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## SNAPSHOT

# Seeding Hope And Sustainable Crops

**In the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, farmers are helped to move away from cultivating poppies**



Photo: USAID / KFZ

*Naimatullah, a farmer in Arghistan district, says he has benefited greatly*

***The greenhouse project is clearly paying off with more farmers increasingly willing to substitute poppy with other crops***

There is a direct link between poppy cultivation and instability in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar. USAID's Kandahar Food Zone (KFZ) program has designed ways to help local farmers grow profitable crops other than poppy.

Kandahar Food Zone established 47 greenhouses and trained 777 farmers in Panjwayi, Zhari, Shah Wali-Kot, Kandahar City, Takhta Pul, Maiwand and Arghistan districts.

The greenhouse project supports Afghanistan's Ministry of Counter Narcotics efforts to create sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities by introducing new technologies and the latest agricultural practices in Kandahar.

Kandahar Food Zone established six greenhouses in Arghistan district and provided 30 farmers with six weeks of training.

Naimatullah, who belongs to Supanzo village in Arghistan district, says poppy was lucrative for militants but not for poor farmers. "We were paid less than what we could earn by growing other crops. Now, in a year we harvest produce from a single greenhouse that is equal to what is produced from almost two jeribs," he added, using the traditional Afghan unit that signifies 2,000 square meters of land.

The greenhouse project is clearly paying off. More farmers are substituting poppy with other crops.

"The farmers now understand that cultivating poppy is not only haram (forbidden) by our religion but that growing poppy increases instability and helps our enemies," says Naimatullah.

Kandahar Food Zone strengthens and diversifies legal rural livelihoods in targeted districts by identifying and addressing the root causes and sources of instability that lead to opium poppy cultivation. Nearly 800 people have benefited from alternative livelihood activities of the two-year, \$18.7 million program, which began in July 2013.