

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)

SCA is a non-governmental organization working to assist in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. SCA was formed in 1980 in Sweden to protest against the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan. Operations started in Afghanistan in 1982 on an emergency basis, which subsequently evolved into long term development programmes. SCA today works in the sectors of Health, Education, Disability and Rural Development, with vulnerable groups in rural underserved areas as primary beneficiaries. Through its programmes, SCA aims to fight poverty, support economic and social development and strengthen democratic development and human rights.

SCA emphasizes the importance of cooperation with local communities, authorities and institutions, to enable Afghans to have a central role in their own development. Building skills and local capacity is considered crucial for the continuity and sustainability of all development endeavors.

Core values of SCA:

- Full respect for the Afghan people's right to sovereignty, cultural heritage and religious integrity.
- Full neutrality and impartiality vis-à-vis people of different religion, gender and ethnic origin.
- Equal access to all services for the Afghan people, including women's right to survival, protection and development.

SCA activities in Afghanistan

For decades, SCA has been active in Afghanistan in the fields of Education, Health, Disability and Rural development. SCA has also implemented agricultural projects in the past but in 2006 these were handed over to an Afghan partner organization. The development of civil society organizations and public institutions, and the promotion of equality and rights, is gaining prominence within SCA programme activities while pure service delivery gradually is handed over to authorities as they gain in capacity.

SCA is today active in the Northern, North-Eastern, and South-Eastern areas of Afghanistan.

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Rehabilitation of Afghans with disability

Through its disability programme known as Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disabilities (RAD), SCA promotes the rights of children, women and men with disabilities to be treated as equals and included in all aspects of community life. Based on an international approach known as Community Based Rehabilitation, the programme reaches over

300 000 beneficiaries in 13 provinces through a network of community centres and rehabilitation clinics.

At RAD clinics, persons with disabilities are physically rehabilitated by being provided prostheses, orthoses, mobility aids and physiotherapy services. Children with special needs are offered preparatory education including classes in sign language, Braille and daily living skills so that they can be integrated into special education classes or included directly in mainstream schools. People with disabilities are promoted through vocational training, the provision of revolving loans and business training.

The rights based approach to disability looks at changing attitudes in the community towards people with disabilities and breaking down barriers of shame and stigma. RAD programme concentrates on awareness raising in local communities through a network of community volunteers, support committees and Disabled People's Organizations. RAD community rehabilitation workers, both men and women, identify people with disabilities in the community and carry out home-based training for people with disabilities with the assistance of their family members. On a national level RAD works with government ministries to draw up policies and programmes which include persons with disabilities and to advocate for their rights through local media and publications.

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