

## Role and Purpose of the study

What is a common characteristic of poverty reduction and development-oriented drug control in developing countries? Cynical people might answer that both are unfeasible. Are they right?

The 30-page study tries to give a realistic answer to part of the question:

- Is development-oriented drug control a suitable instrument to make progress in poverty reduction? And if yes, how does such a drug control policy look like?
- Which consequences do emerge from this for the practical work in development cooperation, which aspects have to be considered?

To answer these questions the study defines and analyses poverty, drug problems and the characteristics of people confronted with drug problems. This is the basis to deduct possible links of poverty with drug problems. The second part presents the tools for realising the contributions of drug control to poverty reduction and the experiences made so far. The third part draws the conclusion and presents recommendations.



Fotos: Christoph Berg, Susanne Schardt, DOST Foundation

## Links Between Poverty and Drugs

Poverty is a multidimensional problem and goes far beyond the notion of insufficient income. It encompasses other dimensions such as health, political participation, social status, crime and war. Environmental and gender issues are cross-cutting. All dimensions are affected by drug problems (production, consumption, trafficking).

### Poverty can be a cause for drug production

- Drug production areas are typically socio-economical and ecological marginalised areas
- They lack access to land, to markets, to off-farm opportunities, to credit and services.

### ... but also a consequence

- The effect on the household income is unclear but it is definitely a myth that there are no other crop as profitable as drug crops.
- Producers suffer from human rights violations, crime, insecurity, lack of political participation.
- If the development agenda neglects the drug production areas they leave it to people who are trying to solve the problem with violence and an aggravation of the situation is obvious.

### Poverty can be the cause for drug addiction

- Drug consumers come from all walks of life but it is often the poor who try to escape their daily burden through drug consumption.

### ... but even more a consequence

- Once they are addicted a further pauperisation is nearly unavoidable.
- Their health is severely damaged, HIV/AIDS increases, they lose their social and cognitive capacities. Often they are involved in crime and violence. Women are especially affected.

### Drug problems worsen the macro-environment for poverty reduction

- The high returns have never been used for sustainable development but underscore national law and sovereignty.
- Bad governance, organised crime and corruption are consequences. Often terrorist activities are financed (like the ones of the Taliban in Afghanistan).

## Poverty Reduction and Drug Control – Concepts and Approaches

Drug Control, as it is understood by the international drug control community, is not per-se poverty-oriented. The huge challenge is to finetune existing concepts towards the goal of poverty reduction so that (a) the development agenda considers drug problems as part of their work and (b) the “drug control people” become convinced that developmental solutions are often more adequate and in the long run more successful than violent actions. Some elements for pro-poor drug control strategies are already known.

### ... for Alternative Development (AD)

- A participatory poverty assessment should be the beginning of the planning. Special attention should be given to questions of availability of land, credit and labour, to the individual priorities of drug producers (risk-minimising vs. profit-maximising), to the security situation and the role of law enforcement.
- Important aspects (with a pro-poor potential) are improvement in access to land and credit, provision of off-farm income opportunities, the right use of conditionality and law enforcement, an enlargement of the activities to migration areas, a systemic approach.

### ... for the Prevention of Drug Addiction and Substance Abuse

- Drug prevention should be considered as a cross-cutting element and be integrated in ongoing programmes, e.g. in education or health.
- Preventive components /programmes should be non-specific, target-group-oriented, and address the drug abuse problem on an integrated basis.
- Participatory integrating measures are particularly suitable, e.g. peer-to-peer (young people themselves as the promoters) or community based drug abuse control (strengthen self-help capacities within communities or social groups to cope more effectively with drug problems on their own).
- Harm reduction should be part of the strategy.

## Recommendations

### ... on a general level

- Drugs and poverty links should be further analysed, esp. in affected countries
- The development community should be open to acknowledge existing links and correspond accordingly.
- The drug control community should consider AD and prevention as the only suitable tool where poverty is the root cause for drug problems.
- The dialogue between drug control agencies and developmental agencies should be strengthened.

### ... on a national level

- The framework and the need for a national pro-poor drug control strategy should be analysed. The GTZ Drugs and Development Programme offers the tool "Dug Profile Analysis"
- Wherever national poverty reduction strategies (e.g. PRSP) are available, the drug dimension should be integrated. The formulation of national drug control strategies should incorporate the development dimension.
- AD should be part of a policy to strengthen rural development. Pacifying conflicts in rural areas is a huge challenge.
- Demand reduction should be a cross-cutting component in the relevant sectoral policies.

### ... on a local level

- In poor production areas AD programmes should be implemented in priority to law enforcement measures. AD should get sufficient chances to reach a success.
- Prevention measures should be seen as a cross-cutting task and should be integrated into existing development projects. Intersectoral cooperation is indispensable. Harm reduction should be included.
- Specific tools at the interface of drugs and poverty, such as community based drug abuse control should be further developed.



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## Drugs and Poverty

### The Contribution of Development-oriented Drug Control to Poverty Reduction

A Cooperative Study of the  
**Drugs and Development Programme**  
and the  
**Poverty Reduction Project**



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