

MEDIA RELEASE

Zurich – 12 May 2021

Swisscontact Annual Report 2020

## **International development cooperation in the “COVID year 2020”: using digitalisation to foster resilience in people and businesses**

**In 2020, Swisscontact worked in a total of 39 countries and implemented 117 projects. Thanks to the long-term approach and strong local roots of these projects, 94,900 people were able to complete programmes in skills development, entrepreneurship and labour-market insertion despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In the area of company development, 870,200 farmers and SMEs received access to better services and products, enabling them to more effectively weather the current crisis.**

Thanks to its many years of local, on-the-ground involvement, Swisscontact can depend on stable structures, networks and partnerships and thus support people, companies and the economy to find their way out of crises like the current one with greater speed and while incurring less damage. The Swisscontact Annual Report shows clearly how, despite challenging conditions, it is still possible to use innovative approaches in international development cooperation.

### **Swisscontact accelerates digital transformation**

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns triggered a digitalisation drive that many people were able to benefit from. Many Swisscontact project teams engaged with the topic of digital transformation at an early stage and – wherever possible and beneficial – moved their activities into the virtual sphere. This included various vocational education projects that introduced or expanded on a remote-learning approach. At the same time, the digitalisation drive at the level of the organisation as a whole was strategically channelled in order to create added value as quickly as possible for the implementation of projects.

### **Career opportunities for refugees and migrants**

“Skills for Life”, one of the projects presented in the Annual Report, is based in the Kakuma refugee camp in North-East Kenya, the temporary home of over 190,000 people who have fled conflicts in Sudan and the Congo. Since 2013, Swisscontact has been contracted by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC to provide training to refugees and members of the local population in

professions for which there is demand on the job market. In the past year, the digital provision of the training courses has been greatly expanded. “Skills for Life” is the first project in this kind of fragile context to so consistently promote digital learning. The digital learning platform will continue to serve as an important addition to the project beyond the COVID-19 crisis. The training courses enable the people in the refugee camps to improve their livelihood – not least in overcoming the economic emergency that the pandemic has triggered.

**Read the Annual Report:** [www.swisscontact.org/report2020](http://www.swisscontact.org/report2020)

### **About Swisscontact**

Swisscontact is a leading partner organisation for the implementation of international development projects.

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.

The independent, non-profit, private foundation was established in 1959 in Switzerland.

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

### **Media enquiries**

Swisscontact – Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation

Hardturmstrasse 134, CH-8005 Zürich

Theres Meyer, Content & Public Relations Manager

[theres.meyer@swisscontact.org](mailto:theres.meyer@swisscontact.org)

Tel. +41 44 454 17 14

[www.swisscontact.org](http://www.swisscontact.org)