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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Organisational Evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

Final Report

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December 2014**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

	[Name protected]
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
	[Name protected]
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
	[Name protected]
BPHS	Basic Public Health Service
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CD	Capacity Development
CDC	Community Development Council
	[Name protected]
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
EPHS	Enhanced Public Health Service
EVAW	Eliminating Violence Against Women
	[Name protected]
GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HRGU	Human Rights and Gender Unit
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
JPO	Jalalabad Project Office
KMO	Kabul Management Office
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
	[Name protected]
	[Name protected]
MPO	Mazar Project Office
	[Name protected]
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPP	National Priority Project
NRP	Northern Rural Project
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
	[Name protected]

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

RE	Realist Evaluation
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SG	Secretary General
SMC	School Management Committee
SMO	Stockholm Management Office
SO	Strategic Objective
SP10	Strategic Plan 2010-2013
SP14	Strategic Plan 2014-2017
SPG	Stockholm Policy Group
	[Name protected]
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Preface

This evaluation was commissioned in June 2014 by Sida's Afghanistan Unit, Department for Asia, North Africa and Humanitarian Assistance, through Sida's framework agreement for reviews and evaluations. The evaluation covers the work of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) from 2010 until October 2014.

Indevelop (www.indevelop.se) undertook the evaluation from August – December 2014, with a field visit to Afghanistan in October following religious holidays and the inauguration of the new President.

The Team was comprised of Team Leader Paul Lundberg and team members Annica Holmberg, Monika Lundin and [Name protected]. All but Mrs. Holmberg participated in the field data collection in Afghanistan. Additional members, [Name protected] and [Name protected], joined the team in Afghanistan providing field organisation and translation and also conducted independent data collection exercises in Samangan and Nangarhar provinces respectively.

Quality assurance was provided by Adam Pain, while Jessica Rothman managed the evaluation process at Indevelop.

The users of the evaluation are Sida and SCA. Mr. [Name protected] was the chief liaison with the Evaluation Team for SCA, and Ms. Birgitta Jansson was the responsible evaluation manager at Sida. This report has been finalised after comments and discussions with SCA and Sida on the draft report.

The team would like to express its appreciation of the substantial logistical support provided by SCA and in particular the regional offices in Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad during the course of this evaluation.

Executive Summary

The report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), covering the period 2010-2014. The evaluation assesses the extent to which SCA's changes and plans for organisational development are sufficient to enhance its contribution to sustainability, to build capacity among staff, beneficiaries and government organisations and apply a human rights-based approach to development. In addition, the report assesses to what extent SCA works towards improved rights for children and people with disabilities and is working towards improve gender equality.

The evaluation was structured as an assessment of an organisation's capacity for future improvement using a methodology designed to ensure that the evaluation provided a critical learning outcome that would be useful for Sida and SCA to agree on future collaboration. As such, the evaluation was primarily guided by the principles of an Appreciative Inquiry approach, coupled with an orientation towards Realist Evaluation. The approach required that the Evaluation Team intensively engage the SCA staff, target groups and Afghan partners to more completely understand the factors that have led to lessons learned from successful and less successful interventions.

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Terms of Reference, which contained a set of specific evaluation questions. The findings and the recommendations of the report have been presented in response to these questions, while the conclusions have been used to summarise issues from both a human rights-based approach and the OECD-DAC quality standards.

The evaluation found that the Strategic Objectives of the SCA Strategic Plans for 2010-2013 and 2014-2017 were highly relevant with regard to the Swedish Development Cooperation strategies of 2012-2014 and 2015-2019. Areas of particular synergy were found in education, health, rural development and gender equality. Aside from these thematic areas, the SCA plans comply with the Swedish intent to enable disadvantaged people, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions based on an increased respect for human rights. The SCA approach has also been fully aligned with the Government of Afghanistan's National Priority Programmes (NPP).

The effectiveness and efficiency of the SCA approach is seen as more than satisfactory. The ability of the organisation to engage in useful development operations in highly isolated and marginalised communities is notable. Government officials, with few exceptions, showed a high degree of knowledge of and appreciation for the work SCA was conducting in their areas.

SCA has been the leader in advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and has had significant success in engaging communities, businesses and government in ensuring their productive inclusion in society. The SCA focus on enlarging the cadre of midwives has had a double impact by opening health services to women who otherwise would not be allowed to see a male doctor, and by creating an enabling environment wherein communities could visualise the benefit of a women's engagement in work outside the home. Similarly, the SCA focus on girls' education has, over time, modified long standing attitudes regarding the value of allowing a girl to attend school. Of the 208 000 students studying in 5922 community-based education classes reported by the [Name protected]¹, the SCA education programme contributed to 33.85% of the country's students in community-based education (including Girls Annexes and Nomadic Classes) at the end of 2013.²

SCA can take credit for meaningful change in the minds of villagers regarding the rights of girls and women but there are still impediments to the advancement of women in its own organisation. Nevertheless, across the organisation, at the time of the evaluation, there is only one Afghan woman at the level of project manager. Although SCA is an INGO, its internal gender dynamics all too closely mirror the same Afghan societal norms that it has been successfully modifying in its field operations.

At present, Afghanistan is a country that has limited financial and technical capacity for engaging in socioeconomic development without external assistance. The government and most communities have only limited local resources at their disposal. This presents SCA with a dilemma. Partly in response to this national resource constraint, SCA has maintained its long standing orientation to delivering services that are needed by disadvantaged people. This focus on quality service delivery has enabled SCA to build a high level of rapport with communities, and with government. This is both a strength and a constraint as it has also kept SCA heavily engaged in self-designed provider/beneficiary relationships. SCA's strong views on the serious needs of disadvantaged people, coupled with an assessment that they as yet have limited capacity to manage many of the technical services in its portfolio has slowed its progress on more fully engaging through a human rights based approach to development.

The current Strategic Plan clearly aims to move in this direction, and many modifications in programme methods/approaches and internal organisational structures are

¹ 3rd National Education Strategic Plan Draft (2015-2020) – [Name protected] Afghanistan, p. 9 ² SCA's calculation based on the above figures from [Name protected], a revision from the figure provided in the SCA 2010-2013 narrative report to Sida p. 21-22. The figure presented in the report was 32%.

being put in place precisely to rectify this imbalance. The strategic plan, with its programmes and objectives, was designed internally by SCA staff following consultations with a sample of target group members and government. However, engagement of people as full partners in planning and implementation does appear to be a significant component in the rural development programme interventions.

The Evaluation recommends that SCA focus its attention on two aspects of its programme in particular. The first, as noted above, is for SCA to more fully embrace a gender sensitive and human rights-based approach to development. This would involve, as a start, undertaking a series of detailed human rights situational analyses of the power dynamics within representative places where SCA operates. Fundamentally, however, SCA must move more swiftly and completely towards ensuring that rights-holders are fully engaged in the planning and operation of all SCA interventions, and that the organisation starts to work with accountability mechanisms between itself and partner organisations and rights-holders. The work on community governance of rural development is a good start and needs to be expanded. These groups also need to be facilitated to form networks of their own that can foster peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

The second major area of attention needs to be placed on SCA's approach to knowledge management and advocacy. Many large donor organisations are unaware of SCA's work other than the fact that they have been in country for a long time. SCA needs to consider building and sharing a body of knowledge on the lessons it has learned through its operations. This could involve inviting local and international academics to undertake detailed research studies on specific aspects of SCA operations. SCA should engage more frequently as a knowledge source in development forums in the country. As SCA evolves its programmes towards a more integrated community approach, it should assist those communities to track their own progress and share these lessons with their peers so they can make informed, and collective, suggestions to duty bearers. Local partners and SCA need to develop advocacy strategies to enhance claims on accountability at different levels in society and in relation to different kinds of duty-bearers.

In summary, the Team found a well-organised, dedicated and self-critical organisation that is intent on improving its ability to achieve its mission statement of supporting people to influence their own development. The leadership's willingness to continue the institutional evolution, initiated four years ago, appears genuine. Coherence among staff at all levels also appears to have improved significantly since earlier evaluations. Nevertheless, the deep organisational culture that has accumulated over the years, centred on a strong service provider role, will be slow to change. At the same time, external evaluators and donors need to remain cognizant of the complex context within which SCA is operating and the limitations this places on both its options for change and its pace.

1 Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), undertaken by Indevelop. The evaluation was designed to analyse the capacities of an organisation to achieve future objectives. These capacities included the ability to implement the remaining three years of its Strategic Plan 2014-2017 in accordance with a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) that is relevant to the prevailing Afghan cultural, economic and security context. The evaluation focused on the implementation of activities that were associated with Sida's contributions³ to SCA during the period between January 2010 to July 2014 and took note of modifications in the programme and organisational structure that are expected to be initiated beginning in 2015.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 Overall evaluation process

During the inception phase, an evaluation matrix was developed to provide an analytical framework for how evidence was to be collected and analysed to answer the evaluation questions. The matrix and its indicators, presented in Annex 3, guided the team throughout the evaluation. A desk review helped to identify a set of assumptions and some preliminary findings.

The field data collection consisted of over 100 stakeholder and informant consultations in Sweden and Afghanistan. Interviews with SCA board members, management team and current and previous key staff, Forum Syd and Sida were held in Sweden prior to the evaluators' departure for Afghanistan facilitating the identification of key emerging issues and concerns. The field phase was used to validate and enrich the desk review and generate new information. It allowed the team to go deeper into the contextual and organisational dynamics. SCA provided the evaluators with project data, internal review and evaluation documents and summaries, brief background notes and case studies on key programmes. Discussions were held with government and civil society stakeholders. SCA staff from Wardak and Ghazni came to Kabul for

³ Directly from Sida's Afghan Unit and through the CSO appropriation channelled by Forum Syd

consultations. The Team travelled to Mazar where they visited several field sites and also met with SCA staff from Kunduz and Takhar. One national team member travelled to Samangan and another visited Nangarhar and Laghman provinces.

Prior to departure from Kabul, the Team held a briefing with SCA senior management to discuss key findings. Finally a set of interviews with SCA leadership and Sida were held in Stockholm to discuss and further understand the deeper factors that influence the design and conduct of SCA in the field.

1.2.2 Conceptual framework, methods for the data collection and analysis

The ToR emphasised the utilisation focus of the evaluation to support learning by SCA to understand and institutionalize the changes needed in its approach and culture to become a rights-based ‘agent of change’. Thus the focus of the evaluation was more of an assessment of the capacity of SCA to become a stronger agent for change in the future, than being a critique of past performance.

The key methods used were Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Realist Evaluation (RE). The primary purpose of an Appreciative Inquire method is to establish an understanding of progress and limitations of a programme through the eyes of the implementers. The use of Realist Evaluation tools was included to ensure that progress and limitations of the SCA approach were viewed in light of the Afghan context. Both AI and RE tools were used to enhance the utility potential of the evaluation report by Sida and SCA. The SCA is accountable to its members and to its donors, primarily the Swedish taxpayers through Sida. However SCA is also accountable to the people of Afghanistan, under whose name it receives funding. An objective evaluation of SCA therefore must be carried out from both value perspectives: Swedish and Afghan. This evaluation employed both lenses, but with emphasis on the Afghan perspective. A stronger emphasis on the Afghan perspective means increased reliance on the Afghan priorities of change in the lives of people.

1.2.3 Limitations

The broad range of topics covered in the ToR, the short time available for field data collection, plus the fragile security situation, allowed only a limited examination of SCA field operations. The Evaluation thus focused primarily on the most significant changes and results that had been achieved during the period under review.

The lack of SCA results data disaggregated at the project level limited the Team in employing some of its proposed analytical tools. The Team made several attempts to obtain data linking outcomes and expenditures. The SCA management explained that their system had not yet been fully oriented in this way. In August 2014, the Finance Unit completed the first budget plan linked to outcome indicators, which will be implemented beginning in 2015. This limitation prevented the Team from using certain planned analytical tools, but did not affect the overall assessment as substantial material was available from external and internal evaluation reports.

The generic guide developed for child and youth participation in evaluation could not be implemented as planned. Most schools supported by SCA were outside the area where the evaluation was allowed to travel for security reasons. Communication with disabled children that were reachable required two levels of interpretation –their teacher and a SCA staff, minimizing the potential for obtaining direct comments from the children. A session with rural community school children was undertaken by one national team member, but he had difficulties using the tool and was unable to get the teachers to leave the room.

2 Background

2.1 THE AFGHAN CONTEXT AND ITS EFFECT ON SCA OPERATIONS

Afghanistan is undergoing several processes of transition simultaneously. The externally driven processes include a significant downsizing of the international military presence and a significant reduction in the level of international expenditure. The impact of the Pakistan battles with its own insurgents on its south-eastern border is yet to be fully determined.

Presently, the country is still in the process of completing its first democratic transfer of power. The President, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, has now been installed but his full cabinet has yet to be named. Parliamentary elections are slated for 2015, possibly associated with the first District Council elections.

There are deeply entrenched contextual factors that also strongly influence the capability of the Government. A fundamental aspect of the Afghan context are basic geographic constraints arising from the inhospitable nature of the terrain and climate that makes it difficult for ordinary families to sustain viable livelihoods and expensive for the Government to effectively serve and protect its people.

Although the structure of the Afghan government mimics that of a developed state, it is still only able to maintain a minimal influence in many parts of the country. Shadow governments set by Taliban and other groups maintain control over villagers in the areas where the Government is weak. Violent conflict between government and insurgent forces are a daily occurrence and the broader security situation is deteriorating. A new offensive is ongoing as this report was being written focusing much of its violence against international civilians. Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) faces the challenge of ensuring security without extensive backup from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

In addition, Afghanistan cannot be understood simply within a nation-state framework. Historically, rulers of Afghanistan used different tribes against each other in order to maintain central control through local powerbrokers, which has complicated the construction of institutions and the ability of the government to meet the needs of

its population⁴. Other aspects such as regional and international conflicts of ideology, military power, political influence and economic activity must also be taken into account. Cordesman⁵ identifies “Afghanistan’s internal political dynamics and the weakness and corruption of Afghan governance mixed with growing de facto power of regional and ethnic power brokers” as major constraints to future success.

Much of the success that the international community can claim to have supported over the past thirteen years has been in the area of basic humanitarian and social service delivery. More children are going to school than ever before. The mortality rates for mothers and children under five have fallen significantly. However, the preponderance of the resources applied to these problems have been from foreign sources. The levels of international funding for social services are already being reduced at the same time that the government revenue collection is also falling. Although the total budget rose by 7% during the first half of 2013, development expenditures declined by 28%, with only 17% of the development budget being spent during that period⁶. During the current fiscal year, government expenditures far exceed revenue collection, which itself was 22% below [Name protected] targets⁷ and nearly \$1 billion less than the 2014 estimate made in 2011⁸. Although there is no plan as yet for how to address this imminent financial shortfall, it is clear that a significant factor in the loss of revenue is corruption. The new Transparency International Corruption Perception Survey⁹ puts Afghanistan at fourth from the bottom, with only Sudan, North Korea and Somalia with worse scores. This fiscal gap will seriously impact the potential for SCA to implement strategies for handing operations over to government.

Attention paid to stimulating the local economy has been weak and sporadic. The expected decline in the growth of the economy as foreign influences diminishes over the next several years will have serious consequences. About 70% of the Afghan population live in rural areas and about 40 % of the rural population falls under the poverty line. Fluctuations of the Afghanistan GDP since 2002 have primarily mirrored the rainfall pattern, not development outcomes, thus indicating the low resilience of the agriculture sector to climatic perturbations^{10,11}. However, the real impact

4 Schmeidl, Susanne. The man who would be king : the challenges of strengthening governance in Uruzgan Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael”, 2010.

5 Cordesman, Anthony CREATING THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND CIVIL-MILITARY AID EFFORTS NEEDED FOR TRANSITION, CSIS, 2012

⁶ World Bank, Afghanistan Economic Update, October 2013, pp. 9-10

⁷ [Name protected], Third Quarter 2014 Report to Congress, October 30, 2014, p. 163.

⁸ Byrd, William. Afghanistan’s Looming Fiscal Crisis: What Can Be Done?, USIP Peace Brief 177, 27 Aug 2014.

⁹ Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2014, 3 December 2014.

¹⁰ World Bank, South Asia Economic Focus Report, October 11, 2013

of the international spending on the economy is now clearly apparent as the GDP growth rate dropped from 14.4% in 2012 to 3.6% in 2013, with an expected decline to 3.2% in 2014 due to the withdrawal of the NATO military personnel coupled with poor tax collection, 'continued violence, economic crime and systemic corruption'¹². With population growing at 2.8%, this meagre growth rate will not generate any improvement in livelihoods over the coming decades. Although unemployment now is estimated at only 8%, largely because of counting on-farm employment, underemployment is nearly 50%, with an estimated 800,000 youth entering the job market every year¹³. Although generally better educated than older Afghans, young people have more difficulties entering the labour market, as shown by a higher unemployment rate of 47% of the 15-24 years old¹⁴.

The culture of Afghanistan is dominated by the religion of Islam. All major ethnic groups in the country are Muslim, with a tiny Sikh minority. Although Islam influences all aspects of life, it is the local interpretation of religious tenets that govern the relations between sexes. As a consequence of varied localized interpretation of law, religious sanctions, customary rules and patriarchal family structures, Afghanistan represents one of the most extreme cases of gender inequality in the world. The 2013 Gender Inequality Index¹⁵ puts Afghanistan at 169, far below comparable countries such as Bangladesh (142) and Pakistan (146).

Closely associated with the treatment of women is the paradoxical situation of children. Many suffer from the moment they are borne due to unhygienic birthing practices. Nearly one half of all child deaths under the age of five occur within the first 28 days of life. Poor nutrition, water quality and sanitation during the first few years play a major role in undermining a child's ability to achieve in school or work later in life. Brutality and sexual abuse of children and youth remain common practices that usually go unreported. In 2012, the Child Protection Action Network reported¹⁶ that while 52 % of rape and sexual abuse cases were brought by females, 48% involved boy victims, but recent reports indicate the rate for boys is on the rise¹⁷.

¹¹ Cordesman, Anthony. The Post-Election Challenges to an Afghan Transition, 2014-2015, CSIS, May 2014.

¹² World Bank, South Asia Economic Focus Report, October 11, 2013

¹³ Cordesman, Anthony. The Post-Election Challenges to an Afghan Transition, 2014-2015, CSIS, May 2014.

¹⁴ GIROA, Central Statistics Office, Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010

¹⁵ UNDP, Human Development Report 2014, Annex 4, July 2014.

¹⁶ UNICEF Annual Report 2012 for Afghanistan

¹⁷ New AIHRC report recently launched shows an increased rates of boys' sexual abuse: http://www.aihrc.org.af/home/daily_report/3324

2.2 BACKGROUND ON THE SWEDISH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan was established in 1980 in response to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Prior to 2001, SCA operated an independent humanitarian operation based in Peshawar, Pakistan. After the establishment of a stable government in 2002, SCA moved its operations management office to Kabul. SCA has a long history in Afghanistan and has operated through periods of even greater instability. In the past, SCA was structured to deliver basic services directly. Under its new Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, SCA is aiming to become more of a catalytic agent of change based on a human rights based approach.

SCA is an independent membership organisation founded and registered in Sweden, with about 4000 members. The field operational activities of the organisation are limited to Afghanistan. In Sweden, the organisation has long worked to shape public opinion on Afghanistan through information sharing and advocacy with the Swedish government and the general public. A growing number of SCA members are expatriate Afghans living in Sweden. The membership elects board members on an annual basis and approves statutes and policies. The board approves the multi-year Strategic Plan and annual workplan & budget for the organisation's operations and is responsible for selecting the Secretary General. The Secretary General is the highest ranking professional officer in SCA. The position has the responsibility for managing the Stockholm Management Office, oversight over Afghan operations and retains the authority to approve all rules and guidelines, particularly related to finance and human resources and is responsible for overseeing evaluation of operations.

In Afghanistan, all operations come under the purview of the Country Director, who, along with other foreign staff in Afghanistan, is selected by the Secretary General. SCA is a large organisation with about 1,300 permanent staff and over 4,500 project based employees on contract basis. SCA currently operates in about 17 provinces of Afghanistan, all located in the geographic north-eastern third of the country. The primary programmes undertaken by SCA include, Education, Rural Development and Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disabilities. The field operation of these programmes falls under the Programme Implementation Department. These major programmes are supported by technical units responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Human Rights and Gender, and Civil Society. Supervision of these units falls under Policy and Quality Assurance Department. Other major units include Finance, Administration, Information, Security, Human Resources, IT, Internal Audit and Procurement and Supply.

The budget for 2014 was SEK 270,100,000. The current budget approved by the SCA Board for 2015 is SEK 275 187 000. The dominant components of the 2015 budget are Health (32%) and Education (24%). Total budget for implementation of the five Strategic Objectives is 72%, with 28% for cross-cutting and other costs¹⁸.

¹⁸ Swedish Committee for Afghanistan's Application For the period January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2017, Appendix 2, Approved Budget for Year, 2015, October 2014

3 Evaluation Findings

The Findings of the evaluation are structured according to the seven key evaluation question groups agreed in the Inception Report. The Conclusions are framed in terms of broad lessons learned, DAC criteria and elements of HRBA .

3.1 ASSESSING SCA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Evaluation Questions Group 1:

- What is SCA's Theory of Change?
- How does it relate to the current Swedish strategy for Afghanistan and its targets?
- Is the Theory of Change relevant with regards to the context?

3.1.1 Description of SCA Theory of Change

An accepted definition of a Theory of Change is the central assumptions of an organisation about the ways in which positive change can come about for individuals, groups and communities. Although substantial work was put into designing a statement explicitly called a Theory of Change (ToC) for the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (SP14), it was not included in the SP14 documentation. However, the evaluation understands that the SCA ToC constitutes a broad, aspirational framework that is anchored in the organisational Vision and Mission and the section of the SP14 that addresses human rights, under pinned by a progressive understanding of Islamic principles¹⁹ .

A critical section from the SCA Mission Statement in SP14 reads, '*to empower individuals...so that they may participate fully in society and influence their own development*'. This is a significant shift from the core element of the Mission Statement from 2008, which was to 'implement development programme in rural areas of Afghanistan'.²⁰

According to key informants, the approval of the current Mission Statement in December 2012 was used by management to initiate its shift away from being an organi-

¹⁹ SCA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, p. 14

²⁰ Carlsson, Goran et al. Evaluation of Sida's Support to the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 2008, p. 15.

sation whose purpose is based on providing for the needs of disadvantaged rural communities.

The SCA Mission Statement is supported by four long-term development goals that define the key changes in Afghan society that the organisation understands underpin any process of empowerment for their target groups. These are:

- Economically and socially just rural communities
- Full participation of women in Afghan society
- Full Inclusion of people with disabilities in Afghan Society
- All children in Afghanistan participate in achieving their full potential

The SCA Goals are addressed by five Strategic Objectives (SO) and associated outcomes in SP14. The manner in which the Outcomes are to be achieved are articulated in detailed work plans. For 2015, a detailed budget planning exercise has been carried out to ensure that the cost of producing the annual outcome objectives has been taken fully into account.

In the view of the Team, the Mission Statement, Goals, Strategic Objectives, Outcomes coupled with a three-pronged approach of Service Delivery, Capacity Development and Advocacy together constitute an implicit Theory of Change (ToC) for SCA for the current plan period²¹. The detailed programme annual work plans constitute the Theories of Action that define how the change will be brought about in concrete terms. Together these articulate SCA's understanding of how change should take place in order for their target groups to gain more influence over their own development during the next three years.

Taken as a whole, the SCA ToC is grounded in the principles of human rights aimed at removing intrinsic impediments to generating human capacity²². Viewed in this way, the continued emphasis on service delivery to remove capacity limitations of rights-holders is clearly an integral component of HRBA.

However, rights' holder ownership of the design of those services remains problematic. One significant limitation of the process by which SP14 was prepared is that participation in the design was essentially limited to SCA staff. Respondents acknowledged that members of target groups were not directly involved in the design of SP14.

²¹ A broad theory of change used to guide a set of emergent, iterative and opportunistic theories of action is considered to be optimal in complex environment, such as Afghanistan. Ref: Funnel, Sue C. and Patricia J. Rogers. Purposeful Program Theory: Effective use of theories of change and logic models, Wiley and Sons, 2011.

²² Sen, Amartya Development as Freedom. Knopf Publishers, New York, 1999, p. 36.

Interviewees said that a sample of target group members were consulted as a part of the Context Analysis used to provide the background for the design of the SP14.

The SP14 has been in effect for less than one year and 2014 has been characterised as a ‘bridging’ year to allow the organisation to fully internalise the change and modify internal rules to bring the organisational structure and procedures in line with the new direction. Interviews in the field revealed that the internalization of the process has enhanced cohesion within the organisation and reduced tensions and misalignment. However our field interviews indicate that interpretation of the guidance contained in SP14 varies among provinces due to the influence of localised filters composed of personal beliefs and experience.

3.1.2 Replacing Silos with Synergy

A significant difference in SCA’s approach is that the description of the Strategic Objectives in SP14 clearly lays out the contribution of each of its programmes towards the achievement of all of the Strategic Objectives. This synergistic process of breaking down ‘silos’ has been underway for less than a year, but the Team found clear evidence of its influence on staff thinking, both in Kabul and in the field. This process is a concrete example of how the (implicit) ToC is influencing the organisation.

This process of eliminating programmatic ‘silos’ has been most evident among the Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disabilities (RAD) team as there is no longer a specific SO for RAD. In its place, all SOs have Persons with Disabilities (PwD) identified as a specific target group, thus requiring all programmes to collaborate in protecting and fulfilling the rights of PwD. RAD, however, remains a ‘programme’ as it has a separate work plan and budget with clear targets to be achieved.

3.1.3 Conflict Sensitive Operations

Conflict sensitivity underpins the entire Theory of Change and SP14. This comes from lessons learned throughout the organisation’s existence. In the early 1980s, SCA began its work shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It established a base in Peshawar, Pakistan in order to manage cross-border operations in conflict affected areas. SCA maintained its operations throughout the Soviet war and the subsequent warlord and Taliban periods. Conflict sensitivity has been an integral component of SCA operations from day one. During the 1990s, SCA was one of the few INGOs to be acknowledged for its attempts to understand the fluctuating power dynamics going on inside the country²³.

²³ Bhatia, Michael and Jonathan Goodhand, Profits and poverty: Aid, Livelihoods and Conflict in Afghanistan: Background research for HPG Report 13, February 2003.

Throughout this evaluation report, there are numerous references to SCA's ability to engage with rural inhabitants in a manner that reduces the potential for conflict while enhancing the potential for sustainable development. In 2011, SCA commissioned an assessment of its operations from a conflict sensitive lens²⁴. The study found that SCA had minimized violence and conflict in its area of operations by focusing on delivering high quality products attuned to local concerns that were delivered by local staff and suppliers. The detailed micro analyses indicated that SCA maintains positive community acceptance and has contributed positively to reducing conflict. However, the report noted that conflict was increasing in all areas and access to programme sites was becoming more constrained due to the generally elevated level of conflict throughout the country.

In 2013, SCA initiated a formal approach to enhance understanding of a Conflict Sensitive Programme Approach (CPSA) to ensure that SCA interventions avoided creating negative impacts rather than seeing local conflicts as an implementation constraint.. Twenty-five staff were trained initially and this number was increased by eight in 2014. Thus, SCA is building a capacity for shifting away from simply 'do no harm' to actively engaging in conflict mitigation and resolution.

3.1.4 Relevance, Applicability and Sustainability of the ToC

The SCA ToC is in accord with the current Swedish strategy for Afghanistan²⁵. The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is stated as enabling 'people living in poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society'. Key sector objectives where the SCA ToC is clearly aligned include strengthening women to enjoy their human rights, greater access to primary education and increase trained teachers and strengthened district administrative capacity in Afghanistan.

The new Swedish Development Cooperation in Afghanistan strategy for 2014-2019 has not been translated into English, but its key objectives (roughly translated) appear to be consistent with the previous strategy, and the SP14 clearly supports several of the key elements. In particular, the overall objective of the country strategy is to strengthen democracy and equality with an emphasis on increased respect for human rights and freedom from oppression. There is an emphasis on strengthening people's own capacity to develop, particularly by obtaining quality education and being able to contribute to economic growth through raising agricultural productivity and other

²⁴ Devlin, Lawrence, [Name protected], [Name protected]. Conflict Analysis of SCA Activities in Afghanistan, PTRO, July 2011.

²⁵ Sida, Revised development cooperation strategy: Afghanistan. January 2012 – December 2014

commercial endeavours. This would be supported through improved infrastructure and improved access to markets and financial services.

3.2 NATURE OF RESULTS 2010-2013

Evaluation Questions Group #2

- What type of results can be attributed to SCA's actions between 2010-2013?
- Has collaborating with the Government of Afghanistan (GIROA) and other partners enhanced the quality and the sustainability of results achieved?

3.2.1 Introduction

The Strategic Plan 2010-2013 (SP10) represented SCA's first attempt at articulating an integrated organisational plan of action. Previously SCA had focused primarily on the delivery of discrete services for separate target groups, and often in separate locations. An important value of this plan lay in establishing the precedent for more carefully measuring impact and for enhancing collaboration among SCA units. However, several internal documents, including SCA's Annual report for 2013 have noted that this results' framework had too many strategic objectives and indicators to be accurately measured, and some indicators and baselines were missing and others not particularly relevant. Moreover, SCA recognised insufficient focus on institutional capacity development in community based organisations and SCA "did not manage to find clear operational modes for applying advocacy and achieving policy changes"²⁶.

Unfortunately, during SP10, SCA did not have a truly functional organisational monitoring system. The PME unit acknowledged that it was unable to provide any tracking of performance indicators at even a project²⁷ level.

The Team employed several evaluation tools to help in understanding how the SCA staff understood the development process and results during the previous SP period. These included the preparation of case stories, logic models, background questionnaires, direct interviews, document reviews and limited field observations. In keeping with an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, many of these examples were selected by SCA staff to represent the best that they had achieved. Other were selected to represent problems that had been or are being addressed.

²⁶ SCA Annual Report 2013 to Sida, p 73

²⁷ In SCA parlance, with the exception of the contractual arrangements for BPHS and NSP, a project is a geographic clustering of activities that fall under the purview of a SCA outpost. For example, the Jalalabad Education Project covers a variety of education related activities in Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan provinces.

3.2.2 Health Programme

The Health programme is one of the oldest being run by SCA. The current Health strategy traces its lineage to the Health Strategy of 2009 with its aim articulated in the SP10 Development Objective of contributing to an **improved health system and reduced morbidity as well as decreased maternal and child mortality rates**. The Strategic Objectives for the period were: **Increased access to and utilisation of quality basic health care for SCA target populations; Quality and utilisation of reproductive and child health services improved; Enhanced individual and institutional capacity of target groups within the health programme.**

i. Links to Government Agenda

The SCA Health programme is clearly in line with the National Priority Programme (NPP) on Health for All. This NPP is focused on health service delivery through Basic Packages of Health Services (BPHS) and Enhanced Packages of Health Services (EPHS), essentially hospitals, and building capacity of health service providers.

ii. Limited collaboration with civil society

A limitation noted by the Health unit was that, partly due to the nature of the field, they have had limited collaborative experience with civil society implementing partners²⁸. This is a limitation in the application of Human Rights-Based Approach principle of participation, and contradicts Sweden's civil society policy and the Paris agenda, including other commitments to promote sustainability. However, they did note that the [Name protected], a major component of national health capacity development, has long been supported by SCA and may be capable of becoming an implementing partner in the future. In addition, community Health Shuras have also been formed to advise on the operation of specific health posts.

iii. Building equal access through capacity of government

One of the most successful interventions during the previous period resulted from an expansion of the Community Midwife Education (CME) activity that had begun in 2005 in Kunduz, Nuristan, Samangan, Saripul and Wardak with over 250 midwives directly trained in SCA schools. In 2007, SCA realised that the utilisation of mother-child health (MCH) services continued to be poor. By 2013, over 85% of Wardak's health facilities had at least one midwife, with associated improvements in reproductive health indicators. An internal assessment of the Midwife mentorship programme²⁹ noted that it was well implemented, particularly in its selection of quality

²⁸ SCA Health Unit, Evaluation Programme Background Notes, September 2014.

²⁹ [Name protected] Mid-term Review of mentorship project, December 2011.

mentors. According to the [Name protected], many of these midwives serve as role models in advocating for greater female participation in public activities.

iv. Focus on building capacity of staff to deliver on commitments

SCA reported facing setbacks in their health programme during the previous plan period, particularly associated with their BPHS contract in Samangan. Discussions with MoPH's Grant and Contract Management Unit indicated their concern that SCA has not been able to provide sufficient decision authority to staff in their contracted provinces, leading to slow response to local management issues, particularly supply. However, despite the criticisms of Ministry officials, the BPHS Balanced Scorecard prepared with international technical assistance, ranked Wardak as 8th best BPHS programme in 2012 and 1st in 2013, while Laghman was rated 3rd best in 2012 and declining only to 5th in 2013.³⁰

Nutrition services are provided primarily through BPHS facilities. The mid-term review of the Samangan BPHS programme³¹ indicated that Under 5 nutrition services failed to achieve its targets in 2009, 2010 and 2011 by nearly 30%. SCA unilaterally decided to drop out of the latest round of bidding for BPHS contracts. SCA management said that this decision stemmed from its desire to focus more on quality of service delivery in limited areas, rather than continuing to expand geographic coverage. SCA management has also indicated that continuation of these contracts is under discussion.

The Advisory Minister for Health and Education noted that the [Name Protected] contract values are based on official government population figures, but these are much lower than reality, making it difficult to provide equitable service.

Another significant factor in reducing success in health service delivery relates to the deterioration in security. SCA health facilities have been hit by mortars and staff attacked by both anti-government elements and by government and international forces because each perceive that the health facility is 'treating the enemy'.

3.2.3 Rural Development Programme

During the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan period, the Development Objective for Rural Development was: **Increased capacity acquired among local communities to initiate, and increasingly take ownership of the process of sustainable development** based on three strategic objectives: **Improved health and hygiene status of rural**

30 (with Johns Hopkins University and Indian Institute of Health Management Research. Basic Package of health Services: Balanced Scorecard 2012-13.

31 SCA, SHARP BPHS Project Samangan Province Afghanistan Midterm review report, July 2011.

communities; Socio-economic development promoted through strengthened sustainable livelihoods; strengthened rural civil society by means of community mobilisation.

The SCA Rural Development programme has been closely aligned with four relevant NPPs. These include the National Rural Access Program, the Sustainable Decent Work Program, the Strengthening Local Institutions Program and Local Governance. The latter NPP has garnered more attention since the beginning of the new Strategy Plan with the creation of a separate SO for Community Governance.

Rural Development has long implementing a contract with [Name protected] under the [Name protected]. Building upon the NSP experience, Sida has been funding the Northern Rural Project (NRP), which is operated directly by SCA in association with the Balkh provincial [Name protected] office.

v. Delivering on commitments to Government

The NSP senior management specifically informed the Team that they were dissatisfied with SCA performance in Wardak and were concerned that there were too many delays in delivery. They felt that SCA, with its experience going back to 2003 and only having one province under contract, should have been better able to identify solutions to keep the operations working. SCA argues that the security situation in Wardak hinders progress³². Despite these comments, the NSP continues to see a strong value in collaborating with SCA, particularly to help build detailed databases on the variety and quality of governance practices at the local level.

vi. Participation of rights-holders in planning and governance

The Rural Development has seen its primary role as that of a facilitator to support community organisations to undertake their own development planning and implementation through an open and inclusive process. However, in August 2012, the mid-term evaluation of NRP³³, noted that it fell short in terms of its support to community empowerment. This assessment was taken seriously by SCA, prompting them, in particular, to scale up their capacity building efforts for women, leading to a three-fold increase in their active participation in community groups.

The Rural Development unit explained to the Team that the new orientation of SP14 has resulted in a significant role reversal, with communities taking the lead. They noted in particular that they were beginning to make a complete shift in all of their

³² The Team did hear that another INGO operating in Wardak abandoned its operations.

³³ Minkiewicz, Anna. Mid-term Evaluation of Northern Rural Project. August 2012.

water and sanitation activities to build community ownership and willingness to maintain the systems.

The CDCs that the Team had an opportunity to meet in Dehdadi District of Balkh Province (CDC Pule Babu and Azar Shareb) both indicated that they have been active in undertaking tasks on their own and in engaging other donors to provide support they have identified. Their expectations for future assistance hinged on improving their understanding of sustainable economic development.

Based on the documents reviewed and interviews with staff and target groups, the Rural Development programme had a strong focus in SP10 on building community capacity to create and maintain infrastructure. The unit noted that its most significant contribution to rural quality of life during the previous plan was the completion of several micro-hydropower units. However, an evaluation conducted in 2011 of the SCA rural development construction services³⁴ noted that planning was inefficient due to the absence of baselines and cost schedules, only limited monitoring, and there was no system of quality management.

Pilot support to the creation of village savings and loan groups and vocational training is ongoing in association with [Name protected]. However, it was acknowledged that, to date, there been limited focus placed on building knowledge of local market dynamics for rural producers.

vii. Collaboration in building government capacity and sustainability

The Rural Development programme has initiated a meaningful evolution in its institutional relations since SP10, particularly through the NRP with a new strategy mandating a stronger focus on building the capacity officials in the District Governor's office and the District Development Assembly. However, the Deputy District Governor of Dehdadi noted that collaboration with SCA had been limited.

In addition, the NSP governance model has been assessed as having limited influence on overall village governance and social norms in Afghanistan³⁵, which continues to remain largely the domain of self-governing organisations under the purview of customary authority. These organisations retain significant influence mediating decisions

³⁴ [Name protected] and [Name protected] Evaluation of SCA's Rural Development Construction Services. December 2011.

³⁵ Baeth, Andrew, Fotini Christia and Ruben Enikolopov. Randomized Impact Evaluation of Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme, July 2013, p x. "observed worsening of governance quality is most likely due to the weakening of local governance accountability structures caused by the creation of CDCs in parallel to existing customary institutions and the lack of a clear delineation of institutional responsibilities following project completion."

regarding access to land and water resources, facilitating access to markets and sanctioning participation of women and children in public life.

3.2.4 Education Programme

Education, along with Health, has been a mainstay of SCA operations since the early days with its primary purpose to empower marginalised individuals by providing access to quality education. During SP10, the development Objective was: **To support all afghan children's right to education by promoting equal access to quality education through a sustainable education system in the country.** This was supported by three Strategic Objectives: **Increased access to quality education; Quality improvement and quality assurance of efforts; capacitated national education.**

viii. Link to Government

The SCA education programme is closely aligned with the NPP on Education for All with prominent issues including girls' education, community education, and the expansion of [Name protected]. The NPP document contains a strong endorsement of SCA's work on Model Schools, stating that the Government will now undertake the task of creating five new ones. The Ministry noted that SCA has adopted national policies on programming and funding and sees an opportunity for SCA to collaborate on build empirical evidence on the exact condition of each school in a district.

ix. Building basic capacity in government

In the past, SCA has allocated considerable resources on teacher training, covering about 2000 teachers each year (45% women). In September 2012, an evaluation was conducted of the SCA teacher training programs³⁶, which noted that the SCA approach was superior to the government training efforts. However, the outcomes of the training was questioned as the evaluation also noted a serious disconnect between training and classroom practice as the public school teachers typically failed to incorporate participatory methods into their routine.

This evaluation had a significant impact on the SCA Education programme by pushing it to rethink its orientation to prioritise quality over coverage. A shift towards peer-to-peer mentoring and in-service learning opportunities in SP14 will mean a decrease in the number of teachers formally trained, but is expected to facilitate greater use of new pedagogical techniques.

³⁶ [Name protected]. Evaluation of the Teacher Training Programs operated by SCA. September 2012.

In addition, the heavily financed Model Schools are in the process of being handed over to the Government, being replaced by ‘Hub schools’ which are expected to be more completely embedded in a cluster of Community Based Schools (CBS), providing for more frequent interaction and follow up. By the end of 2013, SCA was covering over 30% of students learning through CBE in Afghanistan.

The decision taken in 2013 to phase out of Model Schools represents an important step in the evolution of the SCA Education programme from service delivery to rights’ based because it felt that Model Schools served children that already had access to schools while those in more isolated areas had no access to schools or schools with inadequately trained teachers. In addition, a 2012 3rd Party Monitoring³⁷ of Model Schools in Samangan³⁸ and Laghman³⁹ indicated that facilities were well appreciated, but teacher training was poor and inconsistent.

The role of the 3rd Party Monitoring is “to monitor and assess that the facilities of education are operational and delivering services in line with set objectives”. They work off checklists provided by KMO. Staff at KMO is responsible for data analysis and report writing. The primary focus is on “hardware” – facilities and education materials and whether teachers and students are present.

The Education programme has reported meaningful engagement with peer organisations. The emphasis on marginalised target groups has meant a significant effort has been placed on creating education opportunities for girls and for nomadic (Kuchi) children. SCA is an acknowledged leader in Kuchi education strategies. A Kuchi conference in 2011 led to UNICEF and the Child Fund for Afghanistan initiating their own Kuchi schooling activities. A CBE conference, held in 2010, has led to greater recognition of both students and teachers by the national system.

x. Building rights-holders’ participation and ownership

SCA’s focus on educational governance has generated substantial returns. [Name protected] have been formed in association with over 500 schools and 25 districts and provincial [Name protected] across 14 provinces. SCA indicated that it has also begun work to establish a national [Name protected]. The Team met with three [Name protected] in Mazar-i-Sharif (Kishendih & Sholgara from Balkh, Dar ae Soof Payan from Samangan). The [Name protected] members discussed the difficulty in finding well qualified teachers to live in their villages. They noted that there

³⁷ 3rd Party Monitoring is used primarily in areas with high security risk and is not limited to the education sector

³⁸ Report on 3rd Party Monitoring of Model Schools in Samangan Province in December 10, 2012

³⁹ Report on 3rd Party Monitoring of Model Schools in Laghman Province in January 22, 2013

is a significant change from six years before when SCA came to work with them. At that time, no one in their villages was willing to send their girls to school, now they claim that 98% of the families are sending their girls for the first six years. For the first time, this year they will have girls graduating from 12th grade, but there is no formal teacher training institute nearby in Samangan.

3.2.5 Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disabilities (RAD) Programme

The Development Objective of RAD during Sp10 was focused on: **Full inclusion in society of Persons with Disabilities, including their rights to community participation and development, as well as improved access to general service development.** This was supported by four Strategic Objectives: **Increased economic independence of persons with disabilities; Increased access to preparatory education and increased inclusion in mainstream schools; Enhanced quality and better integration of physical rehabilitation services in the health system; Strengthened capacity of public civil society institutions for inclusion of people with disabilities.**

The RAD programme is unique to the SCA portfolio in the sense that there is no Government recognition of the issue in the form of a special NPP for PwD (the issue is mentioned in Health and Education NPP) and there are no projects for PwD carried out by any UN agency in Afghanistan. There are some other international organisations that provide support to war disabled persons, but none with such a broad based programme as SCA⁴⁰.

Despite no NPP for disabilities issues⁴¹, RAD works closely with Government, particularly at the provincial level with the departments of [Name protected]. The RAD programme is formally underpinned by human rights' principles, especially the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by Afghanistan in 2012 following SCA/RAD advocacy), particularly Article 26 that outlines the right to rehabilitation.

xi. Reducing discrimination against persons with disabilities

The ultimate purpose of the RAD programme is also unique, centred as it is on social inclusion. This is exemplified in their work on including children with special needs in mainstream schools. The RAD inclusion approach was evaluated in 2012.⁴² The

⁴⁰ ICRC has Orthopedic Centers in Kabul since 1988, and now in Jalalabad, Herat, Faisabad, Mazar, Gulbahar and LashkarGah. They have a focus on disabilities caused by mines and warfare.

⁴¹ On NPP categorization, see Kabul Process <http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/index.php/clusters--npps/background/29-background>

⁴² Hayes, Julia. Integration and participation of children, youth and young adults with disabilities in soci-

evaluator found that the number of CwD included in SCA schools failed to meet the target because so many had been admitted to mainstream schools. The SCA efforts to orient school teachers on how to properly integrate CwD into their classrooms was seen by government as an important factor in this success. The evaluation concluded that the approach taken by RAD should serve as a model for inclusive education in Afghanistan, because it creates a safe and less restricted environment for women with disabilities.

The activity that the RAD staff themselves consider to be their best are the vocational training and loan programmes for people with disabilities. In 2012, a tracer study was conducted with persons who had completed the SCA vocational training. The study found that 79% of those who completed the vocational training were able to obtain an income. In meetings with Disabled People's Organisation (DPOs), the Team was most impressed by the confidence expressed by the young women. It is difficult to be a woman in Afghanistan under any circumstances, but the vitality and self-assurance displayed by these women was quite remarkable.

Washington University, in St Louis, USA, has initiated a quasi-experimental research project using a random controlled field trial of the RAD approach to Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), as it is recognised as a unique program in a conflict/fragile state environment. The trial began in 2013, running through 2015. A baseline report (in draft) notes that the preliminary data indicate that RAD is consistently prioritising those with more severe disabilities⁴³.

xii. Enhancing the capacity of civil society and rights-holders

Despite a long and close relationship with the [Name protected], the RAD unit noted that there are no implementing partners associated with their programme implementation. In 2011, an evaluation⁴⁴ assessed the DPOs capacities and recognised that over 90% of their financial support continues to come from international organisations. However, the [Name protected] (with its headquarters in Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh Province since 2012) appears to have an independent source of income and 13 branch offices around the country.

Despite their disabilities, the DPOs were able to work together with SCA to advocate for electoral rights and to establish televised sign language news programmes. Exceptionally, the Aybak DPO has established its credibility with the government for its

ety through education and skills training. June 2012.

⁴³ Trani, Jean-Francois et al. Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disabilities Impact Evaluation Study: Participant and Control Groups Comparison at Baseline, November 2014 (draft)

⁴⁴ Pearl Horizon Consulting, DPOs Capacity Needs Assessment, November 2011.

support to over 5000 disabled persons in Samangan and, as a result, has been allocated a plot of land (on which SCA has now constructed a building). This DPO assumes it will be self-sustaining by 2017.

3.3 EMPLOYING A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Evaluation Questions Group 3

- How does SCA implement the rights perspective based on the four principles participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability?
- How has SCA applied a rights perspective and worked towards improved rights for children and people with disabilities?

3.3.1 Introduction

The Team has attempted to explore the content of SCA's stated ambitions with regards to an increased application of a HRBA. Evidence of SCA's progress towards implementing a HRBA is presented as given in SCA's key documents, earlier evaluations and from data collected through interviews and observations.

3.3.2 Rights in the Strategic Plan

SCA's current Strategic Plan is intended to mark a point of departure as it represents, "for the first time, a coherent application of our RBA⁴⁵ to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all our programme activities"⁴⁶. SCA has outlined three strategic means for their operations: capacity development, service delivery and advocacy.

In the current Strategic Plan, SCA acknowledges, "stimulating demand for change and mobilising the poor to claim what they are entitled to, particularly when it is based on concepts of individual human rights, may be met with resistance."⁴⁷

The mid-term evaluation in 2012 (of the SP10) highlighted that the move from a "charity model" into a "social inclusion model", meaning a move towards a rights-based approach - seemed to be a more challenging process for the RAD programme in comparison with other programmes. This was considered to be due to the generally negative social perception of disability which "made the social inclusion of people with disabilities a much more multifaceted and complicated process".⁴⁸ However, as

⁴⁵ RBA – Rights-Based Approach, also HRBA (Human Rights-Based Approach)

⁴⁶ SCA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, p 11

⁴⁷ SCA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, p 14

⁴⁸ SCA Mid Term Evaluation, March 2012, page 11

noted in the results section above, the Team found that the RAD programme has made significant progress and now stands out as a success story among SCA programmes. This is also the perception of external key informants in government. The key reasons are that SCA/RAD has made a conscious effort to (1) address the needs of truly disadvantaged children (making a substantial difference in their lives and those of their parents), (2) work with communities so they see a value (rather than a cost) in supporting programmes for CwD and (3) they worked very closely with government officials, especially engaging teachers to design special education programmes in public schools.

The shift to rights-based approach has been, and, in view of current staff, continues to be challenging. One key informant said that this was “most felt after 2012” and that “the organisation is still empowering itself before it can empower communities”. At the management level, the buy-in for a stronger shift to HRBA is observed to be very high, boosted by the approval of SP14 by the SCA Board. Continued support for service delivery has also facilitated more complete staff support for a rights’ focus.

The mid-term evaluation in 2012 highlighted that SCA mainstreaming of the rights-based approach, gender equality and work through civil society organisations also faced constraints. The evaluator found that establishing a separate human rights and gender unit (and civil society unit) appeared to be less conducive for mainstreaming than posting the respective expertise within the programmes.⁴⁹ However, the Team found that since then two more cross-cutting units, one for Capacity Development has been established and an Advocacy Unit is in the process of being staffed. There is also a plan to recruit five “Gender officers” to be placed in field offices.

3.3.3 Rights in service delivery

The 2013 evaluation of Swedish support to the Education sector⁵⁰, in which SCA is “benchmarked” against UNICEF and World Bank education programmes, highlighted weaknesses in SCA’s involvement of communities in planning. The same evaluation pointed out that there is a perception of SCA as being self-centred and not seeing their operations in a larger national strategic perspective. However, the evaluation did note that SCA performed better in comparison with others in terms of the technical quality of its service delivery.

The Jalalabad Project Office (JPO) acknowledged that since 2010 there was a trend from needs towards rights. To this end the JPO RAD and Education units had organ-

⁴⁹ SCA Mid Term Evaluation, March 2012, page 8

⁵⁰ Swedish Support in the Education Sector in Afghanistan, Evaluation report, [Name protected]. , 2013, p 39

ised gatherings for government bodies and communities to build awareness on human rights and gender equality. Teachers were trained on child rights (foremost girls' education rights) and the rights of persons with disabilities. Target groups are also asked to take greater ownership by contributing to the proper implementation and completion of the projects.⁵¹ However, the staff at the Jalalabad office stressed that their work was based on the demands of the people. School constructions, establishment of resource centres, equipment to education and capacity building remained high in their agenda.

In the Kabul Management Office (KMO), programme staff, for example in Education, conveyed an understanding that education is a right for all and this had improved their programming. However, apart from the right to **access** education, there did not yet appear to be a clear understanding of rights within education or what the application of the principles of HRBA would imply, although a HRBA training was conducted in 2014. A previous evaluation, focusing on SCA work in the education sector, concluded that there is a lack of child centred, activity based teaching in schools supported by SCA⁵².

In a focus group discussion with staff from SCA units (civil society, PME, capacity building and the human rights and gender) the Team heard that some KMO staff did not think that rights-holders perceive that SCA programming has changed in comparison to seven years ago. In contrast, conversations with target groups in Balkh and Laghman indicated that they did perceive a difference in that they were required to take greater ownership in planning and implementation and that this had led to a modification of their understanding of the purpose of development.

3.3.4 Children as rights-holders

The Team had several short sessions with children in SCA supported community schools and disability centres. Interactions with disabled children in Mazar e Sharif was severely limited due to the children's inability to communicate without the SCA intermediaries. Nonetheless, the children, and their teachers, shared highly positive feedback on SCA's interventions in that area. Interviews with parents of disabled children indicated their sincere appreciation for SCA's work.

Findings from the field visit to Jalalabad demonstrated that project office staff expectations are still high for SCA to focus on delivering services to people, and less on enabling people to influence the development being received. This is doubly the case

⁵¹ Notes from Jalalabad, Liaqat

⁵² Swedish Committee for Afghanistan – Report on the Evaluation of Model Schools, Beth Allardice, 201209

for children. In the districts of Behsud and Char-Mesra in Nangarhar, while children targeted by SCA were observed to have access to school buildings, drinking water, and overall improved quality of education, they played no role in any decision regarding the use of those facilities. A programme for School Scouts has been operating for some years, but appear to serve more as discipline monitors than as voice aggregators. A key informant told the Team that Student Scouts are discussed as a possible embryo for progressing with child rights in SCA programmes.

SCA has recently raised the awareness among their education staff on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and corporal punishment. There is an awareness that current teaching methods all too often consist of coercive and violent forms of maintaining “discipline”. Social acceptance of violence is high undermining respect for children’s right to protection from all forms of violence. To this end, SCA plans to also include positive discipline and parenting training in its forthcoming programming.

3.3.5 Building Internal Capacity in HRBA

Attempts to increase the HRBA-competence within SCA have been primarily driven by training starting with senior management. In 2013, a gender mainstreaming training for senior staff was carried out and resulted in a training module in Dari and Pash-tu. A follow-up HRBA training was carried out in August for senior KMO staff and provincial education. The earlier plan to roll out HRBA-trainings more extensively to the field has been postponed to 2015-2017. An internal Human Rights and Gender Equality assessment will be carried out at the end of 2014 with the aim of clarifying entry points and developing an action plan for 2015-2017.

The Team assessed that SCA has a well-developed “rights-based-language” and conveys a good understanding of the benefits with rights-based programming. This has been confirmed through interviews, workshop discussions and additional reviewing of key documents. However, there are clear indications from several sources that SCA is struggling with the task of turning principles into practice.

SCA is aware of challenges related to acceptance and implementation of rights-based approaches, but these are not seen as ‘road blocks’. Instead, SCA remains convinced that strong support for progressive change can be found and developed within the context of the Islamic worldview which frames all aspects of life in Afghanistan.⁵³ These findings have been presented in internal workshops, but have not been brought to partners or the field. In a document called “CEDAW and Islam”, which was shared with the Team (in Dari), SCA tried to put each article of CEDAW in comparison with

⁵³ SCA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, p 14

Islam and the Afghan Constitution. Similarities were found and the booklet was subsequently approved by the Ministry of Hajj. However, SCA internal disagreement on certain interpretations has stopped its wider dissemination. One of the SCA senior staff also presented similar findings during the Annual General Assembly meeting of SCA members in Sweden, in 2013.

A key informant at KMO referred to SCA as “a conservative organisation, in a conservative country”. Nevertheless, as noted in the Results section, some programmes have already overcome significant cultural barriers. A case in point is the Rural Development programme which has succeeded in motivating the CDCs to facilitate female and male joint decision making in some CDCs.⁵⁴ A key informant told the Team that significant change in the mind-set of rural communities has been taking place, at times faster than people in Kabul realise, with rural people becoming enthusiastic, rather than suspicious, about positive changes in local dynamics. This view was borne out in numerous meetings with CDCs, SMC, DPOs and government officials in Balkh, Samangan, Nangarhar and Laghman provinces. In all cases, the target group representatives and government stakeholders acknowledged that it was the way that SCA approached service delivery rather than the services itself that had abetted this shift in attitude.

3.4 GENDER EQUALITY

Evaluation Questions Group 4

- To what extent does SCA work to improve gender equality in terms of changing discriminating attitudes due to patriarchal structures in the Afghan society?
- To what extent are women, girls, men and boys included as both beneficiaries, actors of change and decision makers?
- To what extent is SCA’s organisation and programmes gender mainstreamed?

3.4.1 Introduction

The Human Rights section above, elaborated on certain aspects of the gender dimension in relation to SCA programming and external stakeholders. This section, takes a closer look at the internal staff gender dimension. It was important to understand what is promoted and concretely strategized within the SCA organisation in order to assess SCA’s capacity to embody the values of gender equality that it advocates in the Afghan society. SCA has identified the challenge of recruiting and retaining female

⁵⁴ SCA Mid Term evaluation, March 2012, page 7

staff throughout the organisation as a major impediment for reaching out to girls and women, in particular in terms of truly engaging with women and girls' target groups.

In the Strategic Plan (2014-2017), the SCA has committed itself to making conscious efforts to strengthen the voice and organisational capacities of women - internally among staff as well as throughout their development interventions. SCA also committed to ensuring that all stages of the programme cycle adequately recognise prevailing gender discrimination and strategize around it.

3.4.2 Promotion of Gender Equality within SCA

Approximately 26% of the total of 6000 staff^{55 56} working at SCA are women, of which, at the time of the evaluation, a very small number of Afghan women (two national deputy unit heads at KMO and one national program manager at Mazar Project Office (MPO) are in decision-making positions.

SCA management argued that the low salaries paid was the major constraint to hiring highly qualified women. SCA may have a valid point when they claim that compensation levels of other international organisations in Afghanistan are significantly higher than theirs, thus reducing the incentive for women, particularly highly qualified women, to enter, or remain, in SCA. A brief comparison of SCA salary scales with two other well-known international organisations showed that SCA remuneration is less than half that paid by the comparators. This obviously has an effect on the recruitment and retention of the relatively few highly qualified women in the market. However, it does beg to question as to why large numbers of equally qualified men have chosen to remain in SCA, some for their entire careers, when agencies and projects are constantly head-hunting for new talent. Aside from salaries, organisational culture plays an important role in creating a conducive space to work. The SIPU review⁵⁷ also noted that the limited number of women in decision making positions "is partly due to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified female staff, but also due to 'internal resistance'. The Team knows of no other INGO in Afghanistan that maintains separate eating spaces for men and women staff⁵⁸. Also, women staff commented that they rarely walk alone on KMO campus so as to avoid comments on their dress or looks. The argument that rural work is difficult for women is not a strong one as the percentage of women staff in office jobs in Kabul is actually lower

⁵⁵ Comment from SCA on draft report: 2013 statistics indicate 26% female staff out of 6000 total.

⁵⁶ In comparison, the UNDP reports that 30% of their staff members are women and the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee reports 36% in their organization.

⁵⁷ SIPU, Framework Organisational Review, 7 February 2013

⁵⁸ Several respondents remarked on the serious resistance management encountered when it moved to reduce the height (not to remove) of the wall separating men and women's eating spaces in the KMO cafeteria. Other SCA offices also maintain separate eating areas for men and women.

than in the field where they fill what are beginning to be seen as socially acceptable roles in health and education.

Several measures have been undertaken by management to attract more female staff, such as provision of internship for newly graduates, establishment of nurseries (In KMO and all project offices) and specific competence building initiatives addressing female staff. The nursery at KMO has not only fulfilled its primary goal of facilitating women's employment, it has also played a compensatory role in the sense that female staff testify to having left other, better paid organisations, due to the availability of a nursery. Lately, glass doors have been installed in all office spaces as a measure to avoid derogatory rumours against women, especially when two colleagues of opposite sexes are left to work on their own.

External evaluations and other studies indicate that the most entrenched challenges in SCA's rights-based approach to programming are, not surprisingly, related to women's and girls' rights and gender equality. This is due to the social context and all indications are that SCA already has a good record of reducing local concerns regarding engagement of women and girls in the public space.

To broaden its gender equality dimension, SCA has adopted a more inclusive gender policy by starting to work on masculinities. The first masculinities workshop was held at the KMO office in 2013. It explored how men are viewed and the roles they are assigned. In October 2014, the second workshop on masculinities was held, which was considered far more successful than the first by the Human Rights and Gender Coordinator. Resistance was lower and participation higher. Participants had expressed their willingness to come together in a workshop next year. SCA has also commissioned research on the topic of masculinities that will be finalised in July 2015.

The Human Rights and Gender Unit highlighted the most successful innovations⁵⁹ in their work as the Malalai award⁶⁰, which was awarded internally to SCA programmes for the first time in autumn 2011. The award is granted to 2-3 initiatives within SCA with the aim to recognise contributions to raising gender awareness throughout the organisation. This prize has been identified by the HRGU staff as one of the major achievements within their field of work at SCA.

⁵⁹ HRGU SCA Programme Background Notes for Evaluation Team, October 2014.

⁶⁰ Named after Malalai of Maiwand, a national Afghan folk hero, famous for her courage in the battle of Maiwand 1880.

The Female Staff Association (FSA) was created in 2006 and was formalized with a ToR and MOU with the Country Director in 2011. It was set up as a means to support female staff at SCA to pursue their rights and it also assists in arranging training opportunities. The FSA has been replicated in the POs of Mazar, Taloqan, Kunduz and Jalalabad. The FSA in Mazar, with 62 members, has almost three times as many as Kabul, with only 29. The FSA stated that there are no other Afghan organisations that can be considered role models in gender equality. Therefore, they have been assisted by SCA to undertake exposure trips to other countries. In November 2014, the FSA visited Pakistan and learned about the successful advocacy process undertaken to pass a national anti-sexual harassment legislation in 2010 and its subsequent implementation⁶¹.

The FSA is an unofficial union structure within the SCA, and as such the FSA was not covered by the external Organisational Development assessment process carried out earlier this year. The amount of time that can be dedicated to work for the FSA is not specified, not even for the Chair. FSA members said that meetings usually take place during lunch breaks as they have been told to keep all meetings outside official time. SCA management stresses that all “formal” meetings occur during working hours, and that meetings can also occur more frequently depending on need. However, FSA members stated that the possibility to take part in meetings and other organised events (such as exposure trips) depends on their managers’ willingness to approve participation.

SCA has developed a harassment-free environment policy. The FSA is familiar with cases of harassment towards women within SCA. SCA management stated that there have been no formal complaints until now. However other staff said that some ‘cases’ have been informally resolved by the woman’s decision to leave SCA. The Human Rights and Gender Unit provided training to raise awareness around the policy in 2013. Unfortunately, the HRGU trainers reported that during the delivery of such courses some the workshop participants make fun of the trainers and this negative treatment carries over outside the trainings.

In terms of gender equality work, multiple obstacles can be identified. The HRGU identified the following: Recruitment of staff, not least because it is difficult to find female staff, let alone with gender knowledge. Also, the nature of work is considered feminine, thereby affecting the recruitment of male professionals. Even the term

⁶¹ A Pakistani expert on sexual harassment reviewed the SCA policy and recommended two areas for improvement: 1) it needs to be mandatory for a woman to always sit on the inquiry panel (perhaps head of FSA) and 2) the application of the policy should be expanded to include any person harassed by an SCA employee, in or outside the organization.

“gender” is highly contested, as an equivalent cannot be found in either of the national languages. The gender message becomes an “external” one. Several members within the unit clearly stated that former SCA gender coordinators have not managed to be effective since the combined HRGU unit’s creation in 2005 due to a failure to contextualize their approach to gender (they used the terms feminist and activist to describe their orientation). The current coordinator’s approach was considered to be more “balanced”. However, the Unit also highlighted that there is conflict of understanding and lack of a common narrative on gender and human rights across the organisation, which has led to ‘serious resistance’ to both human rights and gender equality initiatives. In addition, several staff in the HRGU testified of being subject to serious harassment due to their positions in the HRGU and these incidents had been brought to the attention of SCA management.

3.4.3 Promotion of gender equality through field programmes

Promotion of gender equality is a critical concern for SCA, affecting all levels of the organisation, and ultimately their programmes. In 2013 SCA reported that 93% of the health facilities supported by them had at least one female worker. SCA has also constructed family houses in health facilities and recruited escorts⁶² for midwives – which had enabled more women to get access to health facilities and make more informed decisions on health and family planning. For instance, when women are recruited to attend nurse trainings their male relatives can be hired as guards for the training premises.

Involvement of communities, both men and women, in planning and monitoring of health services, through the operation of ‘Health Shuras’ has led to a growing sense of ownership and demand for higher quality services. However, despite attempts to create collaborative arrangements, building and advocating for women’s capacity to enter, and remain, in decision-making roles has been easier in women-only systems, such as women CDCs, while their space for influence in joint CDCs has remained restricted.

Further, a feasibility study on health care personnel⁶³ revealed that not only were female staff concerned for their security, but they were also given fewer capacity development opportunities than male colleagues (such as opportunities to develop English skills). This resulted in female staff becoming even more dependent on their male

⁶² Rural women in most areas of Afghanistan are not allowed to travel without a trusted male family member.

⁶³[Name protected] Capacity Development of Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) Health Care Personnel, undated, page 6-7

colleagues. Women held few key positions even when their competence was adequate for such positions. Male staff did not acknowledge the depth of these problems.

In the mid-term evaluation process in 2012 the evaluator noticed representatives of a female shura requested to meet in the SCA office in order to address their concerns and seek assistance. The evaluator concluded that the advocating and peace building effect, motivating the female and male shuras to talk, listen to each other and find a solution, was an important and significant benefit of possibly even higher importance than the physical construction projects.⁶⁴

3.4.4 Affirmative action

As affirmative action is not mentioned in Afghan labour law, SCA has adopted the Swedish interpretation of governing labour, which says that when two people who are equally qualified and look for a job the person of the underrepresented sex are given priority. Subjects' credentials must be assessed to be nearly equivalent. SCA holds that when affirmative action has been discussed internally it has been concluded that to use affirmative action where lower merit is disregarded to ensure a better statistic would be a quick-fix-solution that negates addressing the root cause of the problem. The Team agrees that affirmative action for the sake of improved statistics is not advisable. However, affirmative actions need not be reduced to encompass only the formal/legalistic application in recruitment and promotion processes.

One small action aimed at making work at SCA more conducive to women was initiated recently. Due to security concerns, female staff at KMO had an agreement which allowed them to leave the office an hour earlier during the darker period of the year. The agreement was however contested by male colleagues, which led to a renegotiations. Now, female staff are allowed to leave an hour earlier each day, but half an hour daily is deducted from their annual leave.

3.4.5 Gender mainstreaming

Within SCA the prevailing perception of gender mainstreaming (and human rights) is steadily changing from being considered a concept of international agreements with limited practical bearing on the Afghan context to acknowledging the real implications for all development work. SCA has also continuously invested in incentive structures and clearer lines of accountability which are more conducive for gender mainstreaming and human rights based approach.

In 2010, SCA reported to Sida⁶⁵ that it was 'continuously working on raising gender awareness within the organisation' in line with Afghan and Islamic values and tradi-

⁶⁴ MTE, p 20

⁶⁵ SCA Report on Sida funded interventions for the period 1 July to 31 December 2010

tions, recognising that there was ‘definitely space for improvement’ due to resistance from staff who felt gender was a western concept. To this end, a human rights and gender dictionary was prepared in English, Dari and Pashto and distributed among staff and external partners. The 2012 Mid-term review of SP10⁶⁶ noted that mainstreaming of HRBA and gender equality through civil society organisation was facing constraints. The evaluation opined that the use of the cross-cutting units of HRGU and CSU to lead on this issue might be ‘less conducive for mainstreaming than having the respective expertise within the programmes’. The 2013 internal review⁶⁷ gave a similar opinion by quoting one programme as stating “the structure and aims [of SCA] contradicts [each other], for example, Gender and Civil society [are] separate to programmes, so how to mainstream?”

The initiation of the new M&E system⁶⁸ represents a step in the right direction by formally clarifying the process and content of a ‘Gender M&E System’ which is intended to ‘document accomplishment around the indicators on changes in gender roles in the communities where SCA works’, by focusing on the ‘number of men and women who benefited from any of SCA’s project interventions’ leading to ‘a deeper analysis of changes in gender relations.’ However, it recognises that a ‘progressive capacity programme’ within SCA and communities will be needed to move this ahead. By the end of 2015, SCA expects to have a policy and strategy in place for gender and human rights that will incorporate Islamic references and perspectives on woman and human rights.⁶⁹

Much of the work on capacitating SCA staff on the concept of gender has been centred on training. The 2012 impact study on gender based violence⁷⁰ reported SCA intends to ‘incorporate GBV as a subject into whatever staff training is already being carried out’. In 2014, SCA conducted gender awareness training for 41 males and 23 females across project and field offices⁷¹. However, it is indicative of the difficulties that management continues to face with staff as the training, as the training in Jalalabad was delayed due to the difficulty of getting men and women to sit in the same room. However, an interview with Sida staff indicated that, in addition to training, SCA management would really need to exert stronger pressure on resistant staff members to change their attitudes. They should also collaborate more with INGOs

⁶⁶ Eder, Bernhard Mid-term evaluation of SCA’s Strategic Plan 2010-2013, Summary March 2012.

⁶⁷ SCA, Summary of results from the review of SCA’s internal organisation, 23 January 2013.

⁶⁸ SCA, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, 2013.

⁶⁹ SCA, Mid-year report 2014, 18 September 2014.

⁷⁰ PTRO, Reducing gender based violence? An Impact study of SCA programmes in Afghanistan-summary, 2012.

⁷¹ SCA, Mid-year report 2014, 18 September 2014.

supported by Sida in Afghanistan, such as MSI, that are also working on gender mainstreaming, rather than assuming they can do it all alone.

Despite the difficulty in mainstreaming the concept of gender, it is clear that women and children are clearly prioritised target groups in SCA programming, but approaches to systematically perceive situations in the field through a gender lens and apply gender mainstreaming in all stages of programming are not fully utilised. A key informant mentioned that during SP10 SCA had once developed a “gender based budget”. The disaggregated ratio of spending was at that time considered satisfactory by the SCA board.

Gender mainstreaming requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programmes. The Team finds that SCA has focused primarily on “women’s empowerment” within its programmes and within the organisation itself, by undertaking important and relevant measures to promote women and girls and strengthen their roles. SCA has so far not put particular emphasis on the transformative aspects of gender mainstreaming, which aim to challenge the prevailing gender relations and assumed roles for women and men. SCA has lately taken important steps to move from gender equality being women’s issues to actually encompassing men and women. The focus have started to shift in the direction which looks at the societal structures that determine gender roles and responsibilities, access to and control over resources and decision-making potentials.

3.5 ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Evaluation Questions Group 5

- How does SCA work with advocacy contributions to improve the living conditions for their target groups (women, children, people with disabilities and people in rural communities)?
- What capacity and relative advantages does the organisation have to improve and strengthen their advocacy work?

3.5.1 Introduction

Advocacy was stated as one of the three pillars of the SP10 as well as for the current strategic plan period. SCA has long experiences of delivering services to rights-holders but has limited experience in using this knowledge, alone or together with local partners, to promote evidence-based advocacy towards local or national authorities.

The mid-term evaluation in 2012 highlighted that advocacy seemed to be understood as awareness-raising among communities and with provincial partners. The evaluation said that while community engagement was effectively done and can be considered as a particular expertise of SCA, advocacy was not well used as a means and obligation to give a voice to marginalised people and promote their rights.⁷²

3.5.2 SCA's use of advocacy in its support of rights-holders

As noted above in the results section, SCA advocacy efforts at several levels have played the key role in placing the rights' of persons with disabilities on the government agenda and in the minds of community leaders and families. In addition, their long-term, low-key approach to girls' education and women's employment in health represent important examples of this ability.

This influence has often been conveyed with a low-voice within what is considered "invited space", where government and other stakeholders welcome their input. However it was noted by informants that SCA should also complement this important "low-voice" advocacy by being more vocal and proactive in national policy developments, by using "claimed space". With SCA's lengthy and continued experience with a wide range of service delivery it is even more important to engage in evidence-based advocacy where SCA increasingly strives towards not only influencing the agenda, but actually setting it. SCA has large but limited outreach, considering the needs in Afghanistan. A HRBA requires that more resources are invested in influencing additional actors to learn from SCA's experiences.

The Team was not able to capture the full scope of the reasons why SCA in Afghanistan is reluctant to engage in 'high-voice' advocacy. We believe that within SCA there is an implicit conflict between rights-based approach/advocacy on the one hand, and service delivery/security on the other. The impression is that an informal cost benefit analysis has given service delivery (with its greater assurance of security) the upper hand when compared with a more uncertain rights-based approach through advocacy. There is a perceived anxiety within the organisation on how SCA intends to maintain and, particularly, to build upon more than three decades of trust and legitimacy from the communities in order to fully implement their programmes through HRBA. The Team considers both invited and claimed space advocacy of importance for any organisation that strives to work with a rights-based approach and for programmes to have an impact beyond its own constituencies.

⁷² Mid Term Evaluation, March 2012, p 15 -16

SCA understands that they are now expected to play a catalyst change agent role, rather than being the main actor itself. However, the dominant response has been to remain engaged in direct service delivery (i.e., interventions designed and implemented by SCA) and, in the process, address societal change. SCA's work on facilitating an emerging civil society by investing in local capabilities is still in a process of development.

SCA is still struggling with defining what advocacy is supposed be in their programming and is still preparing an explicit advocacy strategy. A working group has been established to outline the way forward. This group presented its first report in November 2013. The report suggested a staff plan and job descriptions for advocacy positions at Stockholm Management Office (SMO) and KMO, and also suggested thematic areas where SCA should focus its advocacy work, particularly at SMO. The report acknowledged that "it is not always clear why SCA engages in advocacy" and also that SCA keeps mixing up advocacy with a variety of activities such as raising awareness, building capacity and maintaining dialogue with communities. The working group proposed an overall focus for SCAs advocacy work in Afghanistan during the strategic plan period would be to advocate alone or together with other actors/partners for the right of the target groups, specifically girls, Kuchis, women and PwDs, to access basic services.

In May 2014 the working group presented its second report. In the brief Advocacy Framework presented in the report SCA Advocacy is to be carried out by:⁷³

- Capacitating local NGOs and CBOs to advocate for their rights by themselves towards the local duty bearers,
- Undertaking joint advocacy with communities, CBOs local, national NGOs and networks to influence legislation and government policies in favour of the poor and marginalised, and
- Alone or with networks of like-minded national and international NGOS advocating on behalf of the target groups to influence donor policies and continued development aid to Afghanistan.

The working group also noted that a review of Advocacy activities of programmes and units in Work Plan 2014 indicates a lack of unified understanding and coherence. It lacks strategic focus in terms of policy changes in the long term that promotes the realisation of rights of target groups and there is a tendency to label awareness raising as advocacy without having elaborated on the possible interrelationship and/or difference.⁷⁴

⁷³ SCA (internal) report Advocacy Working Group II, May 2014, p 4

⁷⁴ SCA (internal) report Advocacy Working Group II, May 2014, p 3

The mid-term evaluation in 2012 also concluded, “SCA appears to be too humble”. It could “sell” and publish its expertise more, including by contributing to formulation of national policies and reference documents.⁷⁵ The mid-term evaluator had received external input from the [Name protected], which pointed to insufficient participation of SCA staff with adequate decision power in coordination forums.⁷⁶ The [Name protected] also raised this with the Team. It is clear that expectations are high on SCA’s active participation in such processes. [Name protected] and [Name protected] and the Advisory Minister for Health and Education all visualised SCA as a partner, inviting it to take a seat next to them to build a united front towards external stakeholders.

3.5.3 SCA capacity to strengthen its advocacy agenda

The advocacy working group report also reiterated some implications for advocacy work in Sweden. In essence, advocacy needs in Sweden and Afghanistan are considered very different, and thus the development of SCAs advocacy work needs different timelines. The growth of a clear advocacy framework in Afghanistan is a longer-term initiative, while advocacy in Sweden and Europe can be narrowed down more easily. In Sweden, SCA is considered to be well-equipped to build expertise and engage in action already in 2014 in areas where SCA needs to position itself and influence policy. An advocacy coordination group at SMO was formed in spring 2014 and has so far conducted an initial review of thematic areas to focus SMOs advocacy work on in 2014 and identified five themes for advocacy in Sweden.

3.6 BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Questions Group 6

- To what extent are SCA’s identified and planned organisational changes sufficient and sound in order to adjust to the new strategic plan? Have important aspects or perspectives been left out?
- What is the SCA approach to building capacity of staff?
- What abilities and relative advantages does the organisation have to develop and strengthen their capacity building efforts?

3.6.1 Introduction

There has been substantial change in SCA over the past few years. The Team encountered a SCA that was considerably different in its orientation and capacity to the one

⁷⁵ Mid term Evaluation, 2012, p 7

⁷⁶ Mid Term Evaluation, March 2012, p 17

that was evaluated in 2008.⁷⁷ At that time, the evaluators found the organisation ‘performed weakly in formulating clear directives’, showed a virtual lack of follow-up on previous transformation agreements, made limited investments in institutional capacity building, with programmes showing only a limited engagement beyond direct service delivery.

As noted in the opening chapter on the Theory of Change, the Team clearly recognised that a transformation has taken place that has moved SCA away from the continued implementation of a set of long-established service delivery modalities towards becoming a learning organisation with the growing capacity to test and question its development models. The Team noted that SCA has become far more aware, reflective and self-critical than indicated by earlier reports. This was also substantiated by comments from those who have known the organisation for a longer time.

3.6.2 Building internal capacity to embrace change

It appears to the Team that the 2008 evaluation served as a form of a wakeup call for the organisation. As we have come to understand from informants, the change process began soon thereafter in 2009 with a shift in Sweden with the Board beginning to orient the organisation towards becoming more clearly a professional development organisation, rather than a humanitarian one. By 2011, the organisation’s Vision and Mission statements had been crafted. These statements initially caused some controversy as they called into question SCA’s self-image as an organisation that had for long seen itself primarily as one that works in solidarity with poor Afghans, providing them with goods and services that they could not provide or access for themselves. There was a sense among several respondents that, at the time, many, including some on the Board, were reluctant to shift away from that vision. Nevertheless, the senior leadership pressed ahead and the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, with its clear appreciation of human rights and the role played by Islamic principles in their realisation, was approved by the Board. Indications now are that the Board, SMO and KMO are fully in alignment with the present direction and the remaining changes that need to be put in place.

Given the significance of the process, it needs to be stated again that the participatory nature of the SP14 planning process has been cited by many staff and management as being a primary catalyst for opening people’s minds to accepting new ways of working. This perception was substantiated by interviews conducted by the Team in Sweden, Kabul and provincial units that illustrated the extent to which the new organisational philosophy has been institutionalized. Staff interviewed in each unit in the Ka-

⁷⁷ Carlsson, Goran et al. Evaluation of Sida’s Support to the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 2008.

bul Management Office as well as those in Balkh, Nangarhar, Takhar, Kunduz, Samangan, Ghazni and Wardak were able to clearly describe the purpose and key outputs of their unit, how the purpose of their unit links back to the Vision and Mission, which organisational policies guided the unit in its operations and how its purpose is integrated with those of other units.

However, in the January 2013 organisational development review,⁷⁸ the staff gave their lowest rating with regards to SCA's Organisational Capacities for 'Learning and Change'. Yet, all staff interviewed by the Team remarked on how much their programme, and the organisational culture, had changed in the past two years. The recent Organisation Review⁷⁹ also stated that "the ability to learn lessons from previous experiences ... is a particular weakness throughout the organisation that has in the past affected quality and efficiency of planning, monitoring and evaluation, lessons learning, and reporting."

Nevertheless, the Team found substantial evidence of a robust learning culture that pervades the organisation. There are numerous organisational reform processes that are currently ongoing simultaneously. Every programme talked about the changes they had put into effect since the beginning of the SP14 period or before. Each programme undertook numerous internal, external evaluations and 3rd Party (retainer contract) monitoring during SP10. In nearly every instance reviewed by the Team, these findings have been used to modify an ongoing activity or process.

If anything, SCA appears almost to be trying to introduce too much change at once. Many new procedures will be coming on line in 2015 along with a full implementation of SP14 principles and practices (following the bridging year of 2014). However, no one complained about the changes being put in place (other than more restrictive rules on security for foreigner staff) and all staff commented that they saw the changes as beneficial to the organisation's ability to meet its objectives.

3.6.3 Creating Tools for sustaining change

The new PME Framework⁸⁰ is substantial in nature covering 400 pages in three volumes of guidelines and tools and has the potential to play a substantial role in strengthening the basis for change in the future. A plan⁸¹ is in place to institutionalize the framework and M&E officers have been posted to Project Offices to build the

⁷⁸ Sterland, Bill Summary of results from the review of SCA's internal organisation, 23 January 2013

⁷⁹ Stockholm Policy Group. SCA Organisational Review, October 2014.

⁸⁰ SCA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, 3 vols. 2013

⁸¹ Penaflor, Philip. SCA M&E System Rollout Report, 2013.

capacity of programme teams. The mid-year (2014) report to Sida⁸² illustrates a focus on tracking progress on Process Goals, Programmatic Results as well as internal change dynamics, but remains largely non-quantitative. However, it has been pointed out that the outcome indicators from the SP14 are now fully integrated with the budget planning process and will be reported on in 2015. The Team was also interested to learn that the PME unit is actively engaged in guiding programme staff in the preparation of case stories as a means of more completely understanding the complexity of the development process in marginalised communities.

It will take a considerable time for all of the key elements of the M&E system to be put into full use. The management recognises this and has advised the PME unit, particularly those in the field that their primary duty is to build capacity within the programme units and not to spend time in conducting field assessments.

The new Communications Platform⁸³, approved in September 2014, illustrates how the organisation will be communicating what it has learned about how to implement its Mission Statement. The Communications Platform also discusses the use of Social Media. This is an approach that has been lacking in SCA programming. Several comments have been made in the Advocacy sections regarding the limited effort SCA has made in Afghanistan to explain how it has been successful in a compelling manner. It appears that this is yet another area where management is initiating meaningful change.

We agree with the SPG assessment that the lack of a system-wide IT system has been a constraint to knowledge sharing, performance validation and learning. Although the new financial management system, SCALA, is now on line, it is not yet fully accessible from all offices in Afghanistan. Government interviewees, particularly in Education, Rural Development and Health, all mentioned their need for assistance in building geo-coded information systems at local levels so that detailed research at the district level and below could lead to actionable decisions within government and donors.

Human resource management will take on an enhanced role as the organisation continues its process of transformation. Different types of personnel with different qualifications need to be attracted to the organisation. As a result of a concerted effort, the past year has seen a 10% increase in permanent female staff. However, retention of highly qualified women remains a difficulty.

⁸² SCA, Mid-year Narrative Report Core, September 18, 2014.

⁸³ SCA Communications Platform, September 2014.

Partly due to the decentralized nature of field recruitment, the issue of staff influence and bias in hiring remains an issue of great concern to SCA and its partners. Both Sida and GIROA mentioned this in their discussions with the Team. Management is aware of the problem and is in the process of introducing several changes to the recruitment to reduce its potential, including using a formal statement of no conflict of interest for managers.

SCA Management understand that staff learning clearly needs to be linked to staff performance measurement⁸⁴. The management acknowledges that the current human resource system is dysfunctional, but it is a priority agenda item for 2015. The intent is that a modernized system is being designed to be linked to salary increments and training.

The newly approved rules⁸⁵ of procurement and supply management stand as another example of how change has been institutionalized in the organisation. The Team repeatedly asked a short set of questions at different levels of the organisation, from both programme and operational staff. We found consistent answers to our questions throughout the organisation.

However, informants and management advised the Team that reassessing the security situation and changing rules accordingly has been a ‘constant fight’ against ‘huge resistance’. The issue is also wrapped up in a disagreement over authority lines. Again, the Team was assured that management is well aware of the issue and the Country Director told the Team that he is seeking support from the Board to introduce necessary changes.

3.6.4 Building Capacity among civil society actors, duty bearers and rights-holders

As stated in the Annual Report 2013 and the former Strategic plan period report (for 2010-2013) SCA has realised that it needs a systematic and holistic approach for implementing Capacity Development (CD) with CSOs and local authorities. The evaluation report on SCA support to Civil Society Organisations in Afghanistan in 2012⁸⁶ highlighted the need for SCA to develop a clear understanding at all levels on the purpose, objectives and strategies for their civil society support in general. Although the Team was provided with a paper by the Civil Society Unit titled “Context analysis

⁸⁴ SCA Internal Training Plans for 2015

⁸⁵ SCA Procurement and Supply Manual, April 2014.

⁸⁶ Report of the Evaluation of SCA support to [Name protected] , 2012

guidelines – civil society”, there appears, as yet, to be no commonly applied definition in the SCA of civil society in Afghanistan.

Capacity Development has received stronger attention lately, with improved efforts starting in 2013. The Annual Work plan for 2015 SCA concludes that agreement and common understanding for SCA’s capacity development approach had been achieved among SCA staff at various levels during 2014. Development of a capacity development system had been initiated.⁸⁷ SCA currently has staff at project office level with the “CD facilitator” role as part of their professional mandates, not fully dedicated towards the capacity development end. However, there is an increased understanding that working closely with partners on capacity development will require SCA staff dedicated and resourced to engage with these tasks. The assumption presented to the Team was that the final organisational structure would include multiple staff working in the area of capacity development at project offices. While roles to progress with capacity development are relatively spread among the CSU, the CD team at KMO and other units at KMO – these are expected to equip the CD facilitator at the project office level to carry out capacity development interventions.

The Civil Society Unit (CSU) has existed since 2009. Capacity development of CSOs was primarily channelled through two funding mechanisms, the Small Projects Fund (SPF) and the Organisational Development Fund (ODF). The SPF focused on capacity development in terms of results-based project management and the ODF on development of patterns’ managerial capacities and organisational structures.⁸⁸ There have also been funds that have been directed towards similar ends, directly through SCA programmes (for example through the RAD programme with funding from Forum Syd). Additionally, the Rural Development Programme used to have the so called Capacity Institutional Development (CID), but this component was gradually shifted to the CSU.

The SPF and ODF encompassed approximately 10 and 5 partner organisations respectively, each year. Funding from these funds were only obtainable once (although could be from both) for a maximum period of a year. The ASK evaluation highlighted that the “nature and duration of SPF and ODF programmes was not conducive to get long term, desired impacts”⁸⁹ As a response to the evaluation these funds were merged into a new Civil Society Development Fund (CSDF) in 2013. The number of partner organisations receiving the combined funding decreased to 6 organisations in

⁸⁷ SCA Annual Work Plan 2015

⁸⁸ SCA Programme Background notes, sep 2014, Civil Society Unit, p

1 ⁸⁹ Stimulating Know How ([Name protected] , 2012, p 20

2013. The total budget for the CSDF and CID also decreased with approximately a third from the previous year. During 2013 each of the 6 organisations received approximately 1000 000 Afs (approximately 140 000 SEK) from the CSDF.

In 2014 the CSU and CD team has facilitated 72⁹⁰ CSO assessments on behalf of programmes. The assessment tool was based on INTRAC's model "To be, to do, to relate" and assessments were carried out by relevant project officers in the field. The assessment format was very ambitious in its scope. The team took part in two examples representing organisations at each end of the current capacity spectrum. It was clear that the assessment process had been perceived as a rather "industrialised"⁹¹ one, which had caused some of the larger organisations assessed to react to how it was carried out. There is a risk that the step of the assessment process (and the number of organisations included) was taken without fully considering the next steps that SCA needs to engage in. An ambitious assessment is likely to raise the expectations of the organisations assessed, while SCA is also exploring how they can best support partner organisations OD-processes. The week after the Evaluation Team's field visit, a number of project officers received training from the CSU and CD team on how to develop OD-plans.

The Annual Work Plan for 2015 states that a "new cycle of CD assessment and planning will start with new target groups in 2015". SCA continues by stating that since many changes are required within SCA structure, systems and internal staff competencies to improve the way SCA implements CD intervention with CSOs and local authorities, gradual "increase of target group coverage" is therefore necessary to gather lessons learned, adjust methodologies and tools, and allow for time for SCA to consolidate their competencies. The team wishes to highlight that such an increase of target group coverage do not necessarily have to be a parallel process, but can first and foremost be sought as result of increased CSO partnerships.

Apart from the upcoming focus on target groups (the Team assumes this means rights-holders) SCA is also increasing its focus on capacity development of local authorities, where so far only "needs-based training" has been provided. This is understood by the Team as former focus on capacity development to provide services, rather than support to assuming a role and capacity as duty-bearer. A pilot will take place in the education sector, covering the Province of Nangarhar. Capacity needs

⁹⁰ Figure provided by SCA evaluation review team. The original figure provided by the CSU during the field visit was 59.

⁹¹ Rapidly implementing a standardized "one size fits all" approach across a large number of organisations rather than working with a limited number of self-selected organisations using self-assessment oriented tools to ensure that the change process has been fully institutionalized.

assessments and formulations of plans for these pilots in local authorities are planned for the end of 2014, with implementation starting in 2015

In its Annual Work Plan for 2015 SCA has identified two main outputs to facilitate capacity development of CSOs and local authorities; a manual for conducting innovative and participatory training activities and a manual for monitoring progress of capacity development plans. It is however not fully clear to the team how SCA is resourcing the practical, hands-on capacity development support to CSOs and local authorities. Local NGOs were interviewed by the Team regarding the nature and quality of the SCA capacity development processes in the past. Most remarked that they appreciated the assistance, but felt that SCA should have done more to enable them to take part in SCA's work. All those that are receiving assistance indicated that they need that assistance to continue for many years into the future.

SCA has a different position in comparison with other Swedish Framework organisations, as all Sida-funding will be channelled through the Afghanistan Unit and not through the CSO-appropriation grant (Sida's Civil Society Unit). From 2015 the Sida Children and Youth and the former Forum Syd Grant will be included in this one and the same grant to be channelled through the Afghanistan Unit. This means that the current and forthcoming country strategies for Afghanistan will be the principal governing document, towards which SCA will report and be evaluated against. However, the CSO strategy is guiding for all Sida-grants and will therefore play an important role also for SCAs future decision-making in terms of civil society strengthening in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Unit has also been required to take additional stock of the Civil Society Unit's knowledge so that they can play a greater role in supporting SCA progress in this respect. Sida's Afghanistan Unit and Civil Society Unit have also discussed how they can jointly support SCA in its results framework clarify expected results and indicators related to a) strengthening of local civil society b) the HRBA to programming c) advocacy.

3.6.5 Support for Change in Sweden

SCA, is one of several INGO that have a single focus on Afghanistan. Of these it may have the greatest programming breadth, geographic scope and longevity. In Sweden, SCA is a member-based organisation. This implies that the members have been a driving force. This was clearly the case for the first 30 years of its operations as a humanitarian aid organisation. Now with the advent of the SP14 with its rights-based orientation, the role of the Afghan communities may begin to gain prominence. However, the more the SCA moves into being rights' based, the more key priorities might be perceived differently by members in Sweden and by communities in Afghanistan.

Discussions with the SCA Secretary General and the Chairman of the Board revealed an organisation with a clear division of authority. While the Board has the responsibility to approve the Strategic Plans and annual budgets, considerable authority is given to the Country Director to implement the programme in the way he believes will achieve the planned objectives. Two sets of authorities for decision making are

currently in practice. The first, approved in 2013, separates the roles of the General Members, the Board and the Secretary General. The second, approved in August 2014, establishes the role of the SG with regard to the Afghanistan management team. It is important to note that the SG has little or no role in tactical implementation decision making once the Strategic and Annual plans have been approved by the Board. Doubly interesting is the process of improved integration of financial and programme planning,” involving the budget being planned in line with each strategic objective for the first time; devolving much of the planning responsibilities with each project and field office team working together to develop output maps activity plans for their coverage areas tied to their local contexts; working with outcome teams with representation from all programmes for three year target setting; and for the first time including the administration, finance, and other support functions in developing results-oriented, strategic work plans”⁹². . The Mid-Year report remarked that, in 2014, “the administration and finance functions at SCA are assuming full autonomy for their 2015-17 planning”.⁹³

3.7 SUSTAINABILITY

Evaluation Questions Group 7

- To what extent have programme activities during the prior agreement 2010-2013 contributed to the sustainability of a rights’ based approach in sectorial service delivery?
- In what ways have SCA’s interventions focused on building capacity of beneficiaries and government agencies in order to enhance sustainability of outcomes?

3.7.1 Sustainability of a rights-based approach

SCA has operated throughout Afghanistan’s most turbulent periods in its recent history. SCA started as a humanitarian organisation, moved closer to the field and nearer to target communities in the 1990s, and did not truly begin transitioning from a needs based to a rights based approach and from activity based to results based management until its 2013 Strategic Planning exercise.

In the words of one SCA staff, “sustainability is a concept that looks great but is very hard in practice.” When SCA attempted to hand over interventions several years ago, according to key informants, quality deteriorated in physiotherapy clinics (under

⁹² SCA Mid-Year Report 2014, October 2014, p. 23.

⁹³ *ibid*

BPHS), and follow up assessments have shown the same in schools⁹⁴ due to a reduction in resource allocation by Government. This caused the organisation to be reluctant to exit from activities thereafter.

SCA does not have a standard protocol that guides its exit strategy. There are no existing mechanisms that can mitigate unforeseen events, both for the partner organisations and the target communities. There are no standard protocols that define the process for designing an intervention with an exit strategy in mind. In the long run, helping people to look for resources on their own first before seeking outside assistance should be a cross-cutting theme for every single engagement with communities.

However, SCA has continued to hand over interventions, both in health and in the education sectors, with mixed results. A good example of sustained integration at the individual level is the integration of children with disabilities in formal school system, an area of relative success. Balkh province has witnessed the integration of 400 CwDs over the past 2 years. This example suggests that the higher the degree of community ownership, plus integration with government, the greater the chance of sustainability.

The case of a RAD programme in Faisabad, Badakhshan, where staff were apparently informed by letter that they would be phased out by the end of the year, surfaced during the evaluation. This led management to confirm that there is, as yet, no organisational strategy for ‘exit’, but current thinking is now aimed at how to provide adequate follow up as a process of transition.

3.7.2 Sustainability through government capacity building

As noted in the results section above, SCA has long sustained contract partnerships with government, particularly in Health and Rural Development, in order to target rural population in line with government priorities. Nevertheless, the SCA 2015 Work Plan states that the “low capacity of concerned local authorities in taking full lead and in order to ensure sustainability” remains a major challenge. SCA’s mitigation measures include building capacity, providing pre-conditions including health facilities, equipment, tools and development and technical support and guidance.⁹⁵

Government confirms that SCA has aligned itself well with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) for the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan and the National Priority Programs (NPP) for the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. This alignment, in particu-

⁹⁴ Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Strategic Plan 2010-2013, p.13

⁹⁵ Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Annual Work Plan 2015, p. 97

lar in the educational sector is so strong that the NPP on education gives explicit references to SCA's work on community-based education and with school management committees. In the health sector, SCA has been a long term partner of the [Name protected] in implementing the BPHS and EPHS health packages and building the capacity of midwives. SCA's engagement of both government and community's inclusion of CwD in public schools is well acknowledged.

At a lengthy meeting at the [Name protected] , the Team was able to meet representatives from the [Name protected] . All representatives had a clear understanding of what SCA did in the field, enthusiastically spoke about how its work was aligned with Government policies and how SCA facilitates joint monitoring sessions with Government. However, despite a reorientation to work more with district government, the [Name protected] noted that collaboration with SCA had been limited to date.

3.7.3 Sustainability through rights-holders ownership

SCA admits that it could have put greater emphasis on capacitating local authorities prior to handing over facilities in earlier years. As one approach to mitigate this, under Rural Development, SCA plans to help establish practical linkages among 237 CDCs at different levels, as a way to promote the sustainability of efforts through well established relationships with sub-national governance institutions.⁹⁶

In 2015, SCA will begin to implement the CD plans developed in 2014 with local authorities and CSOs, develop internal guiding principles, procedures and tools for implementation of CD plans, develop two manuals on innovative and participatory trainings and monitoring of CD plans, which would also look into issues of representation, participation and sustainability⁹⁷ and establish V[Name protected] in each of the 70 target communities.

Field visits conducted in Balkh, Nangarhar, Laghman and Samangan Provinces highlighted the complexities of sustainable development and underlined target communities and partner organisations' lack of readiness to continue without external financial and technical support. Individual field interviews, partner meetings and staff discussion sessions emphasized this difficulty. Exceptions to this included the [Name protected], the [Name protected] and the [Name protected] .

⁹⁶ Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Annual Work Plan 2015, p. 91

⁹⁷ Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Annual Work Plan 2015, p. 57

4 Evaluative Conclusions

4.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Over the years, SCA has made choices regarding the manner in which its programmes have been implemented. These choices have ensured its continued relevance to the lives of Afghan people, and, more recently, to their government. However, it appears that its success in directly addressing the needs of marginalised people now impedes its ability to resolutely shift its approach to one that is more catalytic in nature with a focus on rights rather than needs. Nevertheless, the modifications made over the past four years to all programmes show a willingness to test, and modify, its long-standing organisational culture.

SCA's approach to supporting rural communities stems largely from its definition of conflict sensitive development, which focuses on providing quality support in a manner that is designed to modify human behaviour without generating conflict. This approach has shown appreciable success over time in areas such as girls' education and women's employment that remain controversial issues in Afghan society at large.

4.1.1 Mainstreaming Gender Remains a Challenge

However, as our Background section noted, local norms have significant influence on behaviour. The points noted above in section 3.4 (Gender Equality) indicate that SCA continues to struggle to modify the attitudes and behaviour of its male staff in its various offices in Kabul and provinces with regard to accepting women as equal professionals. In the Team's view, the deeper culture of the organisation remains geared towards the perpetuation of behavioural norms that create a more comfortable space for men to pursue their career interests while making the prevailing work environment less conducive to attracting and retaining women employees. The strong resistance to affirmative action measures taken is indicative of the difficulties faced by management in this regard.

That SCA is unable to link its empowering work on people with disabilities and community schools with the theme of gender mainstreaming, as noted in the Gender Equality section above, is not justified for an INGO, but it is not altogether surprising given the existence of similar patterns in the larger Afghan context. Recent work⁹⁸

⁹⁸ [Name protected] . The Dilemma of Women and Leadership in Afghanistan: Lessons and Recommendations, Policy Note, [Name protected], November 2014,

indicates that women's rights is a negotiable item in the peace talks. Afghanistan has substantial recognition of women's rights on paper, but the practical public mainstreaming of the values of gender equality are largely absent. The establishment of the [Name protected] has contributed to a reductionist approach to women's empowerment and stands as a major example of the Afghan and International community's inability to connect gender mainstreaming with Afghan priorities. As a result, the women's movement of the past 12 years has predominantly been urban in nature, lacking understanding of the common Afghan women's urgent needs, the relevance of the concept of gender equality to the priorities of Afghan society remains undefined, and gender equality is still a stranger concept to Afghan men, who think "it is none of their business."⁹⁹

The emphasis on women's and girls' empowerment will remain an important component of SCA's work on human rights and gender equality. SCA will however need to strengthen gender mainstreaming work by complementing the inclusion of "women-specific issues" and targeting women and girls particularly in programming with work that also have a more transformative character, thus challenging the prevailing gender relations and roles assigned on the basis of sex. Empowerment of women will not happen in a vacuum or within women's spheres only, men will have to take a more active part in processes to increase gender equality. Also, in the work targeting women and girls specifically more attention can be paid to addressing women's priorities in legislation, policy development, research and programming.

4.1.2 Further Work on Building Rights-holders Capacity is needed

SCA is introducing a number of management reforms to strengthen the internal organisational mechanisms. However, the Team assessed that the key missing element in these organisational development efforts remains the lack of a structured approach to engaging, and building the capacity of, community organisations to engage as partners in the design and implement of interventions that are perceived to be of significant value to themselves. This task will certainly be difficult, but in the view of the Team, enabling community organisations to take on more meaningful implementation roles, particularly in education, RAD and rural development, would be the basis for reducing SCA's direct implementation role while building organisational capacity among rights holders to more directly influence their own development. This, we argue, is the primary reason for shifting to a rights based approach, as stated in the SCA Mission Statement: *'to empower individuals...so that they may participate fully in society and influence their own development'*.

⁹⁹ Interview with a well educated Afghan man who earned a Fulbright scholarship and views himself as a civil rights activist

4.1.3 Seek Collaboration with Other Organisations

The interviews conducted during the data collection phase and the comments made on the draft report indicated that SCA management recognises the difficulty it is having in changing this organisational culture and is seeking advice on appropriate means to address gender equality and human rights issues within the organisation. Comments from staff indicated that no one felt there were any comparable experiences SCA could learn from in Afghanistan. Recently, however, NORAD published a brief report¹⁰⁰ on Norwegian experience of working with gender in rural Afghanistan. This report reviews the organisational profiles, the approaches to gender mainstreaming and the lessons learned from several organisations working in similar conditions as SCA. In addition, Helvetas, a Swiss NGO, recently conducted a series of regional dialogues on working on gender issues through an Islamic lens¹⁰¹. It will be important for SCA to seriously engage with these and other likeminded organisations as the internal staff culture is viewed by the Team as one of the most significant impediments preventing this INGO from shifting into a rights based approach.

However, BRAC (formerly known as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) may serve as the most valuable collaborating organisation as SCA continues its process of organisational change. BRAC began its work in 1972 with relief efforts shortly after the war of independence. It quickly shifted into sectorial service delivery to fill gaps in the new government's efforts to reach the rural populations, but, by 1980, BRAC was already an international case study for its 'people-centred approach'.¹⁰² In addition, BRAC has operated a Gender Justice and Diversity Programme¹⁰³ for decades that works simultaneously within the organisation and with communities. This people-centred and gender sensitive approach, applied within a predominantly Muslim society with severe disparities, limited governmental capacity and resource constraints, has been the organisation's *raison d'être* ever since. The conclusions of this evaluation show that SCA has the potential to emulate BRAC's

¹⁰⁰ NORAD, Working with Gender in Rural Afghanistan: Experiences of Norwegian funded NGO projects, September 2014.

¹⁰¹ <http://blog.helvetas.org/the-gender-inequality-index-and-thoughts-on-our-work-in-afghanistan/>
<http://blog.helvetas.org/how-to-be-gender-responsive-in-islamic-contexts-experiences-and-lessons-learned/>
<http://blog.helvetas.org/a-pat-on-the-back-and-lessons-from-working-with-women-in-bangladesh/>

¹⁰² Korten, David. Community Organisation and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach. Public Administration Review, Vol. 40, No. 5 (Sep. - Oct., 1980), pp. 480-511.

¹⁰³ <http://gender.brac.net/>

strong orientation to human rights¹⁰⁴ and its ability to test, document and reach others by communicating¹⁰⁵ its lessons.

The focus of the conclusions and recommendations will, therefore, be centred on our observations regarding SCA's strengths and weaknesses on these two critical themes: **rights** and **reach**.

4.2 SCA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING HRBA

SCA is still exploring how it will promote human rights in the Afghan context. It has a stated intention to work from within an Afghan and Islamic values system. To do so, human rights enhancing strategies and tactics will need to be adequately outlined and challenges not glossed over by focusing on non-sensitive issues. With the apparent exception of the RAD programme, there appears to be a reluctance to acknowledge the applicability of human rights instruments and international commitments. SCA staff specifically stated that use of international human rights treaties was a non-starter. The Team agreed that such resistance formed an implicit challenge to making progress in this area.

4.2.1 Participation

SCA engaged in a successful, participatory process for staff during the development of the current Strategic Plan. However the involvement of representatives from rights-holder was limited to consultations. This seriously reduced the HRBA characteristics of that process, resulting in the retention of the sense, however implicit, of SCA as provider and target groups as beneficiaries. The provision of an enabling environment for rights-holders to participate in all stages of programming is a key component in HRBA. However, more work needs to be undertaken, in order for rights-holders to move from consultations around specific issues to assume a more prominent role in both programme design and implementation.

4.2.2 Non-discrimination

SCA has been able to extend and maintain much of its service delivery to some of the most marginalised groups and isolated communities in Afghanistan. There is a high level of awareness around the root causes of discrimination and, over a long period of time, significant programmatic attention has been paid to removing such barriers.

¹⁰⁴ On 13 November 2013, [Name protected] signed a MoU with the [Name protected] Martyrs and Disabled on children's rights policies to improve conditions of children.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.brac.net/content/learning-resources>

However, there is a need for SCA to proactively expand their current work on inclusion, in particular with regard to the full participation of women and children in society. It will be difficult to fully mainstream gender issues across the programmes if the number of women in decision making positions remains limited. Men can be trained in gender sensitivity, but they will never have to experience what it means to be a woman. Affirmative action to compensate for inequalities and past discrimination are not intended to constitute permanent solutions, but offer redress and a temporary prioritisation until injustice is overcome. This can prompt the need to, temporarily, compensate for an uncondusive environment, while also undertaking efforts to address root causes and remove obstacles permanently. However, a rights-based organisation must start by embodying rights' based values within its own organisation. The organisation's ability, therefore, to change discriminating attitudes due to patriarchal structures in the Afghan society, remains challenging. The Team does not believe that adding full-time specialists, such as in child rights, would be an appropriate solution as often the burden of change falls on their shoulders rather than being owned by all staff. Management needs to conceptualise how it can incentivise behaviour change in a positive direction. They can be helped in this by external experts, but adherence to a rights perspective needs to become an integral component of every staff member's annual assessment.

Gender equality has both quantitative and qualitative aspects which need to be considered both at organisational and programmatic levels. The quantitative aspects concern for example equal representation of women within the organisation (staff of SCA and partner organisations, rights-holder in structures supported, etc.). The qualitative aspects are concerned with equality in influence over decision-making processes and opportunities to establish development objectives. This means that numbers such as 26% female staff or even a 100% girls within a particular rights-holders group are quantitative indications that, by themselves, shed little light over the quality of activities aimed at promoting gender equality. This means that a perfect 50/50 representation of men and women within SCA would still not be sufficient (nor a requirement) for undertaking quality work if this did not result in greater recognition of the perspectives of both women and men in all stages of programming and decision-making.

4.2.3 Transparency

Decision-making power in design and implementation appears to remain vested primarily in SCA staff. It was unclear to the Team to what extent decisions are based upon processes that enable rights-holders to discuss and identify priorities. Thus, at a certain level, SCA still perceives itself as the provider who decides when and where services will be delivered. The unfortunate case of abruptly closing the [Name protected] in Faisabad in line with SCA re-organisation plans to reduce its geographic spread is indicative of this pattern. Sida Kabul informed the Team that even the [Name protected] has written to SCA expressing his surprise and disagreement with the move.

This evaluation argues that any partnership undertaken needs to have prior mutual agreement on what they expect will come out of that partnership, roles assigned to the parties involved and how they expect to recognise “development” according to agreed terms. That will provide transparency and, as such, revisions or phasing out would not come as such a surprise.

4.2.4 Accountability

A significant constraint on SCA moving fully in a HRBA direction is the current Afghan social, economic and security context. The Afghan government has limited ability to take over facilities initiated by SCA and to run them at the same level of quality. However, the Team also met with villagers who spoke confidently about the efforts they were making, within their capacity, to improve services and to develop themselves. Enhancing their sense of ownership would be beneficial to all. SCA’s efforts to fully shift to a results based performance measurement approach beginning in 2015 is expected to have significant impact on both the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations. The fact that the entire 2015 work plan has been budgeted in line with the objective structure of SP14 is a commendable step that should have a significant impact on accountability.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS WITH APPLICATION TO ENHANCING REACH

The conclusions in this section have been clustered under the standard OECD/DAC criteria as seen through a HRBA lens to emphasise their role in furthering the SCA’s internal efforts to change its approach to development.

4.3.1 Relevance

The strategy articulated in SP14, particularly with the procedural and programmatic modifications that will be introduced in 2015, is highly relevant to Afghanistan, its people and their government. It is also relevant to Sida’s current and forthcoming country strategy. SCA has, however, been slow in implementing Sida’s decade-old guidance on becoming a human rights-based organisation. SCA is correct in elaborating explicit advocacy strategies for all aspects of its programme. However, SCA has not spent much time or resources on conducting detailed micro-level research or in supporting the creation of community-based information systems, both of which could form parts of evidence-based advocacy strategies.

4.3.2 Effectiveness and Efficiency

The management decision to begin scaling down from its current geographic spread is a positive one. However, at this stage, efforts to fill the gap by enabling target groups themselves to organise and share lessons at higher levels does not appear to have been developed beyond a few pilots within the Rural Development programme. The only example given of networking among target groups above the community level was that of the CDC clusters, which were created by NSP. Management responded that no attempt had yet been made to facilitate similar associations for DPOs, SMCs, or

Health Shura. Facilitating networking among target groups would go a long way to enabling rights-holders to share experiences and collaboratively identify solutions to common problems that are faced by many communities in geographically disbursed locations.

The Team suggests that continuing to run BPHS/EPHS and NSP contracts in the future may prove to be counterproductive to SCA's effectiveness in achieving the synergy across its Strategic Objectives in the future. In contrast, SCA's focus on girls' education in isolated rural areas and the inclusion of CwD in public schools are examples of its potential to be effective in addressing human rights in a sustainable manner. In these cases, SCA has been able to take the time to understand how to address key concerns from the perspective of the communities. SCA effectiveness in advocacy has been greatest when it has engaged in dialogue with Government and other larger stakeholders, but such efforts have often not been commensurate with the extensive knowledge base that SCA possesses.

The current approach to sustainable rural livelihoods requires a clear understanding of the realities of market economics for the rural poor. This will be a critical factor in progressing towards the goal of "Economically and socially just rural communities". Similarly with community governance, SCA has seemingly not fully acknowledged that customary leaders still hold sway on most decisions that directly affect the human rights of men, women and children. Mother and child nutrition has been recognised as a serious problem by SCA. However, a synergistic approach involving all programmes is not yet evident.

The process of fully integrating planning and budgeting beginning in 2015, coupled with decentralization of planning decisions to outposted units, should go a long way to rectifying some of the complaints received from government regarding the lengthy and slow process required to make management decisions in the field. The Team does not anticipate any negative consequences from this measure, but a detailed review of the utilisation of resources should certainly be a part of any future evaluation.

4.3.3 Impact

SCA has long assumed that it achieved "impact" in rural areas primarily by addressing capacity gaps. However, by so doing, it has also been actively engaged in the removal and prevention of barriers to rights' fulfilment through the modification of attitudes and beliefs. The cases of girls' education, midwives, CwDs, CDCs and others attest to this. SCA's recognition that it needed to move away from Model Schools and in order to enhance its impact on the lives of the most disadvantaged by placing greater emphasis on the quality of teaching in community schools represents a meaningful lesson that is still being processed by the organisation as a whole.

4.3.4 Sustainability

The evaluation concludes that SCA's continued efforts at alignment with government programs enhances the chances for sustainable continuation and expansion of SCA efforts, irrespective of government's limited capacity. Similarly, the impact of SCA's

interventions in communities have been valuable in triggering, and sustaining, value shifts and cultural transitions at a community level that few had imagined were possible in rural Afghanistan. It is in the area of organised civil society development that SCA remains weak. This evaluation confirms that SCA mirrors the Afghan context to a great extent. In some ways, this has been an advantage, reflected in SCA's capacity to work in remote conflict-prone areas for over three decades. On the other hand, SCA's capacity to mirror the Afghan context may, particularly by those unaware of the context, be perceived as being overly conservative and often focused on delivering on task assignments rather than on more slowly building the capacity of rights-holders to undertake those tasks for themselves.

5 Recommendations

5.1 ON THE THEORY OF CHANGE

For SCA:

- By the mid-point in SP14, SCA should undertake a participatory process review involving a series of dialogues aimed at deepening understanding and ownership of its programme design by partners and target groups. The purpose of this exercise would be to initiate the process of building ownership among target groups of rights holders. Participatory M&E tools have been used in development for several decades¹⁰⁶. Core principles of Participatory M&E¹⁰⁷ are: primary stakeholders are active participants – not just sources of information; building capacity of local people to analyse, reflect and take action; joint learning of stakeholders at various levels; catalysing commitment to taking corrective actions.

For Sida:

- Help SCA to link with good examples of HRBA programming in Afghanistan, in the South and Central Asian regions and in other countries where Sida has successfully supported rights-based organisations, particularly those with Islamic cultures.

5.2 ON IMPROVING RESULTS

For SCA:

- SCA should carefully consider whether to continue to bid for BPHS, NSP and other government contracts in the future.
- SCA might consider child nutrition as an integrating results measure for its overall SP14.^{108 109}

¹⁰⁶ Friere, Paolo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic; 30th Anniversary edition (September 1, 2000); Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review. Estrella, M. And Gaventa, J. *IDS Working Paper 70*, 1998.

¹⁰⁷ <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTPCENG/0..contentMDK:20509352~menuPK:1278203~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:410306.00.html>

¹⁰⁸ The [Name protected] said he would help to link SCA to the President on this if they were interested.

¹⁰⁹ Mitchell, Jonathan. The Long-Term Association of Early Childhood Diarrhea with School Success: A Case Study from Pakistan. *Journal of Education for International Development* 2:2, 2006.

- The Team recommends associating with ILO/Afghanistan's multi-year research effort on agricultural value chains in Afghanistan. In addition, ILO is in the process of finalising an agreement with Sida/Stockholm to deepen this research. SCA needs to carefully assess whether its proposed direction for its RD programme matches the needs and interests of rural target groups. Local economic development must be seen as a fundamental component of any approach to improving human rights and gender equity.
- With regard to community governance, the Team recommends that SCA review the collected work of [Name protected]¹¹⁰ on customary governance in Afghanistan in order to more fully understand the political economy of governance at the community level.
- As a part of its overall IT upgrade, SCA should adopt a system-wide tool for collecting geo-coded data to support GIROA in better understanding the precise of nature issues that need to be addressed in specific locations. The effectiveness of the advocacy strategy undertaken by the RAD programme in Balkh should be carefully documented by the organisation and incorporated into its new organisation-wide approach to advocacy.

For Sida:

- Sida should assist SCA to more fully understand the elements of its Afghan strategy referring to economic growth through rural agricultural development and how this links to its rural development programme.
- Sida should assist GIROA to articulate their requests, particularly those of [Name protected], [Name protected] and [Name protected], for building local development information data-bases in a standardised manner to facilitate collaboration amongst donors and implementers, particularly those operating in thematic and geographic areas that overlap with SCA.
- It is critical that Sida conduct a brief follow up assessment in 2016 to assess the efficacy of the wide range of SCA change management tools initiated in 2014 and 2015.

5.3 ON CENTERING ON HRBA

For SCA:

- The conduct of a series of in-depth, site specific human rights situation analyses, including the situation of children and the consequences of the roles assigned to women and men would be an appropriate tool for deepening its understanding of local power dynamics.

¹¹⁰ [Name protected]

- In addition, SCA needs to explore how to engage with a more profound HRBA to programming. This would include an assessment of the implications of applying a HRBA to programming, when compared with the current scope (funding dedicated and locations) and modes of delivering services.
- The child rights assessment tool that was not fully utilised by the Team may be appropriate for SCA to use in the future in 3rd Party monitoring exercises. With adequate adaptation to the local context. SCA could use the tool in its work with communities to also ensure that children's views are taken into consideration in programming.
- In order to arrive at conclusions about what service delivery with a more robust human rights-based and gender mainstreaming approach would require from SCA a piloting of a HRBA "flagship" project in a carefully selected location should be considered where the relevant cross-cuttings units of KMO are fully involved in the process to learn and subsequently relevantly replicate.

For SCA Board/SG:

- SCA's preparation of a HRBA situation analysis and field pilots would need to be carefully followed and fully understood in Sweden by SCA members and the general public, particularly regarding its implications for future programming.

For Sida:

- Sida may assist in linking SCA with other Sida-supported organisations that have carried out detailed HRBA analyses and field pilots. Sida needs to undertake an assessment by 2016 targeted specifically on assessing SCA's movement towards HRBA.

5.4 ON GENDER EQUALITY

For SCA:

- SCA management needs to step up their commitment to women in the organisation and engage in concrete efforts by use of affirmative action. The FSA should be given a more formal role in advancing rights of women in the workplace.
- SCA needs to clearly formulate their vision for gender relations in Afghanistan and how they perceive that a human rights-based and gender mainstreaming approach within the Afghan Islamic context will be used to guide programming towards this end. The updated Human Rights and Equality strategy (due in 2015) will be a good opportunity to present the perceived pathways for SCA's contribution to gender equality.
- We strongly recommend that SCA management needs to ensure that HRBA and gender mainstreaming are understood as vital elements, rather than donor impositions, in progressing towards increased gender equality in its programming. Hence the recommendations for human rights above are equally relevant under this heading.

For SCA Board/SG:

- Greater pressure needs to be put on KMO to respond to concerns expressed by the female employees in Afghanistan. A set of steps to fully integrate women into SCA/Afghanistan organisational life should be agreed upon and externally monitored for compliance.

For Sida:

- Greater pressure needs to be put on SCA/Kabul to respond to concerns expressed by the female employees in Afghanistan. A set of steps to fully integrate women into SCA organisational life should be agreed upon and externally monitored for compliance.

5.5 ON BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY

For SCA:

- SCA needs to formulate advocacy strategies that build upon the knowledge and priorities of rights-holders. There are several processes that may help in this regard: work on implementing a design for citizen based information systems; design mechanisms that can facilitate closer dialogue and information sharing among community groups and networking at levels above the community; include local elected council structures in the SCA capacity building agenda.
- SCA should take recent experience with research on the RAD programme to encourage other academics to test its assumptions about the drivers of change.
- SCA needs to take a more outspoken role within the international community. In a country where most research points to how development has failed the people, SCA needs to come forward to share how it has been able to succeed.

For Sida:

- Swedish and other international academics should be encouraged to undertake independent research in collaboration with SCA, particularly with regard to girl's education, community schools, and midwifery.
- Facilitate greater opportunities for SCA to present its lessons at national, regional and international forums.
- Assist SCA to learn from the efforts in building a social movement in Bangladesh.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Jupp, Dee et al Measuring Empowerment? Ask Them: Insights for results-based management from the experience of a social movement in Bangladesh. Sida Studies in Evaluation, 2010

5.6 ON BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For SCA:

In order to become a more rights-based organisation which safeguards its current contextual relevance, while at the same time contributing to profound and resilient change in its operating environment, SCA needs to:

- Ensure that the ambitious PME-system also captures the perspectives of rights-holders in all stages of programming and that this is used to inform and adjust programming
- That organisational development also progresses to include aspects of content (HRBA) in addition to structures and “hard-ware” – within SCA, as well as in capacity development of CSOs and local authorities.
- That SCA expands its’ current network of partners and engages in more collaborative partnerships with various actors that can qualitatively contribute with their reach, experiences and knowledge for mutual learning that benefits SCA programmes and rights-holders at large.
- In particular, creating opportunities for DPOs and other potential partner organisations to undertake increasingly greater responsibilities within SCA programme implementation could also be emphasized more.
- In the future, when increasing the focus on the “how” (rights within and through education) there is a need to also invest in building the capacity of 3rd party monitors to investigate these aspects.

For Sida:

- Increasingly engage with SCA in discussions to define realistic objectives for increasing and improving their capacity development support, in particular to civil society, and how Sida can play a more facilitative role in this process.
- Sida should ensure that the next external evaluation TOR specify that quantitative analysis tools be used to assess the budget/objective alignment being initiated in 2015.

5.7 ON SUSTAINABILITY

For SCA:

- For the concept of sustainability to become a reality, SCA must adopt a long term approach, by creating space and capacity for adaptive programming¹¹² that empowers people to see the relevance of new concepts to their daily lives. Future programme development will require a re-orientation towards ensuring future agendas are owned by the target groups themselves. SCA must continue to remain relevant to the changing Afghan context through a careful study of the President's Manifesto (a translation of some summary points are presented in Annex 6), and closely follow government and donor deliberations on this.
- In the Team's view, SCA could benefit from building long-term collaborative partnerships with like-minded international actors¹¹³. The primary purpose of these partnerships would be to develop a joint approach for propagating reduced dependence on foreign assistance.
- The recent 2014 Asia Foundation Survey noted that 8% of respondents believed that communities/ people fund development. SCA can dig deeper into that data, which is all available on the TAF website, to examine who make up this 8%, what are their conditions, under what circumstances they said/ believed so, etc. This could help SCA to understand what changes in people's lives and in what direction can change an unsustainable dependency on external assistance (to include that from SCA) to a sustained inter-dependency of communities and public service delivery institutions.

For Sida:

- As SCA's primary source of support, Sida can augment SCA's partnership development efforts with like-minded international development organisations by promoting a drive that helps move the current nature of relationship between Afghans and their international partners from one that is characterised by dependence to one that is marked by mutual interdependence. A review of the UN HABITAT work with urban CDCs may be instructive
- Sida may wish to consider reducing its focus on sustainability, shifting instead to a focus on resilience¹¹⁴. The ongoing conflict, harsh and fluctuating climate,

¹¹² For more on the subject, Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1994) ; Ronald A. Heifetz, Marty Linsky and Alexander Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organisation and the World*, (Harvard Business Review Press: 2009) and Dean Williams, *Real Leadership: Helping People and Organisations Face their Toughest Challenges*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005).

¹¹³ GIZ and the Swiss Development Cooperation, with its associated Helvetas, could be two examples of international organizations with similar approach to work in Afghanistan. BRAC, as mentioned above, is another.

¹¹⁴ Stockholm Resilience Centre, *Applying Resilience Thinking: Seven Principles for Building Resilience in Socio-ecological Systems*, Stockholm University, 2014.

maldistribution of water, poor soils, lack of well-defined market chains are among the many constraints that rural families face on a daily basis. These natural limitations, and periodic calamities, are exacerbated by the never ending conflict. In the long run, helping these families to understand how to be prepared for the worst may prove to be a more useful approach than focusing on sustaining models of reform.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

2014-05-22

Terms of Reference

Organisational evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Information about Sida

The Swedish development cooperation constitutes a normative framework for all the Swedish support to developing countries, including development assistance given via Swedish CSOs such as the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. This framework emphasizes two perspectives for global development: the perspective of poor people on development and the rights perspective. The following four principles are to guide cooperation in order to apply the rights perspective: participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability.

According to current strategy 2012-2014, the overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is to enable people living in poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society.

1.2 Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) was established in the 1980s and has been active in the country for more than 30 years. It is a non-governmental organisation which in June 2013 became one of Sida's framework organisations. SCA is active in 17 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces and operates programmes in the field of health, education, rural livelihoods, community governance and rehabilitation of Afghans with disabilities.

For many years, the primary focus for SCA was to provide emergency aid with the aim to help rebuild Afghanistan after decades of war. During the last decade, this focus has gradually evolved into long-term development programmes, which in 2013 led to the adoption of a new strategic plan for the time period 2014-2017. This plan entails a renewed vision, mission and strategic means for SCA which include the rights perspective, a gender-focus and a long-term focus through service delivery, advocacy and capacity building. SCA is planning an organisational development review during April 2014 to develop their capacity to implement the new strategic plan.

Before the framework status was granted to SCA, Sida's CIVSAM-department commissioned an external organisational assessment of SCA through SIPU. This assessment criticised SCA for weaknesses within the organisation regarding their HR-, gender- and M&E work, their ability to conceptualise capacity building and the lack of a gender balanced team, especially regarding females in decision making positions.

In 2015 Sida is planning on entering a three year agreement with SCA. Prior to this agreement Sida's Afghanistan Unit will commission an external evaluation. The evaluation will review to what extent programme activities have contributed to sustainability, have built capacity among staff, beneficiaries and governmental institutions, have applied a rights perspective and have worked towards improved gender equality and improved rights for children and people with disabilities. Also, it is of Sida's interest to assess how SCA is continuing to work with these issues and to what extent the identified changes, outlines and plans from SCA's organisational development review in order to adjust to the new strategic plan are considered sufficient and sound, or if important aspects or perspectives have been left out.

2. Scope of assignment

2.1 General information

As a part of Sida's assessment and new agreement with SCA for 2015-2017 it has been decided that an organisational evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan shall be undertaken.

The evaluation will consist of the following:

1. A desk study - as a first step to compile and *critically* analyse the findings and recommendations from already existing evaluations (both external and internal), reviews, programme documents, strategic plans and reports from 2010 and onwards, including result matrixes.
2. An inception report - based on the desk study and these terms of reference, outlining the task and an initial assessment of relevant issues.
3. Field visits - as a complement to the desk study including interviews with relevant stakeholders. These interviews should include SCA staff in Kabul, Stockholm and programme provinces, representatives of national and provincial authorities, local communities, civil society partners, direct beneficiaries, Sida staff and Swedish Embassy staff
4. Findings and results from the desk study and the field visits should be synthesized in a final report focusing on the assessment of effectiveness and sustainability of the implementation of objectives and priorities within the previous strategic plan 2010-2013 and on the assessment of possible additional changes to be made within SCA's organisation in order to implement the new strategic plan 2014-2017 and thereby achieve planned results, promote sustainability and act as an actor of change. Possible recommendations to SCA regarding organisation and programme design should be included in the report.
5. A seminar should be held at Sida, outlining the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation to all stakeholders interested.

2.2 Purpose

These terms of reference describes the frame for an evaluation of SCA's ability to reach quality results over time, adjust to the new strategic plan and act as an actor of change. The overall purpose of the evaluation is therefore to assess to what extent SCA's changes and plans for organisational development in order to adjust to the new strategic plan are sufficient and sound. The purpose is also to assess to what extent SCA has contributed and is continuing to contribute to sustainability; to build capacity among staff, beneficiaries and governmental institutions and has applied and applies a rights perspective. Also, the purpose of the evaluation is to assess to what extent SCA has worked and is working towards improved rights for children and people with disabilities and to assess to what extent SCA has worked and is working towards improved gender equality. The evaluation will have a critical and learning approach. **The intended direct users of the evaluation are Sida's Unit for Afghanistan and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Other stakeholders selected are the Swedish Embassy in Kabul and Sida's Unit for Civil Society (CIVSAM).** The evaluation is expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in the assessment of SCA before entering into the new agreement for 2015-2017. **The evaluation is also intended to provide SCA with additional recommendations for its future work.**

For above mentioned purposes, the assessment will (i) document experience of SCA's programme activities in Afghanistan; (ii) discuss and define to what extent programme activities during the prior agreement have contributed to sustainability, have built capacity among staff, beneficiaries and governmental institutions and have applied a rights perspective (iii) discuss and define how and to what extent SCA during the current agreement is contributing to sustainability, to build capacity among staff, beneficiaries and governmental institutions, focuses on advocacy, applies a rights perspective and is working towards improved rights for children and people with disabilities (iv) discuss and define to what extent SCA has worked and is working towards improved gender equality (v) discuss and define to what extent SCA's identified and planned organisational changes - in order to adjust to the new strategic plan - are sufficient and sound, or if important aspects or perspectives have been left out (vi) summarize lessons learned and provide additional recommendations for programme design and management going forward.

2.3 Stakeholder involvement

This evaluation is commissioned by Sida's Unit for Afghanistan and the terms of reference has been generated in consultation with the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and the Swedish Embassy in Kabul. An elaborative work plan shall be developed by the evaluating team including necessary interaction with relevant stakeholders.

The evaluators should, during the course of their work, carry out a sufficient number of interviews and interaction with relevant stakeholders such as Sida officers and thematic experts, SCA staff and management functions, representatives of national authorities such as ministries, representatives of local authorities at district and provincial level, representatives of local communities, civil society partners as well as a representative sample of beneficiaries randomly selected.

Interviews shall be conducted with men, women and youth. The evaluating team will strive to create equal opportunities for men, women and youth to participate in interviews.

2.4 Evaluation questions

The main evaluation questions should be the following:

1. To what extent have programme activities during the prior agreement 2010-2013 contributed to sustainability, built capacity among staff, beneficiaries and governmental institutions, applied a rights perspective and worked towards improved gender equality and rights for children and people with disabilities?
2. What is SCA's theory of change and how does it relate to the current Swedish strategy for Afghanistan and its targets? Is the theory of change maintainable and relevant with regards to the context?
3. How does SCA work with advocacy contribution to improve the living conditions for their target groups (women, children, people with disabilities and people in rural communities)? What capacity and relative advantages does the organisation have to improve and strengthen their advocacy work?
4. In what ways have SCA's interventions proved to be sustainable? How does SCA work to build capacity among local staff, beneficiaries and governmental institutions? What abilities and relative advantages does the organisation have to develop and strengthen their capacity building efforts?
5. How does SCA implement the rights perspective based on the four principles *participation, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability*?
6. To what extent does SCA work to improve gender equality in terms of changing discriminating attitudes due to patriarchal structures in the Afghan society? To what extent are women, girls, men and boys included as both beneficiaries, actors of change and decision makers? To what extent is SCA's organisation and programmes gender mainstreamed?
To what extent is SCA's identified and planned organisational changes in order to adjust to the new strategic plan sufficient and sound? Have important aspects or perspectives been left out?

Throughout the evaluation and in the report, special attention shall be given to how gender and conflict sensitivity has been integrated in planning, implementation and reporting. Unintended effects, such as targeting errors, should also be identified.

2.5 Recommendations and lessons

The evaluation is primarily expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in Sida's assessment of SCA's before entering into the new agreement for 2015-2017. Also conclusions and recommendations of use for SCA shall be provided based on the evaluation questions.

Recommendations given on the basis of findings in this review should focus on key ways and opportunities of achieving maximum outcomes given comparative advantages and potential of the programme.

Clear references to related underpinnings, observations, and applicable global, regional and local best practice should be given for each recommendation.

2.6 Methodology and Implementation

The budget for the evaluation is maximum SEK 800 000.

The appropriate methodology and methods to be used in the execution of the evaluation will be worked out in detail during the inception phase of the evaluation by the evaluation team and be documented in an inception report which has to be approved by Sida.

The inception report shall include:

- A model for analysis of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan's theory of change,
- Further elaboration of evaluation questions and an overall evaluation design showing how evaluation questions will be answered,
- An account of baseline data identified,
- A basic analysis of stakeholders, influencing and/or affected by SCAs programmes directly or indirectly,
- An account of how stakeholders will participate in the evaluation (who, how, when, why),
- Possible key issues to be further looked into in the evaluation,
- Possible delimitations to be agreed upon with Sida and SCA,
- A detailed work plan including a time schedule agreed upon by Sida and SCA
- A budget.

During the field visit the consultant has to give relevant feedback to and discuss the initial observations/findings with SCA. Before leaving Afghanistan the consultants shall carry out a debriefing with SCAs office in Kabul and the Swedish embassy.

2.7 Reporting and documentation

Upon signing of the contract with the consultant, time and budget for the evaluation will be approved by Sida.

The evaluation team shall present an inception report to Sida and SCA for discussion no later than 7-10 days after the evaluation process is initiated. SCA and Sida will have the opportunity to comment on the inception report and these comments shall be taken into account by the consultant. Comments are to be sent to the evaluating team no more than one week after the inception report is received. The inception report will serve as a guiding document for the rest of the evaluation.

A draft report should be delivered to Sida and SCA three weeks before deadline for the final report. Stakeholder feedback should be collected during the succeeding ten days. By the time a final report is submitted, one day of work from the lead consultant should remain, to be used for any necessary post deadline revisions or for a half day review-based workshop held for relevant stakeholders.

The report must include a presentation of the process in drawing up the evaluation design and choosing methodology. It shall also list all contributors to the evaluation (excepting those that have opted for anonymity). An over-all de-briefing of findings to date is expected to be delivered at the Swedish embassy and SCA office in Kabul at the end of the in-field part of the evaluation. Related inputs from Sida and Embassy staff, as well as SCA representatives participating in this review, should be collected.

The final report must be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. When the final report has been submitted the consultants will present the report at a seminar at Sida for all stakeholders interested. The final report can also be presented at a seminar at the Swedish Embassy in Kabul.

The evaluation report shall be written in English with the executive summary and recommendations translated into Dari and Pashtu. The format and outline of the report shall therefore follow, as closely as is feasible, the guidelines in Sida Evaluation Manual – a Standardised Format. Subject to decision by Sida, the report might be published in the series *Sida Evaluation*.

The review reports should adhere to the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results-Based Management, and the format should correspond to the benchmark structure presented in Sida's Evaluation Manual Annex B.

The final report should at the latest be presented the 30st of September and not exceed 50 pages excluding annexes.

2.8 Schedule

The evaluation will be undertaken during maximum seven weeks from the 1st of July until the 30st of September 2014. Minimum two weeks of the evaluation period should be spent in Afghanistan for interviews and field visits.

The inception report should be presented to Sida and SCA no later than 7-10 days after the evaluation is initiated. Sida and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan will have the opportunity to comment on the inception report within one week. The inception report must include a detailed work plan and time schedule agreed upon by Sida and SCA.

The draft report shall be submitted to Sida and SCA electronically no later than two weeks before deadline. Sida and SCA will comment the draft report within seven working days, after which the consultant shall prepare the *final report* within seven working days.

2.9 Profile of the Supplier and requirements for personnel

The evaluation team should be constructed to have a solid set of qualifications of Monitoring and Evaluation, gender and UNSCR 1325, children's rights, human rights for people with disabilities, democratic governance, human rights, civil society as well as a good understanding of the Afghan context and development in conflict and post conflict environments.

The Consultant should use a participatory approach and have a gender balanced team. In order to carry out separate interviews with women, at least one of the female team members must be Afghan and/ or fluent in Dari or Pashtu. The consultant team should have exhibited skills in interviewing and analysing qualitative data gathered through interviews.

Required competences of the team members are:

- I. Academic degrees in Development Studies, Social science and/or Political science
- II. Vast experience in working and/or evaluating within the sector of human rights, gender equality, children's rights, rights for people with disabilities, democratic governance or civil society, preferably in conflict and post-conflict countries.
- III. Vast experience in working and/or evaluating within the sector of organisational development
- IV. Minimum 5 years of experience of evaluation of international development work, particularly in human rights based areas
- V. All team members must be fully professionally proficient in English
- VI. Good understanding of the Afghan context
- VII. At least one of the female team members must be a local consultant and/ or fluent in Dari or Pashtu.

The Team Leader should have thorough experience of Swedish Development Cooperation including civil society issues, gender issues and documented experience of conducting evaluations.

Annex 2 – Inception Report

As a separate document, finalised 2014-09-24.

Annex 3 – Evaluation Matrix

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan Evaluation Matrix 2014			
1 Evaluation Focus: Theory of Change			
DAC Criteria: Relevance			
Evaluation Question What is SCA's Theory of Change? How does it relate to the current Swedish strategy for Afghanistan and its targets? Is the Theory of Change relevant with regards to the context?			
Second Level Questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
Is a well-articulated ToC evident in SCA documentation? How was it developed?	Logic models for projects/programmes show explicit horizontal and vertical links Programme Theory exists for SCA as a whole	Textual analysis Semi-structured interviews PSOAW Workshops Outcome Results Tool	SCA Programme documents Board, staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
To which specific aspects of SIDA global and Afghan strategies do SCA goals fit? Are there gaps?	Specific links in SCA documentation with relevant plans and policies	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA Programme documents SIDA plans, strategies and policies GIROA NPPs Board, staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
Is and if so how is the ToC, monitored developed and adapted in relation to changing conditions	TOC has been modified to match changing conditions	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops Outcome Results Tool	SCA Programme documents Board, staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
What is the level of synergy among the different programmes/projects operating in a specific geographic area?	Level of collaboration among SCA programmes operating in the same geographic area Synergy in choice of target groups	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops Outcome Results Tool	SCA Programme documents Board, staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
Are the objectives of the programme clear, realistic and commonly understood by the stakeholders	Evidence of TOC applied in design, implementation and monitoring of programme interventions	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	Programme documents Interviews Focused Group Discussions

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

In what way are partners and beneficiaries involved in the design of the TOC?	Inclusiveness of TOC design process	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops PME Workshops	Programme documents Interviews Focused Group Discussions
In what way is the SCA Board involved in the design of TOC	Board advice and consent on TOC formulation	Textual analysis Semi-structured interviews	SCA Board members SCA Board minutes
In what way has Sida influence the design of TOC?	Sida advice and consent on TOC formulation	Textual analysis Semi-structured interviews	Sida staff Sida SP approval minutes
2 Evaluation Focus: Effective and efficient delivery of results and adding value			
DAC Criteria: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact			
Evaluation Question: What was the nature of results achieved during 2010-2013?			
Has collaborating with the Government of Afghanistan (GIROA) and other partners enhanced the quality and the sustainability of results achieved?			
Second Level Questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
What are the key products delivered by RAD, RD, Health, Education, PLWD, LG, CSO programmes	SCA programme articulation by project is relevant and complete	Prepare list of all SCA projects by programme matching with plans	SCALA
Where are these delivered?	Locations of all SCA projects	Map SCA project locations by village matching with plans	SCALA
Is the justification of the programme goals realistic	SMART objectives in place and achieved	Review sample selection of projects from each programme PME Workshops	SCA Programme documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
Do SCA reports accurately reflect causal links to stated outcome at project, programme and organisation levels?	Contributory causal linkages are clear and meaningful	Qualitative Comparative Analysis Comparative Case Studies	SCA Programme documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observation
How has Results-based Management been implemented by SCA?	RBA policy implementation quality	Text analysis Interview validation PSOAW Workshops	Results Frameworks Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
In what way are partners and beneficiaries involved in the design of the projects, setting targets to be achieved and controlling the pace of project implementation?	Inclusiveness of project design and results framework process	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops PME Workshops	Programme documents Interviews Focused Group Discussions
What are the time and cost parameters? Are these within agreed limits?	Project implementation parameters are within agreed limits	Budget analysis PSOAW Workshops	SCALA SCA Results Framework
Has collaborating with GIROA enhanced the level of results achieved?	Transaction costs of government partnered projects	Budget analysis PME Workshops	SCALA staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

			views
What is the level of beneficiary investment in SCA initiatives?	Percentage of beneficiary financial involvement in SCA project costs	Budget analysis PME Workshops PSOAW Workshops	SCALA staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field data collection
How are beneficiaries involved in monitoring and evaluating SCA interventions?	Status and utility of M&E system	Text analysis Semi-structured interviews PSOAW workshops PME workshops	M&E system staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field data collection
3 Evaluation Focus: Rights Based Approach			
DAC Criteria: Participation and Inclusion			
Evaluation Questions: How does SCA implement the rights perspective based on the four principles participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability? How has SCA applied a rights perspective and worked towards improved rights for children and people with disabilities?			
Second Level Questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
What is the SCA level of understanding of key human rights issues in Afghanistan	Conduct of baseline analysis of human rights issues in 2013	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA Programme documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
To what extent do the internal dynamics of SCA reflect that of an open, transparent accountable organisation?	Overall policies, rights mainstreaming practice, targeted actions, inclusive involvement	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How is HRBA applied in SCA programmes?	Evidence of consistent utilisation of RBA in project implementation	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Board, Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How has SCA fully involved critical stakeholder in programme design and implementation?	Evidence of inclusion, participation, replication, diffusion, innovation, associational governance	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
In what way are customary duty-bearers engaged in SCA programmes?	Evidence of transparency, accountability, equality, inclusion	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How does SCA promote child rights in programming?	Evidence of specific focus on child rights in relevant projects	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

		PME Workshops	views Field observations
How does SCA promote disability rights in programming?	Evidence of specific focus on child rights in relevant projects	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
4 Evaluation Focus: Gender			
DAC Criteria: Participation and Inclusion			
To what extent does SCA work to improve gender equality in terms of changing discriminating attitudes due to patriarchal structures in the Afghan society?			
To what extent are women, girls, men and boys included as both beneficiaries, actors of change and decision makers?			
To what extent is SCA's organisation and programmes gender mainstreamed?			
Second Level Questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
Were baseline analyses of situation of women and girls conducted in relation to SCA programmes?	Baseline analysis incorporated into 2010 and 2014 Strategic Plans	Textual analysis	SCA documentation
To what extent do SCA Board, staff, contractors, beneficiaries under the key issues pertaining to gender inequality in Afghanistan?	Clarity of understanding	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
To what extent do the internal dynamics of SCS reflect that of a gender sensitive organisation?	Policies and procedures are compliant with international standards	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Are SCA's problem formulations and programme designs gender sensitive? Are targets gender disaggregated?	Evidence of gender sensitivity in SP 2010 and 2014	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Are gender equality objectives monitored?	Gender equality objectives achievement by project/programme	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Which are the key actors expected to promote gender equity within SCA projects?	Clear identification of roles played in gender mainstreaming in individual projects	Semi-structured Interviews PME Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How is the gender perspective reflected in SCA partner relations?	Requirement for partners to adhere to international national gender	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, bene-

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

	equality standards	PME Workshops	Beneficiary views Field observations
5 Evaluation Focus: Advocacy			
DAC Criteria: Participation and Inclusion			
Evaluation Questions: How does SCA work with advocacy contributions to improve the living conditions for their target groups (women, children, people with disabilities and people in rural communities)? What capacity and relative advantages does the organisation have to improve and strengthen their advocacy work?			
Second Level Questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
What are the main advocacy strategies of SCA in Sweden/Europe?	Evidence of effectiveness of advocacy strategies	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Board, staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
What are the main advocacy strategies of SCA in Afghanistan?	Evidence of effectiveness of advocacy strategies	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
To what extent have the perspective of direct beneficiaries been taken into consideration in design of advocacy tools	Advocacy tools designed to address key beneficiary needs	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Does SCA make use of available complaint mechanisms, legal instruments for monitoring performance and accountability?	Link between SCA advocacy strategies/practices and national grievance mechanisms	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Does SCA coordinate its advocacy work with other actors? If so, how?	Evidence of advocacy coordination with other actors	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
What capacity skills do SCA staff have for their own advocacy work or to promote this work with others/	Key advocacy skills present in SCA staff	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSAOW Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
What is the degree of influence of SCA advocacy on donor and GIROA policies, plans and operations?	Evidence of SCA influence	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA policies, procedures Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
6 Evaluation Focus: Organisational Development			
DAC Criteria: Effectiveness, Efficiency			
Evaluation Questions: These are not really efficiency questions and nor is efficiency asked for in the ToR			

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

To what extent is SCA's identified and planned organisational changes sufficient and sound in order to adjust to the new strategic plan? Have important aspects or perspectives been left out? What is the SCA approach to building capacity of staff?			
Second Level questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
What is the SCA strategy for internal and external Organisational Development?	Baseline assessment of coherence of SCA organisation model as of 2013 Situation analysis of SCA partner OD and proposed remedies	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
What has been the impact organisational development interventions undertaken by SCA in the past three years?	Improvements in organisational efficiency with respect to: Implementation within planned timelines Prompt resolution of implementation problems Degree of delineation and complementarities Quality of coordination functions Level of capacity in management and implementation Creation of synergies among programmes Level of diversity of opinion and inclusion in decision making	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How has OD been reflected in the 2010 and 2014 SP?	Organisational Development presentations are clear and implementable	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Are all SCA units staffed to capacity and consistent with requirements of SP and TOC	Staff and resource ratio to SP requirements	Staff Analysis	Staff, views
What is the percentage increase in women at a decision making level in SCA over the past 3 years?	Number of women in decision making positions	Staff analysis	Staff, views
Does the OD strategy include processes of increased ownership or co-creation of SCA supported interventions by beneficiaries and partners?	Participatory design and implementation of SCA projects	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Does the OD strategy include the development of accountability mechanisms within SCA and in relation to rights-holders?	Evidence of downward accountability mechanisms	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
What is SCA's operational definition of civil society?	Definition exists or can be formulated	PSOAW Workshops interviews	Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
How are the OD strategies of partners assessed?	Partner selection mechanisms include OD assessment	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Inter-	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant,

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

		views PSOAW Workshops	beneficiary views Field observations
How does the relationship with SCA influence the OD strategies of contractor organisations?	Oversight mechanisms for ethical behaviour of contractors	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Are baseline assessments sufficiently detailed to be able to track change partner capacity?	Baseline assessment oriented towards factors influencing partner capacity	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views
7 Evaluation Focus: Sustainability			
DAC criteria: Sustainability			
Evaluation Questions:			
To what extent have programme activities during the prior agreement 2010-2013 contributed to sustainability?			
In what ways have SCA's interventions focused on building capacity of beneficiaries and government agencies in order to enhance sustainability of outcomes?			
Second level questions	Indicator	Methods	Sources
How are partners supported to take ownership of projects and build the capacity to sustain outcomes?	SCA policies and practices oriented towards partner capacity to sustain	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
In what way are partners/beneficiaries motivated to take greater control over design and implementation of SCA initiated interventions?	Evidence of successful independent operation post-SCA	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Is there any record of increased organisational stability of partners?	Evidence of improved system for internal and financial control, project and staff management, monitoring mechanisms?	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
What are the formal SCA project exit strategies formulated and implemented?	Existence of exit strategies and level of execution Level of sustainability of the quality of project output after SCA withdrawal	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How are partners involved in exit strategies?	Degree of stakeholder involvement in exit strategy Level of influence of programme on partner policies and practices Level of commitment to same purpose	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations

ANNEX 3 – EVALUATION MATRIX

What is the Government's level of ownership and capacity to sustain SCA initiatives?	Level of understanding of common purpose Level of financial capacity to maintain or replicate SCA initiatives	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
What is the type/level of coordination with other partners?	Level of understanding of common purpose Degree of coherence of programme approaches and implementation tools	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Does SCA support partners to build alliances with other actors?	Creation of networks independent of SCA	Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews PSOAW Workshops	SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
How has the shift to Framework status with Sida affected the design and implementation parameters of SCA programme approach and content?	Budget structure in 2013 vs 2014	Budget Analysis Textual Analysis Semi-structured Interviews	SCALA SCA documents Staff, partner, consultant, beneficiary views Field observations
Is the Theory of Change maintainable?	Combination of OD, CD, HRBA strategies build resilience of beneficiaries and capacity of partners to deliver with reduced SCA involvement	Outcomes Reporting Tool	ALL field and desk sources

Annex 4 – Key Informants Interviewed

Interviews in Sweden	
Peder Jonsson,	SCA Board Chair
Anna-Karin Johansson	SCA Secretary General
Magnus Carlquist,	Head of Afghanistan Unit Sida
Birgitta Jansson	Senior Program Manager – Afghanistan Sida
Anders Fänge	SCA Board member
Hans Linde	SCA Board member
Maria Kempe	Project Support Manager Forum Syd,
Stefan Nilsson	Programme manager Forum Syd
Kajsa Johansson	Former SCA CSU Coordinator
Begoña Birath Barrientos	Sida HQ, former Sida officer in Afghanistan
Anders Rosen (via email)	Information Coordinator
Key Informants International	
Andreas Steffanson (via Skype)	Former Country Director, SCA
Bill Sterland (via skype)	Former SCA PME Coordinator
[Name protected]	Religion and Peacemaking Officer USIP USA
Key Informants Sida Kabul	
Ulrika Josefsson	Counsellor/Head of Development Cooperation
Lotta Westerberg	Second Secretary (Development)
[Name protected]	National Programme Officer
Key informants in SCA Kabul	
Dimitrije Todorovic	Country Director
[Name protected]	Administrative Director
Jorgen Holmstron	Program Implementation Director
[Name protected]	Policy and Quality Assurance Director
[Name protected]	Environmental Officer
[Name protected]	IT Manager
[Name protected]	Administration Manager
[Name protected]	Procurement and Supply Manager
[Name protected]	Finance Manager
[Name protected]	Senior Information Officer
[Name protected]	Internal Audit Manager
[Name protected]	Head of Field Administration Unit
[Name protected](via email)	Planning and M&E Coordinator
[Name protected]	Human Rights and Gender Coordinator
Ross Duncan	M&E Reporting Officer

[Name protected]	Deputy HR&G Coordinator
Alessandra de Guio	Capacity Development Advisor
Annika Carlsson	Civil Society Coordinator
[Name protected]	Deputy Director Program Implementation
[Name protected]	Head of Rural Development Programme
[Name protected]	Head of RAD Programme
[Name protected]	Head of Education Programme
[Name protected]	Head of Health Program
[Name protected]	Civil Society Senior Trainer
[Name protected]	Deputy Head of Education
[Name protected]	Deputy Coordinator for M&E
[Name protected]	Programme Implementation Coordinator
Key Government Informants Kabul	
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Brigitta Bode	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
External Key Informants Kabul	
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Topi Torronen,	Embassy of Finland
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Malin Bogren	UNFPA
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Chona Echavez	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Key Informants in SCA Mazar	
[Name protected]	SCA Office Administrator

[Name protected]	SCA Community Based Rehabilitation Officer
[Name protected]	SCA Finance Manager
[Name protected]	SCA RAD Project Manager
[Name protected]	SCA Senior M&E Officer
[Name protected]	SCA Education Project Manager
[Name protected]	SCA Chief Engineer
[Name protected]	SCA Northern Rural Bridging Project Manger
[Name protected]	Rural Development Consultant
[Name protected]	Physical Therapy Center Coordinator
[Name protected]	Child Development & Rehabilitation Center
[Name protected]	SCA Field supervisor.
[Name protected]	SCA Field supervisor.
[Name protected]	SCA/CBR Worker.
[Name protected]	SCA CBR Worker.
[Name protected]	SCA CBR Worker
[Name protected]	SCA CBR Worker
External Key Informants Mazar	
[Name protected]	IOM
Florian Smimans,	BMZ
[Name protected]	BMZ
[Name protected]	UNICEF
[Name protected]	UNDP/ [Name protected]
[Name protected]	UNDP
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Dehdadi [Name protected] Members (Female)	
[Name protected]	Head of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Clark
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Cashier
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member

[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
Dehdadi [Name protected] Members (Male)	
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Head
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Head
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Head
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Head
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Member
[Name protected]	[Name protected] Cashier
[Name protected] Members Balkh	
[Name protected]	Head
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Secretary
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Secretary
[Name protected]	Secretary
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Secretary
[Name protected]	Head
[Name protected]	Secretary
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Member
[Name protected]	Head
[Name protected]	Secretary
Key Informants in Balkh Government	
Key Informants in Balkh Government	
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]

[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
Key Informants Samangan	
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	Representative [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Director of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Representative of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Representative of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Director of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Representative of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Representative of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	Volunteer worker of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Deputy cashier [Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	Aybak SCA -NRP team leader
[Name protected]	Finance officer- SCA Aybak
[Name protected]	Social Organiser-SCA Aybak
[Name protected]	Administrative officer(HR+Security)
[Name protected]	Health unit project manager-Aybak SCA
Key Informants Laghman	
[Name protected]	Deputy Project Manager)
[Name protected]	field supervisor of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
100+ Students	[Name protected]
Key Informants Nangarhar	
[Name protected]	Office Administrator/HRM
[Name protected]	(Education Project Manager)
[Name protected]	Community Mobilisation Officer

[Name protected]	Senior Physiotherapy Supervisor
[Name protected]	Female physiotherapy supervisor
[Name protected]	Senior physiotherapist
[Name protected]	Finance Controller
[Name protected]	School Consultant
[Name protected]	Director of A[Name protected]
[Name protected]	Director of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Member of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	School Consultant and Head of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	UNDC National Survey Coordinator
	Members of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Head of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Teachers of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Head of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	Members of [Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]
[Name protected]	[Name protected]

Annex 5 – Key Documents Reviewed

SCA Documents

AAPT Capacity Assessment Report

Administration Manual

Ahmad, Javed, Mid-term Review of mentorship project, December 2011

Allardice, Beth Swedish Committee for Afghanistan – Report on the Evaluation of Model Schools, 2012

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Civil Society Unit Context Analysis

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Devlin, Lawrence, [Name protected], [Name protected]. Conflict Analysis of SCA Activities in Afghanistan, PTRO, July 2011.

Field Guide for Assessing Capacity Needs and Planning

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Hayes, Julia. Integration and participation of children, youth and young adults with disabilities in society through education and skills training, Final Evaluation Report, June 2012

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Williams, Dean. *Real Leadership: Helping People and Organisations Face their Toughest Challenges*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005)

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Annex 6 - The President's Manifesto for Change

President Mohammed Ashraf Ghani's Manifesto¹¹⁵ offers the broad framework and is most likely going to be the basis for the new government's orientation on development. Some areas of emphasis are given below:

On health, the Manifesto focuses on women's health, statistical research to provide baseline data, and treats health sector initiatives not only in terms of services but a drive aimed at cultural shift, comprising of six major areas of intervention, including prevention through vaccination programs, strengthening midwifery, public awareness, access to clean drinking water and nutrition and environmental protection.

On education the emphasis is to be on women's access to education and on context based (rural vs. urban) vocational training for both men and women.

In Rural development, technical knowledge (quality), people's understanding of their context (legitimacy) and political needs (political will to support) will determine the nature of work, in which people's representation through elected District Councils at the district level and CDCs at the village level will play a key role in meeting the deadline of 5 years to create income and production sources at villages across the country and help villages begin contributing to the national budget and revenue generation machinery.

Women empowerment, it propagates, begins with changing how we view women: as humans in their own right and not as relations of men. It prioritises women's security as a critical element of women empowerment, underlines safeguards against harassment and discrimination at the workplace through zero tolerance policies, and gender sensitive budgeting nationwide. Highlighting the urgent need for gender inclusive economic development, the Manifesto underlines existing avenues for women's enhanced earning capacity, through investment in and focus on areas such as the protection of women's right to own family property/ inheritance in accordance with law, facilitating rural women's access to markets, investment in garment manufacturing to offer employment opportunities in rural areas in particular to women and also strengthen self-sufficient garment production, jewellery production and precious

¹¹⁵ The following points are from an informal translation done by Afghan members of the Evaluation Team of the Dari version of the President's Election Campaign Manifesto found on the internet.

stone carving industry, production of artificial limbs and strengthening the nursing and midwifery sectors as critical contributors to lowering maternal mortality rates and as sources of employment for women.

On active engagement of communities in decision-making through participatory governance, the Manifesto underlines the need to strengthen constitutional channels of people’s representation in local governance by holding DC elections alongside Parliamentary elections in 2015 and developing and finalising the Law on access to information as protected by Article 50 of the Afghan Constitution.



Organisational Evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

This evaluation of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) covered the period 2010-2014, focusing on its capacity to apply a human rights-based approach to development. The evaluation determined that the substantial changes that SCA continues to make in its structure and processes have enhanced its ability to promote sustainable development and build the capacity of its staff, target groups and government partners. SCA's work has improved the rights of rural children, particularly girls and persons with disabilities, and created an acceptable space for rural women in the work arena, yet the organisation continues to struggle with its own internal gender dynamics. The report recommends that SCA integrate market dynamics in its rural development programmes, ensure that children's views are taken into consideration, mainstream gender sensitive approaches throughout its organization, foster interdependent relations among communities and public service delivery institutions and seek greater opportunities to present its lessons learned.

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