



## PRIORITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY REPORT



Former Opium Poppy Farmers in Khash, Kishim,  
and Shar-e Buzurg Districts in Badakhshan

October 2008

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## **Synonyms and Acronyms**

ADP/N	Agricultural Development Programme / North
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AL	Alternative Livelihoods
CDC	Community Development Council
CN	Counter Narcotics
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFW	Food for Work
HH	Household
OPC	Opium poppy cultivation
MCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office of Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

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### **Groupe URD (Kabul)**

# **An Assessment of the Priority Needs of Former Opium Poppy Farmers in Khash, Kishim and Shar-e Buzurg Districts in Badakhshan Province**

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **The livelihood context**

- Household food needs are generally not met by local agricultural production. The province was already food insecure in the 1970s and a large number of households are still chronically short of wheat.
- Since most of the cultivated land is rainfed, many households are vulnerable to drought.
- One of the consequences of lower opium poppy cultivation levels is that longer-term out migration, specifically to Iran, has become a necessity for the poorest households.
- There are few or no marketable surpluses of wheat; and cash crops other than opium poppy are rare. Licit interactions with markets are generally related to the purchase of essential household commodities, the most important of which is wheat.
- As non-farm employment opportunities are limited, on-farm work still provides the bulk of labour opportunities for village households.

#### **Household livelihoods**

##### *Income sources*

- Participation in the illicit opium economy - through opium production and sale and opium wage labour – is the main source of household cash income.
- Wage labour, whether farm or non-farm, opium or non-opium, is a key source of income for the majority of households.
- The low proportion of households involved in the sale of farm produce other than opium highlights two important features of the local rural economy:
  - there is little or no marketable surplus of wheat; and,
  - there are no or very few cash crops other than opium.
- Opium production and sale is an important source of income for all wealth groups, particularly the middle income and better-off households. The poor and middle-income households benefit substantially from opium wage labour, although non-opium wage labour is a more important income source.
- Opium poppy cultivation is the first source of income for one third of the households, which is twice as much as crop production for home consumption, indicating that many households rely more on opium sales than wheat production to ensure their grain supply.

##### *Labour migration*

- Overall, 31% of households have at least one member migrating for work.

- There is a high correlation between labour migration (seasonal or long-term) and the level of poverty: 40% of the poor households have at least one member migrating seasonally and 60% have at least one member migrating on a long-term basis. In contrast, less than 20% of better-off households are involved in labour migration while rich households are not involved.

#### *Indebtedness*

- Indebtedness affects households differently according to their level of poverty. Overall 76% of households reported having outstanding debts while over 90% of poor households are indebted.

#### *Shocks and coping strategies*

- To cope with shocks, poor households first rely on their social network to access loans and then deplete assets (in particular land), whereas middle-income and better-off households rely more on livestock sales. Rich households tend to use their own savings.
- All mechanisms to deal with shocks reduce households' ability to recover in the longer term without licit development opportunities being available.

#### *Food security*

- Most households in the sample villages do not meet their food needs. Less than 4% of households interviewed were self-sufficient in wheat.
- Spring is the worst period for wheat shortage. Although households have a variety of strategies to cope with grain deficit, more than 70% of poor households face serious difficulties to satisfy their food needs.

## **Opium poppy cultivation**

#### *Differing trends*

- The Khash valley has a long history of opium poppy cultivation. However, the eradication campaigns of 2006 and 2007 have not affected farmers' decisions, and there have been no substantial reductions in opium poppy cultivation.
- In contrast, there have been substantial reductions in opium poppy cultivation in the central valley of Kishim district. However, although reductions have been reported on irrigated land near main roads and on nearby rainfed land, on remoter rainfed land, overall cultivation levels remained relatively unchanged.
- In some areas, villages collectively abandoned opium poppy cultivation in 2006 after the government promised assistance. As this assistance has not yet materialised, many farmers plan to revert to opium poppy cultivation in the coming season, especially on rainfed land.

#### *Household decision-making*

- Despite eradication campaigns over the last three years, most farmers have continued to grow opium poppy because there is no other choice, without the promised government assistance.
- In some areas the levels of opium poppy cultivation have remained relatively stable over the last few years. In other areas, farmers reported a need to restart opium

poppy cultivation after one or two years of reductions, because of a lack of government development response.

- The counter-productive effects of poorly planned eradication campaigns, highlighted in the literature about opium drivers in Afghanistan, are confirmed by farmers whose opium poppy fields had been eradicated in the last two years, who cited eradication, without alternative livelihood opportunities being in place, as a reason for continuing to produce opium.
- The lack of assistance from both government and aid agencies, after many promises, appears to be a strong incentive for farmers to continue with or revert to opium poppy cultivation. Many farmers stated that they have waited too long for government assistance – from six months in Barlas to two years in Yarwazan – and, having become poorer, now have no other choice but to revert to opium poppy cultivation.
- While indebtedness is a key opium driver in poor and middle-income households, beneficial market conditions encouraged many of the better-off and rich households to grow opium poppy.
- Cash from opium poppy cultivation is mainly used to buy food; in particular to make up the wheat deficit. Food security is a top priority that, in the absence of investment in the licit rural economy, can rarely be achieved in most areas of Badakhshan without income from cultivating opium poppy.
- The cultivation of opium poppy is virtually the only means to access agricultural credit, especially for the poor in remote mountainous areas, and this plays an important role in encouraging opium poppy cultivation.

#### *Reasons for not cultivating opium poppy*

- Although many households cited their respect for the government ban as the main reason for not cultivating opium poppy; the high labour requirement is a key limiting factor. When family labour is scarce and labour prices increase, opium poppy cultivation can be constrained.

#### *Impact of reductions in opium poppy cultivation*

- Given the importance of income from opium sales to make up household wheat deficits in Badakhshan, reductions in opium poppy cultivation have reduced household grain supply for those who have stopped cultivation voluntarily as well as those whose fields have been eradicated.
- The reductions in opium poppy cultivation have adversely impacted the livelihoods of landless and poor households who get much of their income from wage labour, in particular on opium poppy fields: with constrained labour opportunities and lower daily wages. Further reductions in opium poppy cultivation without government investment in the licit rural economy will reduce further the livelihoods opportunities of wage labourers with adverse impacts on their household income.

#### *Perceptions of government policy*

- The overall feeling among farmers interviewed was that many local powerbrokers play a role in the illicit opium economy through opium poppy cultivation and opium marketing and consequently have no interest in enforcing the ban.
- Within the local authorities, there appears to be a combination of a lack of capacity and an unwillingness to enforce the ban on opium poppy cultivation.
- The government is perceived as being unable to improve the economic situation in rural areas and, at the same time, is powerless to prevent opium poppy cultivation.

The villagers feel betrayed and there is mounting anger at the lack of development action. Many insist they are ready to oppose the eradication forces.

- In Shar-e Buzurg, key informants think that the local authorities have admitted their own weakness by encouraging farmers to grow opium poppy this coming season in order to calm mounting dissatisfaction with the authorities.
- It is not easy to evaluate how much effort the population is still ready to make to stop opium poppy cultivation in the short term because they have lost confidence in the government due to its failure to act on promises to provide licit income earning opportunities.
- Government policy is perceived as being based on promises to farmers that their economic problems caused by stopping opium poppy cultivation would be addressed by a combination of creating job opportunities and developing licit rural livelihoods programmes. As these promises have not been followed by concrete action, villagers have started to distrust the government. Many farmers who did not plant opium poppy in autumn 2006 did so the following spring season, as no support materialised.

#### *Perceptions of WFP food aid*

- There is a good perception of food-based programmes, in particular food for work (FFW) and school feeding. Nevertheless, although food aid partly addresses household food insecurity, it is widely considered insufficient to improve rural livelihoods on a long-term basis.
- In view of the high and increasing price of wheat, there is a clear preference for food-based programmes over cash-based ones. In areas with poor market access, food-based programmes are appreciated whatever the household level of poverty.

## **Conclusions**

- Chronic food insecurity is the norm in 80% of households and affects both poor and middle income groups. Food insecurity was aggravated by several factors in 2007; including a dramatic increase in the price of wheat and a fall in the price of opium.<sup>1</sup>
- There is thus an urgent need to address the issue of food insecurity on humanitarian, as well as on counter narcotics and governance / state building grounds.
- There is considerable demand for the rehabilitation and development of community infrastructure, with particular emphasis on irrigation systems, coupled with road rehabilitation and bridge construction to improve access to markets.
- It is essential to target aid programmes at both men and women in order to reduce opium poppy cultivation and establish sustainable licit livelihoods.
- Farmers are openly starting to oppose the government. Further poorly sequenced eradication campaigns could lead to a violent reaction and increased insecurity: undoing much of the state-building work that has been initiated in Badakhshan.
- Stopping opium poppy cultivation needs time; and elimination by force, without alternative livelihoods options in place is counter-productive and politically dangerous.
- Short-term food aid programmes have a potentially vital role as an initial step in long-term economic development programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> In late 2007, farmers received about 4,000 Afs per kg of opium, with which they could buy only 200 kg of wheat, compared with 2,000 kg in 2004.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is based on a report prepared for UNODC by Groupe URD in December 2007 and January 2008. The report provides in-depth qualitative analysis, supported by data collected in Khash, Kishim and Shar-e Buzurg districts of Badakhshan province as described in Section 2 below. The analysis is not statistically rigorous but is designed to provide an overview of the current situation of former opium poppy-growing households in Badakhshan.

The *objective* of the study was to investigate livelihood strategies and dynamics and to identify the immediate priority needs of farmers formerly engaged or at risk of re-engaging in opium poppy cultivation in order to inform interventions designed to address these needs. The study was also intended to serve as a baseline against which to assess the impact of such licit development interventions.

The key criteria for district selection, identified from a UNODC/WFP desk review in November 2007, were:

- **Opium Poppy:** history, trends and levels of opium poppy cultivation, proportion of arable land under opium poppy (Source: UNODC Opium Survey Reports);
- **Socio-economic vulnerability:** proportion of population food insecure, distance and travel time to local markets, land-holdings (size, irrigated, rainfed, source of irrigation water), security and accessibility.

## 2. SURVEY APPROACH

The priority needs of the target groups in the three sampled districts<sup>2</sup> were identified through combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, including:

- Key informants at provincial, district, sub-district;
- Meetings and focus group discussions with village elders and/or CDCs, supported by direct field observations;
- Household interviews (214) using structured questionnaires, with both men and women;
- Household case studies (16) using a more qualitative approach.

Within each district, three villages were sampled to illustrate differing livelihoods systems using the following criteria: landscape position, access to market, opium poppy cultivation (history and current level) and outside intervention. Within each site, households representing various socio-economic groups were interviewed to capture differing livelihood constraints and opportunities and the varying levels of dependency on opium poppy cultivation. The socio-economic groups were identified through wealth ranking during village meetings and then reviewed and finalised using the criteria shown in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> Kash, Kishim and Shar-e-Buzurg – which provide a broadly representative overview of the province as a whole.

**Table 1: Summary of the main indicators identifying the four wealth groups**

Indicator		Poor household	Middle household	Better-off household	Rich household
Access to land		No or very little	Limited	Good	Good
Maximum cultivable land (jerib)	Irrigated	3	6	20	15
	Rainfed	2	35	70	20
Small livestock		< 10	< 35	< 35	> 15
Oxen		No	0,1 or 2	0,1 or 2	2 or 3
Wheat self- sufficiency		2 months	5 months	8 months	10 months
Wage labour		Frequent	Some	Limited	No
Small business		No	Few	Few	Some

Male and female members of poor, middle income, better-off and rich households were interviewed in three villages in each of the districts of Kishim, Khash and Shar-e-Buzurg, shown in the map below.



### 3. KEY FINDINGS

The characteristics of Badakhshan and the three surveyed districts are:

- **Badakhshan Province:** Remote, food insecure, limited arable land, harsh climate, high altitude, long tradition of opium poppy cultivation.
- **Khash District:** above 2,000m; arable land scarcity; landlessness; long tradition of opium production – crucial to livelihoods and food security; poor access; no central bazaar.
- **Kishim District:** above 850m; market links; good irrigation; socio-economic disparities; long history as major opium producer, recent reduction in opium production is unsustainable without development investment.
- **Shar-e-Buzurg District:** above 1,200m; remote, poor access; limited markets; little irrigation; serious food deficit, reductions in opium poppy cultivation following eradication campaigns.

#### 3.1 The Livelihood Context and Structural Factors

##### *Badakhshan Province*

The geography of Badakhshan province is characterized by high mountains and steep river valleys. Although the province has historically been largely cut off from the rest of Afghanistan, the current construction of a metalled road from Taloqan to Kishim will contribute to opening up the western part of the province. Nevertheless, many areas are inaccessible for several months of the year.

By and large, food needs are not met by local agricultural production. The province was already food insecure in the 1970s. Today a large number of households are still chronically short of wheat. Since most of the cultivated land is rainfed, many households are vulnerable to drought. The sale of livestock and the seasonal migration of labour are two critical household livelihood strategies designed to address wheat deficit, especially in inaccessible mountain areas. Where irrigated land is available, there is a wide array of strategies to meet grain needs including the production and sale of opium, livestock sales and seasonal wage labour<sup>3</sup>.

One of the consequences of lower opium poppy cultivation levels in the province is that longer-term out migration, specifically to Iran, becomes a necessity for the poorest households. Reducing opium poppy cultivation not only impacts opium poppy growing households but also affects the livelihoods of landless households, both within Badakhshan and in the adjoining provinces of Thakar and Kunduz, who get a substantial proportion of their cash income from working on opium poppy fields.

##### *Three contrasting districts*

**Khash district**, in the central part of Badakhshan, consists of 11 villages lying in two highland valleys, characterized by a relative scarcity of both irrigated and rainfed land. There is a long tradition of opium poppy cultivation. According to UNODC's Opium Survey in 2007, the Khash valley is the major area for opium production in Badakhshan. Opium poppy cultivation plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of Khash

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<sup>3</sup> Mansfield D. & Pain A., (November 2007) *Evidence from the field: Understanding changing levels of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan*. AREU, Kabul.

people: in particular in their food security strategies. There is no central bazaar in Khash but only a few shops in Sharhan village. The dominant opium-based barter economy explains the limited cash flow in the area.

**Kishim district** centre, on the western border with Takhar province, is in a key position on the trade route to Faizabad. The central bazaar is relatively developed and is reasonably easy to access. Although Kishim is one of the richest agricultural districts of Badakhshan, there are substantial disparities within the district, from both the socio-economic and geographic points of view. In addition to unequal access to land and other productive assets, there are several pockets of poverty in the more isolated parts of the district. In 2000 – 2001, Kishim district was a major opium poppy producing area. Since then, the district has achieved one of the largest reductions in opium poppy cultivation in the province.

**Shar-e Buzurg district**, in the northwest of the province, borders Takhar province as well as Tajikistan. It is mountainous, with a few narrow and rocky valleys and, like other remote districts in Badakhshan, is characterized by poorly functioning markets and mostly rainfed arable land. The level of grain self-sufficiency is extremely low and, with the rise in wheat prices, the food security situation is likely to become more critical. Although Shar-e Buzurg is not a major opium poppy production area, opium appears to be entrenched in the local economy through heroin production and trafficking.

Livelihoods interventions in the three districts are summarised in Table 2 on the following page.

#### *Different levels and types of intervention*

Whereas, government departments are poorly represented in Khash and Shar-e Buzurg districts, Kishim district, being more accessible, is better served as illustrated by the widespread establishment of farmer cooperatives, the main programme implemented by the Department of Agriculture.

International NGOs are well-represented in the Kishim district centre. The geographical distribution of programmes in the district is however uneven, with much assistance focussed on the main river valley, with far less activity in remoter areas. Acted is the facilitating partner of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The Alternative Development Program / North (ADP/N) is currently the largest livelihood project in Kishim district. WFP supports several programmes, but there is no school feeding.

There are no NGOs based in Khash district but several operate from offices in Baharak district. The NSP, implemented by AKF, has been initiated in all the villages. Although there is an apparent “over-targeting” of the district by development agencies, the scope of interventions in the field is limited. WFP food aid includes school feeding and FFW.

Livelihood interventions are much more limited in Shar-e Buzurg district. The only two NGOs are Acted and Oxfam, the former implementing the NSP. The USAID-funded ADP/N does not operate in the district. WFP is one of the major stakeholders, mostly through FFW and school feeding programmes.

#### *Few market interactions and limited non-farm employment opportunities: two main features of rural livelihoods*

There are few or no marketable surpluses of grain and cash crops other than opium poppy are rare. Licit interactions with markets are generally related to the purchase of essential household commodities, the most important of which is wheat.

**Table 2: Main livelihood interventions in Sample Districts**

Organization	Main projects	Duration	Intended beneficiaries	Target areas
<b>Kishim district</b>				
Afghanaid	Vegetable development	2007-2009	Members of 5 cooperatives supported by PADCO	Areas suitable for vegetable production (main river valley)
ARMP	Micro-credit including loans for alternative livelihoods	2007-2010	Farmers who agree to stop OPC Poorest families	All district: Wahkshi, Jari Shababa, Baloch, Takya -planned in Gandom Qol
BRAC	Micro-credit	2007-2008	Widows & other poor women	Kishim town and 2 nearby villages (Nawabad, Nayeba)
Land O' Lakes	Livestock development	2007-2008	Cattle, goat and sheep producers	Panjshiri, Farashghani, Baloch, Mardara, Baghe Turk
NAC	Forestry (GAIN) Nursery farm Agriculture training	NA	Widows and other poor households Farmers	All district with a focus on central Kishim (nursery farm)
PADCO <sup>4</sup>	ADP/N	2005-2009	Farmers involved in OPC	All district
Roots of Peace	Orchard development	2007-2008	Members of 5 cooperatives supported by PADCO	Areas suitable for commercial orchards
<b>Khash district</b>				
Organization	Main projects	Duration	Intended beneficiaries	Target areas
AKF	Veterinary services & Micro-enterprise development	NA <sup>5</sup>	NA	4 villages
	Bee keeping, seed multiplication, orchard development	NA	NA	Most villages
BRAC	Micro-credit	NA	Widows & other poor women	Sharhan, Sarilula
	Agriculture & livestock development credit	NA	Farmers and livestock producers	
CFA	Literacy	NA	NA	Most villages
DED/GTZ	Infrastructures Vocational training	2006-?		All district
PADCO	ADP/N	2005-2009	Farmers involved in OPC Cooperative members	All district
Roots of Peace	Orchard development	2007-?	NA	NA
<b>Shar-e Buzurg district</b>				
Organization	Main projects	Duration	Intended beneficiaries	Target areas
Acted	NSP: roads, water, solar	NA	District populations	All district. Roads linking to Rustaq district
Oxfam	FFW (with WFP); orchards drinking water	NA	Rural population	All district
Merlin	BPHS Health	NA	District population	District Centre & Dawung

<sup>4</sup> Some components of the ADP-N are sub-contracted to implementing partners: Afghanaid (vegetable development), Roots of Peace (orchard development) and Land O' Lakes (livestock development).

<sup>5</sup> NA - No Data Available at the time of the survey

Non-farm employment opportunities are limited. Moreover, although the non-farm labour market is expanding in the neighbouring districts and provinces, in particular in Takhar and Kunduz with a growing demand for casual labour in the construction sector, on-farm work still provides the bulk of labour opportunities for village households, as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Labour opportunities in sample villages**

		<b>Location</b>	<b>Main activities</b>	<b>Labour wage</b>
<b>KISHIM</b>	<b>Baloch</b>	Takhar, Kunduz	Wheat harvest Rice transplanting and harvest	NA
	<b>Yawarzan</b>	In neighbouring areas	Rice harvest	200-300 Afs/day
	<b>Gandom Qol</b>	1) In Takhar, Kunduz and Baghlan	Wheat harvest Rice transplanting and harvest	Equivalent to 3,000-4,000 Afs/month
		2) In Kishim (especially Baloch area)		
	3) In the village	OPC	200-300 Afs/day	
<b>KASH</b>	<b>Sharhan</b>	In the village and neighbouring areas	OPC	3,000-4,000 Afs/month (monthly or seasonal contract)
	<b>Mughula</b>	In neighbouring villages	OPC	3,500 Afs/month (monthly contract during cropping season) or 20,000 Afs per season (contract for 8-9 months)
	<b>Sarilula</b>	In the village and neighbouring areas	OPC	NA
<b>SHAR-E BUZURG</b>	<b>Barlas</b>	1) In the village	OPC	NA
		2) In Takhar, Kunduz and Baghlan	Wheat harvest and rice transplanting	About 30 ser of rice per season (2-3 months)
		NB: No migration to work in OP fields (no skills)		
	<b>Shurak</b>	1) In Takhar and Kunduz	Wheat harvest Rice transplanting and harvest	NA
NB: No migration to work in OP fields (no skills)				
<b>Samargh</b>	1) In the village	OPC	100-200 Afs/day	
	2) In Takhar and Kunduz	Wheat harvest Rice transplanting and harvest	About 2,000 Afs per month	

Note: OPC – Opium Poppy Cultivation

### 3.2 Household livelihoods

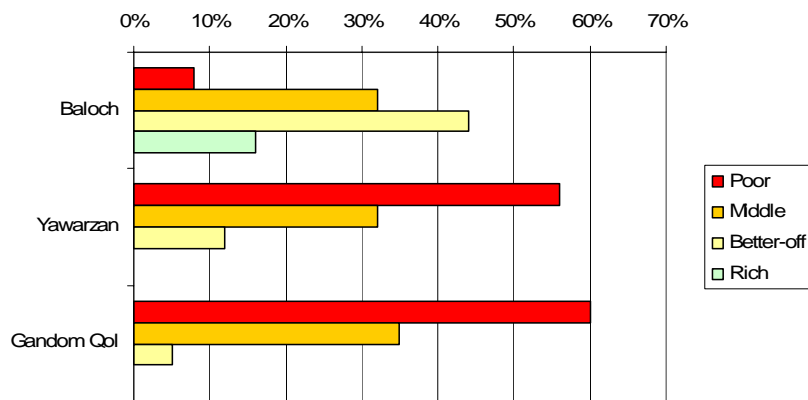
*Household characteristics: land access and livestock ownership as differential factors*

Extended families are common across the different socio-economic household groups. Household size ranges between 2 and 25 members. The proportion of children under 12 years old averages 44% and the dependency ratio is relatively high; with 74% of households having one male worker for three or more dependants.

In most villages, opium poppy cultivation is the main reported skill for both males and females.

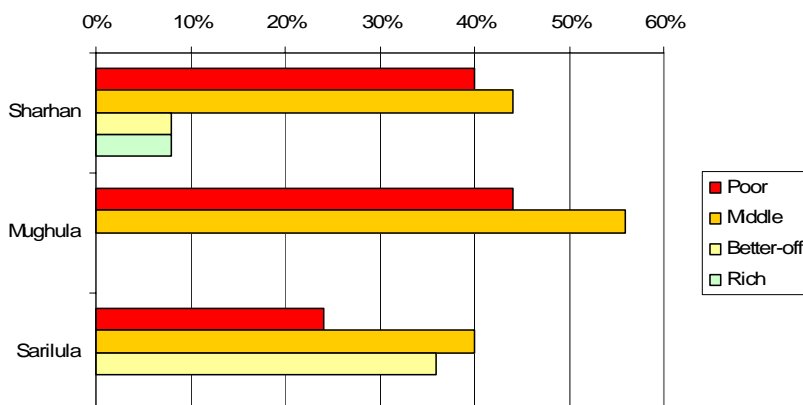
In **Kishim district**, there are different levels of household assets among the three surveyed villages. Baloch appears the richest with considerable land area, both irrigated and rainfed, with most irrigated land being double cropped. However, although Baloch has the largest numbers of livestock, land and livestock assets are unequally distributed. Both irrigated and rainfed lands are available in Yawarzan. However, irrigation water shortage is common and the landholdings are much smaller than in Baloch. Moreover, there are only small numbers of livestock in the village, mainly because of the lack of pastures. Trees (fruit and timber) are one of the few household assets. There is only rainfed land in Gandom Qol with very few other productive assets other than donkeys. Most household landholdings are small (3 jerib on average).

**Figure 1: Socio-economic distribution of households in Kishim villages (n=70)**



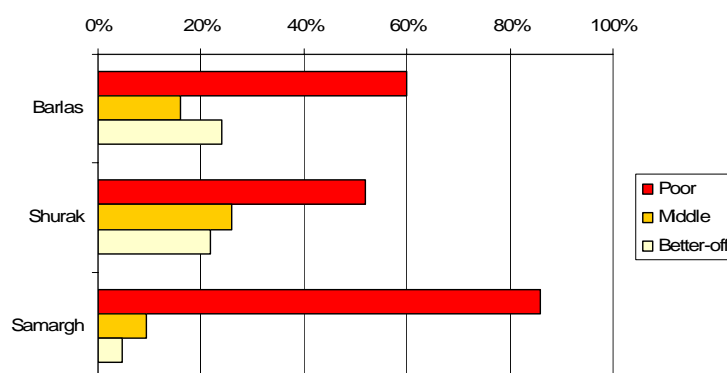
The three villages surveyed in **Khash district** are more homogeneous. Although there is both irrigated and rainfed land, irrigated land is the most common. Sharecropping on irrigated land is more common in Mughula (50% of households), where households own less irrigated land than in Sharhan (25%) and Sarilula (16%). There is limited availability of irrigation water and, due to the high altitude (above 1800 m), irrigated land is single cropped. Livestock is a common asset across the different socio-economic groups; with 40% of poor and middle income households owning small livestock. There are both fruit and timber trees with half of the sample households having orchards, although many are small and recently planted.

**Figure 2: Socio-economic distribution of households in Khash villages (n=75)**



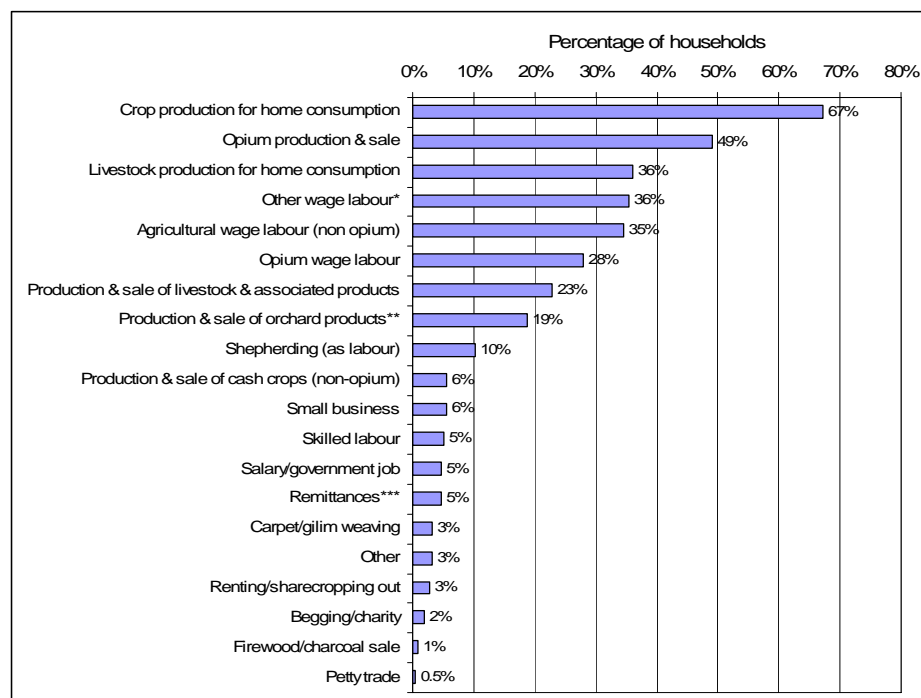
In **Shar-e Buzurg district**, there is a low level of productive assets. There is no irrigated land in the sampled villages and almost half of the poor households do not own rainfed land; although middle income households have on average 5 jerib of rainfed land. In Samargh, the number of small livestock per household is low (less than 10), but there are several big livestock owners in Barlas. Overall, 75% of the households do not have oxen. Orchards and timber plantations are rare, although Barlas and Shurak villagers have access to large pistachio forests.

**Figure 3: Socio-economic distribution of households in Shar-e Buzurg villages (n=69)**



*Sources of income: a majority of households rely on opium poppy*

**Figure 4: Reported sources of household income (n=214)<sup>6</sup>**



*Notes to Figure 4:*

- \* including non-farm migrant labour
- \*\* including "collective" orchards (in particular pistachio trees)
- \*\*\* remittances from family members living permanently away from home (not from seasonal workers)

<sup>6</sup> HHs gave multiple answers. Therefore percentages do not total 100%

Although 67% of households reported that the cultivation of crops for household needs was an important source of income, the fact that the crop production is for home consumption means that it is not purely a source of cash income, but rather a source of household subsistence which reduces the cash requirement for purchasing food.

Overall, participation in the illicit opium economy - through opium production and sale (49%) and opium wage labour (28%) – was the predominant source of household cash income.

Wage labour, whether farm or non-farm, opium or non-opium, was a key source of income for 69% of households. The livestock sector was an important source of subsistence as well as for cash income, through the sale of livestock and associated products.

The low proportion of respondents involved in the sale of crops other than opium (6%) highlights two important features of the local economy:

- there is little or no marketable surplus of wheat; and,
- there are no or very few cash crops other than opium.

The patterns of livelihood strategies are consistent with village endowments of productive assets (land, livestock), natural resources (e.g. pistachio trees), labour opportunities and access to markets. Although there is an apparent diversity of livelihood strategies, with 80% of the sample households reporting three or more sources, there are substantial disparities among villages.

As shown in the table below, opium production and sale is an important source of income for all wealth groups, particularly the middle income and better-off households. The poor and middle-income households benefit substantially from opium wage labour, although non-opium wage labour is a more important income source.

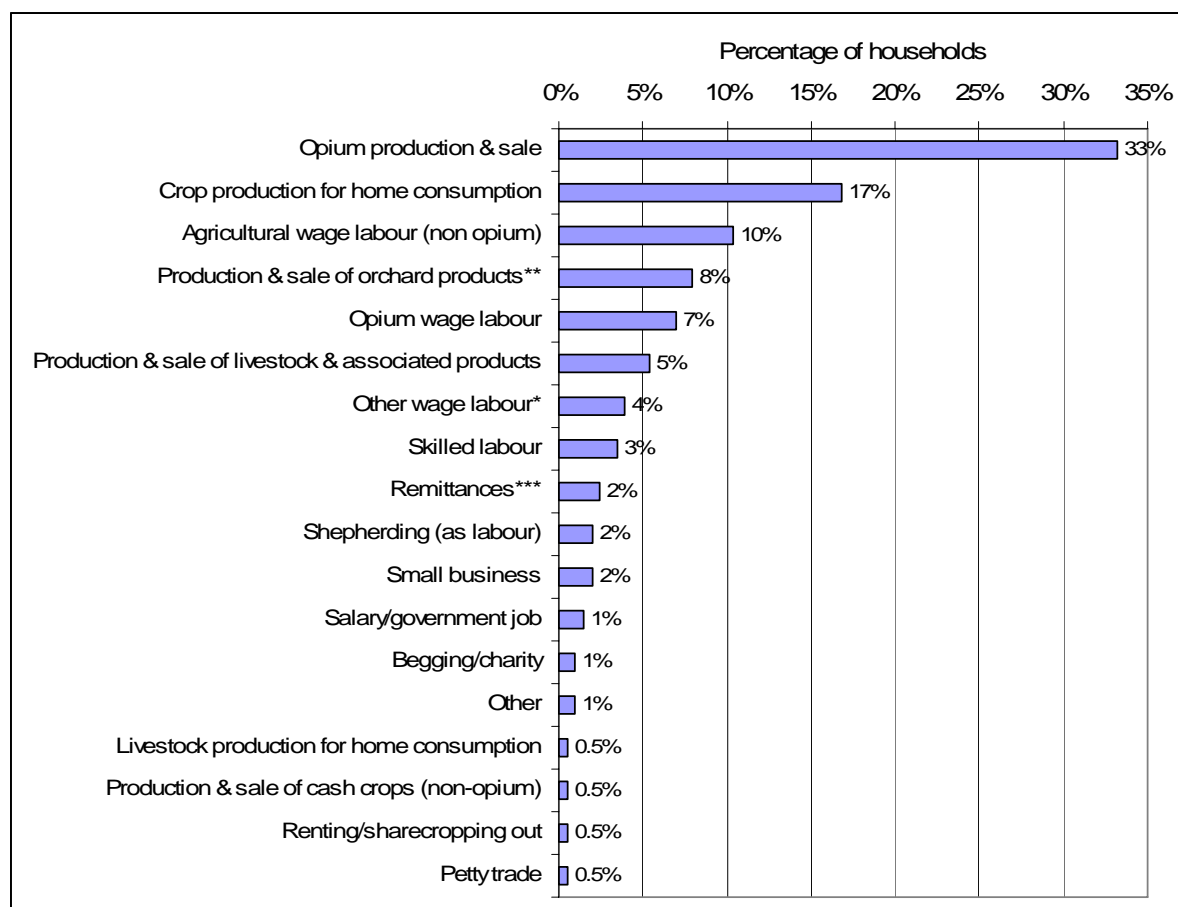
**Table 4: Reported sources of income (% of HHs), by socio-economic group<sup>7</sup>**

	Poor	Middle	Better-off	Rich
Opium production and sale	35%	64%	61%	33%
Production & sale of cash crops (non-opium)	0%	3%	24%	17%
Production & sale of livestock & associated products	12%	17%	50%	83%
Other wage labour	42%	17%	5%	0%
Agricultural wage labour (non opium)	56%	23%	5%	0%
Opium wage labour	37%	26%	13%	0%

A ranking of income sources, in Figure 5, is based on the perceived contribution of the income source to household livelihoods and highlights the central role of opium production and sale as a source of household income. Opium poppy cultivation is the first source of income for one third of the respondents, which is twice as much as crop production for home consumption, indicating that many households rely more on opium sales than wheat production to ensure their grain supply.

<sup>7</sup> HHs gave multiple answers. Therefore percentages do not total 100%.

**Figure 5: First source of income ranked by sample households (n=202)<sup>8</sup>**



\* including non-farm migrant labour

\*\* including "collective" orchards (in particular pistachio trees)

\*\*\* remittances from family members living permanently away from home (not from seasonal workers)

#### *Cropping patterns: predominance of wheat and opium poppy*

The main irrigated crops sown or planned in the 2007-2008 season were wheat (69% of farmers who have access to irrigated land), opium poppy (58%), potato (47%), rice (28%), maize (12%), barley (9%), mung bean (6%) and onion (6%). Of the farmers with access to irrigated land, only about 6% of wheat growers had sold part of their crop in the last two years, all of them less than half of their production. There have been no major changes in the patterns of irrigated crops grown in the last two years apart from the reductions in opium poppy cultivation: with no new crops, and with the same proportions of farmers growing crops other than opium poppy and wheat.

The main rainfed crops sown or planned in 2007-2008 were wheat (73% of farmers who have access to rainfed land), opium poppy (42%), barley (25%), flax (10%), vetch (5%), grass pea (4%), watermelon (4%) and melon (3%). As with the irrigated crops, with non-opium rainfed crops, there were no or very few sales, with no major changes in cultivation trends over the past two years.

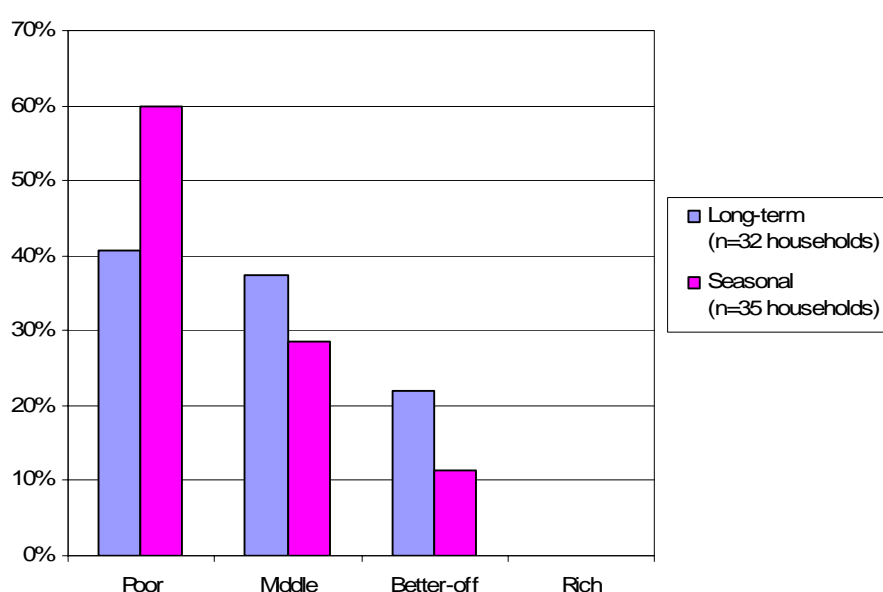
<sup>8</sup> 12 of the 214 sampled HHs did not respond.

### *Labour migration: different patterns to cope with poverty and landlessness*

Overall, 31% of households have at least one member migrating for work outside their village. Long-term labour migration is a key livelihood strategy in Khash district as a whole. The main destination is Iran. Seasonal out migration is common in Shar-e Buzurg; the main destinations being Kunduz, Baghlan and Takhar provinces.

As shown below, there is a high correlation between labour migration (seasonal or long-term) and the level of poverty: 40% of the poor households have at least one member who migrates seasonally and 60% have at least one member migrating on a long-term basis. In contrast, rich households are not involved in labour migration, while about 20% of better-off households are.

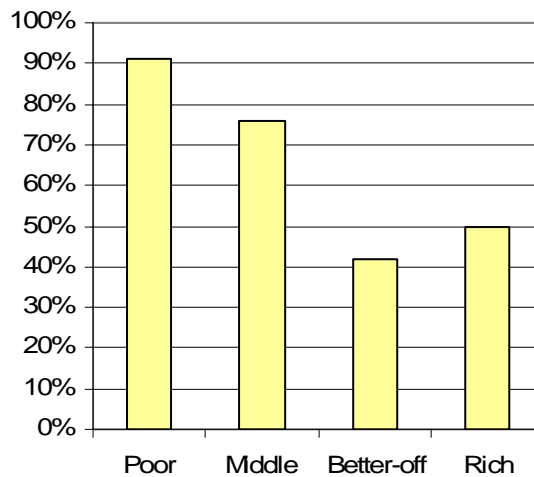
**Figure 6: Socio-economic distribution of households involved in labour migration**



### *Credit: borrowing for basic needs*

Indebtedness affects differently households according to their level of poverty. Overall, 76% of households reported having outstanding debts while, as shown in Figure 7, over 90% of poor households are currently indebted. Furthermore, 70% of poor households estimate that their level of debts has increased. The main reason for getting into debt is to obtain basic household needs; primarily food followed by other consumables. Opium traders were rarely mentioned as lenders, which highlights the imprecise boundary between opium and non-opium traders: the latter also frequently being involved in opium trade among other business interests, while the former often provide farmers with grain and other goods and are paid back when the opium is harvested.

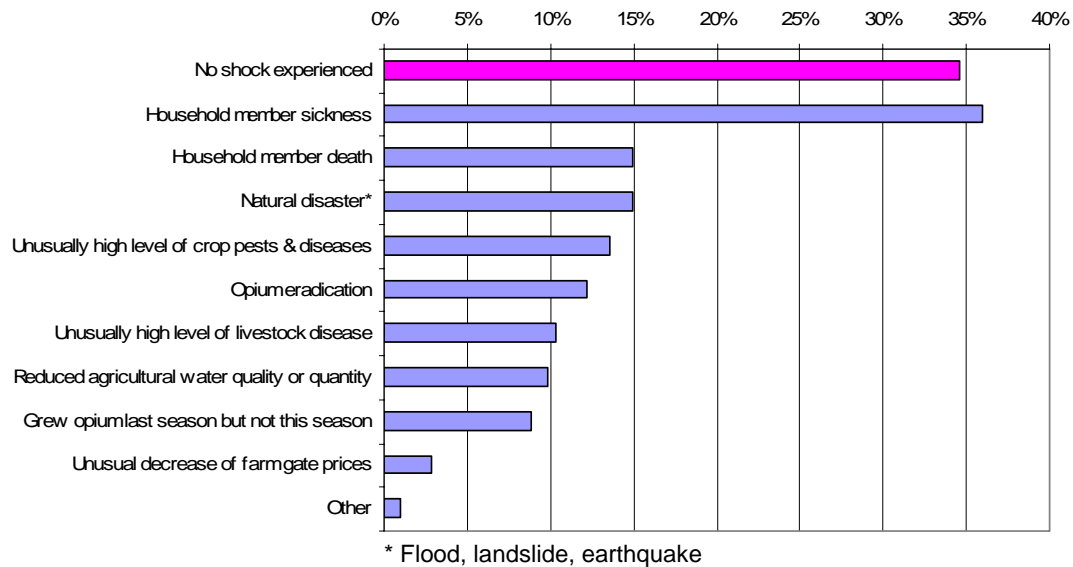
**Figure 7: Percentage of household indebted, by socio-economic group (n=214)**



*Shocks and coping mechanisms*

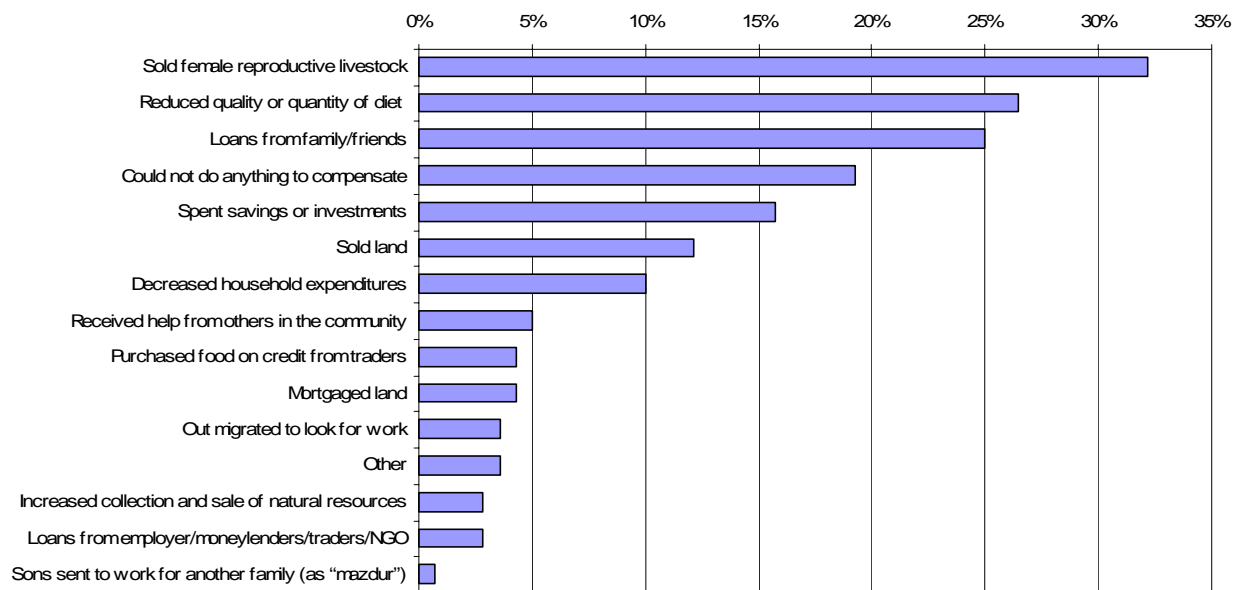
Although nearly 35% of households reported that they did not experience any shocks, the main shocks reported related to the sickness or death of household members. As shown in Figure 8, natural disasters, in particular floods, were also important. Eradication of opium poppy fields was mentioned by less than 15% of households; whereas less than 10% of respondents consider the fact that they did not grow opium in 2006 - 2007 as a shock.

**Figure 8: Shocks in 2006 - 2007 reported by households (n=214)**



To cope with shocks, poor households first rely on their social network to access loans and then deplete assets (in particular land), whereas middle and better-off households rely more on livestock sales. Rich households tend to use their own savings. However, it is evident that all mechanisms to deal with shocks reduce households' ability to recover from those shocks in the longer term without licit development opportunities being available.

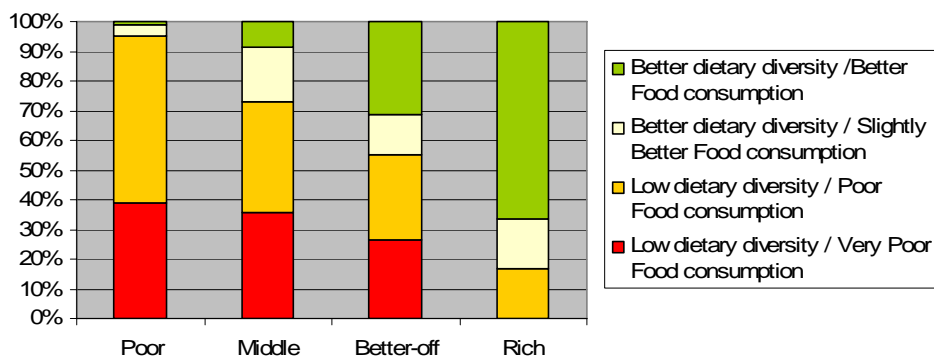
**Figure 9: Strategies adopted by households to cope with “top-one” shock (n=139)<sup>9</sup>**



*A worrying food security situation*

Less than 4% of households interviewed were self-sufficient in wheat and half of these were from Baloch village in Kishim district. Less than two thirds of the households are able to obtain sufficient wheat every month by combining their own production with wheat purchase. Many households claim to cultivate opium poppy so that they can obtain their minimum food requirements. Poor households have low dietary diversity and low or very low food consumption. Conversely the majority of rich households have higher dietary diversity and better food consumption.

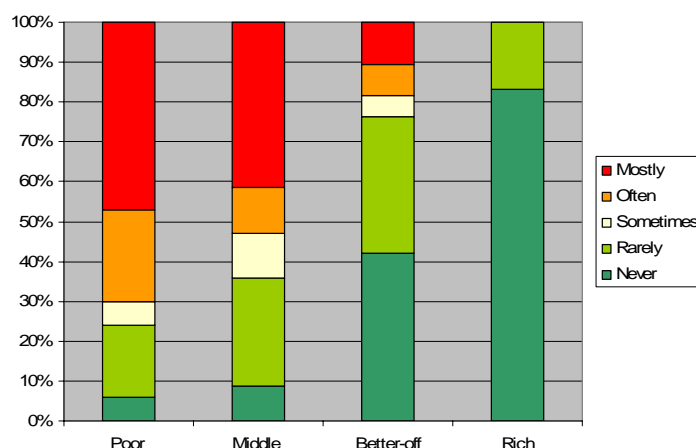
**Figure 10: Food consumption by socio-economic group (n=214)**



Spring is the worst period for wheat shortage, although there are small variations from one district to another; partly explained by differing agricultural calendars. Although households have a variety of strategies to cope with grain deficit, according to women respondents, more than 70% of the poor households have chronic problems satisfying their food needs.

<sup>9</sup> 75 of the 214 sampled HHs did not respond.

**Figure 11: Problems to satisfy food needs, by socio-economic group (n=214)**



### 3.3 Opium poppy cultivation

#### *Differing trends*

The Khash valley has a long history of opium poppy cultivation. The limited eradication campaigns of 2006 and 2007 have not affected farmers' decisions, and no substantial reductions in opium poppy cultivation were reported. Between 2005/6 and 2007/8, 85% of respondents in Khash reported that they cultivated opium poppy on irrigated land.

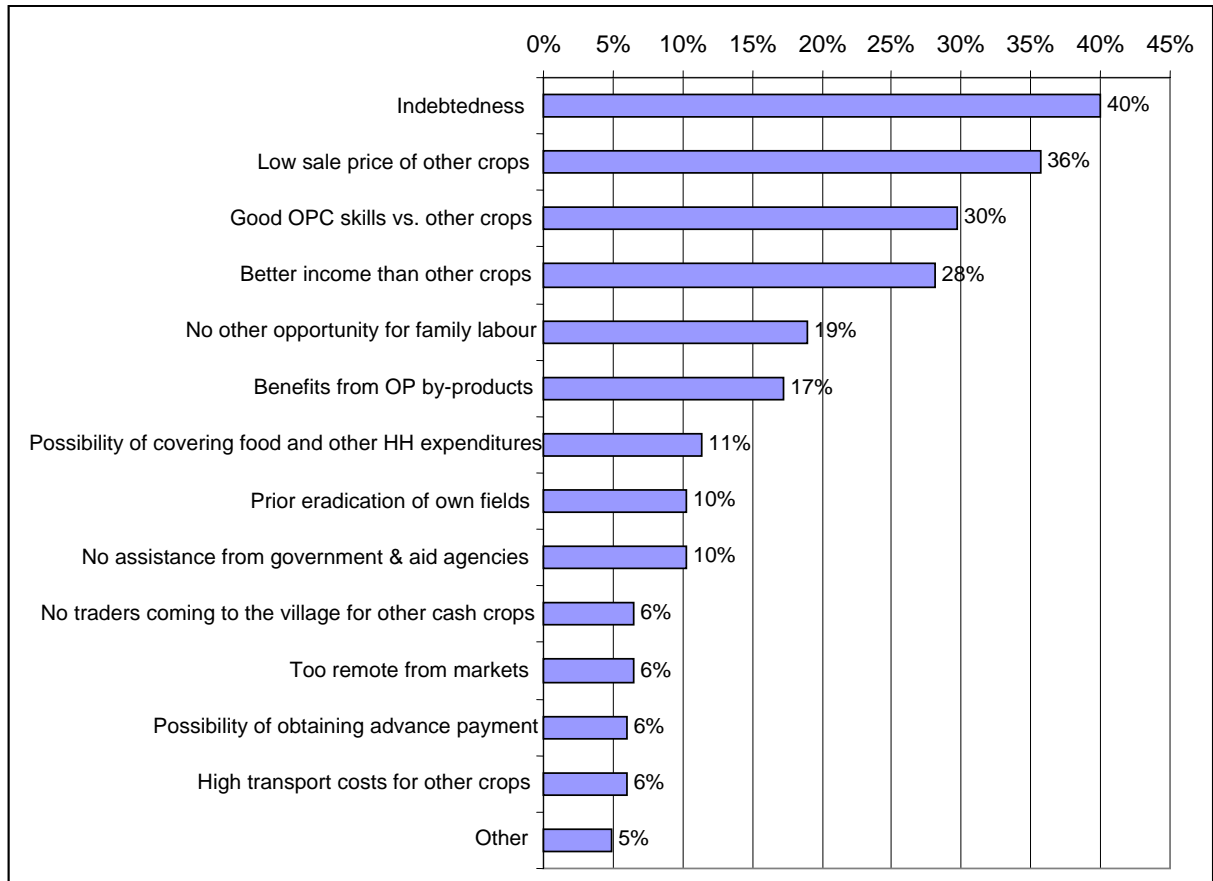
In contrast, there have been substantial reductions in opium poppy cultivation in the central valley of Kishim district, but little change elsewhere. Although reductions have been reported on irrigated land near main roads and on nearby rainfed land, on remoter rainfed land, cultivation levels remained relatively unchanged. Many farmers planted rainfed poppy in late 2007 or plan to restart growing in spring 2008. In some areas, there were collective decisions to abandon opium poppy cultivation in 2006 after the government made promises of assistance, which have not yet materialised. Consequently, most farmers indicate that they plan to revert to opium poppy cultivation in the coming season, especially on rainfed land. Despite limited eradication and awareness creation campaigns over the last three years, the majority of farmers feel that they have little choice to meet their household subsistence needs other than growing opium poppy, without the promised government assistance to develop the licit rural economy and to establish alternative income-earning opportunities.

People were reluctant to speak about opium poppy in Shar-e Buzurg district. The recent and repeated awareness campaigns and, above all, the belief that assistance would be provided only to those farmers who stop opium poppy cultivation are two possible explanations for such reticence. According to key informants, in some areas the levels of opium poppy cultivation have remained relatively stable over the last few years. In other areas, farmers reported a need to restart opium poppy cultivation after one or two years of reductions, because of a lack of government response. However, many such sites are not considered major opium producing areas, mainly because of the scarcity of land, the short cropping season and low yields.

*Farmers' decision-making processes*

The main reasons farmers gave for cultivating opium poppy are illustrated in Figure 12.

**Figure 12: Farmers' reasons for growing opium poppy (n=185)<sup>10</sup>**



OPC = opium poppy cultivation

HH = household

The counter-productive effects of eradication campaigns, highlighted in the literature about opium drivers in Afghanistan<sup>11</sup>, are confirmed by the answers of the farmers whose opium poppy fields had been eradicated in the last two years and who cited this eradication as a reason for continuing to produce opium.

The lack of assistance from both government and aid agencies (cited by 10% of respondents), after many promises, appears to be a strong incentive for farmers to continue with or revert to opium poppy cultivation. Many farmers stated that they have waited too long for government assistance – from six months in Barlas to two years in Yarwazan – and, having become poorer, now have no other choice but to revert to opium poppy cultivation.

<sup>10</sup> HHs gave multiple answers. Therefore percentages do not total 100%. 29 of the 214 sampled HHs did not respond.

<sup>11</sup> See in particular Mansfield, D. (2007). *Beyond the metrics: Understanding the nature of changes in the rural livelihoods of opium poppy growing households in the 2006/7 growing season*. ADIDU. UK Government.

Disaggregated data by socio-economic group show that indebtedness is a key opium driver in poor and middle-income households, while beneficial market conditions encourage many of the better-off and rich households to grow opium poppy.

It was clear from village meetings and case studies in virtually all locations and across the different wealth groups that the cash from opium poppy cultivation is mainly used to buy food, and in particular to make up the wheat deficit. Food security is evidently a top priority that, without investment in the licit rural economy, can rarely be achieved in most areas of Badakhshan without income from cultivating opium poppy. Moreover, several structural factors combine to discourage farmers from stopping opium poppy cultivation. This includes the small size of landholdings (especially in Shar-e Buzurg district), and remoteness combined with limited physical infrastructure, in particular access roads. In many upland villages where there is no irrigated land, there is no viable alternative farming system. It is only in areas with the highest potential for alternative crops, with fertile irrigated land and proximity to markets where there is even a limited opportunity to make a viable living without cultivating opium poppy.

The cultivation of opium poppy is virtually the only means to access agricultural credit, especially for the poor in remote mountainous areas, and this plays an important role in encouraging opium poppy cultivation. Such loans can take different forms, the main one being cash advances from traders on the next opium harvest. Other forms of loans include obtaining food on credit from local shopkeepers involved in the opium trade and then repaying with opium. In some areas, traders not only purchase opium at the farm gate and give advance payments against the crop, but also supply wheat to opium poppy growers; an extremely effective production system.

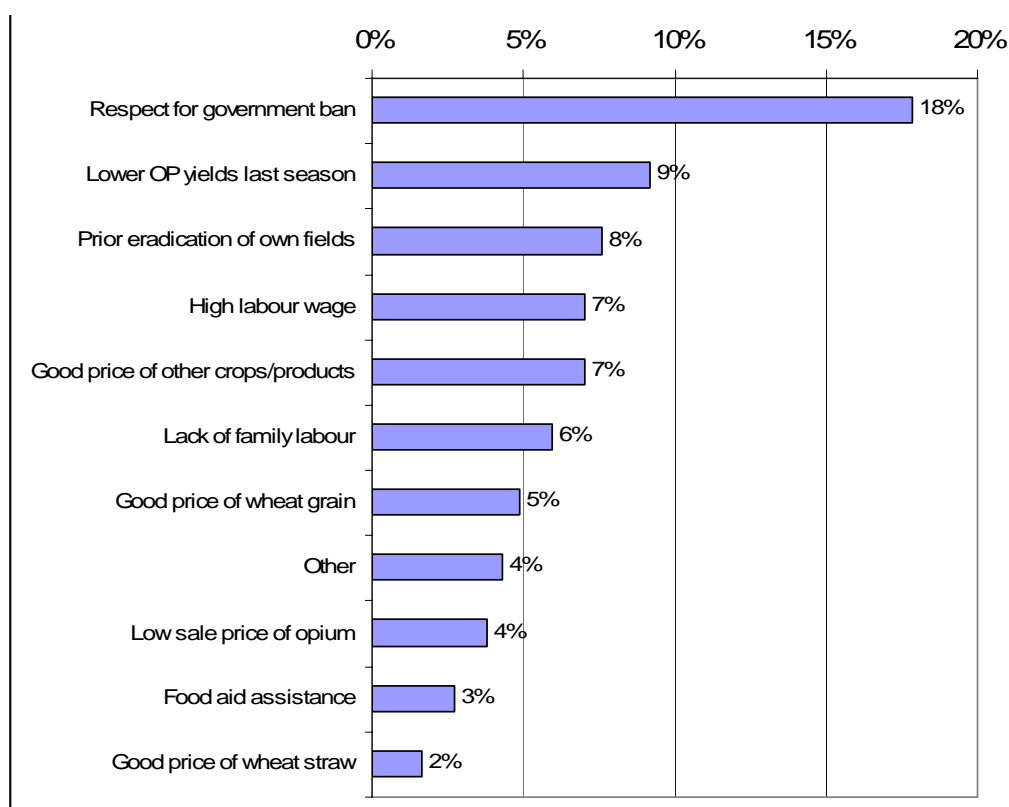
Other advantages of opium poppy cultivation mentioned by farmers included: the low water requirements of opium poppy make it attractive in poorly irrigated areas; opium poppy seeds are easily available compared to those of other crops including wheat; and opium is easy to store and transport.

The structural drivers of opium poppy cultivation, cited by respondents, include: small landholdings; remoteness and limited physical infrastructure; no alternative cash crops in high altitude areas with little arable land and no irrigation water; and other alternatives, such as livestock are constrained by a lack of support services including, in the case of livestock, lack of winter fodder, marketing constraints and limited access to veterinary services.

#### *Reasons for not cultivating opium poppy*

Although only 30% of respondents did answer questions on this topic, as shown in Figure 13, 18% of those who did cited their respect for the government ban. Lower yields and eradication during the last season were also important reasons. Village-wise, the government ban was frequently cited as the only reason to stop growing / not to grow poppy in Shar-e Buzurg district, thus reinforcing the idea that awareness campaigns, relayed by religious leaders, were at least partially successful.

**Figure 13: Farmers' reasons for not growing opium poppy (n=185)<sup>12</sup>**



Clearly a combination of several factors influences farmers' decisions not to cultivate opium poppy. These include: opium poppy yield, lower opium price and hence a reduced profit margin, high labour requirements and increasing production costs. However, in many areas of Badakhshan, such factors that are usually important in farmer decision making in other areas of the country, play a secondary role, since, as many farmers have said: "there is just no other choice". Exacerbating the problem is the fact that practical licit development assistance from the government and aid agencies remains limited on the ground and has, to date, proved insufficient to tip the scales against opium production: consequently such investment has had a very limited impact on the levels of opium poppy cultivation.

The high labour requirement is a key limiting factor on the maximum area of opium poppy a farmer can grow. When family labour is scarce and labour prices increase, poppy cultivation can be constrained<sup>13</sup>. However, in the sample villages, the high cost of labour was not felt to be a major constraint for at least two reasons. First, there are substantial stocks of manpower from the landless households; and licit job opportunities are scarce or nonexistent locally. Second, in the uplands, peak agricultural work periods are staggered due to altitude differentials. Neighbouring opium poppy growers arrange labour with each other accordingly. Consequently, many opium poppy growers do not have to hire outside labour.

<sup>12</sup> Of the 185 farmers interviewed, only 59 (32%) answered the question and some gave multiply answers. Therefore the percentages do not total 100%.

<sup>13</sup> Pain A., (2004) *The impact of the opium poppy economy on household livelihoods: Evidence from the Wakhan Corridor and Khustak valley in Badakhshan*. AKDN.

### *Impacts of changes in opium poppy cultivation levels*

Given the importance of income from opium sales to make up household wheat deficits in Badakhshan, reductions in opium poppy cultivation have reduced household grain supply for those who have stopped cultivation voluntarily as well as those whose fields have been eradicated. In several cases, particularly in rainfed areas, the ban resulted in arable land being left fallow. The three main impacts of the food shortages resulting from reductions in opium poppy cultivation are: increased indebtedness; increased migration and asset depletion (mostly sale of livestock and sometimes land).

#### **Box 1. Migration to Iran and indebtedness as direct impacts of reductions in opium poppy cultivation**

"I have about 4 jerib of rainfed land and 11 people to feed. I used to grow poppy on about 5 ser of land every year up to 2005-2006. I stopped last year because of government promises of assistance. Without poppy income, I couldn't manage to feed my family. I borrowed 50,000 Afs, mostly to buy food and other basic commodities. Recently I sent one of my sons to Iran to look for work. I had no debts before. Migration to Iran is also something new for my family".  
*Farmer from middle income group in Samargh, Shar-e Buzurg district*

"Last year, I destroyed my poppy fields myself to respect the government ban. Without poppy incomes, our living conditions have worsened. We cannot afford new clothes. At first, I started working as a wage labourer to replace poppy income. This is not enough, so I had to send two of my sons away to look for work: one went to Kunduz, one to Iran. I will take up opium poppy cultivation on rainfed lands this year."  
*Farmer from middle income group in Yawarzan, Kishim district*

The reductions in opium poppy cultivation have also adversely impacted the livelihoods of landless and poor households who get much of their income from wage labour, in particular on poppy fields: with constrained labour opportunities and lower daily wages. It is clear that further reductions in opium poppy cultivation will reduce the livelihoods opportunities of wage labourers with adverse impacts on their household income; reducing their capacity to repay loans and to access new ones.

#### **Box 2. Reduced job opportunities and labour wage**

"I have my own land but I grow poppy only on 3 jerib of sharecropped rainfed land. I also work as a labourer for other farmers. After opium poppy cultivation decreased in the area, I faced difficulties to find a job, and the wage went down to 100 Afs per day. This happened in *Jawza* (May/June) and I usually have not enough wheat for my family during this time of year. I bought food on credit and I'm now indebted, which is new for me. I also sold 3 cows to meet household expenditures. If we cannot cultivate poppy in 2008, I'll go to Iran.  
*Farmer from middle income group in Baloch, Kishim district*

### *Perceptions of government policy towards opium poppy*

A widespread feeling among farmers interviewed was that many local authorities play a role in the illicit opium economy through opium poppy cultivation and opium marketing and consequently have no interest in enforcing the ban.

Within the local authorities, there appears to be a combination of a lack of capacity and an unwillingness to enforce the ban on opium poppy cultivation, with the two being closely linked. On the face of it, the eradication forces appear to have a very limited ability to eradicate opium poppy crops. However, a more convincing argument for all interviewees is that the eradication forces are corrupt. Examples of

negotiations prior to eradication and bribes given to the police are numerous. This practice obviously leads to distortions in the implementation of the eradication programme and in the way eradication affects the, usually poor, farmers whose opium poppy crops are eradicated.

**Box 3. Eradication shortcomings and setbacks in Shar-e Buzurg**

“This year, eradication forces came to my area. I gave them 650 dollars and they left without destroying a single plant of poppy. I then collected 150 Afs from each farmer.”

*Local commander, Shar-e Buzurg district*

“In 2006, four policemen from the eradication forces came and asked us to provide them oxen to plough and destroy our poppy fields. They were pushed back by an angry mob of villagers.”

*Shura representative, Barlas, Shar-e Buzurg district*

In recent years, government policy towards opium poppy cultivation has been based on two pillars: promising assistance to farmers if they stop opium poppy cultivation and encouraging compliance through the threat of eradication. However, little has been achieved. The government is at present perceived as being unable to improve the economic situation in rural areas and, at the same time, is powerless to prevent opium poppy cultivation. The villagers feel betrayed and there is mounting anger. Many insist that they are ready to oppose the eradication forces. Another clear illustration of this situation was in Shar-e Buzurg, where key informants think that the local authorities have admitted their own weakness by encouraging farmers to grow opium poppy this coming season in order to calm the mounting dissatisfaction of the population.

Government policy is perceived as being based on promises to farmers that their economic problems caused by stopping opium poppy cultivation would be addressed by a combination of creating job opportunities and developing licit rural livelihoods opportunities. As these promises have not been followed by concrete action, villagers have started to distrust the government. Many farmers who did not plant opium poppy in autumn 2006 did so the following spring season, as no support materialised.

*Farmer perception of WFP food aid and other assistance programmes*

Overall there is a good perception of food-based programmes, in particular FFW and school feeding. These programmes are considered to be effective in improving household diets in terms of both quality and quantity. Nevertheless, although food aid partly addresses the food insecurity of households, it is widely considered to be insufficient to improve rural livelihoods on a permanent basis.

In view of the high and increasing price of wheat, there is a clear preference for food-based programmes over cash-based ones. In areas with poor access to markets, food-based programmes are particularly appreciated whatever the household level of poverty.

In food insecure areas food-based programmes would help farmers to begin reducing opium poppy cultivation. However, all interviewees agreed that a few months of FFW projects would be insufficient to improve their economic situation sustainably, and above all to increase their livelihoods opportunities. Some respondents even asked for evidence that FFW would be more profitable than opium poppy cultivation.

Finally, it is not easy to evaluate how much effort the population is still ready to make to stop opium poppy cultivation in the short term because they have lost confidence in the government due the promises it has failed to keep.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.1 Priority needs of farmers and communities

Chronic food insecurity is the norm in most villages and affects both poor and middle income groups, representing 80% of the sample households. Food insecurity was aggravated by several factors in 2007.

- There has been a dramatic increase in the wheat price in recent months. One informant reported that: *“In Ghor, at harvest time, one ser of wheat was 50 Afs. At present, one ser of wheat costs about 200 Afs at the market in Faizabad.”* In the rural areas surveyed, villagers reported a market price of wheat of around 140 Afs per ser.
- In addition, the market price of opium has fallen substantially in the last two years. As a result, the terms of exchange between wheat and opium have decreased tenfold, thus considerably reducing farmer purchasing power. *At present, farmers receive about 4,000 Afs per kg of opium, with which they can buy only 200 kg of wheat, compared with 2,000 kg in 2004.* Another consequence of the fall in the market price of opium is that the more isolated opium poppy growers have found it increasingly difficult to sell their crop: demand is reduced and opium traders are not visiting the more isolated villages so frequently.
- Finally, the 2007 wheat crop did not yield well due to the irregular and unseasonable rainfall.

There is thus an urgent need to address the issue of food insecurity on humanitarian, as well as on counter narcotics and governance / state building grounds.

There is considerable demand for the rehabilitation and development of community infrastructure, with particular emphasis on irrigation systems, coupled with road rehabilitation and bridge construction to improve access to markets. In the less-developed areas there is a need for basic infrastructure such as schools, clinics and drinking water facilities. Such investments are in line with proposals in the recent DFID / World Bank report on licit responses to the opium economy which states, for example, that: *“accelerated and scaled-up investments in irrigation would have a high impact against the drivers of the opium economy, and would provide broadly spread benefits, with the typically important multiplier effects of irrigated agriculture throughout the rural economy.”*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ward et al, (December 2007) *Economic incentives and development initiatives to reduce opium poppy production*. DFID / World Bank

## 4.2 Key issues in programming interventions to reduce opium poppy cultivation

### *Not creating further expectations and giving priority to action*

Although the government has used the promise of aid projects to encourage farmers to stop opium poppy cultivation, few promises have been put into practice. NGOs and UN agencies are still welcome in most villages, but it is becoming counter-productive and possibly increasingly dangerous to continue to ask communities about their needs and to conduct assessments if these are not followed by tangible licit development benefits for these communities.

### *Promoting a gender approach*

The role played by women in opium poppy cultivation is crucial<sup>15</sup>. Informal discussions with women confirmed that:

- women are highly involved in opium poppy cultivation and are often directly remunerated, and,
- women are extremely reluctant (or even unwilling) to stop opium poppy cultivation without alternative livelihoods opportunities being available. One key informant stated that “*women are the first household members to convince to stop opium poppy cultivation.*”

It is evidently essential to target aid programmes at both men and women in order to reduce opium poppy cultivation and establish sustainable licit livelihoods. Moreover, women have various off-farm income generating skills such as sewing and embroidery in Kishim or making *gilim* and *namad* in Khash, which could provide licit livelihood opportunities.

### *Working with the government eradication plans: Or modifying the government eradication plans in line with alternative livelihood projects*

Recent literature on the illicit opium economy has produced much evidence on the possible counter-productive effects of poorly managed eradication campaigns in Afghanistan<sup>16</sup>. As mentioned by Ward et al, “*in areas where opium poppy cultivation is most concentrated and where legal livelihoods are limited, there are simply no alternatives, and eradication can only further marginalize already vulnerable socio-economic groups, resulting in pauperisation, migration, and damage to the nascent relationship between citizen and state.*”<sup>17</sup> Such conditions are already the norm in many of the villages assessed. Farmers are openly starting to oppose the government. Further poorly sequenced eradication campaigns could lead to violent reaction against the government, increase drastically the insecurity and undo much of the state-building work that has been initiated in Badakhshan.

Stopping opium poppy cultivation needs time; and elimination by force, without alternative livelihoods options in place is counter-productive and politically dangerous. Coordinated plans should be drawn up between the government and aid

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<sup>15</sup> As it is with many aspects of household livelihoods strategies.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Ward et al (2007) *Op. cit.*; Mansfield, (2007) *Op. cit.*; Pain, A. & Mansfield, D. (2006) *Opium poppy eradication: How to raise the risk when there is nothing to lose*. AREU.

<sup>17</sup> Ward et al (2007) *Op cit.*

agencies on opium poppy eradication closely linked with support to the licit rural economy. World-wide experience shows that selective eradication campaigns are only appropriate in areas where effective licit livelihoods are already in place: which is not yet the case in most areas of Afghanistan.

### **4.3 Specific recommendations on programming food aid**

#### *A long-term perspective*

Short-term food aid programmes can contribute to winning back the trust of rural households. However, they are not an effective long-term solution to chronic food insecurity, and, on their own, are not enough to convince farmers to abandon opium poppy cultivation. Joint efforts between the government and aid agencies with combinations of long-term agricultural and rural development programmes are required to achieve tangible and sustainable results. Short-term food aid programmes have a potentially vital role as an initial step in such long-term development programmes.

#### *Adopt a local development rather than a relief approach*

Under the current circumstances in Badakhshan, food aid programmes such as FFW are good tools to develop community infrastructure and facilities in the short term. However, in practice, they often fail to achieve their objective for several reasons including the lack of technical staff to manage workers and to ensure that the appropriate technical standards are maintained so that the completed infrastructure operates as designed. In addition, appropriate arrangements (including training) are required to ensure the effective operation and maintenance of these structures. Therefore, in order to ensure that these conditions are achieved, it appears essential to work with and support the Community Development Councils, established under the NSP, as the main community partners of the government, UN agencies and other aid organisations.

#### *Have direct access to beneficiaries*

An effective management and monitoring process should be followed in the implementation of food aid projects, in particular with the distribution of wheat, to ensure that the appropriate beneficiaries receive their due. Mismanagement of food aid is counter-productive and only serves to alienate the target communities and undermine their trust in the government and external aid agencies.

#### *Target off-farm seasons*

Unsurprisingly, the preferred periods for food aid assistance for community infrastructure is before or after the main seasons of agricultural activities that vary from one place to another, according to the farming calendar in the various agro-ecological zones. It is essential for such activities to be appropriately targeted in terms of both the participants and the farming calendar.

#### *Take advantage of the geographical mobility of the male workforce*

Labour migration is a key livelihood strategy in Badakhshan and can add value to food aid projects that target households from all income levels in a village. By ensuring that participants from all the socio-economic groups work together, such projects can encourage community participation and co-operation. This approach would be particularly pertinent in vulnerable and isolated districts.



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