

## Creating mainstream schools in a war-torn country

Afghanistan – Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

In Afghanistan children with disabilities commonly attend separate schools. The aim of the organization is to promote Inclusive Education at the community level that is adapted to the needs of all children. The target group includes children with disabilities, girls, and the marginalized Kuchi (nomadic) children. The programme provides services for 81,000 learners, of whom 65% are girls, and has established a large network and cooperation with the government.

*“It is not war, neither is it foreign or national soldiers who will change the education system in Afghanistan, but the change of attitude towards children and persons with disabilities.”*

- Mr. Joseph M. Evans, SCA Inclusive Education Advisor

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The education programme covers 57 districts in 13 of 34 Afghan provinces.
- 81,000 learners are housed in 2,600 classes with about 3,000 teachers.
- The programme supports 500 School Management Committees, which consists of parents, teachers, Imams, and local leaders.
- The budget varies from year to year, ranging from approximately \$5.2 million in 2013 to \$6.2 million in 2015.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

Afghanistan has been in war for over 30 years and still counting. Political instability, insurgency, corruption, and lack of sustainable education policies are some of the main barriers to the development of Inclusive Education. In response, the project engages with the government to advocate for Inclusive Education, targeting vulnerable children, children with disabilities, and girls. One of these engagements was to assist the government to develop an Inclusive Education Policy, which came into force in December 2014. Earlier, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan created special education programmes focused on the early identification of children with disabilities and early intervention through home-based education. Following their home-based education, the children were transferred to a Community Rehabilitation Development Centre, where they were introduced to formal literacy and numeracy for two to three years before transitioning to a mainstream school.

## SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

In order to provide Inclusive Education, the project offers support through early intervention training and the creation of an accessible learning environment. Community-based rehabilitation workers, special education teachers, physiotherapists, parents, and local leaders foster the students so they can ultimately attend mainstream schools. Materials developed include Braille books and writing implements, basic sign language books, woodblocks, textbooks, writing materials, and games, among others. The programme also arranges training schedules for teachers when school is in recess. Training includes how to set up an inclusive classroom, the preparation of inclusive lesson plans, and the recognition of children's learning diversities.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The forecast for 2015 is to provide support to 12 community-based schools, where 12 resource centres have been earmarked for construction. The resource centres will act as the material development centre for community-based teachers; as training centres for teachers and parents; as assessment centres for children with disabilities; and as hubs for assisting community-based schools. Six new schools with six classrooms each will be constructed. In addition, the training of trainers is a major focus to boost the quality of teaching. In 2016 adult literacy for parents, a learning programme for out-of-school children, and early childhood education are under consideration.

Photo: Yes

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