

# REPORT

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017 - 2020



# SWISSCONTACT

## SWISS FOUNDATION FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

We are a leading partner organisation for the implementation of international development projects. Founded in 1959 and registered under Swiss law, we are an independent non-profit organisation. We are politically and denominationally neutral.

### MISSION

We promote inclusive economic, social and ecological development to make an effective contribution towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies. With this objective in mind, we offer the chance to economically and socially disadvantaged people to improve their lives on their own initiative.

### WHAT WE DO

- We strengthen the competencies of people, improving their employability.
- We increase the competitiveness of enterprises, growing their business.
- We foster social and economic systems, promoting inclusive development.

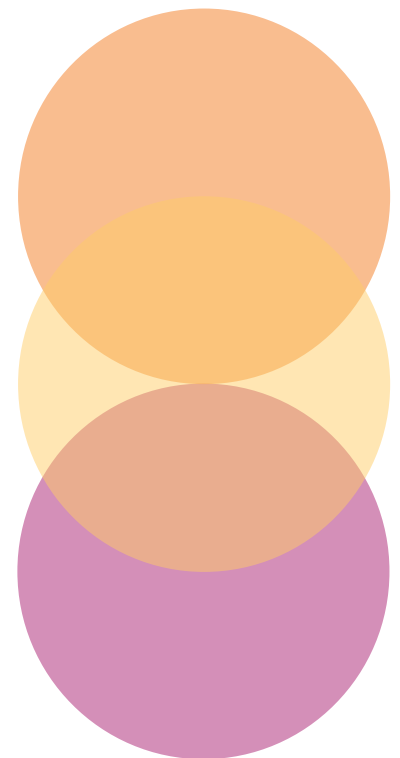
### WHAT WE OFFER

- Project Implementation
- Advisory Services
- Training
- Applied Research

PEOPLE

ENTERPRISES

ECONOMY



The projects constitute a part of Swisscontact's Development Programme. The Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) will only contribute financially if the project costs are not completely covered by other partner financing. The SDC covered between 40% and 50% of the costs of the entire Development Programme (2017 - 2020).

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## LONG LASTING PARTNERSHIPS CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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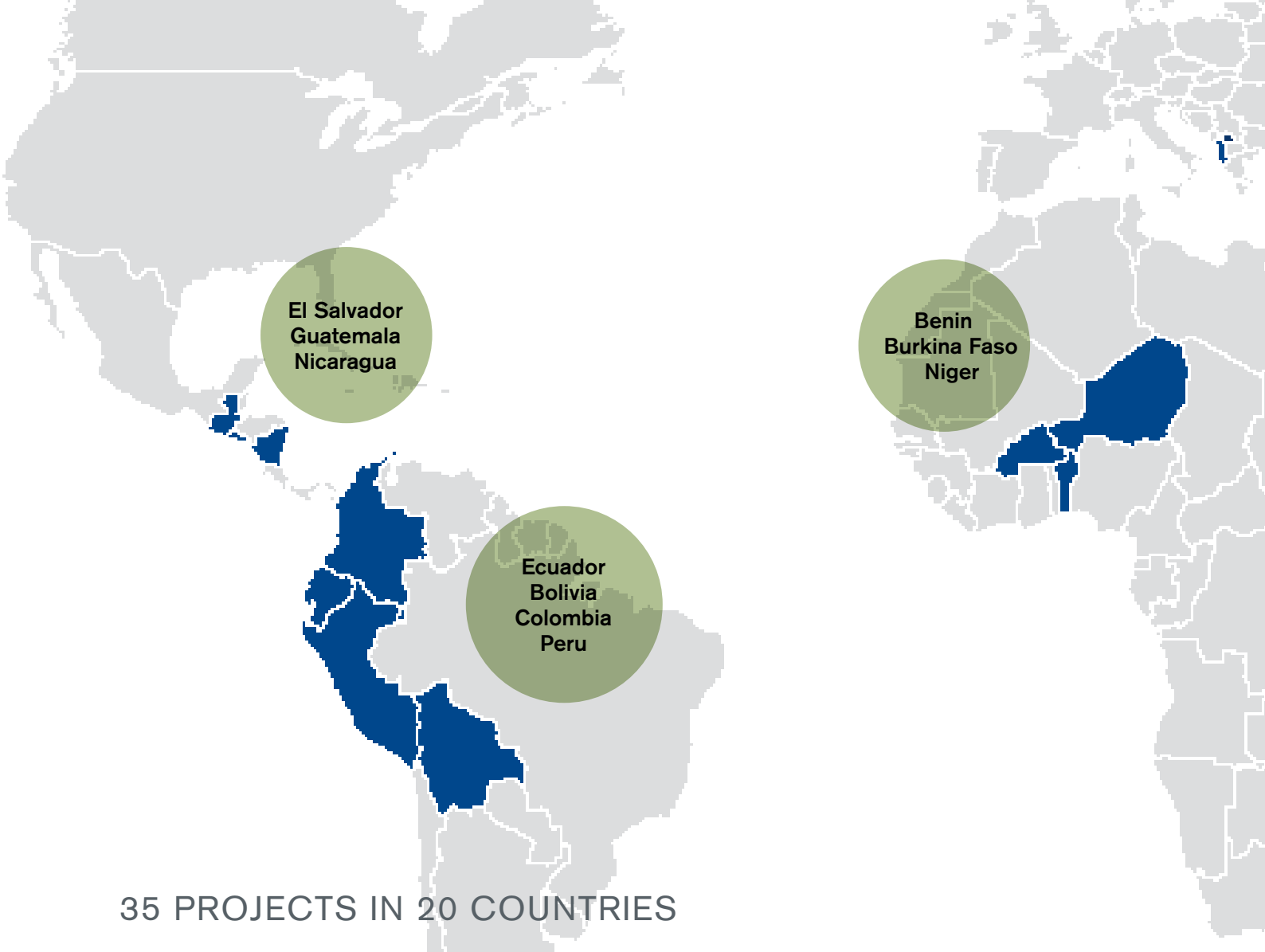
ELIANE HERRMANN  
Head of Development Programme

Our Development Programme is the centrepiece of Swisscontact. It encompasses about 27 projects in more than 20 countries (with the number of projects and countries changing between 2017 and 2020). For me it is a great honour to be part of this exciting programme, where we test new ideas and further develop existing innovations that have been proven effective over time.

Despite the significant challenges caused by COVID-19 in the last year of the four-year period 2017-2020, the results of the Development Programme are highly satisfactory, and we have reached or even exceeded nearly all targets. I am very proud of our achievements and the great effort of our project teams. The programme's objective gained relevance considering the intensified challenges of the partners and target groups. The slogan «Leave No One Behind» is even more relevant now than ever before, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is not only taking lives ruthlessly across the globe, but also hitting the economy hard, especially in developing countries, leaving the people jobless and without an income. Our approach is based on the conviction that, if provided with a conducive environment, people have the innate ability and willingness to free themselves from poverty. The objective is to improve their lives through their own initiative by inducing ownership interests. The Development Programme embraces the UN's Agenda 2030. The 17 SDGs and, particularly, the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 underline the fact that global social and economic challenges, such as migration, fragility and security - to name a few - need to be addressed by tackling their root causes.

Increasing consumerism, the (unequal) use and distribution of resources, pressure on the environment, climate change, growing economic disparities, social volatility, political fragility and (youth) unemployment are interrelated challenges of an increasingly unpredictable globalised world. Swisscontact supports developing and emerging countries in their efforts to implement Agenda 2030. Pro-poor growth requires the productive integration of all segments of society – be it as producers, workers and consumers – respecting decent and sustainable working and production conditions. The core of our work is the empowerment of people and local actors to develop capabilities and networks to overcome access barriers. Based on this approach, the Development Programme contributes directly to sustainable development by creating opportunities for people through job creation, income generation and productive employment. On a wider scale, this enables us to build sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

We link Swiss and international actors from the public and private sector, as well as academia. In this way, the programme supports cross-sectoral approaches and cooperation. Our Development Programme is co-financed by several donors and receives a contribution of the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). I would like to thank all our donors for their continuous support in the past four years and I am looking forward to our collaboration in the future.



### **ALBANIA**

Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship, 2017-2020

### **BANGLADESH**

Action Research on Energy Efficiency, 2017-2018

Sarathi, 2018-2020

Astha, 2019-2022

Uttoron, 2019-2022

Shujola, 2018-2020

### **BENIN**

Capacity building for health workers (2010-) 2017-2018

Dual vocational education and training in the crafts sector (2013-) 2017 - 2019

Menuiserie Alu, 2017-2020

### **BOLIVIA**

Ecovecindarios, 2017-2018

Markets for recycling, 2019-2020

Filtruma, 2017-2020

### **BURKINA FASO**

Local economic development, 2017-2020

### **CAMBODIA**

HoKa, 2018-2020

### **COLOMBIA**

Construya, 2019-2020

### **ECUADOR**

Emprende, 2017-2019

Finca, 2017-2019

### **EL SALVADOR**

Nuevas Oportunidades, 2018-2020



#### **EL SALVADOR, NICARAGUA**

Beekeeping, 2017-2019

#### **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, 2018-2020**

#### **GUATEMALA**

GenerAcción Emprendedora, 2017-2020

Local Senior Expert Contact in Guatemala, 2019-2023

Empodera, 2018-2022

Ecosystems, 2019-2021

#### **KENYA, UGANDA, TANZANIA**

Inclusive Finance Programme, 2017-2020

#### **LAOS/CAMBODIA**

Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture and Tourism, 2017-2020

#### **LEBANON**

Tafawoq, 2019-2020

#### **NEPAL**

Youth Employment Project, 2017-2020

#### **MOZAMBIQUE**

Skills to Build, 2017-2020

#### **NIGER**

Youth Platforms , 2017-2018

#### **PERU**

Construya, 2019-2020

#### **TANZANIA**

Taka ni Mali, 2017-2018

#### **UGANDA**

Inclusive Markets Uganda, 2017-2020

Local Skills Development for Youth, 2017-2020

**SENIOR EXPERT CONTACT** since 1976

## WORKING AREAS

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### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Skills development supports people in securing their basic material needs, thereby reducing poverty and facilitating the economic and social development of a region or country. In this sense, skills development represents all activities and systems that prepare people for the labour market and supports them to thrive therein. This includes initial and continuing vocational education and training (VET), as well as labour market insertion. Optimal conditions for high employment are based on educational offers, which meet individual needs, as well as economic and social interests.

The Development Programme implemented skills development projects in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. The overarching goal is to support people in their efforts to create the conditions for a secure livelihood and to actively participate in society. Cumulatively, eight skills development projects have developed institutional capabilities of training providers, government and private sector partners to deliver high quality and relevant services, inclusive vocational skills development, counselling and post-training support (internships, placement, mentoring for self-employment). The advocacy of social inclusiveness and a participatory civil society and political landscape contribute to the reduction of disparities.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Swisscontact's value proposition and competences are focused on economic development. Within our Enterprise Promotion projects, the entrepreneurial acumen of business people has been strengthened, and consequently increased their income. We aim at promoting and empowering new and existing micro, small and medium-sized farms and enterprises to increase their productivity, production, sales and turnover. This results in higher competitiveness, increased additional net income for our target groups, and job creation. Besides strengthening the supply and production side, farmers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as growth and trade-oriented entrepreneurs benefited from entrepreneurship support and services to improve linkages to national and international sales markets provided by private and public project partners.

Within the Development Programme, different tools have been tested and replicated. We also facilitate research and exchange in the Global South, regarding entrepreneurship and to improve the ecosystem for entrepreneurs in selected countries. Furthermore, the Senior Expert Contact offers tailor-made consultancies of retired experts to SMEs. As deployments were not possible as of March 2020, a new offer with remote consultancies was created. Although virtual assignments cannot replace all on-site consultancies, they were so successful that we will continue to offer them in the future.





## FINANCIAL INCLUSION

In our Development Programme projects, access to financial services and products often address the struggle of the gender gap. Women especially face increased challenges when accessing basic financial literacy and services. In our projects, we tailored affordable financial solutions to smallholder farmers, households, employees and small and medium-sized enterprises. The main objective is the improvement of the economic and social integration of disadvantaged women and men. They gain improved access to secure and fair financial services and products (e.g., micro-and small credits, savings, leasing products, micro-insurance and improvement of financial literacy). Furthermore, they increased opportunities for secure and fair financial services through the enhancement of the financial sector by empowering the stakeholders (savings and lending groups, cooperatives, banks, universities).

To foster women's economic empowerment, innovative financial products are developed and tailored to the needs of disadvantaged and excluded population groups, paving the way for gender equality and social inclusion. For example, micro leasing products enable female beekeepers to access hives for their economic activities, and informal savings and lending groups not only support beneficiaries in the acquisition of basic financial knowledge - which they usually lack, but more importantly provide autonomy, especially to women, leaving no one behind.

## RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

The Resource Efficiency projects of the Development Programme supported its partners in using resources properly, efficiently and sustainably. The objective of our initiatives is to create structures, which enable and foster sustainable development, whether in the area of air pollution prevention, waste management, renewable energies and technologies, and so on. Policy dialogue is an integral part of the interventions contributing to improving the legal framework conditions. An example is a technical standard for the registration and certification of green companies. Three projects within our Development Programme measured CO2 equivalents reduced. By the end of 2018, the Development Programme concluded two of its Resource Efficiency projects.

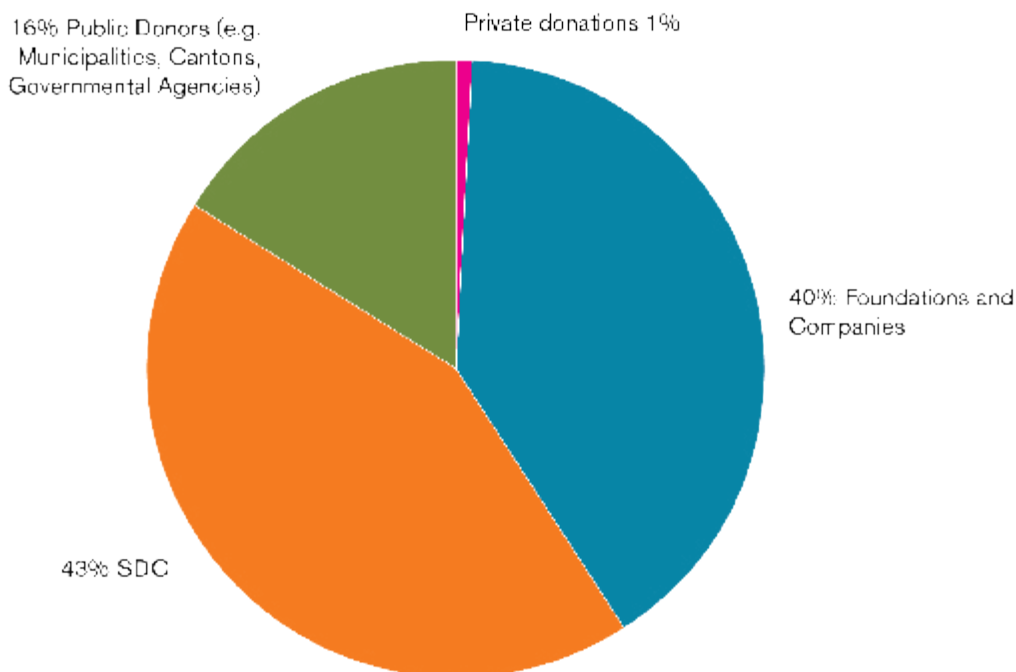
Through the promotion of climate-smart economy, people in developing and emerging economies not only have the opportunity to develop and implement sustainable development practices, but also incorporate them into their business activities (Ecovecindarios" in Bolivia and "Taka ni Mali" in Tanzania). The Markets for Recycling Project in Bolivia was piloted in 2019 with the aim of upgrading the recycling and management of waste in the transport sector. It supports green businesses to improve their business models and recycle as well as reuse waste from the transport sector.

## FINANCING

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The Development Programme is financed by several private and public donors. The programme received a financial contribution of SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA).

Average programme volume per year CHF 14'300'000



WE THANK ALL OUR PARTNERS  
LIST ON THE ONLINE-VERSION

[www.swisscontact.org/en/development-programme/dp-2020/financing](http://www.swisscontact.org/en/development-programme/dp-2020/financing)

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## RESULTS

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The overall goal of the Development Programme is to achieve sustained and improved livelihood for our target groups. This is measured through the increase of income and the creation of new jobs. Despite the challenging last year of this phase due to the Corona pandemic, we met and even exceeded our targets.

*4 104 new  
jobs (full-time  
equivalent)  
created*

*435 624 people  
(56% women)  
benefitted from  
programme  
activities*

*CHF 94 million  
additional net  
income generated*

## MILESTONES

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The start of four-year phase with several new projects, for example our Sustainable Agriculture Project in Cambodia. The project addresses the increasing demand of farmers in Cambodia for **innovative technologies**, for example in soil preparation, harvesting procedures and storage methods. What is needed are practical approaches that farmers can afford and that allow them to increase their harvests and produce sustainably in the longer term.

The launch of our **innovative partnership model** established in the Local Skills Development for Youth Project in Uganda, which is proving to be one of the most sustainable vocational training approaches. It relies on the interests and incentives of young adults looking for work and companies in growing sectors that lack a good workforce. The youths are divided into learning groups, linked to companies by means of partnership models, and trained in both practical and theoretical matters.

Measuring our impact is key. Since the introduction of the **Monitoring and Results Measurement system (MRM)**, we made significant progress in results orientation on programme level. All Development Programme Project Managers attended training in 2017. Each project has a standardised impact measurement, which is based on the guidelines of the international DCED standard. In addition, each project region is supported by a so-called MRM advisor, who trains and supports the teams to measure our impact.

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**Organic and Fair-Trade certified chocolate** from the Finca Project in Ecuador is available in Swiss supermarkets. In cooperation with private sector partner Chocolat Halba, the Swisscontact project planted over 300 000 cocoa plants and 80 000 additional trees. The certified cocoa beans are produced through highly sustainable cocoa cultivation, following agroforestry standards.

We can look back at several achievements completing our waste management project in Tanzania (Taka Ni Mali). The sustainability of the project activities is ensured by providing **profitable business opportunities** in the waste sector, complying with the policies implemented by the government regarding a proper Solid Waste Management, and ultimately because of the importance of living in a clean and safe environment.

**Local ownership is key.** The Ministry, in close cooperation with Swisscontact, developed guidelines for vocational career guidance and the integration of young people into the labour market in Niger. Today, these national guidelines serve the authorities as a tool for reflection, anticipation and decision-making, and it is impossible to imagine Niger without them. This is a great achievement. The career guidance counselling platforms are up and running, and new platforms are even emerging independently.





The development programme launches Swisscontact's first project using the **Market System Development** approach in West Africa. The inclusive market approach identifies barriers and causes that prevent the successful participation of poor and disadvantaged people in the market. Empowering local actors in the system is key. In Benin, small-scale producers from the fish and citrus sectors are integrated into the market and thereby able to increase their income.

Two highlights culminate in the opening of a new Swisscontact country office in Lebanon and the scaling up of the innovative and highly successful **Coaching for Employment** approach, which was developed in Albania and Kosovo in cooperation with the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. Disadvantaged young adults with a predominantly Syrian or Palestinian background strengthen their skills and gain access to the labour market.

The export of the first container of organic Salvadorian honey is a great success as it is the first company ever in El Salvador to be certified in organic honey production. Swisscontact has fundamentally contributed to this accomplishment. Our Beekeeping Project supported and capacitated small-scale beekeepers and beekeeping enterprises such as cooperatives, associations, small enterprises, equipment suppliers and export companies to meet **international quality standards** of organic honey production.

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The Development Programme **supported vulnerable people to deal with the repercussions of the Corona pandemic**. For example, Community Paramedics in Bangladesh educated community members about the COVID-19 disease, symptoms and stipulated safety measures. In Nepal and Guatemala, young entrepreneurs received financial support to save their businesses and experts from our Senior Expert Contact advised SMEs all over the world in virtual consultancies on how to adapt and improve their business.

Several projects concluded in 2020. Because of our **systemic approach**, it is key to strengthen and empower local players. For example, through our GenerAccion Project in Guatemala, vocational training centres now design high-quality curricula independently. In Albania and Kosovo, public and private sector partners coach vulnerable youths and support their integration into the labour market through an elaborated Coaching Cycle, and in Burkina Faso, municipalities and labour associations develop strategies for their local economic development.





## OUR FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

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### COLOMBIA SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION



With the support of the Hilti Foundation, Construya Colombia established a successful public-private partnership that improves the quality of construction in densely populated and illegally constructed poor neighborhoods.

On the public side, the project supported SENA, the most important public training institute in Colombia, to introduce training methodologies and strategies to teach informal construction workers safe practices. At the same time, we needed the commitment of major companies in the construction sector, who are closely linked to the project's target groups - homeowners and workers. Together with these companies, the project developed an offer that improves construction practices in informal housing. The companies, as well as their partners, such as hardware stores, are best positioned to recruit course participants. Offering relevant training modules is an exceptional opportunity to increase customer loyalty for private sector partners. At the same time, SENA benefits by sending their trainers to training where the coordination of participants is handled for them. In this way, the project was able to reach out broadly to construction workers and homeowners.

Due to the creation of a win-win situation for the public and private partners, the reins are now in the hands of the partners, who will continue to offer support to vulnerable people. The approach has been so successful that it is replicated in Peru, where the situation of informal housing is very similar to Colombia, but the risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes is even greater.

### EAST AFRICA DIGITAL SAVING AND LENDING



While the methodology of the saving and lending groups is not new, Swisscontact sought ways to increase transparency and to support the Mavuno groups to connect with the digital age. Thanks to locally organised Mavuno savings and lending groups, the members can mobilise savings and access small loans within the group. During monthly meetings, a small, predetermined amount is collected from each member as savings. These savings are then partially lent out again to its group members. This informal financial service enables them to absorb income fluctuations or build up income-generating activities. Until now, group members have recorded their savings and loans manually in books. This way of accounting is on a low-threshold level, but it is also subject to errors and lacks transparency.

For this reason, Swisscontact has sought cooperation with the Kenyan software developer "Digital Vision", who created a user-friendly and adaptable software called "Chamasoft". With an app that has been adapted to the special needs and opportunities of Mavuno members, all savings and loans are now recorded digitally. Each group member can access the app's online platform and receives a message on their smartphone with the amount of savings made. Those who don't have a smartphone will receive a simple SMS – in Kenya, the majority of the population owns a mobile phone. Using the app, all group administrators can see at any time who has the highest savings, who has taken out a loan and for how much, as well as the repayment rates. Group members have a personalised profile, where they can easily monitor their own as well as the group members' savings.

## EASTERN EUROPE COACHING FOR EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



In Albania and Kosovo, young adults from stigmatised and marginalised population groups, such as Roma, are disadvantaged when entering the labour market. The Coaching Cycle was developed by Swisscontact in cooperation with the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. Since the project began, 2 340 young adults have successfully completed the Coaching Cycle. “Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship” (C4EE) gives disadvantaged young adults a new perspective. They are motivated to develop different skills during a nine-month modular coaching cycle.

In partnership with civil society NGOs, national employment offices and SMEs, coaches were trained. The coaches implement the coaching sessions with young adults (58% women) in small groups. Through this integrative and personalised process, the participants developed their individual professional and personal competences.

The success of the approach speaks for itself when one looks at the employment rate, which is over 80% among the graduates (before the Corona pandemic it was 90%). Public partner NES (National Agency of Employment and Skills) in Albania is also convinced of the positive results and further developed the methodology into a modular and tailor-made advisory component for job seekers. The approach has been so successful that it is now being adapted to the contexts and applied in other projects in Morocco, Lebanon, Laos and El Salvador.

## BANGLADESH COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC TRAINING



The project “Achieving Sustainability Towards Healthcare Access” – ASTHA, aims to increase youth employment through a two-year community paramedic training programme. Swisscontact has been working on transforming and modernising the learning experiences of students enrolled in the community paramedic course.

In 2019, the project took an innovative approach by integrating 3D audio-visual technology into the training that improves the quality and attractiveness of the training and at the same time provides a more effective and interactive way of learning. This in turn leads to more and better qualified healthcare providers at the community level. Under a partnership agreement with the architectural visualisation company Auleek Limited, 3D content was developed for two course topics: reproductive health and the respiratory system. They can be seen using virtual reality headsets and provide a 360-degree view of the systems, basic animation of how the systems operate and a test module. Additional 3D models are planned for the future. This initiative is the first of its kind in primary healthcare education in Bangladesh.

The introduction of 3D modules has generated interest and enthusiasm among teachers and students who piloted the technology. 80% of the students found learning through virtual reality effective and the learning retention rate improved by 25%.

## SUSTAINABILITY & LESSONS LEARNT



### SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of project interventions is of great importance to Swisscontact. The coordination of project activities is in line with national development plans. We are thus guided by the needs and local circumstances of our project countries. On the other hand, our systemic approach to project implementation contributes decisively to the sustainability of our activities. It could be, for example, that smallholders have no access to national or international markets because they do not meet the necessary quality standards. It could also mean that the curricula in vocational schools are not oriented towards private sector demand. After the identification of the underlying problem, we try to close the gaps, for example by building the capacity of actors such as cooperatives, training centres, government institutions, producers, etc. The project partners are strengthened with knowledge and the necessary skills. This enables them to serve the needs of disadvantaged women and men in the long-term. We are particularly concerned with reaching people who are excluded or marginalised from the system, such as the youth, minorities, indigenous peoples, internally displaced persons, or migrants. We do this by providing them with access to education, the labour market or the market system. Our main goal is to withdraw at the appropriate time and leave behind a strengthened system that functions within itself.

To guarantee and continuously monitor our impact, a solid Monitoring and Results Measurement system is key. The Development Programme has significantly contributed to the development of an internal measuring system within Swisscontact. Based on sound quantitative data and qualitative information, our system can reveal why and how specific changes have taken place, and how sustainable these might be. The overall system not only provides information on the viability, efficiency, efficacy and impact of our projects and the organisation as a whole, it also ensures adaptive and results-oriented project management. Our impact measurement system complies with the internationally recognised standards of the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED).

We are proud that the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) that audited Swisscontact in 2019 noted the reliability of the source data both at the level of Swisscontact project managers, and local partners. It confirms the good traceability of the data used for reports throughout the information chain.





## LESSONS LEARNT

Learning from mistakes allows us to evolve. When working in a development context, not everything runs smoothly all the time. Adaptive project management is therefore the top priority for the projects in our development programme. The context also changes; in 2020, we all experienced this worldwide due to the Corona pandemic. We therefore constantly ask ourselves questions such as: are we achieving the desired result with our planned approach? Is our outcome significant?

In the last four years, we have also had to make adjustments to our projects time and time again. For example, in our vocational training project in Mozambique, firstly certification was awarded at the level of educational institutions only. Now, after several years of reform, the project supports the training centres in awarding nationally recognised certificates. It became evident that the prioritisation of qualitative over quantitative selection of the target group is key for a successful project output. This allows tailored support to the target groups and - with a proven intervention model oriented towards the beneficiaries' needs - the project is most likely to succeed in scaling up its activities and outreach at a later stage. In the Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship (C4EE) Project, for example, young women and men have been chosen according to specific criteria, including background, motivation, career potentials.

Looking ahead to the new Phase 2021-2024, the Development Programme will give increased consideration to qualitative aspects when designing its projects. External factors such as the disruption of political, economic and ecological conditions remain a challenge for the beneficiaries, as well as for project implementation and steering. Incidents can slow down the project's progress or even halt operations entirely.

In order to benefit further from past successes and setbacks, the Development Programme strives to pool thematic clusters throughout the programme. These thematic clusters then permit the trans-regional sharing of know-how and experiences throughout the projects. During the planning of the Phase 2021-2024, the formation of clusters was taken into account, especially within the selection and definition process of new and existing Development Programme projects.

*We create opportunities*

Swisscontact  
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Cover: Beekeeping in Uganda  
Pictures: Swisscontact employees and friends

**ZEWO-Seal of approval:** Swisscontact was awarded the Seal of Approval from ZEWO. It is awarded to non-profit organisations for the conscientious handling of money entrusted to them, proves appropriate, economical and effective allocation of donations and stands for transparent and trustworthy organisations with functioning control structures that uphold ethics in the procurement of funds and communication. Swisscontact is regularly audited on the adherence to these criteria. (Source: ZEWO)

Swisscontact is a member of **Transparency International** and **UN Global Compact**.



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