

Serious and organised crime and livelihoods programmes

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Questions

1. What types of alternative livelihoods/development programmes that address serious and organised crime exist in developing countries, what interventions do they use and what outcomes do they seek to achieve?
2. What does the evidence say about how effective these programmes are?

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1. Summary of main findings

Tackling the effects of serious and organised crime (SOC) on development is not an area that traditionally has received much attention from the international aid community. Arguably, the issue only moved onto the mainstream development agenda with the publication of the World Development Report 2011, facilitating its cross-cutting inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (Reitano and Hunter 2018). This notwithstanding, development work in relation to SOC remains incipient and the field is still being scouted. Among the reasons for this is that the phenomenon of SOC defies clear definition and categorisation (Schultze-Kraft 2016). For the most part, SOC has been framed as a security problem for states, not a development issue. Consequently, policy responses – mostly by governments and multilateral organisations, but sometimes also by civic groups taking justice and armed defence against SOC into their own hands - have focused on law enforcement against, and criminal prosecution and incarceration of, members of crime structures and networks. The evidence on the relationship between SOC and alternative development or livelihoods programmes, and the effect of such programmes, is very limited.

The literature search conducted for this Helpdesk report identified four principal areas of intervention pertaining to (a) alternative development and/or rural livelihoods/development promotion for drug crop producing communities, such as poppy farmers in Afghanistan, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, coca farmers in Colombia and cannabis growers in Morocco; (b) alternative livelihoods promotion for rural populations engaged in wildlife crime, such as illegal hunting and poaching in Uganda and other sub-Saharan African countries; (c) alternative livelihoods promotion for populations at risk of engaging in piracy, particularly in coastal areas in Somalia; and (d) gang violence reduction and citizen security enhancement, such as the so-called 'second-generation' violence prevention and reduction interventions in several Central American states, as well as in Liberia and Afghanistan. The search did not produce any evidence of the existence of policies and programmes that would seek to tackle illegal drug production (processing and refining of plant-based or synthetic illegal drugs), drug trafficking, human trafficking and smuggling, illegal organ trade, gun running and cybercrime, among other types of SOC, by means of alternative livelihoods programmes.

In terms of the effectiveness of the identified interventions, the general picture is one of limited and/or lacking evidence. With respect to programmes geared at promoting **alternative development, alternative livelihoods and rural development in drug crop producing regions in the developing world**, the lack of solid evidence on effectiveness is related to the politically, socially, ideologically and culturally contested nature of current drug policies. Even in the cases of Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, which are generally heralded as successful examples of suppressing opium poppy farming and heroin production, there is no evidence that AD and the promotion of alternative livelihoods has been the main factor contributing to the reduction of, if not an end to, the illicit opium economy. At a very general level, what can be said is that any effectiveness of AD and alternative livelihoods interventions in drug crop producing regions depends on the political, socioeconomic, security and cultural contexts, the type of illicit drug involved and the combination and sequencing of counter-drug enforcement, including (forced) eradication of drug crops, and AD or alternative livelihoods policies. There is no strong evidence that reducing the price differential between illicit and licit crops, with the former usually outcompeting the latter by a wide margin, is enough to incentivise rural populations to cease farming illicit crops. Based on research in Afghanistan and Myanmar, alternative development programming unlinked to broader state-building initiatives is bound to fail. What is more, alternative development/livelihoods programmes in drug crop producing countries can have negative effects. In Afghanistan, for instance, the increased production of staples or high value horticulture, have marginalised the land-poor, leading to changes in land tenure arrangements, the migration of vulnerable groups and the concentration of drug production in more remote and insecure regions.

Regarding **wildlife crime in central and eastern Africa**, there is limited evidence on (a) what causes and drives wildlife crime and (b) what can be achieved with interventions geared at promoting alternative livelihoods among rural populations engaged in or at risk of engaging in wildlife crime. General observations on the effectiveness of interventions geared at address in wildlife crime through alternative livelihoods projects include:

- Building on traditional uses, practices, rules and governance institutions can enhance effectiveness where these are perceived as legitimate and equitable by community members. Livelihood options and ways to benefit from wildlife need to be chosen by community members themselves in accordance with their cultural and socio-economic values, and not imposed by external actors;
- Community members need realistic incentives to support and actively engage in conservation, including anti-poaching. Rights and benefits are both important, though each may be inadequate alone;
- Establishing clear, secure and enforceable rights (including land tenure) for communities to sustainably use, manage and benefit from conservation and wildlife is a fundamental basis for effective community-based wildlife management. Communities need help in securing the transfer of, and respect for, land and resource rights at the national level;
- Effective community governance requires clarity on who constitutes the community doing the managing. Legitimate institutions need to be developed within and by these communities to ensure equitable benefit sharing and effective resource management, based on respect for legitimate traditional institutions where these exist;
- Communities need greater voice in decision-making as well as in the development of policies that affect them. This applies at every level, from local to global.

With respect to **piracy in the Horn of Africa**, there is no systematic evidence on the effectiveness of programmes geared at promoting alternative livelihoods for coastal populations, especially unemployed youth, formerly engaged or at risk of engaging in piracy off the coast of Somalia. The little there is in terms of programme evaluation is centred on monitoring outputs but not establishing outcomes or impact.

Finally, regarding interventions aimed at curbing urban **gang violence in Central America and countries such as Liberia and Afghanistan** the evidence base is again very limited. There is no solid evidence on the effectiveness of 'second-generation' interventions to curb urban gang violence in Central America. Although they have been credited with some modest successes, such as the establishment of 'peace zones' in San Salvador, which were negotiated between the government and gang leaders and brought a temporary decrease in homicides, more preventive second-generation interventions seem to have yielded more rhetorical advances than meaningful reductions in gang violence. With respect to alternative livelihoods-focused interventions in other fragile and violence and crime-affected developing countries, there has been limited experimental research on the violence-reducing effects of job skills training programs in post-conflict and fragile settings. More limited research still explores the effects of these interventions during active conflict or in other crisis-affected environments. Studies from Liberia and Afghanistan find that, alongside skills development, offering financial capital in credit-constrained and fragile environments may lead to reductions in criminal and violent activity, due to higher returns to capital in such settings. In these settings, combining jobs skills training programs with economic incentives—e.g. capital inputs or cash transfers—may be more effective than vocational training alone. However, it is often the case in developing countries that engaging in crime versus legitimate work is not an either/or decision—individuals in these settings often engage in 'portfolios' of work in order to mitigate risks associated with uncertain occupations and

income. As such, while vocational programs may reduce involvement in criminal or violent activities, it is extremely difficult to get people to exit these activities entirely.

Methodology

This Helpdesk report is based on an online literature search, including keyword searches in academic journal indexes (Taylor and Francis, Science Direct, Springer, SAGE and Wiley Online Library) and Google and Google Scholar. The search has been oriented toward identifying scholarly and grey literature sources that address alternative development/livelihoods programmes geared at tackling organised and serious crime issues in developing countries. The search terms included: “alternative livelihoods AND organised crime”; “alternative livelihoods AND “criminal networks”; “alternative livelihoods” AND “wildlife crime”; “alternative livelihoods AND piracy”; “alternative livelihoods” AND “urban gangs”; "alternative development" AND "country name"; "alternative development" AND "drugs policies"; "alternative livelihoods" AND "country name"; "alternative livelihoods" AND "drugs policies"; "illicit crops" AND "economy in country name". The search was informed by the author’s expert knowledge on some of the current debates on the topic.¹ It sought to identify recent research, i.e. works published in the past five years (only one older paper dating back to 2009 has been included), on (a) types of alternative livelihoods/development programmes that address serious and organised crime in developing countries, what interventions are used and what outcomes are sought, and (b) the evidence about how effective these programmes are. The report focuses on countries and regions of primary interest to the UK Government and DFID. References to recent research on alternative development/livelihoods programmes in other regions, especially Latin America, were deliberately minimised. This Helpdesk report is not a full systematic review of the available evidence.

2. Programmes focused on rural populations engaged in illicit drug crop farming

Efforts to provide drug crop farmers in source countries with alternative, licit sources of income have been part of drug control policies since the 1960s. Originally, alternative development (AD) was framed in the rather limited way of ‘crop substitution’. This means that the farming of crops, such as coca and cannabis bush and opium poppies, which are used to produce plant-based drugs scheduled as prohibited substances in the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on

¹ Dr Schultze-Kraft has published extensively on drug and crime policy issues, including the reports ‘Organised crime, violence and development’ (<http://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/organised-crime-violence-development/>), ‘Getting high on impact: the challenge of evaluating drug policy’ (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301868860_Getting_high_on_impact_The_challenge_of_evaluating_drug_policy), ‘Evolution of estimated coca cultivation and cocaine production in South America (Bolivia, Colombia and Peru) and of the actors, modalities and routes of cocaine trafficking to Europe’ (http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/2373/downloads/EDMR2016%20Background%20paper_Schulze-Kraft_Evolution%20of%20estimated%20coca%20cultivation%20and%20cocaine%20production.pdf), ‘Getting real about an illicit external stressor: transnational cocaine trafficking through West Africa’ (<https://www.eldis.org/document/A68398>) and ‘Narcotráfico en América Latina: Un nuevo consenso internacional’ (https://www.jstor.org/stable/20647041?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).

Narcotic Drugs,² including cocaine, cannabis resin and heroin, must be substituted for by licit crops like coffee or cereals. Starting in the 1990s, the concept of AD evolved to include a broader focus on rural development in drug crop producing areas and the generation and protection of alternative livelihoods for rural communities (Buxton 2015). In the terminology of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the official drug control community, alternative development is a lawful, viable and sustainable alternative to illicit cultivation of drug crops. Interventions are considered sustainable when they are economically viable, with practical business plans, ecologically sound, socially just, culturally and anthropologically appropriate, and based on a scientific approach that incorporates the farmers in a people-centered approach (Schultze-Kraft and Befani 2014).

Types and aims of interventions

Broadly speaking, three types of AD programmes have been implemented by governments and multilateral and bilateral drug control and (some) development organisations in drug crop producing countries in Latin America (mostly coca in the Andes), Africa (mostly cannabis and khat) and South East Asia (mostly opium poppies):

- *Crop and income substitution*: the longest-standing type of AD intervention dating back to the early 1960s, crop and income substitution seeks to directly replace illicit crops with alternative licit crops. This approach includes the implementation of different alternatives, such as promoting non-agricultural opportunities and enhancing the profit of alternative crops with certification schemes, among others (García Yi 2014; see also Buxton 2015, Schultze-Kraft and Befani 2014).
- *Integrated rural development (IRD)*: first adopted in the 1980s in countries like Thailand, Laos and Vietnam as well as Bolivia and Peru, IRD addresses a broad range of local social, economic, and environmental problems simultaneously. More of a ‘macro’ strategy than relatively limited crop and income substitution projects and geared at mainstreaming AD into national and regional rural development plans, the approach is expensive and tends to require significant international staff and a large complement of local counterparts (García-Yi 2014; see also Buxton 2015).
- *Mainstream development*: this approach seeks to embed drug control activities within regional and national level development programmes. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has nominally endorsed this approach for its AD interventions but in practice many of their efforts mostly continue to resemble crop and income substitute approaches (García-Yi 2014:75-76).

Among the early AD interventions figure, for instance, a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-sponsored programme in the Rif region in Morocco implemented in 1960, in which “seeds and fertilizers were distributed to assist farmers to switch [from cannabis] to other crops, while studies were undertaken to convert kif [i.e. cannabis] cultivation to other crops, [ironically] also to tobacco (Blickman 2017:10). This was followed, in 1961, by the launch of the “United Nations and the FAO [...] rural development programme, Développement Economique et Rural Du Rif Occidental (DERRO), which although not specifically targeting cannabis cultivation, was intended to develop the area and counter deforestation, erosion and migration” (Blickman 2017:10).

In other regions, cases of AD programmes have included “several AD projects in Laos (i.e. the Shifting Cultivation Stabilization Pilot Project) and Thailand (i.e. the Royal Northern Project), which aimed at “development first and opium suppression second” (Windle 2018:371). In Vietnam, “development-oriented opium suppression projects were eventually mainstreamed into national development policy” (Windle 2018:371). In Afghanistan, the government with the

² UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1961_en.pdf)

financial and logistical backing from the UK and US governments introduced the Helmand Food Zone in 2008. “This initiative consisted of three activities: a counternarcotics information campaign aimed at deterring planting [of opium poppies], distribution of wheat seed and fertilizer, and eradication [of opium poppies]” (Mansfield 2018a). In the Andean region, where basically all of the world’s coca leaf is grown, the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) operated an organic coffee certification AD project. “The Promotion of Organic Coffee Cultivation and Marketing in Coca Regions Project (1994-2001) aimed to: [...] help [...] farmers in coca cultivation regions [who farmed both coca leaf and coffee, with the former crop achieving a consistently higher price on local markets than the latter] gradually to switch their coffee crops to organic coffee. It also advised them on processing and marketing the organic coffee, thus helping them to sustainably increase their income, and create a stable economic alternative to coca cultivation. The project operated in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Cauca regions of Colombia; in the Selva Central of Peru, and in the northern Yungas are of Bolivia” (García-Yi 2014:79). UNODC has also been active in supporting AD projects implemented by the governments of Peru, Colombia and Bolivia, including a project in the upper Tambopata valley in Peru, “one of [the country’s] most remote and difficult to access Amazon rainforest areas”, geared at replacing coca crops with alternative crops such as coffee (García-Yi 2014: 79-81).

While intuitively appealing and representing what could be termed the ‘soft’ and ‘developmental’ side of drug supply control strategies, policies designed to support alternative development and livelihoods have not escaped the wider controversy over the ultimate goals of drug policy and the theories of change that underpin interventions (Schultze-Kraft and Befani 2014). At the heart of the problem is that AD and alternative livelihoods programmes in drug crop producing regions are conceived as being part of the broader international counter-narcotics effort geared at suppressing the illegal production, trade and use of substances scheduled as illegal and harmful in the 1961 UN Convention against Narcotic Drugs. Promoting AD is therefore not primarily aimed at improving the livelihoods of impoverished rural populations but is rather seen as necessary to curb the production of prohibited plant-based psychotropic substances. In this respect, British drug policy expert David Mansfield, who is known for his empirical work in Afghanistan, observes that “the change model that underpins alternative development is [...] far from clear with many development donors perceiving it as intimately tied to coercive measures such as eradication and efforts to make development assistance contingent on reductions in drug crop cultivation, so called ‘conditionality.’ In Afghanistan, many development donors, such as DFID, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) argued such an approach would be counterproductive; [even] USAID, [which is not known for being critical of making alternative development/livelihoods promotion aid contingent on the prior eradication of illicit crops] went as far as to say it would be “self-defeating” (Mansfield 2018: 158).

“There is a need to move away”, continues Mansfield, “from what are often rather economic reductionist understandings of drug crop cultivation and develop a much deeper understanding of those who cultivate and trade illegal drug crops and how they shaped and are shaped by the political economy of the places they inhabit. [...] It is also important to recognise the different roles these crops play in the household economy and how this impacts on the allocation of both labour and land. [...] The result is that for the vast majority of farmers in Afghanistan, wheat is a staple and not a cash crop [such as opium poppies – or coca leaf and organic certified coffee in Peru], and as such the presentation of the gross returns (or even the net returns) on the two crops is misleading. For most farmers, an increase in the price of wheat does not result in a shift to commercial wheat production, even if the net returns on wheat production surpass those of opium. Instead, high wheat prices are seen by farmers as bringing about an increase in the cost of food that needs to be managed by the household. This is especially the case where there are concerns over wheat imports from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, and where violence and conflict make it difficult to travel and purchase wheat at the local market (Mansfield 2018:163-164).

Effectiveness

Owing to insufficient evidence and the politically, socially and ideologically contested nature of current drug policies, there is no consensus on the effectiveness of programmes that aim at promoting AD, alternative livelihoods and rural development in drug crop producing regions (Schultze-Kraft and Befani 2014). This is borne out in the research on AD and alternative livelihoods interventions in drug crop producing countries as varied as Afghanistan (Mansfield 2018), Morocco (Blickman 2017), Peru (García-Yi), Colombia (Rincón-Ruiz 2016), Kenya, Nigeria and Lesotho (Carrier and Klantschnig 2016). Even in the cases of Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, which are generally heralded as successful examples of suppressing opium poppy farming and heroin production, there is no evidence that AD and the promotion of alternative livelihoods has been the main factor contributing to the reduction of, if not an end to, the illicit opium economy. In general terms, what can be said is that any effectiveness of AD and alternative livelihoods interventions in drug crop producing regions depends on the political, socioeconomic, security and cultural contexts, the type of illicit drug involved and the combination and sequencing of counter-drug enforcement, including (forced) eradication of drug crops, and AD or alternative livelihoods policies. There is no strong evidence that reducing the price differential between illicit and licit crops, with the former usually outcompeting the latter by a wide margin, is enough to incentivise rural populations to cease farming illicit crops (García-Yi 2014; Mansfield 2018; Windle 2018).

In this regard, Windle observes that Thailand is “one of a small handful of countries to have largely stopped farmers from growing opium. After decades of cultivation, Thailand succeeded—after initial policy experimentation and false moves—in suppressing production in the late 1990s and early 2000s through a policy centered primarily on alternative development, which addressed the structural drivers of opium farming. Alternative development was supported by law enforcement (primarily negotiated eradication) and sequenced after state extension [i.e. establishing and/or expanding the presence and basic service reach of the state in remote rural areas] and the resolution of the highland insurgency. [...] Thailand’s success boils down to the establishment of state authority in formerly isolated areas and the extension of incentives to farmers, followed by the creation of a high-risk environment for illicit drug crop cultivation and production” (Windle 2016:8-9; see also Anderson 2017). Therefore, “the Thai intervention was essentially one of ‘state extension through the administration of development-orientated projects into isolated highland areas of Northern Thailand. [...] After identifying the limitations of more coercive approaches, eradication and law enforcement were sequenced after the state had increased its authority in opium farming areas” (Windle 2018: 371).

Highlighting the lack of evidence that opium poppy farming was primarily rolled-back because of the promotion of substitute licit crops, Anderson notes that “historical success of alternative development in Northern Thailand and finds that opium poppy cultivation was not drastically reduced because substitute crops earned the same income as opium: nothing can equal the price of opium to smallholder farmers, especially those without land tenure and the consecutive inability to securely invest in longer-term crops. The near-total reduction in opium cultivation, however, was aided by much more than new crops and price guarantees. [...] These findings [from northern Thailand] indicate that alternative development programming unlinked to broader state-building initiatives in Afghanistan, Myanmar and other opium poppy-producing areas will fail, because short-term, high-yield, high value, imperishable opium will remain the most logical choice for poor farmers, especially given the lack of a farmer’s vested interest in the state which compels them to reduce their income whilst offering them no other protections or services” (Anderson 2017:48-49).

These findings are confirmed by research in other south-east and south Asian countries, such as Laos, Vietnam and Afghanistan. According to Windle, “state extension was a stated objective in several alternative development projects in Laos, including the Palavek Alternative Development Project, the Xieng Khouang Highland Development Programme and Nonghet Alternative Development Project Programme. Furthermore, both Laos and Vietnam used opium suppression

as a justification for expanding existing policies designed to further assimilate highland minorities within the dominant lowland culture and politics, including the dovetailing of opium suppression with resettlement of highland peoples into lowland areas. For example, a 1994 Laotian policy to resettle 60% of highlanders into new or existing lowland villages was justified by parallel objectives of extending the state into formerly isolated areas and, reducing poverty and opium production” (Windle 2018:370-71).

In Afghanistan, writes Mansfield, “it has not been unusual to hear the argument from development donors and practitioners, such as USAID and its contractors that any support to legal on-farm, off-farm and non-farm income will lead to a contraction of the illegal economy, or at least provide an increased portfolio of legal options that farmers can pursue. [However], in practice both illegal drug crop cultivation and the legal economy can grow in parallel and it is not uncommon for investments in physical infrastructure such as irrigation, and agricultural inputs such as fertiliser to be used to increase the amount of land under opium poppy and its yields. Other interventions, some of them ostensibly designed to deliver development outcomes, such as the increased production of staples or high value horticulture, have marginalised the land-poor, leading to changes in land tenure arrangements, the migration of vulnerable groups and the concentration of drug production in more remote and insecure regions” (Mansfield 2018:158).

Furthermore, “there are many examples of alternative development, particularly in Afghanistan, where the strategic focus of the programme has been to provide largesse and political favour to elites so that they will in turn coerce the rural population to abandon or reduce opium poppy cultivation.³ The kind of pro-poor development outcomes that donors like DFID or the World Bank might support are lost, or merely an externality of a programme primarily designed to leverage reductions in levels of opium poppy cultivation, much of which is only short lived (Mansfield 2018:158)

3. Programmes focused on rural populations engaged or at risk of engaging in wildlife crime

Wildlife crime has been defined as “any harm to (or intent to harm or subsequent trade of) non-domesticated wild animals, plants and fungi, in contravention of national and international laws and conventions” (Harrison et al. 2015). In recent years, this illegal activity has become an issue of considerable and growing international concern (see Harrison et al. 2015; Biggs et al. 2017; Duffy et al. 2016). In this respect, it has been observed that the “increase in awareness [of wildlife crime] is partly due to the recent and rapid rise in illegal wildlife trade [IWT], and partly because of the increasing militarisation with which wildlife crime is carried out in some high-profile areas, such as the poaching of elephants for ivory and rhinos for horn in Central and Eastern Africa. While poverty is often cited as a driver of wildlife crime, this is not necessarily true. Additionally, wildlife crime can have negative impacts on poor people, either because their natural resource base is being depleted, or through insecurity introduced by wildlife criminals. Responses to wildlife crime can also have disproportionate impacts on local people, who can be easy targets for law enforcement agencies. However, there is a dearth of evidence in the literature which would enable the relationships between poverty and wildlife crime to be empirically assessed” (Harrison et al. 2015:8).

³ ‘Largesse’ refers to the disbursement of large amounts of agricultural and alternative development funding in drug crop producing countries. In Afghanistan, for instance, “between FY 2002 and FY 2012 USAID provided approximately \$2.46 billion for agricultural and alternative development funding to improve production, increase access to markets, and provide alternatives to poppy cultivation.673 Of that, USAID has obligated and disbursed \$54 million in direct assistance to build capacity at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) (SIGAR 2014:169).

Typical policy responses to wildlife crime have been increasing the costs associated with engaging in it, mostly through state-led and/or private law enforcement. However, “top down (and particularly militarized) enforcement strategies frequently not only change the costs of engaging in IWT but can produce a range of other (sometimes unanticipated) impacts that can collectively undermine conservation incentives. Where enforcement efforts are upholding local rights, providing security and/or defending a community’s assets they will strengthen community benefits from conservation and may well increase support for it. But poorly directed or heavy-handed efforts can impose unjustified restrictions on people’s use of wildlife resources, infringe rights, and undermine the benefits that local people can gain from conservation and wildlife protection. Interventions justified by cracking down on IWT can, for example, curtail livelihood benefits from legitimate use of wildlife through subsistence use, trade, or trophy hunting programmes. Heavy-handed enforcement can further involve unjust persecution, harassment and human rights abuses by authorities, increasing the perceived costs of living alongside wildlife” (Cooney et al. 2017:371-72).

Given the shortcomings and risks associated with (militarised) law enforcement responses to wildlife crime, an alternative strategy is providing ‘alternative livelihoods’ for local communities. “The most commonly cited rationale for these interventions is that by providing an alternative source of income they reduce dependence on income from IWT. In some cases, the ability to benefit from alternative livelihoods interventions is made conditional on wildlife conservation. In these cases, the interventions serve to increase the costs of engaging in IWT. However, the evidence for the effectiveness of alternative livelihoods approaches (in terms of delivering conservation outcomes) is scant. In particular, it is unclear if the provision of benefits from alternative livelihoods interventions replaces or simply supplements IWT benefits. There are some examples in which alternative livelihoods have been used as one component of a package of interventions to tackle IWT or where ‘reformed poachers associations’ have been established on the premise of provision of alternative sources of income-earning opportunities (Duffy et al. 2016:370-71).

Types and aims of interventions

Creating alternative sources of income is a strategy advocated to reduce local engagement in IWT. For example, “in the Ruvuma Elephant Project implemented by the PAMs Foundation, local people are supported to grow chillies that not only act as a deterrent for elephants and so help reduce human– wildlife conflict but also provide an income-generating opportunity through the development of small enterprises selling chili jam. Such alternative-livelihood interventions are focused on reducing livelihood dependency on wildlife (also known as decoupling). A wide variety of such interventions have been used in conservation initiatives, including tailoring and barbering, rickshaw pulling, and bicycle repairing. The intended output is that the community has a greater diversity of livelihood options. The anticipated outcomes are that communities depend less on wildlife as a source of revenue and so have less need to poach. However, the evidence base for the effectiveness of such alternative-livelihood interventions is patchy and weak” (Biggs et al. 2017:9). According to Dilys Roe et al. (2014), among the reasons for this lack of evidence about the effectiveness of alternative livelihoods projects in relation to wildlife crime is that “their objectives vary a great deal, and there is no single accepted definition of what constitutes an alternative livelihood project. In addition, very little is known about what impacts, if any, alternative livelihoods projects have had on biodiversity conservation, as well as what determines the success or failure of these interventions” (Roe et al. 2014:1).

This evidence gap notwithstanding, it is held that it is important to engage rural communities that neighbour or live with wildlife as key partners in tackling IWT. While a framework to guide such community engagement is lacking, a key assumption is that “the communities that are close to wildlife are key to combating IWT. By virtue of their proximity to and knowledge of wildlife, they are well placed to participate in and support IWT. The same characteristics mean, however, that they are equally well placed to detect, report on, and help prevent IWT. Such communities are diverse. Socioeconomic, political, legal, and environmental factors influence the nature of

interactions with wildlife; hence, perceptions of and attitudes toward IWT differ (Biggs et al. 2015). These differences affect the types of community-engagement interventions that are likely to be effective” (Biggs et al. 2017:6-7).

However, “current understanding of illegal hunting is hampered by a lack of data. Moreover, it is frequently approached primarily as a conservation concern rather than an issue of poverty and development. Yet, the argument that it results from poverty is widely used” (Duffy et al.:16). It is therefore important to “move on from this characterization and recognize the complexities of motivations and political-economic contexts so that illegal wildlife hunting can be addressed in a more effective, socially and environmentally just manner. [...] Illegal wildlife hunting may not simply be a way of averting want and deprivation, it may be a means of seeking and affirming identity, status, lifeways, custom, and local prestige” (Duffy et al. 2016:16).

Examples of recent efforts aimed at promoting alternative livelihoods for rural populations engaged or at risk of engaging in wildlife crime in several African countries include the interventions implemented by the Uganda Wildlife Authority and other organisations in Uganda (Harrison et al. 2015) and a ten-year programme (2010-2020) of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) geared at protecting biodiversity in the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) region spanning five southern African countries, Tanzania (Serengeti and the Selous national parks) and Central Africa.

The interventions in Uganda combine law enforcement with regulated resource access, revenue sharing from tourism and sport hunting, the establishment of reformed poachers’ associations and conservation education (Harrison et al. 2015). Based on an assessment of the socio-economic enabling factors and the technicalities of ivory and rhino horn trafficking, the BMZ programme, which is implemented by GIZ, identifies the following areas of strategic intervention were identified (Global Initiative Against Organised Crime/ SWP 2014):

- Strengthen and support the national capacity for management and governance of the protected areas, including through the use of technology;
- Provide alternative livelihoods and incentives for local communities to engage in preventing poaching;
- Work across borders to ensure a uniform and collaborative approach to protect the conservation areas;
- Build the capacity of a range of security actors, from wardens to law enforcement, the police and the judiciary;
- Address corruption facilitating the poaching and transportation of illegally sourced environmental commodities;
- Raise awareness and attempt to address demand in the main market countries in Asia consuming ivory and rhino products, based on analysis of the factors driving demand;
- Support international cooperation and dialogue between the affected African and Asian countries.

Effectiveness

Overall, there is limited evidence on (a) what causes and drives wildlife crime and (b) what can be achieved with interventions geared at promoting alternative livelihoods among rural populations engaged in or at risk of engaging in wildlife crime. According to Cooney et al. (2017), “so-called “alternative livelihood” initiatives are often deployed as a mechanism to reduce unsustainable and/or illegal use of wildlife by indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). However, the evidence-base for the effectiveness of these initiatives is very limited. Many suffer from poor design, and outcomes can even undermine conservation in the long term” (Cooney et al. 2018:10). Among the pitfalls Rosie Cooney et al. identify in this respect is “elite capture (the inequitable capture of benefits by more powerful individuals) [of alternative livelihoods programmes], which is a constant threat that can undermine the potential engagement of the

community as a whole. Communities are made up of individuals with different priorities and motivations, and interventions need to understand these in order to target the right people. Including women as direct beneficiaries and key stewards of natural resources is critical” (Cooney et al. 2018:10). Based on a review of the extant literature,⁴ the authors offer the following insights for policy:

- “Building on traditional uses, practices, rules and governance institutions can enhance effectiveness where these are perceived as legitimate and equitable by community members. Livelihood options and ways to benefit from wildlife need to be chosen by community members themselves in accordance with their cultural and socio-economic values, and not imposed by external actors. This also applies to enforcement interventions – these will be more effective where they are “co-created”, i.e. where communities have a say in the setting of rules and penalties for breaking them, where traditional authorities are respected, and relations of trust between the enforcement authorities and communities have been built. Effective enforcement engaged communities: two sides of the same coin. Effective enforcement against ITW and community engagement can – and should – be mutually reinforcing. In any setting, good enforcement relies critically on support from communities, particularly through the provision of intelligence. On the other hand, communities need strong and reliable backup when their interests or resources are threatened, and it would endanger them to combat such threats themselves. Currently, however, enforcement is often poorly targeted and ineffective. It is often focused on communities and individuals who gain only a tiny fraction of the profits from ITW, are battling acute subsistence needs, and who are unaware of the extent or impact of ITW, while “kingpins” or other powerful players go unpunished.
- Community members need realistic incentives to support and actively engage in conservation, including anti-poaching. Rights and benefits are both important, though each may be inadequate alone. Empowerment of communities to manage their own resources through strengthened land and resource rights can be a strong motivating force. The overall benefits from conservation need to outweigh the costs of conserving it. This is particularly challenging given the high payoffs (to a few) of high-value ITW. Although benefits need not necessarily be financial, where people are facing acute subsistence needs – or where living with wildlife imposes significant costs – financial incentives may be critical.
- Establishing clear, secure and enforceable rights (including land tenure) for communities to sustainably use, manage and benefit from conservation and wildlife is a fundamental basis for effective community-based wildlife management. Communities need help and support in securing the transfer of, and respect for, land and resource rights at the

⁴ “The review first addresses the large and well-established body of literature on community-based approaches to wildlife management, covering three decades of experience in this field, and draws out key lessons learned and best practices. However, the recent upsurge of high-value ITW has brought new dynamics and implications for conservation. The review therefore goes on to consider the limited literature in recent years specifically addressing community involvement in tackling ITW in the context of the current “crisis”. The lessons from this experience, particularly on the factors that facilitate or constrain effective CWM, are highly relevant to the current debate on ITW. Yet, these lessons appear to have been overlooked in the urgency to find quick-fix solutions to a complex problem. Indeed, the three decades of literature on CWM is remarkably consistent in the lessons it highlights and the policy prescriptions it provides. This begs the question as to why these lessons are not being heeded. The answer may lie in the political nature of conservation and in the power of the vested interests that benefit from maintaining the status quo rather than embracing reform. UNEA could add value to the debate on communities and ITW not by reinventing the wheel and making recommendations that have been made numerous times before, but by encouraging Member States to take heed of the lessons already learned and seek to implement them. As one of the reports we review points out, “democracy and sustainability are two sides of the same coin” (Nelson, 2010). That is to say, the crucial political and governance reforms required for CWM are only likely to happen when communities are able to demand their rights. For this they need to be organized and mobilized, and enabled to have a “voice” (Cooney et al. 2018:13-14).

national level. International restrictions imposed via multilateral agreements or import restrictions should be based on very careful consideration of how these will affect community wildlife management at the local level. Policies often ignore the benefits of using land for wildlife, and favour agricultural, extractive or other commercial development. This drives loss of wildlife and can restrict community rights and interests.

- Effective community governance requires clarity on who constitutes the community doing the managing. Legitimate institutions need to be developed within and by these communities to ensure equitable benefit sharing and effective resource management, based on respect for legitimate traditional institutions where these exist. These power structures must be accountable to the community. Attention must be paid to understanding the diverse and heterogeneous groups within communities and how power and benefits are shared.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, communities need greater voice in decision-making as well as in the development of policies that affect them. This applies at every level, from local to global. Despite well-established policy commitments on the importance of IPLCs in conserving wildlife, IPLCs have little or no influence in conservation and wildlife management decision-making at the national level. At international level their influence is highly variable – from well-integrated to virtually absent” (Cooney et al. 2018: 8-11)

4. Programmes focused on populations engaged or at risk of engaging in piracy

Piracy off the coast of Somalia in the Horn of Africa has become a major international concern since it started manifesting more prominently in the mid-2000s, when it was prompted by prowling and illegal fishing by foreign vessels. Over the years incidents of piracy increased with more youth joining in as in-flow of large amounts of cash began to pour in from activities that were assumed by young men as lucrative and profitable. Piracy is often seen as closely linked to poverty and high youth unemployment rates, especially in remoter coastal and adjacent hinterland districts of Somalia where piracy lords can hide and attract new recruits. In 2010, it was estimated that the cost of piracy to the international community ranged between US\$4.9- US\$8.3 billion (UNDP 2015). Piracy has been a lucrative business but at the same time has brought about a host of negative socio-economic consequences, including increased sex-workers, increased use of *Khat* and other narcotics which have led to increased crime and diseases, including increasing vulnerability to HIV Aids in coastal communities (UNDP 2015).

In 2013, the number of reported incidents of piracy off the coast of Somalia declined sharply, with a total of 17 attacks in the first 9 months, compared to 99 attacks in the same period during 2012 (UNDP 2015). This is attributed to measures including improved international and regional cooperation on counter-piracy efforts. However, piracy remains a very real threat and ships are still unable to transit peacefully off the coast of Somalia. According to the UNDP Alternative Livelihoods to Piracy Somalia project (see below), this threat is likely to remain as long as local communities in coastal areas are unable to provide alternative livelihoods opportunities for unemployed youth. In effect, piracy activities have been shifting from one coastal area to another depending on the pressure exerted on pirates by the local authorities and communities as well as increased livelihood activities for youth in the areas abandoned by pirates.

Types and aims of interventions

Interventions geared at tackling piracy off the coast of Somalia through the building of alternative livelihoods for coastal populations (especially youth) formerly engaged or at risk of engaging in piracy have generally focused on promoting local economic development, job creation, vocation training and social rehabilitation. The underlying assumption of these projects is that vulnerable and poor coastal populations, especially unemployed youngsters, engage in piracy because of

the socioeconomic hardship and poverty they experience. Among the projects that have been implemented in the past years in this area are the UNDP project Alternative Livelihoods to Piracy in Somalia, a Norwegian Church Aid project on addressing piracy in Somalia and the joint UN/FAO/EU Coastal Communities against Piracy (CCAP) project.

UNDP Alternative Livelihoods to Piracy in Somalia⁵: In 2013, UNDP Somalia and the Consortium of Shipping Industry Donor Companies jointly established a project intended to strengthen community resilience against piracy through local economic development, job creation and support for micro and small entrepreneurs - particularly youth and other vulnerable groups - in the piracy 'hot spots' of Puntland and Central Somalia. Implementation commenced in March 2013 for a period of 18 months with a total budget of USD \$1 Million. While these resources - coupled with additional funds from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office - are helping to combat piracy in Adado, Abudwak, Eyl, Gara'ad, Hafun, Bander Bayle and South Galkayo, there is considerable unmet demand for support to vulnerable communities, including youth at risk of becoming pirates - in other coastal areas of Puntland and Central Somalia.

The intervention is focused on three districts: two in Puntland and one in the Central Region. The two in Puntland are Alola and Bargal, while the one in the Central Region is Balanbal and adjacent towns. All these areas were either piracy hot spots or have been heavily affected by piracy related activities and still remain vulnerable because of limited economic opportunities, high youth unemployment rates and poor infrastructure. The project aims to combat long-term unemployment in the target areas through the provision of social rehabilitation actions, employable skills training, entrepreneurship trainings, provision of in-kind micro grants to entrepreneurs, start-up tools to young people, and the rehabilitation of productive and social infrastructures through 'cash for work' schemes.

Social rehabilitation activities are incorporated into this project in all three areas where target youth are given the opportunity to benefit from the rehabilitation program as part and parcel of a full-fledged economic empowerment program. Simultaneously with the social rehabilitation training, the target youth is engaged in the long-term employment program through the employable skills training program including various vocational skills and micro-business management training to help the beneficiaries set up their own micro-enterprises.

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) project⁶: Piracy has plagued the Puntland region of Somalia for many years starting from the mid-2000s, and those most affected have been unemployed young men who are most likely to be recruited into piracy. NCA, together with partner the Garowe Vocational Training Centre (GVTC), has sought to contribute to ending piracy by initiating the alternative livelihoods to piracy project, targeting this unemployed and uneducated group. 700 youth who were former pirates, and who previously were engaged in piracy and youth at risk who had lost their livelihood (fishing) due to piracy along the coastal areas of Puntland, were targeted through this project during the period 2011-2014. 400 youths were enrolled into a 3 months vocational training at GVTC where they undertook training in masonry, electricity, carpentry etc. Another 300 youths were enrolled in business skills training for a period of one month.

⁵ http://www.so.undp.org/content/somalia/en/home/operations/projects/hiv_aids/environment-and-natural-resources-mangement-project111.html

⁶ <https://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/contentassets/3147be4c564d45c19290e7a9f12db86f/kirkens-nodhjelp-somalia-results-one-pager-2015.pdf>

EU/FAO/Somalia⁷: In 2016, the Somali government, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Union (EU) launched a joint project to support coastal communities and help them wean off piracy. The project aims at promoting economic opportunities for young people living in coastal communities in north-eastern and central areas of Somalia. Under the Coastal Communities against Piracy (CCAP) project, hundreds of young residents are receiving training on using new fishing vessels, fish product processing, fodder production and others. According to the UN and the EU, creating long-term jobs for youth in fishing community is a key strategy for preventing piracy and reducing temptations to engage in maritime crime. The prevention and fight against piracy cannot be achieved just by strengthening regional coordination and capacity for maritime security, but instead must be supported by creating alternative livelihoods and economic opportunities for groups more at risk of engaging in illegal activities.

The project builds on other FAO activities in the fisheries and livestock sectors, such as the deployment of FADs (Fishing Aggregating Devices) along Somalia's coastline in 2015 and a boat building programme that is making low-cost, high quality, efficient and safe fishing boats available to fishing communities for the first time for many years. Almost 200 young people from coastal communities in Puntland, Galmudug and Mogadishu will benefit from the use of new fishing vessels and receive technical training to increase the catches, reduce costs and better manage vital marine resources. More than 200 young men and women will receive training and mentoring support in handling and processing of fish and fish products and management and operation of fish handling facilities. Over 75 youths will benefit from support in fodder production and another 440 youth will be involved in related cash-for-work activities. At the institutional level, 18 individual fishing co-operatives and the Hibo Co-operative umbrella organization will benefit from a structured training and mentoring programme to improve their services to the fishing community.

Effectiveness

There is no systematic evidence on the effectiveness of the referenced programmes geared at promoting alternative livelihoods for coastal populations, especially unemployed youth, formerly engaged or at risk of engaging in piracy off the coast of Somalia. An evaluation of the Norwegian Church Aid project provides the following insights, which are, however, entirely focused on project output achievement, not impact.⁸

- Alternative livelihood targeting piracy is embryonic and an innovative idea that NCA should seriously and consistently promote. The world all over is concerned and is in dilemma on how to combat the problem. NCA has come up with the non-violent strategy anchored on the religion which hitherto, although gradually, has proved its efficacy. More gains are expected as the stakeholders expand their coverage.
- In collaboration between GVTC and a private company providing electricity to Garowe - the Nugal Electrical Company (NEC) and facilitated by NCA, a tailor-made electrician course curriculum was developed to ensure that what graduates learnt met the company's labour demand. As a result of this, about 20 of the graduates from the electricity training at GVTC have been employed at NEC and currently there are 12 of

⁷ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-11/10/c_135818028.htm

⁸ <https://www.norad.no/globalassets/import-2162015-80434-am/www.norad.no-ny/filarkiv/ngo-evaluations/somalia-programme-activities-in-gedo-puntland-and-mogadishu-final-report.pdf>

them still working with NEC. After vocational training, 400 other students who were trained in other skills were given a start-up kit which contained the minimum tools required to help them set up their own enterprises. As confirmed by end of phase one ALP evaluation report, 60% of the vocational skills graduates i.e. those who did not go formal employment, have managed to start their own businesses in their area of expertise. The business skills training (BST) graduates were given a start-up grant of 500 USD and the evaluation report confirmed that 75% of the 300 BST graduates have started their own re-tail shops especially in Garowe IDP camps where there is large population who depend on shops to buy food. These youths are now useful members of Puntland society, who are now earning a decent income and taking care of their families and wider society. They earn an average of 150 USD per month from their businesses and this has kept them away from piracy and human trafficking business across the red sea which attract idle youths in Puntland. These youths are now not only able to support their families, but they are accepted and respected members of the community.

5. Programmes focused on violence prevention and reduction among urban youth gangs engaged in a range of criminal activities

In the past fifteen years, urban violence has become a major preoccupation of policymakers, planners and development practitioners in cities around the world. States routinely seek to contain such violence through repression, as well as through containment of crime at the periphery of metropolitan centres. Yet, urban violence is a highly heterogeneous phenomenon. Robust state-led responses tend to overlook and conceal the underlying factors shaping the emergence of urban violence, as well as the motivations and means of so-called violence entrepreneurs. Among the most notorious groups currently engaged in urban violence are the Central American gangs (locally known as *pandillas* and *maras*). In the last years, the type of urban violence committed by these groups has seen a qualitative transformation. Central America serves as a transit point for at least 80 percent of all cocaine shipments between the Andean region and North America. There is an increasing amount of evidence suggesting that the involvement of local gang members in drug trafficking and dealing is leading to both types of gangs evolving towards more violent behaviour patterns (Jütersonke et al. 2009).

Government responses to gang violence and crime have transitioned from 'iron fist' law enforcement interventions in the 2000s to programmes that target 'youth at risk' by means of a range of policies not primarily focused on law enforcement, criminal prosecution and incarceration of gang members. "The opening salvo of the veritable 'war on gangs' underway in Central America was El Salvador's adoption of a 'Mano Dura' (Iron Fist) policy in July 2003. A harbinger of repressive approaches to gang control, the Mano Dura approach advocated the immediate imprisonment (for up to five years) of youths as young as 12 who displayed gang-related tattoos or flashed gang signs in public" (Jütersonke et al. 2009:13). However, these heavy-handed law and order policies did not prove effective and risked exacerbating gang violence and human rights violations. In Central America, "policing efforts that address social phenomena such as youth gangs and organised crime exclusively through violent repressive strategies do not work. In the best of cases, such strategies are not sustainable, merely displacing violence from one part of the city to another (Arévalo de León et al. 2016). Community-oriented forms of policing as well as targeted hotspot policing interventions in the US and/or Colombia and Brazil too have been found to have little effect on levels of urban crime and violence (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action: 2018).

Regarding the impact of community-oriented policing approaches, one important challenge that has been identified is that "the nature of this approach varies widely. It may range from initiatives to simply bring the police into closer contact with communities to more strategic efforts to create

partnerships between communities and the police to reduce disorder and deter and solve crimes. A 2015 review of 25 studies on community-oriented policing (of which only one was a Randomized Control Trial) [and most of which referred to cases in the US, not developing countries] found no effects on crime and violence, but improved public perceptions regarding police performance and disorder (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action:2). A 2016 study (based on a Randomized Control Trial) of hotspot policing interventions in Bogotá (Colombia) revealed that “more intensive policing or municipal services alone had small direct effects on crime, but the combination of both together on the same blocks substantially reduced crime. An analysis of displacement effects nevertheless suggests that these interventions pushed crime onto neighbouring streets. Property crime was more likely to be displaced than violent crime (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action:4). In Brazil, Police Pacifying Units (UPPs) were assigned to provide a permanent increased police presence in favelas in Rio de Janeiro and encouraged to develop more positive relations with residents. Around the same time, the city introduced a “pay-for-performance” incentive scheme that paid rewards to all units in the city that were able to keep homicides, car theft, and street robberies below neighbourhood-specific thresholds. [...] The study found that UPPs led to little impact on homicides between inhabitants, but decreased police killings, accounting for 29 fewer police killing incidents for every 100,000 people each year (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action: 5).

Types and aims of interventions

Faced with the ineffectiveness of tough law enforcement interventions, the Central American governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have rolled out interventions, with the support of multilateral agencies, geared “at voluntary weapons collection, temporary firearms-carrying restrictions and alcohol prohibitions, to environmental design in slums and targeted education and public health initiatives focusing on ‘at-risk youth’ and even single female-headed care-giving households” (Jütersonke et al. 2009:13). These so-called ‘second-generation interventions’, which are mostly geared toward violence reduction and only incorporate select elements of what would be called alternative livelihoods promotion projects like, for instance, job skills training or cash-for-work programmes,⁹ “feature an evidence-led and ‘integrated’ approach to urban violence prevention and reduction. Because action plans tend to be formulated by municipal authorities and service-providers in concert with public and private security actors, academic institutions, and civil society, they can also unconsciously adopt a more participatory and intersectoral approach. [...] At the level of practice, even where levels of financial investment in first-generation initiatives far surpass those being accorded to second-generation programmes, examples of the latter are [...] being implemented in the region, particularly by multilateral and bilateral development agencies. Under the rubric of ‘citizen security’ and ‘violence reduction’, the World Bank, the IADB, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Habitat Programme (UN-HABITAT), the UN Office for Drug and Crime Control (UNODC) and others are invested in an array of activities designed to promote greater compliance and a focus on voluntary approaches to addressing urban violence and gangs. For example, the World Bank developed a Small Grants Programme for Violence Prevention (SGPVP) in 2005 as part of a wider crime and violence prevention initiative, which included a focus on gangs. In keeping with the second-generation framework outlined above, the agency seeks to support ‘community-based’ and

⁹ Such alternative livelihoods-focused interventions have been implemented, for instance, in Afghanistan (a livelihood training programme and a one-time unconditional cash transfer programme for at-risk youth in Kandahar), Liberia (an intensive agricultural training programme for high-risk men and cash-for-work and sports-for-change programmes) and Uganda (a cash-transfer programme for youth) (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action:16-18).

municipally driven approaches to reducing the availability of weapons and re-engineering the attitudes and behaviour of gangs who might use them” (Jütersonke et al. 2009:16).

These interventions are informed by research on social and urban violence reduction and/or mitigation strategies. In this vein, Arevalo de León et al. highlight “policy approaches that focus on individual manifestations of violence are ineffective and do not contribute to an overall reduction of violence in society, especially if they are formulated in reaction to public perceptions based on sensationalism and exaggeration. Different expressions of violent cycles reinforce each other: repressive responses on the side of governmental agencies; violent imageries in society that foster self-help reactions such as vigilantism and lynching; domestic, gender and school violence that reinforces such violent imageries. All of them need to be addressed simultaneously and in a coordinated way in order to achieve effective and sustainable results” (Arevalo de León et al. 2016:15). According to the research conducted by Arevalo de León et al., “experience shows that civil society and community organisations such as churches, community associations, NGOs, academic centres and trade associations can fill the gap left by deficient state capacity and complement the state’s efforts in the design and implementation of operational strategies addressing insecurity, crime and violence. [...] Genuine civil society organisations can provide additional inroads into a problem, as they can more effectively reach out to illicit actors than governmental institutions, and they can engage non-conventional actors constructively in the search for creative solutions” (Arevalo de León et al. 2016:18).

International actors are also well placed to play an enabling and empowering role, supporting and facilitating coordination among all the different stakeholders. However, they should acknowledge that their interventions are neither neutral nor merely technical inasmuch as they respond to national or institutional interests. Their role should be discussed just as openly as that of any other stakeholder. External actors cannot be builders, but they can be enablers. They might understand the conceptual need for bridging but can only do it by supporting local actors who understand the need and lead the process – and who have been working to reduce violence well before international peacebuilders arrive (Arévalo de León et al. 2016).

Effectiveness

There is no solid evidence on the effectiveness of ‘second-generation’ interventions to curb urban gang violence in Central America. Although they have been credited with some modest successes, such as the establishment of ‘peace zones’ in San Salvador, which were negotiated between the government and gang leaders and brought a temporary decrease in homicides (Seelke 2014), more preventive second-generation interventions seem to have yielded more rhetorical advances than meaningful reductions in gang violence (Jütersonke et al. 2009). What is better known is that “contrary to their reported success in diminishing gang violence, repressive first-generation approaches have tended instead to radicalise gangs, potentially pushing them towards more organized forms of criminality.

According to Jütersonke et al. (2009), “inevitably, hard-handed measures are frequently supported by the public, owing to the visibility such interventions afford. But, while official reports claim that anti-gang initiatives generate significant reductions in criminal violence, most evidence indicates that these effects are temporary and tenuous. Crackdown operations against gangs tend to generate perverse effects – including a greater predisposition to excessive acts of brutality and new forms of adaptation to avoid capture. Indeed, repressive tactics frequently encourage members to become more organized and violent, as is well illustrated by escalatory violence in Honduras in the wake of Mano Dura. Similar processes have been reported in El Salvador and Guatemala” (Jütersonke et al. 2009:12). In sum, “when it comes to outcomes, [...] there is comparatively meagre evidence of effective impacts across time and space. Indeed, in the Central American countries that now long ago emerged from war, including Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador, homicidal violence appears to be rising or remaining stable – sometimes equivalent to peak periods of armed conflict (Jütersonke et al. 2009:18).

Regarding the alternative livelihoods-focused interventions in other fragile and violence and crime-affected developing countries, “to date, there has been [...] limited experimental research on the violence-reducing effects of job skills training programs in post-conflict and fragile settings. More limited research still explores the effects of these interventions during active conflict or in other crisis-affected environments. Existing evidence suggests that, similar to the findings from behavioral interventions, to improve social stability, employment programs should be targeted at the highest-risk individuals. Studies from Liberia and Afghanistan find that, alongside skills development, offering financial capital in credit-constrained and fragile environments may lead to reductions in criminal and violent activity, due to higher returns to capital in such settings. In these settings, combining jobs skills training programs with economic incentives—e.g. capital inputs or cash transfers—may be more effective than vocational training alone. [...] [However], it is often the case in developing countries that engaging in crime versus legitimate work is not an either/or decision—individuals in these settings often engage in “portfolios” of work in order to mitigate risks associated with uncertain occupations and income. As such, while vocational programs may reduce involvement in criminal or violent activities, it is extremely difficult to get people to exit these activities entirely [...]. In reality, low-ranking criminals and rebels often have very little to gain (materially) from participating in these activities—crime tends to reward only a select few. [...] Blattman and Ralston (2015) suggest that policymakers “should not expect dramatic effects of employment on crime and violence, in part because some forms of violence do not respond to incomes or employment” (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action:16).

6. Evidence gaps

As shown in this Helpdesk report, overall the evidence on the types of alternative development/livelihoods programmes that address SOC and associated activities, such as illicit crop farming, in developing countries as well as the interventions that are used - and the effectiveness of such interventions - is very limited or non-existent. Where there is some evidence, it is not necessarily solid and tested. In part this is so because the main focus of policy addressing SOC is law enforcement-focused, not development-oriented. Thus, there are no discernible policies and programmes that would seek to tackle illegal drug production (processing and refining of plant-based or synthetic illegal drugs), drug trafficking, human trafficking and smuggling, illegal organ trade, gun running and cybercrime, among other types of serious and organised crime, by means of alternative livelihoods programmes.

Regarding the AD and alternative livelihoods promotion programmes that have been referenced in this report, it is paramount to solidify the evidence base with respect to the causes and drivers of illicit crop farming, wildlife crime, piracy and urban gang violence. Furthermore, it is of importance to (a) develop useful indicators and metrics to measure the effectiveness of interventions in these fields - a big task that would require overcoming significant political and ideological hurdles in order to establish a broader consensus on the aims of drug and wildlife conservation policies; and (b) conduct rigorous outcome and impact evaluations of AD and alternative livelihoods promotion programmes, including with respect to piracy gang-related crime, thereby overcoming the limitations of current evaluations which focus on outputs, not outcomes and/or impact. Additional research is also needed to better understand non-material drivers of participation in crime and urban violence and what types of non-employment interventions are most effective in reducing crime and urban violence among highest risk men. In this respect, much remains to be done in terms of strengthening our understanding of gender issues in relation to both SOC in the developing world and alternative development/livelihoods interventions aimed at helping people and communities build a life outside harmful crime.

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