that the reduction in villages cultivating poppy can most likely be attributed to drought damage, as it is in much of neighbouring Nangarhar province. But a net increase in poppy cultivation indicates that the more established villages are markedly increasing opium poppy cultivation in the face of the drought. Sarobi was another 2000 expansion study district in which the balance of poppy growing villages declined in the AOPS 2000, in this case by 11%, but the net area cultivated for the district was 158% larger than in 1999. Again, a large increase in area is indicated in a limited number of villages. Indeed, as indicated in Table 3, of 22 provinces surveyed in 2000, 11 posted an increase in poppy cultivated per village between 1999 and 2000. Again it is interesting to note that in Badakhshan, Kabul, Logar, Nimroz and Zabul provinces the average area of opium poppy cultivated per village actually increased even though the number of poppy growing villages declined.

Table 3 : Provinces where Average Area of Opium Poppy per Village Increased in 2000

Province	Change in Number of Poppy Villages%	Average Poppy per Village 1999 Hectares	Average Poppy per Village 2000 Hectares	Change in Opium Poppy Area %
Badakhshan	-31	4.9	6.2	-8.4
Farah	30	4.5	6.6	91.8
Jawzan	34	13.7	15.2	-71.2
Kabul	-11	1.1	3.2	158
Kapisa	13	0.1	2.0	173
Kunar	12	1.1	2.7	173
Kunduz	165	1.1	5.4	1187
Laghman	5	1.1	2.6	138
Logar	-38	0.4	1.3	59.6
Nimroz	-39	5	8.7	7.6
Zabul	-27	1.1	1.8	18.6

Source: Annual Opium Poppy Survey 2000. UNDCP: Islamabad. Four provinces with

Some further expansion of poppy cultivation might have been expected in Qandahar in 2000, after two new districts were recorded in 1998. There were however no new districts here in 2000, and an increase in the number of poppy growing villages was recorded in only two districts out of 12 surveyed. The result was a net reduction of 43% in poppy cultivation in Qandahar in 2000, including reductions of about 50% in UNDCP's target districts. If the bans on poppy cultivation by the Taliban did have any practical impact it should have been here in their Qandahar stronghold. However, Qandahar contributes only about 4% to the national poppy cultivation total. In the core opium producing province of Helmand next door, poppy cultivation was reduced by only 4% in 1999/2000, with 86 more villages coming into production.

In 1999, the majority of respondents indicated that under the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions they would cultivate opium poppy in the 1999/2000 growing season. The proportion was similar in 2000. However, whilst 36% of respondents indicated in 1999 that they were as yet unsure as to whether they would cultivate opium poppy in 1999/2000, claiming that they would first assess the profitability of the crop in the current season, views in 2000 appeared to have polarised, with only 19% of respondents undecided. 32% of farmers in 2000, far more than 1999, reported that they would not grow poppy next season. The reasons given for this decision in 2000 however, in only a few cases included the prospect of action by the authorities. The most commonly recorded reasons were economic, ie that they had not secured the expected returns from opium poppy.

Although a majority of 2000 respondents overall claimed that they would definitely grow poppy again in 2000/2001, notably in the three districts of Zabul province, and in Kalafgan, a majority in Qala-e-Zal, Tagab and Azro claimed that they would not grow opium poppy again. Since the

expansion studies fieldwork has indicated that villages more often increase their areas of opium poppy in the years following initial cultivation than actually give up, it is interesting to record the reasons farmers gave. The drought has without doubt been an overwhelming factor with heavily reduced yields and significant total losses, so that farmers found their returns on the 1999/2000 poppy crop very disappointing.

Just over one tenth of those interviewed in 1999 claimed that they would not cultivate opium poppy due to the labour intensive nature of opium poppy cultivation. Respondents in 2000 on the other hand, were aware of the relatively high labour requirement but did not see this as a problem: their labour was “free”. Extensive crop damage caused by frost and excess humidity in 1998 had prompted one respondent to report that he would not plant opium poppy in the 1999 season, whilst a further respondent indicated that he would no longer cultivate opium poppy due to the pressure he was under by fellow villages in Azro district. One respondent claimed that he would only stop cultivating opium poppy when the international community agreed to recognise the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan. This response had been recorded during fieldwork in Shinwar in September 1999, but not in the 2000 expansion study.

In each of six year 2000 districts, Qala-e-Zal, Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa, Tagab, Sarobi and Azro, a handful of respondents indicated a belief that the drought had been divine punishment for producing the *haram* opium. Whilst the great majority of respondents did not consider labour a problem, some did, 4 farmers in Azro and Tagab reporting that the intensive labour required by their poppy crop had caused them to neglect other farm activities such as the care of livestock. A related problem was the shortfall in fodder occasioned by the drought and the land allocated to opium poppy. This reflects the concerns recorded in Kalafgan in Takhar province in 1999, although the year 2000 respondents in Kalafgan did not mention fodder shortage in the context of poppy cultivation, and indeed all twelve respondents there were determined to continue poppy cultivation in 2000/2001. Of the undecided farmers in Tagab, Sarobi, Jaldak/Shar-e-Safa, Azro and Qala-e-Zal, the question of the opium prices and profitability was the primary consideration, followed by the uncertainty about autumn rains and irrigation water. Reports of some rainfall in Afghanistan reached Islamabad during September 2000, but the effects of such a prolonged drought will continue into 2001.

“Poppy is haram, may Allah forgive me. I will not grow it again” Farmer in Tagab district, Kapisa, (2000) asked if he would cultivate opium poppy next season.

9. Access to Markets

The majority of those interviewed in all three phases of fieldwork indicated that traders would visit their area to purchase opium from them, or were already in the area or were frequent visitors. For instance, in Azro district in 1999, respondents indicated that farmgate traders had already approached households prior to the harvest of opium. However, due to the low price being offered, few respondents agreed to sell their opium in advance but instead agreed to sell their opium to a specific trader at the prevailing market price at harvest time. Respondents argued that this arrangement was mutually beneficial as the farmgate trader ensured a certain number of purchases within the area and the respondents had a guaranteed market and avoided having to transport their opium over the mountains to the markets in neighbouring Nangarhar province.

In the province of Laghman, both respondents and key informants reported in 1999 that farmgate opium traders were particularly active due to rumours regarding the high quality of the opium produced in the area. This is in contrast with Shar-e-Safa district where traders were not present in the area, allegedly due to uncertainty over the quality of the final yield. By 2000 however, three quarters of respondents in Shar-e-Safa said that they would sell to farmgate traders.

The majority of respondents in Shindand in 1999 indicated that there were a number of major markets in which their opium could be sold due to their proximity to the Iranian border. Bazaars in Shindand town, Kalata Nazir, Karizak, Ghorian and Adraskan were all cited as possible outlets in which respondents could sell their opium. Many of those interviewed reported that farmgate traders were active in the area. However, due to the low prices offered respondents preferred to travel to the local bazaars to sell their opium.

This sentiment was echoed in the districts of Kalafgan and Tagab in 1999, where a small minority of respondents indicated that they would transport their opium to nearby markets rather than wait for traders to visit them. However, in Kalafgan only 1% of those interviewed indicated that they would travel to the nearest market in Keshem to sell their opium, whilst in Tagab only 2% of respondents thought they might travel to Jalalabad to sell their crop. By 2000, all Kalafgan respondents said they intended to sell to farmgate traders.

Respondents in the 2000 phase of fieldwork in three districts, Qala-e-Zal, Tagab, and Sarobi nearly all answered that they would sell their opium in local markets or larger regional bazaars rather than to farmgate traders. Qala-e-Zal respondents would sell mostly in Kunduz or local markets although two farmers reported insufficient yield to sell anywhere. All 15 respondents in Tagab would sell their opium in Jalalabad, unless they needed ready cash, and all in Sarobi reported that they would also sell in Jalalabad. Many year 2000 respondents indicated this strategy, that they would sell to traders if they really needed ready cash, but otherwise would send or carry the opium to local or major bazaars.

“Traders are already about. I may sell some opium to them, but most I will send to Jalalabad”. Farmer in Tagab, Kapisa (2000).

“Traders are coming. They know that the opium quality is higher here than elsewhere”. Farmer in Azro district, Logar (2000)

The remaining respondents in 1999 and 2000 reported that farmgate opium traders were living locally and were purchasing opium both before and after the harvest. In 1999, in the districts of Sheegal and Marawara in Kunar province, respondents indicated that whilst opium traders were living within the district, there were also traders from Bajaur in Pakistan that frequently travelled across the border to purchase opium in the area. A number of farmers took pride in reporting that traders would visit their district because it produced particularly fine opium.

It should be clear, then, that access to markets and marketability gives opium a clear and strong advantage over other crops under current conditions in Afghanistan. The likelihood of a collapse in the market price of opium, as experienced from time to time with onions and other produce, is unfortunately very small. To lose sight of the demand side of the equation would be to forget that if farmers could not sell opium at a good price, they would not grow it. Efforts to increase farm

production, and improve farmers livelihoods, are severely constrained by the absence of well organised and functional markets for other produce.

10. A Ban on Opium Poppy Cultivation

4% of those interviewed in Taliban controlled areas in 1999 indicated that they were not sure whether to cultivate opium poppy in the 1999/2000 growing season as they were unsure of the local authorities' policy on drugs. The respondents with this view were from the districts of Sarobi and Tagab, those districts under the regional administration in Kabul. Most year 2000 respondents, except in northern districts, had heard of the bans imposed on opium poppy by radio or by word of mouth, but in most cases farmers believed the 1/3 ban to be "not serious" or not applicable in their particular area. Only one of the 2000 expansion study respondents reported that the Taliban policy on opium poppy cultivation, which he was well aware of, was a factor in his decision not to grow opium poppy next season. Nine other respondents mentioned bans and possible action by the Taliban as a factor, but six of these were determined to grow poppy in 2000/2001 regardless. Note however that all of the 2000 respondents, except those in Azro district, were interviewed before the total ban was announced in July 2000.



Flowers of death: opium poppy in flower in Qarghai district, Laghman province (April 2000)

In a number of cases, year 2000 respondents referred to the Taliban collection of ushr as a good reason for not taking the bans seriously. A more common response was that the authorities should look to "their own areas" in Nangarhar or Helmand provinces before bothering about the negligible amounts in new districts. However the majority of respondents claimed that although they had heard of the current and proposed restriction on poppy cultivation, they had seen no action by the Taliban and would therefore assume that the restriction did not apply in their particular area.

"Taliban have not said anything to us, we have just heard from radio. There has been no action here" Farmer in Dai Chopan district, Kunduz (April 2000).

Indications from the year 2000 fieldwork were, therefore, that the one third poppy ban of 1999 and eradication measures by the Taliban had had little, if any, impact in the areas selected for expansion studies. The impact of such policy and action elsewhere would in any case be difficult to isolate from that of the drought on poppy cultivation. However in five out of the nine provinces where 30% or more of farmers reported eradication efforts by the authorities, opium poppy actually increased. Only two of the remaining provinces, Nangahar and Qandahar, decreased poppy by more than the national average of -10%, and in these cases, reported drought losses were high. In Qandahar, where a reduction of 43% in poppy cultivation was estimated in the 2000 AOPS, farmers reported average crop losses due to drought of 49%, whilst in Nangahar 29% losses were reported. These findings tend

to suggest that the impact of the Taliban edict and eradication efforts on poppy cultivation was very limited in 1999/2000 compared to that of the drought. Both the AOPS and the expansion studies do nonetheless indicate that the message from the authorities is getting through to farmers, but that more robust and widespread action is necessary if significant impact is to be achieved. It is also interesting to note that fieldwork for Study 8 *The Role of Opium as a Livelihood Strategy for Returnees* in September 2000 recorded more concern among farmers in Tagab about the July 2000 proclamation of a total opium poppy ban by the Taliban, than was reported by farmers there earlier in the year. The results, however, will be evident in the report of the 2001 AOPS.

“Poppy is not a problem here. The ban only operates where there is a lot of poppy. It should be stopped in the eastern zone.” Farmer in Tagab district, Kapisa (April 2000).

At the time of the 1999 fieldwork, only a few respondents in Shar-e-Safa in Zabul province said they were aware of any restrictions on opium poppy cultivation by any of the local authorities.³⁵ However, 16% of the respondents in districts which the Taliban controlled reported that had there been a ban on opium poppy cultivation, they would have complied with it. In 2000 all respondents in all except two districts, Kunduz and Kalafgan, reported that they were aware of the one third ban on opium cultivation and the total ban intended for the 2000/2001 season. They had learned of the bans either by radio broadcasts or by word of mouth.

In Kalafgan district in Takhar province, where the Northern Alliance is the presumptive authority³⁶, one respondent reported in 1999 that he had heard that the local authorities in Faizabad had dismantled a drug processing laboratory, resulting in a decrease in the farmgate price of opium. However, none of the respondents in Kalafgan were aware of any restrictions on opium poppy cultivation, and this was also found to be the case in 2000. By May 2000, 67% of respondents in Kunduz reported that they were not aware of any restrictions by the authorities on opium poppy cultivation. Some 33% of those interviewed in 1999 indicated that, given the local authorities’ collection of the agricultural tax, known as *ushr*, they would be surprised if the Taliban banned opium poppy cultivation.³⁷ This sentiment was echoed by 7% of respondents who claimed that there would never be a ban on opium poppy cultivation. At the time of the 1999 fieldwork, only 1% of the respondents in Taliban controlled areas believed that a ban would be imposed in the near future whilst a further 17% did not wish to indicate what their reaction would be to the imposition of ban on opium poppy cultivation by the Taliban authorities. Several respondents in both Azro, Arghandab, and Dai Chopan indicated in 2000 that they very much doubted that the Taliban edicts should be taken seriously, because the Taliban were benefiting from *ushr* or *zakat*.

The scale of the task facing those concerned with the eradication of opium poppy in Afghanistan

³⁵ Since the completion of the 1999 fieldwork, an edict was issued by Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, on 29 September 1999, that stipulated that there will be a one third reduction in the level of opium poppy cultivation in the 1999/2000 growing season.

³⁶ As at end October 2000, the Taliban have pushed the Northern Alliance forces out of Takhar and currently hold the capital Taloquan.

³⁷ *Ushr* is a 10% agricultural tax levied against all agricultural commodities.

should not be underestimated. Although there is a tradition in Afghan culture of obedience to acknowledged clan or supreme leaders, it was never likely that edicts alone would bring about a significant reduction in cultivation. Key informants in 2000 have indicated that in several provinces including Qandahar, some farmers would offer resistance to wider efforts by the authorities to destroy poppy fields. Taking a lesson from Pakistan, in 1998 field weapons and well armed soldiers were required to bring poppy farmers in the Nihag, one small side valley of the Panjkora river in Dir district, in line with the government's poppy reduction objectives³⁸. Development assistance, and not enforcement alone, is the key to sustainable opium poppy eradication.

11. The Role of Conditionality in Expansion

After four years of UNDCP working in the district of Shinwar in the eastern region, and Maiwand, Khakrez and Ghorak districts in Qandahar, combined with the increasing priority given to the drugs issue by the international development assistance community, there appears to be a growing awareness amongst the rural population of Afghanistan of interventions aimed at reducing opium poppy cultivation.

In 1998, none of the respondents in the districts of Azro, Qarghai or Mehtarlam were aware of such interventions. Almost three quarters of those interviewed in the eastern region in 1999 however, were conscious of projects aimed at reducing opium poppy cultivation that were undertaken by 'UN agencies', or UNDCP itself. This differs greatly with those interviewed in Shindand, where none of the respondents were aware of any activities, United Nations or otherwise, aimed at reducing opium poppy cultivation. 60% of farmers interviewed in the three Zabul districts in 2000 were aware that "the UN" was working against poppy cultivation in Nangarhar and Qandahar. All year 2000 respondents in provinces adjacent to the core areas of Nangarhar, ie Kapisa, Kabul and Logar reported that they had some knowledge of UN activities against drugs. In the northern region, in the district of Kalafgan, in Takhar province, the majority of respondents (1999 and 2000) reported that they were unaware of UNDCP or UN activities aimed at reducing opium poppy cultivation. In 2000, none of the farmers in the north in Kalafgan or Qala-e-Zal reported that they knew about UN or UNDCP activities against drugs, although a number were aware of the Annual Opium Poppy Survey.

Despite the widespread awareness in the eastern region of a UNDCP presence in Nangarhar and Qandahar, none of the respondents in any year indicated that they were undertaking opium poppy cultivation to attract development assistance from UNDCP or other development agencies. As this Study and others in the series have shown, the complex array of socio-economic, environmental and political processes that influence opium poppy cultivation, and how these vary across different socio-economic, spatial and gender groups, would tend to mitigate against such a simplistic explanation for the increase in illicit drug production in Afghanistan. Although respondents had heard about UNDCP, they were seldom aware of any details of UNDCP's work in the target districts. One farmer had understood that the UN were compensating farmers for opium poppy destroyed by the authorities and several others referred to specific villages or sub-districts such as Ghani Khel in Shinwar, where they knew of a UN presence, but no details of the approach.

³⁸ UNDCP/ Government of Pakistan Dir District Development Project, NWFP, Pakistan.

ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

An Analysis of the Process of Expansion of Opium Cultivation into New Districts in Afghanistan: Strategic Studies 1,5 and 7

Objective: To further UNDCP's understanding of the structural and motivational factors that lie behind the expansion of drug crop production to new areas of cultivation. [*the terms of reference for Study 7 also included a synthesis of the findings of the three phases of fieldwork*]

Summary: Initially this study will seek to interview poppy cultivators in districts where poppy has recently been introduced. Attempts will be made to contact the farmers cultivating poppy in these areas in an effort to further UNDCP's understanding of the process of relocation. Semi- structured interviews will focus on the nature of tenancy arrangements, ethnic or kinship ties, and push-pull factors determining relocation. This work will be undertaken in subsequent years should new areas come under poppy cultivation.

- ! *Initial Target Districts for 1998:* Azro in Logar and Qarghai and Mehtarlam in Laghman province.
- ! *Target Districts for 1999:* Sarobi in Kabul, Tagab in Kapisa, Asadabad in Kunar, and Alishing and Alingar in Laghman. Also follow up interviews should be conducted in Azro in Logar and Qarghai and Mehtarlam in Laghman province to explore the process of expansion in these districts. Interviews in Shindand district in Farah province should also be undertaken if reports of cultivation are found to be true.
- ! *Target districts for 2000:* Argandab, Jaldak, and Dai Chopan in Zabul province. Qala-e- Zal in Kunduz province. Tagab in Kapisa, Azro in Logar, Sarobi in Kabul and Kalafgan in Takhar province. Interviews will be undertaken in new districts and provinces should new areas come under opium poppy cultivation in subsequent years.

Methodology: Due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the locations in which the interviews are taking place emphasis should be on informal interviews. A questionnaire should not be used. Instead the interviewer should focus on a number of key issues discussed in a conversational manner. Notes should not be taken during the interview but should be written up once the interview has finished and the interviewer has departed.

Emphasis should be given to conducting in-depth interviews over a wide geographical area to assist in identifying generic issues that could be explored in other districts during subsequent stages of the study. Priority should be given to interviewing first time cultivators of opium poppy. A minimum of twelve interviews should be undertaken in each district. It is essential that these interviews are conducted over a wide geographical area. Consideration should also be given to interviewing a smaller sample of households who have cultivated opium poppy for two to three years in order to analyse the process of expansion and consolidation of opium poppy in a particular village or location.

KEY ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED

Identify whether: (A) *landowner*; or (B) *sharecropper*?

If Landowner

- i. How much land do they have?
- ii. What crops have they produced in previous years?
- iii. How much land is dedicated to each crop this year? Last year?
- iv. If produced opium poppy in which year/s?
- v. Why have they opted to produce opium poppy this year?
 - ie. What is different about this year from last year?
Agricultural conditions changed?- ie. access to water?
Fragmentation of land?
Relative prices of crops? - ie Wheat v opium poppy
Need for credit? What for?
Approached by individuals to grow opium poppy? - ie Traders or sharecroppers?
- vi. Where did they learn about opium poppy cultivation?
- vii. Opium poppy requires a lot of labour, what area does the labour they require for harvesting come from? Hired? Family?
- viii. Given that this area is a new opium poppy growing area where will they sell their opium?
- ix. Do they intend to grow opium poppy next year? What are reasons for their answer?
- x. What do they include when calculating the profitability of opium poppy?
- xi. Have they heard that the Taliban have imposed a ban on new areas of cultivation?
- xii. Have they heard about UNDCP's activities in other areas of Afghanistan?

If sharecropper

- i. What is their province and district of origin?
- ii. What was the last district in which they sharecropped/rented land?
- iii. What prompted their relocation to here?
- iv. What crops did they produce in previous area?
- v. How much land do they cultivate in this area?
- vi. If they produced opium poppy in previous area? For how many years?
- vii. Where did they learn about opium poppy cultivation?
- viii. Any family/ethnic links between area where previously sharecropped and current area?
- ix. Opium poppy requires a lot of labour, what area does the labour they require for harvesting come from? Hired? Family?
- x. Given that this area is a new opium poppy growing area where will they sell their opium?
- xi. Will they stay in the area or return to previous area?
- xii. Do they intend to grow opium poppy next year? What are reasons for answer?
- xiii. What do they include when calculating the profitability of opium poppy?
- xiv. Have they heard that the Taliban have imposed a ban on new areas of cultivation?
- xv. Have they heard about UNDCP's activities in other areas of Afghanistan?