

PRESS RELEASE

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Swisscontact 2019 Annual Report

COVID-19: international development cooperation more urgent than ever

In 2019, Swisscontact implemented 120 projects in 38 countries. 79,700 people completed programmes in vocational education, entrepreneurship, or labour market insertion. Landmark events in 2019 included our 60th anniversary and the merger with the UK consulting organisation Springfield Centre.

“International development cooperation in transition” was Swisscontact’s motto during our anniversary year. On this occasion, the organisation also asked itself questions about the future: how can Swisscontact continue contributing to a development model that includes all people? Today, at time of publication of the 2019 Annual Report, this anniversary motto is more relevant than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic and globally imposed lockdown will leave serious consequences in their wake, making international development cooperation a more urgent issue than ever before. In these times, when now all societies and governments are turning inwards, it is all the more important not to lose sight of global linkages.

More solidarity for global stability

Swisscontact hopes this far-sightedness is shared by parliamentary committees when they meet and debate this summer on the International Cooperation strategy 2021-2024. “Heading into a global recession, we must not forget Agenda 2030. Only when the international community continues to follow the development goals can at least the worst consequences of the crisis be contained,” writes Samuel Bon, Swisscontact CEO, in a [comment](#). It is not only a question of solidarity but also one of global stability.

Project focus: vocational training in rural Niger

For the 2019 Annual Report, Swisscontact showcased two of more than a hundred projects in text and pictures. One of these takes us to rural Niger, where young people have few opportunities to complete a vocational education. With a market-oriented training, they now have better opportunities to find a job. On behalf of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Swisscontact, therefore, developed training courses that meet the needs of young people on the one

hand while being mindful of regional economic demands on the other. Metalworker Aïcha Amadou completed a 14-month dual apprenticeship-based vocational training: “I can’t find the words to describe how much this training has changed me. Moreover, it is our workshop that benefits,” she says.

Broadening the palette of services offered

As part of Swisscontact’s further development, the merger with the UK’s “Springfield Centre” in 2019 was a milestone. Both organisations are like-minded; more specifically, they share the view that a carefully designed, environmentally friendly and socially mindful private sector development approach in many cases is the best way to achieve inclusive development. The shared path underscores a core element of Swisscontact’s Strategy 2025: the challenges inherent in international development cooperation require new partnerships that must use synergies and build on complementary approaches. This will create value for donor partners, and resources can be deployed to the greatest benefit of the local beneficiaries in the field.

On the annual report: www.swisscontact.org/report2019

Photos for downloading

from Aïcha Amadou, metalworker, Niger: [Image 1](#) / [Image 2](#)

Vocational education in Niger – tailors in training: [Image 3](#)

About Swisscontact

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. Founded in 1959 and registered under Swiss law, we are an independent non-profit organisation.

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

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