

Supporting education, health and sanitation needs among the local population in Ky Son District, Vietnam, to prevent re-cultivation of opium poppy



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Vietnam

Duration: January 2003 to December 2004

Implementing UN Agencies: UNODC

Other Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development; Nge An Provincial People's Committee

Budget: \$308,227.50

Key Words: Rural communities; alternative livelihoods; access to basic social services

BACKGROUND

Opium poppy production in the northern regions of Vietnam dates back to the 19th century when it was cultivated for medicinal, social and ritual purposes by ethnic minorities. Throughout the 20th century, however, opium was increasingly bought for pharmaceutical use as well as distributed illegally through illicit channels. At the same time, a significant rise in the population put unsustainable pressure on traditional systems of agriculture and the livelihoods

of rural communities. As a result, dependency on poppy cultivation increased in the 20th century and opium poppy cultivation became crucial for the survival of farmers in Ky Son district. Earlier projects in the area had indicated that farmers could adopt new and more sustainable cropping systems if products were made marketable and access to education and social services, along with infrastructure improvement and land use rights were guaranteed.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the project was to contribute to the on-going drug eradication in Ky Son by providing community-based development assistance and generating alternative sources of income. Specifically, the project activities aimed to: (i) improve access to educational facilities, clean water, sanitation, adequate irrigation and health services; (ii) reaffirm local ownership by involving farmers and villages in all stages of the project design and implementation; (iii) undertake a series of infrastructure upgrades in the

targeted communities; and (iv) promote alternative sources of income by reducing livestock mortality rates, diversifying crop based sources for income generation, and improving agro-forestry. Through collaboration between UN-agencies, the Government and local people's committees, the project aimed to create an alternative joint framework for sustainable agro-based development that could be replicated more broadly in rural communities eager to break their dependence on poppy cultivation.

BENEFICIARIES

The project benefitted approximately 32,000 persons from ethnic minorities in Ky Son, living in areas characterized by widespread opium poppy cultivation. In addition, through community-based development

activities, 2,800 students received improved education, 8,500 persons gained access to health clinics and 1,300 households received mini-hydroelectric generators.