

## Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference Rural Development 2015

Edited by prof. Asta Raupelienė

ISSN 1822-3230 / eISSN 2345-0916

eISBN 978-609-449-092-7

Article DOI: <http://doi.org/10.15544/RD.2015.085>

### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN COLOMBIA'S CONFLICT ZONES: A PROPOSAL FROM THE WWP MODEL**

**Carlos Alberto ÁVILA CERÓN**, Sustainable Rural Development at the Agroforestry Department of the Technical University of Madrid (UPM), Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos, Av. Complutense s/n, Spain, [carlosalberto.avila.ceron@alumnos.upm.es](mailto:carlosalberto.avila.ceron@alumnos.upm.es)

**Ignacio DE LOS RÍOS-CARMENADO**, Rural Development and Agroforestry Department of the Technical University of Madrid (UPM), Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos, Av. Complutense s/n, Spain, [ignacio.delosrios@upm.es](mailto:ignacio.delosrios@upm.es)

**Maria RIVERA**, Sustainable Rural Development at the Agroforestry Department of the Technical University of Madrid (UPM), Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos, Av. Complutense s/n, Spain [maria.rivera@upm.es](mailto:maria.rivera@upm.es) (*corresponding author*)

**Susana MARTÍN**, Academic and Faculty Planning, Technical University of Madrid (UPM), Escuela Superior de Ingenieros de Montes, Av. Complutense s/n, Spain, [susana.martin@upm.es](mailto:susana.martin@upm.es)

During the past fifty years, Colombia has endured an internal armed conflict. It has left as a result massive forced displacements, destruction of the social capital and indiscriminate logging of forests in regions affected by illicit crops and a strong presence of illegal armed groups supported by drug trafficking. In spite of a number of national policies and programs against illicit crops, the issue still persists, along with all the social implications it carries with.

This paper presents a model for planning rural development projects in regions with illicit crops. The methodology applied is based on the model "Working With People (WWP)" and integrates the knowledge and experience gathered throughout the implementation of various projects in the region of La Macarena, Colombia. It takes into account eight years of continuous work with the communities, in one of the areas of greatest social unrest in Colombia, due to illicit crops, on-going criminal activity and violence by illegal armed groups and a weak presence of State institutions. Some of the factors hindering successful advancement of rural development policies include the breakdown of the social fabric, deterioration of moral values, family disintegration and lack of confidence. The conceptual framework applied integrates elements from policy analysis and social learning (Friedmann, 1991; Cazorla et al., 2015), proposed as a reaction from traditional and ineffective social reform models (Friedmann, 1991) developed in this type of scenarios.

Following a thorough review of rural development planning theories regarding illicit crops areas, we carried out an analysis of the experience in the Macarena region under the WWP model. The results show the effects of the WWP model and the necessity to develop a strategy for the eradication of illicit crops in a post-conflict scenario, taking into account various social variables. Findings denote a greater relevance of the ethical-social and political-contextual dimensions in terms of sustainable rural development. Trust building, the enhancement of social relationships and direct interaction with target communities are the basic factors to the reconstruction of the social fabric and value systems, fostering sustainable rural development and stabilization.

*Keywords: Post conflict, illicit crops, rural development, rural prosperity, Working With People.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the late 60s, Colombia became an active actor in the cultivation, processing, trafficking, distribution and consumption of psychoactive substances; also known as "the world drug problem" (United Nations, 2005). For years, Colombia has been identified as one of the main producers of cocaine and a major producer of opium, heroin and marijuana (UNODC, 2012). In fact, 95.5 % of the cocaine seized in the United States comes from Colombia (United States Department, 2012). For decades, this issue has required the cooperation of international partners, especially the United States, in a joint effort to stop the cultivation and trafficking of narcotics. Illicit crop productivity depends upon a number of factors (USAID, 2009), changes in weather, farming techniques, soil fertility, and disease prevalence can produce widely varying results from year to year and place to place. Most illicit drug crop areas are not easily accessible to the governments, making scientific information difficult to obtain. The relative productivity of poppy crops can be estimated using imagery, based upon the results of field studies conducted in Latin America (United States Bureau, 2012).

The drug problem in Colombia has not only been a criminal phenomenon in itself but has fostered and nurtured the development of organized crime and systematic violence (Paez, 2012). Also, production and trafficking of illegal drugs is often related to corruption, political violence, insurgency and terrorism (Singer, 2008; Ritter, 2009). In Colombia, illicit crops and the associated armed conflict, has caused the forced displacement of millions of people, the destruction of social capital, and the indiscriminate logging of forests (Armenteras et al., 2006). Furthermore, increased presence of

illegal armed groups have been fostered by association with drug trafficking (Moreno et al., 2003; UNDCP, 2000). These groups attack civilians to reinforce their power, expand territorial control, weaken state presence, and accumulate valuable assets such as land or extraction of natural resources (Ibáñez and Velez, 2007; Henao, 1998). It is estimated that more than 3 million people has been forcibly displaced, which corresponds to about 7 % of the country's population and 30 % of the rural population (USCR, 2006).

Rural communities have been the most visible victims of Colombia's internal conflict; they have become military targets from illegal armed groups in their struggle for territorial control (Wilson, 2002). These groups have deliberately targeted civilians, prompting forced internal migration, appropriating goods and assets, and reducing the ability of communities to defend themselves (Azam and Hoeffler, 2002). These attacks also aim to control all economical activities in the area and constitute a way to ensure recruitment (Cárdenas, 2001; Paez, 2012). The constant presence of illegal armed groups in rural areas, given the weak presence of State institutions, causes social conflicts over land tenure, increased criminal activity and widespread violence. It has generated enormous social costs including disruption of families, destruction of values (ethical and moral) and lack of confidence in regards to rural prosperity (USAID, 2009).

### **Planning the fight against illegal crops in Colombia**

Since the early 70s, the Colombian government has been implementing policies and programs to try to eradicate illicit crops, investing substantial resources on the matter (Paez, 2012). The government has designed these programs, with on-going support from international experts (Moreno et al., 2003) and aim at providing legal alternatives for income generation in rural areas. Communities in areas denominated as "under eradication" follow the regulations of such programs and commit not to grow illicit crops in their properties.

Since the first large-scale military action, "Operation Fulminante" implemented by the Colombian army in 1978 (Tokatlián, 1978), planning efforts have adopted a classic model of Social Reform. This model is characterized as being developed "top-down", that is from the perspective of government officials and international cooperation agencies. In this way, planners and program managers are the ones imprinting their individual vision into these programs (Cazorla et al., 2015). Most of the time, these initiatives have a temporary nature with little sustainability, along with little social and political integration at the local level. Some examples of these programs are: Campo en Acción between 1990 and 1994, Plante y Palante between 1994 and 1998, one of the most important is Plan Colombia (from 1999), a program that initiates its execution with the Government 1998–2002 and whose main objective was the fight against the worldwide problem of drugs, organised crime and the violence hence generated, economic and social reactivation, the strengthening of democratic institutions and improving peace negotiations in Colombia. Plan Colombia is a bilateral agreement between the Government and the United States of America. Between 2002 and 2010 a new program called Presidential Program against illicit crops that had two strategies, the voluntary manual eradication "forest keepers and productive projects Program" and forced manual eradication, between 2008 and 2014. These are programs that collect the experience of Plan Colombia and that continue the strategies in the framework of political consolidation and territorial reconstruction (Decree 6141 November 3 2011).

The social reform concept is framed in the context of the United Nations' alternative development model (DA), developed in the *International Convention on Drugs* (United Nations, 1961, 1971, 1988). Its objective is to promote legal and sustainable socio-economic options for communities that have resorted to illicit cultivation for their livelihood.

These alternative development programs represent a non-repressive option in the fight against illegal crops (Balcazar, 2008). From its inception, alternative development models have been promoted and implemented by international cooperation organisms. These programs have placed special emphasis on economic elements and land tenure, relegating other important dimensions such as the social and political spheres. This view has dominated the approach towards crop substitution, measuring its impact in terms of hectares established and eradicated. It does not take in to account key factors such as security and citizen participation, which in turn increases the risk that the resources allotted might end up strengthening illegal armed groups.

While there has been a reduction in coca cultivation, cocaine production seems not to have been affected (UNODC, 2012). These programs have not managed to rebuild social capital, nor generate the social networking necessary to guarantee sustainable rural development (Singer, 2008; USAID, 2009).

### **A new approach to rural prosperity and development in post-conflict areas**

This section provides an overview of a new approach to the planning of rural development projects in areas affected by illicit crops. We propose an alternative to the classic planning model for AD, taking elements from the "Working with People" (WWP) model developed by the GESPLAN group, as a result of 25 years of experience in rural development projects carried out in both European and emerging countries (Cazorla et al., 2005, 2013; De los Rios et al., 2011, 2013). This framework goes beyond technical and economic dimensions of rural prosperity, focusing in the people, their behaviour and the contexts the communities live and work (Cazorla et al., 2013).

Following this framework, rural prosperity is measured and valued beyond the accumulation of wealth, being associated with the ability of communities to improve their quality of life, within a holistic approach (Legatum Institute, 2014; Sardar, 2007; Rapp, 2008; SDC, 2009) focused on the individual (Jackson, 2009; Robinson, 2012; Cazorla et al., 2013) and social welfare (Kasser, 2009; Jennings, 2013). It demands development planners to incorporate the notion of welfare as key to an integrated view of development (Cazorla et al., 2013). Furthermore, contemplation and respect for the environment are also human needs and values in themselves that ought to be taken into account into any planning process. From this point of view, the WWP model is a conceptual proposal addressing an integrated vision of rural

prosperity, incorporating elements of planning such as social learning, trust building and improving human behaviours. The model includes the following components:

**Ethical and social component:** WWP proposes a new direction for rural development projects that emphasizes the development of skills (contextual and behavioural). It requires planners to take into account social sensitivities (Cazorla and De los Rios, 2010) and ethical standards that exceed the purely structural and technical aspects of a project. Among the actions to build trust, it is important to highlight aspects such as improving safety, infrastructure and basic social services (education, health, recreation, etc.). The model also prioritizes actions tending to strengthen the skills and values of community boards and producers associations as key agents for the revitalization of a local economy based on licit production projects. These social organizations are an important part of the social fabric where trust and community values regenerate, providing new opportunities for organized and reliable work.

**Negotiation component (public-private).** Another key factor to the sustainability of projects in post-conflict zones is the harmonization of public and private actions in the territory. It envisages an articulation from both sectors enabling increased private sector investment and participation. Such “negotiations” generate mutual benefits, and propel a capacity to think and act in original and imaginative ways (IPMA, 2010). These relationships support planner’s creativity, in an individual and collective sense, ultimately benefitting the communities for the common good (Cazorla and De los Rios, 2010). In each post-conflict area, it is necessary to formulate a distinctive strategy, taking into account the communities’ needs, advantages and resources. It entails an open dialogue between various actors, increasing commitment to assume and manage risks (Friedmann, 1993), from a transactional planning perspective (Cazorla, 2015).

**Political-contextual component.** This component seeks to link all processes and productive projects to political organizations and public authorities at the local level. In this case, the national government selects municipalities in which to develop post-conflict actions, based on direct consultation with local administrations as well as military and police authorities. In addition, planners ought to carry out field visits in order to evaluate the interest of people to participate in alternative development projects, as well as the perception of security among these communities.

**Social Learning component.** The process integrates a final component that supports the construction of learning and exchange spaces between all actors in order to apprehend lessons learned and knowledge from people in the field. It means putting together theory and practice in planning (Friedmann, 1993); social learning functions with the assumption that all effective learning comes from experience. This is why, it encourages the target population to actively participate in planning processes, bringing people into *action* since the beginning; in order to collectively change reality and create new *values* that support dialogue and mutual learning (Cazorla et al., 2013).

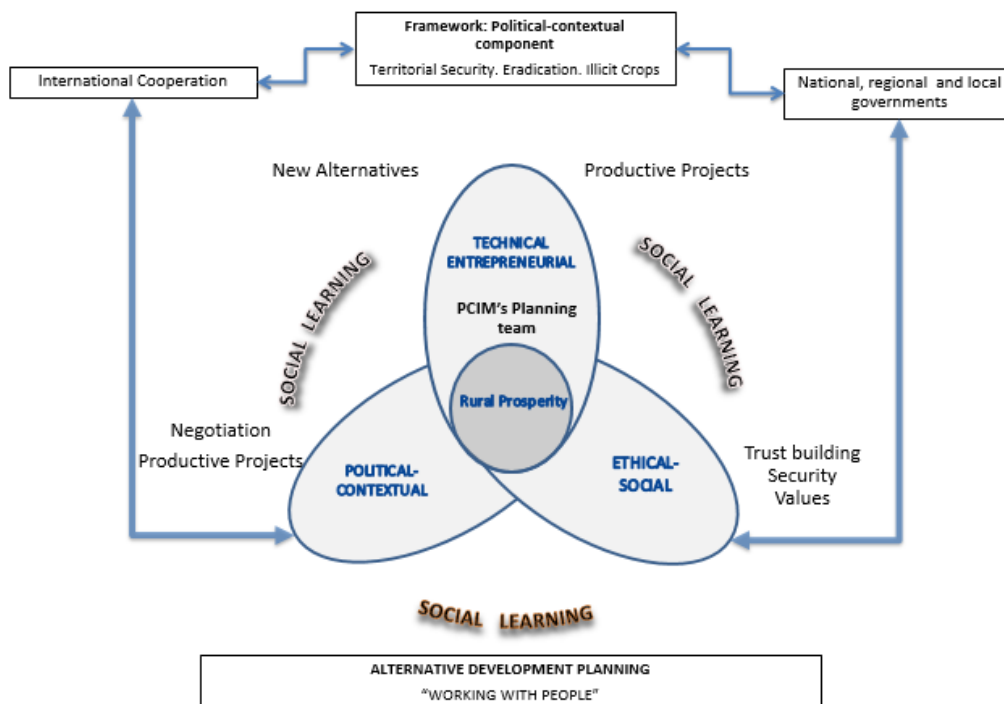


Figure 2. New approach on alternative development planning

Source: Own elaboration

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PCIM CASE STUDY

The WWP model has been applied to the Integral Consolidation Plan of the Macarena (2009–2014), "PCIM" in central Colombia. Due to eradication policies, the population of these areas were found to be either in disagreement with

the State, at risk of forced displacement or willing to continue with the production of illicit crops. This case presents a new approach to rural development planning in post-conflict regions. It is an innovative proposal for policy-making in terms of social recovery of the territory and an effective policy against illegal crops. The strategic focus of PCIM involves trust-building initiatives following military actions, decreased control of illegal armed groups and security recovery (PCIM, 2010).

The results of this research are based on a methodology that incorporates different tools and information sources; first the collection and review of numerous secondary sources on the above concepts. Moreover, the research methodology incorporates empirical information obtained from a rural development project of high complexity in its management. The project is located in the Community of La Macarena (Colombia) and is implemented and managed based on the planning model Working With People (WWP) (Cazorla et al., 2013). The social base consists of 2,503 families in the area known as *La Serranía de la Macarena*, comprising the municipalities of Vista Hermosa, Uribe, Mesetas, San Juan de Arama, Puerto Rico and La Macarena in the department of Meta.

The first instrument – questionnaire #1 for the collection and systematization of experience knowledge about the project – was designed according to international dimensions for the assessment the rural prosperity within a holistic approach (Sardar, 2007; Rapp, 2008; SDC, 2009; De los Rios et al., 2013; Cazorla et al., 2013; Legatum Institute, 2014): the social-ethical dimension; the entrepreneurial-business dimension; and contextual-political dimension. This questionnaire was applied to the families of the La Macarena Community who have benefited from PCIM's projects and have participated in its management. The questionnaire was sent to the 250 families (10 % of the 2,503 target families), obtaining a response of 18 % (46 owners), acceptable statistically speaking (Cea, 2001) and being unnecessary to increase the sample size. This high response from members of the Community is a guarantee of interest in the PCIM. For the expert knowledge information, the project management report of the Management Body of Colombia was used, which is the entity responsible for the management of PICM.

A second instrument was, different focus group (workshops) that were held as part of the activities of the Project Management and Monitoring of PCIM, including the project Director to whom the same criteria of questionnaire #1 was applied. For the treatment of data, we used the statistical program SPSS V.19. Finally, the integration of results – experienced knowledge of the affected population with expert knowledge – allowed drawing lessons to take appropriate actions.

## **RESULTS OF THE WWP APPROACH IN PCIM**

This section summarizes the results of the application of WWP theories in the area of intervention of PCIM since 2008.

The analysis derive from the experience generated in the application of the above-mentioned methodology, and are presented in accordance to the three components of WWP.

**Ethical and social component: restoring trust.** After 8 years of PCIM, it is observed that new values have been generated and there is an increasing sense of recovered confidence between the people and public institutions. It entails greater citizen participation towards consolidation and social recovery of the territory. This project has had an influence in reducing forced displacement and job creation. In this way, trust building has resulted in a decrease in displacement (70 %) and increased job creation (23 %). However, communities still perceive that project planning did not take into account their point of view as they were designed by people outside the municipality (33 % of the inhabitants), and that one of the main problems is the lack of articulation and dialogue with the community in terms of project planning.

**Negotiation component: Generating business.** PCIM established round tables between public and private sectors and the beneficiaries, with the purpose of generating sustainable projects. This articulation between government bodies (national, local and international) and the private sector has been pivotal for Territorial Consolidation and Reconstruction and have resulted in tangible business among private companies and producers association. It is important to highlight the role of these associations, which in less than five years have managed to grow steadily, strengthening their organizations, and linking more than 500 producers to markets. These projects have resulted in enhanced productivity (some associations' present production increases of 517 %), due to different actions within PCIM including: Know-how and technical assistance (70 %); improved product quality (73 %); access to new markets (30 %) and financial support (34 %). Dairy and cacao sectors have been particularly benefitted from these commercial alliances and training. Access to the financial system has been key in the process, as these associations are accessing credit collectively (69 %) or as individuals (43 % of the population).

**Contextual political component:** The Department for Social Prosperity is responsible to develop and implement policies for Social Inclusion and Reconciliation. Within the department there is the Special Administrative Unit for Territorial Consolidation, which seeks to create the necessary institutional capacity to ensure access and protection of the fundamental rights of the population of the territories historically affected by armed conflict and illegal crops. The Department also holds The National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty, the Victims' Unit, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute and the Center for Historical Memory. These institutions, along with military and police forces and eradication mobile groups, determine intervention areas for homeland security as well as voluntary and forced eradication. This PCIM contextual-political component involves different stages (Military Operations, Transition and Consolidation) in order to effectively restore security in the target territory. And thus, the process of "working with people" evolves, depending on the level of territorial security. Following military operations, where there is a high incidence of insurgent or terrorist threat, it is fundamental to ensure the protection of citizens. As security forces establish greater control, the areas become "Transitional", where the State can start working with the communities. As such, increasing presence of public and private institutions provide the basis to start implementation of social and economic development projects, focused on the needs of the population. Finally, a permanent presence of the security forces and rapid actions of assistance

ensure that the area moves towards “**Consolidation**” where security conditions are positive, allowing increased “work with people”, enabling private and public negotiations and more sustainable projects. In these conditions, community boards and local producer organizations are strengthened, creating confidence, positive values and skills that foster social prosperity. PCIM beneficiaries believe that coordinated actions from the political arena have had a positive impact in the communities, improving safety (37 %), infrastructure (25 %), technical assistance (46 %), access to revolving funds (43 %) and the implementation of productive projects (31 %). These institutions are promoting the conditions to foster a culture of peace, democracy and regional stability, to promote prosperity and decent living conditions for all citizens.

**Social learning component:** WWP model has generated new relationships and a dialogue between planners and beneficiaries. Participants believe that the main lesson learned is that the process of transition from an illicit to a licit economy should be based on building trust between the people and the State. Beneficiaries also believe that the program has propelled participation between institutions and the people, generating collective learning, especially with the following national institutions: the Department for Social Prosperity (25 %), Mayoralties (23 %), “Colombia Responde” program (13 %), the governorship of Meta (12 %), FUPAD (6 %), the Agrarian Bank (5 %), CORDEPAZ and FEDECAFE, and the entity responsible for the management of National Nature Reserves (2 %), as well as with private sector groups such as the National Federation of Cacao Producers (FEDECACAO). Learning processes are gradual, they follow a logical sequence and are articulated among them. They are based on relationships of trust between public institutions and the civil society. These learning processes allow the development of abilities and skills for both the communities and local institutions to create a sustainable peace in rural areas.

## CONCLUSIONS

The new approach to prosperity and rural development in post conflict areas that was launched mid 2008 in the area called Region of Macarena contains Working With People (WWP) elements that were created as a result of 25 years of experience of the Group Gesplan, in projects oriented to improve prosperity in rural areas. It’s a new transition model from an illegal to a legal economy with a local rural development vision. Through the different components it presents a new conceptual proposal that goes beyond the technical and economical vision of rural prosperity, emphasizing the behaviors of the people and the contexts in which communities live and work (Cazorla et al., 2013). At the same time, the components of this new approach have supported the population living in areas of illicit crops eradication to get involved in the culture of legality and establish new relationships with the State.

## REFERENCES

1. Armenteras, D., Rudas, G., Rodríguez, N., Sua, S., Romero, M. 2006. Patterns and causes of deforestation in the Colombian Amazon. *Ecological Indicators*, Vol. 6, pp. 353–368.
2. Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas. 2005. Resolución aprobada por la Asamblea General, Documento Final de la Cumbre Mundial 2005, A/RES/60/1 (2005). Nueva York. (In Spain)
3. Balcázar, Á. 2008. Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena, Proyecto de Apoyo de la Embajada del Reino de los Países Bajos. Bogotá: CCAI – Acción Social. (In Spain)
4. Cárdenas, M. 2001. Economic Growth in Colombia: A reversal of ‘Fortune’? *CID Working Paper*, No. 83.
5. Cazorla, A., De los Ríos, I. 2001. The new social sensitivity engineering of rural development. *AGENG international Conference of Agricultural Engineering*, pp. 165–182.
6. Cazorla, A., De los Ríos, I., Díaz-Puente, J. 2005. The Leader community initiative as rural development model: application in the capital region of Spain. *Agrociencia*, Vol. 39, Iss. 6, pp. 697–708.
7. Cazorla, A., De los Ríos, I., Salvo, M. 2013. Working With People (WWP) in Rural Development Projects: a Proposal from Social Learning. *Cuadernos de Desarrollo Rural*, Vol. 10, Iss. 70, pp. 131–157.
8. De los Ríos, I., Díaz-Puente, J., Cadena-Iñiguez, J. 2011. The initiative LEADER as a model for rural development: implementation to some territories of México. *Agrociencia*, Vol. 45, Iss. 5, pp. 609–624.
9. De los Ríos, I., Turek, A., Afonso, A. 2013. Project Management Competencies for Regional Development in Romania: Analysis from “Working With People” Model. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, pp. 614–621.
10. Jackson, T. 2009. Prosperity Without Growth. Economics for a Finite Planet. Abingdon: Earthscan.
11. Jennings, C. 2013. A review of Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson, Pillars of Prosperity: The Political Economics of Development Clusters, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2011, pp. 375 and Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty, Profile Books, London 2012, pp. 529. *European Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 29, pp. 252–258.
12. Kasser, T. 2009. Psychological Need Satisfaction, Personal Well-Being, and Ecological Sustainability. *Ecopsychology*, Vol. 10, Iss. 4, pp. 175–180.
13. Legatum Institute. 2014. Legatum prosperity index. Legatum Institute Foundation. London: Legatum Institute Foundation.
14. Páez, C. 2012. Cuatro décadas de Guerra contra las drogas ilícitas: un balance costo – beneficio. Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico-Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Colombia. (In Spain)
15. Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena PCIM. 2010. Programa de Apoyo de la Embajada del Reino de los Países Bajos. Bogotá: Acción Social – CCAI. (In Spain)

16. Rapp, H. 2008. Fulfilment and prosperity: a new-Gandhian vision. Fourth opinion piece for the Redefining Prosperity seminar "Visions of Prosperity." London: Sustainable Development Commission.
17. Ritter, A. 2009. Policy Analysis: Illicit drugs policy through the lens of regulation. Australia.
18. Sardar, Z. 2007. Prosperity: A transmodern analysis. Think-piece for the SDC seminar 'Visions of Prosperity', November 2007. London: Sustainable Development Commission.
19. SDC. 2009. Prosperity without Growth? The transition to a sustainable economy. London: Sustainable Development Commission.
20. Singer, M. 2008. Drugs and development: The global impact of drug use and trafficking on social and economic development. Hispanic Health Council, Hartford, USA.
21. United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. 2012. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control. Washington, D.C.
22. UNODC. 2012. Informe Mundial Sobre las Drogas 2012. Resumen Ejecutivo. New York. (In Spain)
23. USAID. 2009. Assessment of the Implementation of the United States Government's Support for Plan Colombia's Illicit Crops Reduction Components.
24. Wall, D. 2008. Prosperity without growth, economics after capitalism. The first opinion piece for the Redefining Prosperity, third seminar "Confronting Structure – achieving economic sustainability". London: Sustainable Development Commission.