Preliminary results of the qualitative data analysis

Consultant Daniela Chiriboga
1. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS
1. Country selection

Six countries were identified:

1. Chile
2. Colombia
3. Guatemala
4. Honduras
5. Mexico
6. Peru
2. Selection of Experts

1. Contact with focal point requesting the selection of 3 experts

2. Country response:
   - Name
   - Position
   - Institution
   - Contact:

3. Contact experts to learn about their participation

4. Possible outcomes:
   - Interview scheduled
   - Change of expert
2. Selection of Experts: Profile

- **19 experts**

- **EXPERIENCE:** Between 2 to 30 years

- **AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:**
  - Detectives
  - Police officers
  - Vice ministers
  - Directors
  - Advisors
  - Prosecutors

- **AREAS OF PERFORMANCE:**
  - Public security
  - Anti-Drugs units
  - National observatories
  - Drug trafficking control
  - Organized crime control
### 3. Interview schedule

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**Schedule**: 4 weeks (August 02 to 26)

**Means used**: Zoom platform

**Problems**:
1. Due to conflicts with other responsibilities
2. Lack of response from experts
4. Interview and data analysis

### Key results:
- **Number of interviews:** 19 interviews conducted
- **Duration:** 33 to 59 minutes
- **Topics addressed:** Seizures, arrests, prosecution, price and purity, emerging trends and information exchange

### Main issues:
- **Lateness:** (1 to 3 hours)
- **Last-minute replacement of the designated expert**

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#### Data analysis

- Recording interviews
- Transcription of interviews
- Country-level report writing
2. PRELIMINARY RESULTS
1. Drug supply context

Seizures
- Criminal organizations with linear structures.
- Seizures of domestically produced drugs as an effect of the pandemic.
- Increase in drug seizures during the pandemic.
- Decreasing purity levels to compensate for low drug prices during the pandemic.

Arrests for drug offenses
- People related to synthetic drug offenses and diversion of substances.
- People with higher levels of education, doctors (dosage), chemists (production).
- People of new nationality. Foreigners
- People with a less ostentatious way of life.

Prosecutions for drug offenses
- Delay in sentencing due to pandemic.
- Improvements in the efficiency of judicial processes once the processes were transferred virtually.
1. Drug supply context

**Drug trafficking**
- Trafficking routes located in chemical supply areas, crops and laboratories.
- Changes in transit, destination and origin countries.
- Drug trafficking from more distant countries. Formerly: border countries.
- People with a greater capacity to traffic drugs are recruited.

**Retail drug trafficking**
- Drug purchase through internet, calls and messages.
- Through delivery services.
1. Drug supply context

Trends on marijuana or coca leaf plantations:
1. To avoid drug shipment.
2. As an effect of the pandemic by not being able to move drugs across the borders

Reinforcement in detected cultivation areas and extension to new areas with the following characteristics:
1. Difficult access for authorities
2. Areas far from the normal transit of people
3. Close to logistics chain

Higher yielding crops (more harvests per year) due to changes in farming techniques:
use of old plots for seedbeds or mixing fertilizer with irrigation water.

Use of advanced farming techniques to adapt planting in unfavorable environments, such as desert areas.
1. Drug supply context

Emerging trends

- Piperazines, para-methoxy-methamphetamine, NBOme, ketamine, tramadol, ecstasy, 2CB
- Largest seizures in most populated places
- Drug users characterized by young people and young adults with high incomes
- Drug trends such as opioids, fentanyl, benzodiazepines, codeine

Chemical substances

- Incidents of diversion of Potassium permanganate, fuels, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, hydrochloric acid and acetic anhydride.
- Replacement of chemicals when controls are in place, use of pre-precursors and with common substances use, such as salt or cement.
- Chemical substance reuse.

Laboratories

- From small and rustic to large structures that process inputs from different plantations.
- Final-stage drug production approach for profitability.
- Synthesis, compaction, extraction or bulking.
2. Drug supply

**Operations**
- There are several agencies with jurisdiction to make drug seizures.
- Increased focus on investigative operations to reach the highest-ranking members of criminal structures.
- Decentralization of services to the territory (increase in prosecution offices of new locations).
- Increased inter-institutional and international cooperation.

**Legal changes**
- Increase in the number of detention days for investigative purposes.
- Determination of the degree of purity of drugs.
- Decrease in convictions for drug-related offenses.
2. Drug supply

Chemical substance control

- Control of substances at customs office, in transportation and in companies to which the products are destined.
- Audit in companies through the comparison of substances in stock vs. use.
- Problems regarding the storage of chemicals.
- Some countries have an outdated list of chemical substances subject to control, which makes their monitoring difficult.

Illicit crops control

- Eradication operations.
- Alternative crop programs, crop substitution and licit production projects with trade and export lines, as well as production diversification.
- Detection through intelligence analysis, satellite analysis, foot patrols, informants.
2. Drug supply

- Technical committees, supply and demand observatories, information fusion centers.
- The exchange of information is not standardized in all cases.
- Periodic / specific meetings.

Early warning system
- Not established in all countries.
- In the countries that have been created, the agreements and working minutes that protect its creation and protocols are maintained.
- Constraints during the pandemic to carry out the set-up process and regular meetings.
Preliminary results of the qualitative data analysis.

Consultant Daniela Chiriboga
DChiriboga@oas.org