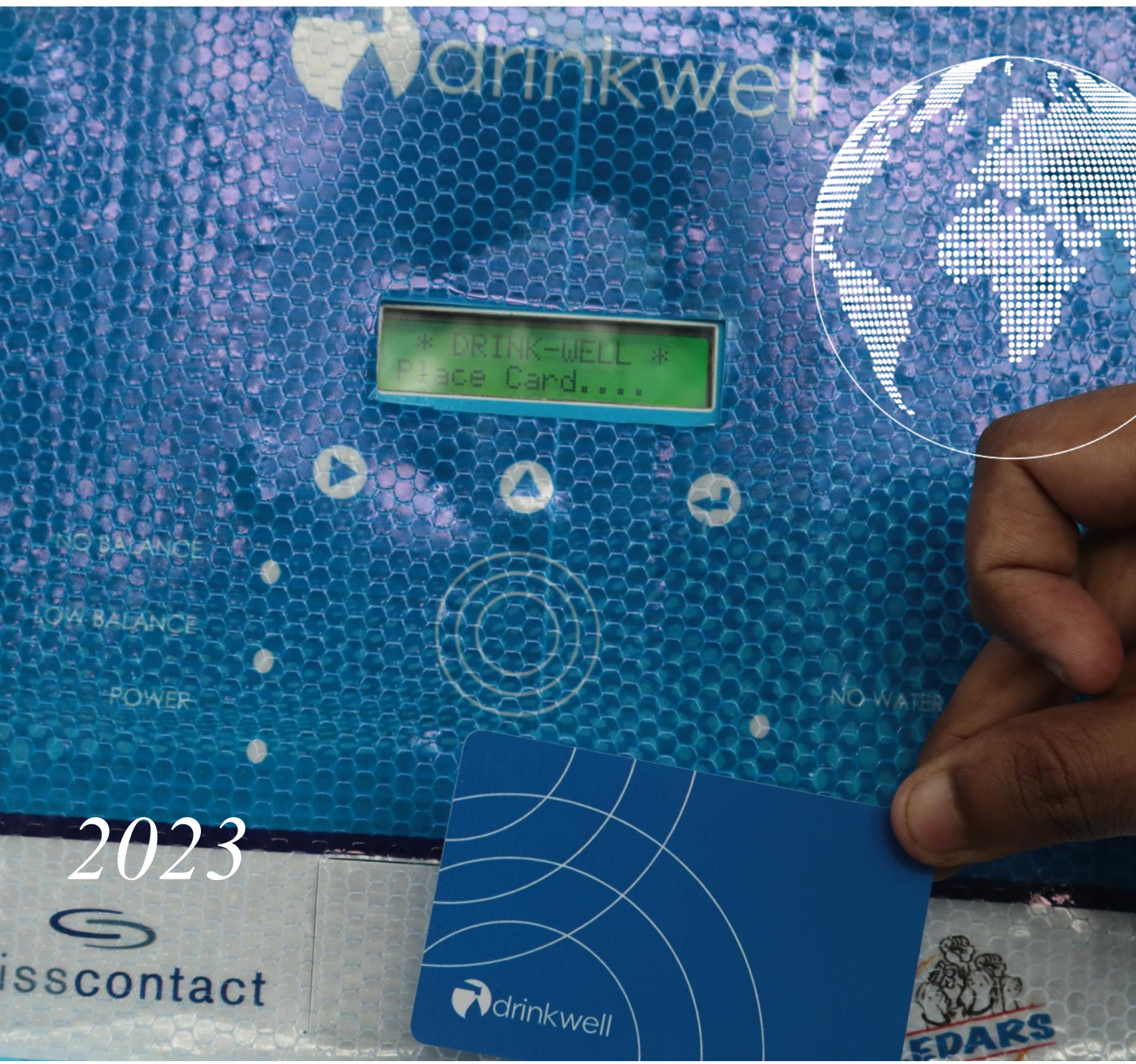


ANNUAL REPORT

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



ELIANE HERRMANN
Head of Development Programme



The global political situation is characterised by increasing unrest and crises. The conflict in Ukraine is affecting people far beyond its borders and is impacting the economy, the

humanitarian situation and international cooperation. This emphasises the need for joint efforts to overcome the complex global challenges. The consequences include increasing poverty, escalating costs for key resources and a weakened global economy. In 2023, the political conditions in Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Lebanon and Mali were particularly difficult and fragile.

Despite these contextual difficulties, our results are very satisfactory. In some cases, our results were even exceeded. This is mainly due to our networking approach. We see our role as a facilitator and strengthen the local actors. As we focus on technical cooperation, we are accepted by partners and governments. Our local partners are anchored in the context, which is why the interventions have been successful despite difficult circumstances. Our partners and project teams have proven resilient and managed to overcome most of the challenges by the end of 2023.

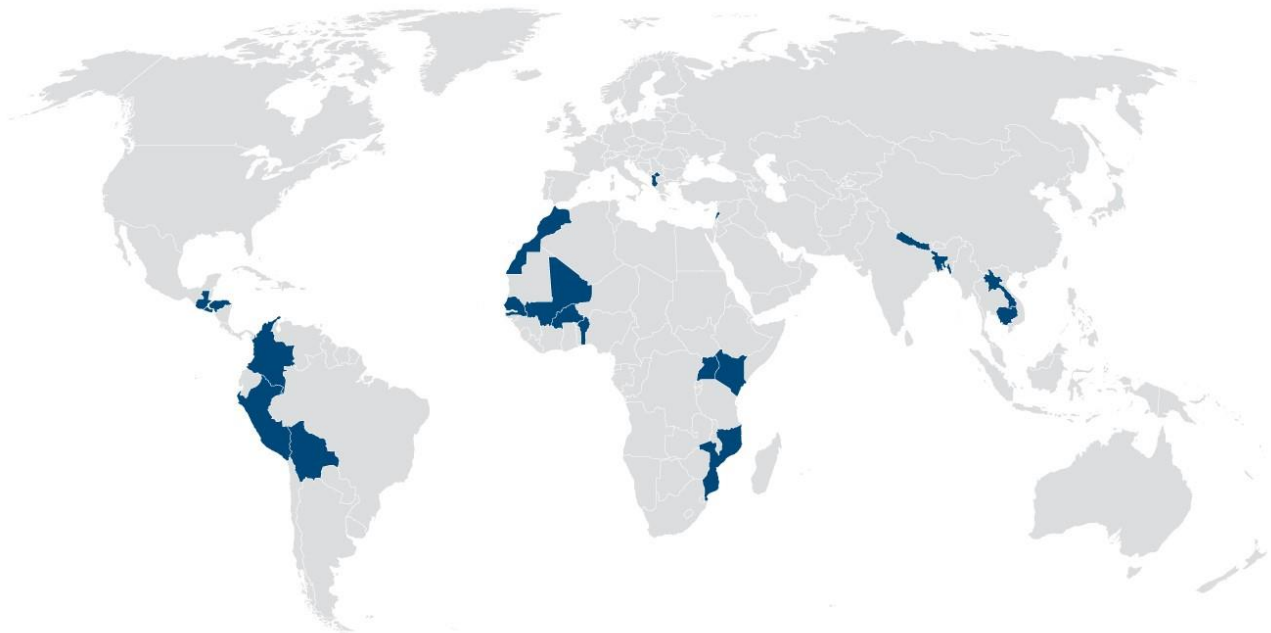
I am particularly pleased that 97 560 particularly vulnerable and marginalised people had access to improved products and services through our Development Programme last year.

Climate change poses a growing risk for our target groups. There is a growing consensus that climate action (SDG 13) needs to be more strongly combined with poverty reduction and inclusive social and economic development in order to achieve sustainable development for all (all SDGs). Climate action and poverty reduction are closely linked. Unlike many development organisations that implement projects focusing exclusively on environmental and climate outcomes, Swisscontact integrates climate change solutions into its broader development strategy and treats climate change not as an isolated issue, but as an integral part of social and economic development. We will therefore focus even more on this issue in the coming years.

I would like to thank all our financing partners for their continued support and look forward to working with them in the future.



2023: 31 projects in 21 countries



ASIA

Bangladesh
Cambodia
Laos
Nepal

AFRICA

Burkina Faso
Benin
Kenya
Lebanon
Morocco
Mali
Mozambique
Senegal
Uganda

LATIN AMERICA

Bolivia
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Colombia
Peru

EASTERN
EUROPE

Albania
Kosovo

PROGRAMME RESULTS AND IMPACT 2023

Swisscontact relies on systematic impact measurement. Consistent and comparable tracking and measurement of results in various projects of the Development Programme is an integral element of project management and quality assurance for us. We achieved the following results in 2023:



AREAS OF WORK

The Development Programme supports Swisscontact's strategy, prioritises quality over quantity and promotes innovation and national ownership in our project countries. Above all, our work is intended to make a significant contribution to overcoming existing and upcoming development challenges and to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Last year, the Development Programme comprised 31 projects in 21 countries and is divided into two main areas:



PROMOTION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

It is very important to us that people are given good vocational training opportunities and the chance to receive a high-quality basic education. This enables them to develop the skills and abilities they need for employment or self-employment. In this way, we also help to ensure that the country or region remains competitive. The Development Programme supports people who are looking for a job, young people in particular should have good opportunities on the labour market. We focus among others on young adults, women and marginalised groups. Our aim is to enable them to lead a secure life and play an active role in society. To achieve this goal, Swisscontact develops vocational training and further education programmes together with our partners, given that the labour market needs a wide range of skills and knowledge to meet the demand. A particular focus of our work is to enable people to help themselves and to strengthen our local partners.



PROMOTING CAPACITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & PRODUCTIVITY

In this area, Swisscontact focuses on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Our goal is to help them improve their productivity, production and sales figures. This not only increases their competitiveness, but also leads to additional income and a higher number of jobs. To reach our aim, we provide access to innovative means of production, financial services and knowledge. This support comes from our local partners. In addition to improving the production, we also support business development and access to national and international markets. Farmers and companies receive help from our private and public project partners. We additionally support marketing activities to ensure that they can keep up with market trends. Also, we actively work to improve the business environment and strengthen the entrepreneurial system.

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN THE WORK AREAS IN 2023?

PROMOTION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

Vocational training and further education, measures for integration into the labour market and the recognition of qualifications as well as certification initiatives help people to secure their basic material needs. This can reduce poverty and promote the economic and social development of a region or country. In this sense, our projects strengthen the development of skills for all activities and systems that prepare people for the labour market and help them to assert themselves on it. Ideal conditions for a high level of employment are based on educational programmes that meet individual needs as well as economic and social interests. An important part of this area of work is therefore the support of political dialogue and the engagement of various interest groups to involve all relevant stakeholders in the activities.

In 2023, 9 404 people (61% women) found an employment or self-employment (target until end 2024: 12,000; 50% women). In addition, 1 595 jobs were created or retained last year (target until end 2024: 1 000). The income increase in 2023 was 365% (target until end 2023: 35%).

We are very satisfied with the results achieved in 2023 and are particularly pleased with the progress made regarding the women's quota. On the one hand, positive developments were achieved in our projects in Guatemala in particular. Secondly, in Burkina Faso, where we were able to train many women in financial literacy. In addition, our target groups were able to significantly increase their income in percentage terms. The high percentage is due to the fact that our target groups consist of vulnerable and unemployed people who had a very low income at the time the initial situation was assessed. Some phase targets have therefore already been exceeded and we are confident that we will achieve all targets by 2024.



PROJECT EXAMPLES & HIGHLIGHTS



VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN BANGLADESH

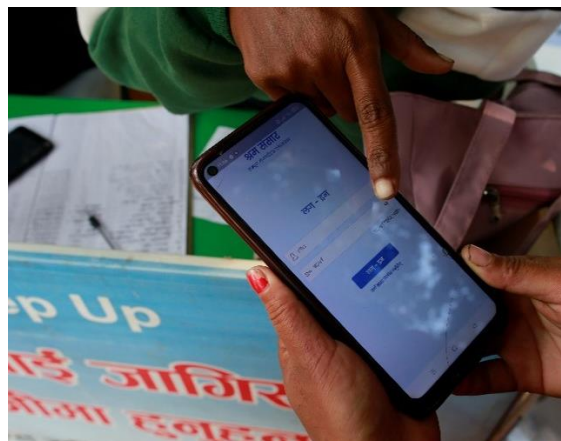
The ASTHA project aims to train young adults in Bangladesh to become community paramedics to open up employment and income opportunities for them in their communities. The population benefits from these affordable medical services, particularly in rural areas.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 626 people (55% women) have registered for the two-year Community Paramedics training programme
- 44 880 people (74% women) have received high-quality, affordable healthcare services

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

Community paramedic training is not prioritised at national level. Staff turnover and unclear responsibilities at various local authorities also make communication difficult and slow down progress. A new association, which is to be founded together with other healthcare providers, will provide a broader platform for representing their interests.



LABOUR MARKET INSERTION IN NEPAL

The Step Up project supports Nepalese men and women in finding an employment or in starting their own business, thereby helping to reduce poverty. A newly introduced labour market information system promotes the exchange of information between jobseekers, employers and training providers via a digital platform supported by the government.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 6 280 jobseekers (48% women) gained access to improved labour market insertion services
- 13 unemployed young adults (92% women) completed needs-based vocational training programmes

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

The project is confronted with the challenge that providers of vocational training are unable to find enough participants and industrial companies for the trainings. The project will therefore intensify its cooperation with the project municipalities to reach more people interested in training and, if necessary, to co-finance the training costs in order to minimise the risk for companies.



VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION IN GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR

The Nuevas Oportunidades project promotes the reintegration of returned migrants into the labour market in El Salvador and Guatemala through coaching services and the certification of work skills.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 338 beneficiaries (42% women) received a work skills certification
- 100 beneficiaries (41% women) entered the labour market
- 228 beneficiaries (37% women) received access to soft skills coaching

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In Guatemala in particular, there was political unrest last year, which led to demonstrations and road blockades and temporarily restricted project activities. Another challenge for the project was to build trust in the project activities among the migrants. The improvement in project communication through closer cooperation between the project team and the local press and church communities proved successful in the reporting year.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN GUATEMALA

The aim of the Innova project is to increase the income of employed and unemployed young adults through access to high-quality and relevant vocational training. The project supports young adults in improving their employability in the long term.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 504 people (50% women) benefited from improved training programmes
- Average increase in income of CHF 3 302 per year
- 8 vocational training institutions adapted their vocational training programmes to the labour market

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

The project promotes dialogue between the private sector and training providers. Despite positive feedback, no one has yet felt obliged to take on the coordination of the meetings. The team will therefore endeavour to show stakeholders the added value of the meetings as a means of exchange and sustainable improvement of training standards in Guatemala.



PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

Working closely with the private and public sectors, the Skills to Build project promotes employment opportunities in the construction sector and workshops through specific training and certification measures.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 1 728 young adults (23% women) were given access to basic courses
- 6 construction workers and workshop owners (no women) successfully completed the certification process

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

Despite the efforts of the project team to involve women in the activities, some obstacles remain. Reasons include amongst others women's lack of self-confidence, pregnancies shortly after training or the reluctance of workshops and companies to employ women. Even private individuals favour male craftsmen. To lower these barriers, the project will continue to carry out awareness-raising measures in the project areas and at companies in 2024 on the basis of its "Gender equality and social inclusion" strategy.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN LEBANON

The Tafawoq project aims to sustainably improve the living conditions of disadvantaged young adults with a Syrian, Palestinian or Lebanese background by strengthening their skills and giving them access to the labour market. To this end, the young adults take part in various coaching programmes.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 120 young adults (55% women) completed the coaching cycle
- 26 young adults (50% women) made use of psychological or legal support services

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

At the end of 2022, the economic situation in Lebanon reached a low point for the time being. Tentative signs of recovery emerged in the course of 2023. Tourism returned hesitantly and private remittances from people living abroad were significant, which contributed to the economic recovery. However, this development has been jeopardised since the start of the armed conflict around Gaza and on Lebanon's southern border. Nevertheless, the project will continue to try to help young adults integrate into the labour market.

PROMOTING CAPACITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & PRODUCTIVITY

As part of our projects to promote entrepreneurship and productivity, the business skills of businessmen and women are strengthened. Our aim is to promote and empower new and existing micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to increase their productivity, production, sales and turnover. This leads to higher competitiveness, a higher net income for our target groups and job creation. Farmers and small businesses as well as growth- and trade-oriented entrepreneurs are also supported and benefit from services to better connect to national and international sales markets. As part of the Development Program, various tools were tested and replicated. We also promote research and exchange on entrepreneurship and on improving the ecosystem for entrepreneurs in selected countries.

In 2023, a total of 13 657 farmers, entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (46% under female leadership) increased their annual net income thanks to our projects (target by 2024: 10 000; 30% women). The result of including women exceeds our target, which is very pleasing. The income growth target was also exceeded by 132% (target by 2024: 15%). This considerable growth is mainly due to significant increases in income compared to the baseline situation, especially in Honduras and Bolivia. In Bolivia, for example, companies operating in the recycling business were able to significantly increase their turnover, more than double the target, leading to a total net profit of CHF 98 484. In Honduras, the average annual net income per coffee farmer increased significantly in 2023 compared to the previous year (from CHF 1 032 in 2022 to CHF 1 758 in 2023).

In 2023, our projects also created or maintained 526 jobs in this area of work and reduced 13 007 tonnes of CO₂. In addition, 1 772 people (51% women) had access to clean drinking water and 1 201 534 people were reached through awareness-raising campaigns (target by 2024: 150 000). The use of digital channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp significantly increased the range and a considerable number of people were reached.



PROJECT EXAMPLES & HIGHLIGHTS



SENIOR EXPERT CONTACT GLOBAL

Volunteer experts from the Senior Expert Contact programme provide advice to small and medium-sized businesses and institutions in developing countries and Eastern Europe. The primary aim of these short-term assignments is to increase competitiveness, improve product and process quality and maintain and create jobs. In addition, the project aims to increase the profits and revenues of these companies and their employees.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 4 287 voluntary working days
- 113 advisory missions in 17 industries and 14 countries
- 5 935 employees (46% women) reached

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

To better support Swisscontact's 2028 Strategy, the missions will be deployed more strategically in future to provide specialised knowledge for SMEs and partner organisations. Furthermore, a new approach to impact measurement as well as a new software system will be introduced which improves digitalisation and automation efforts.



IMPROVING WASTE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN LAOS

The Waste to Value project strengthens waste and resource management as well as access to environmentally friendly products and contributes to inclusive development and a healthier environment in Laos through the targeted selection of partners. Furthermore, waste collectors are better integrated into the waste value chain.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 71 SMEs in the service sector introduced green products and services
- 92 SMEs improved their waste and resource management
- 118 waste collectors strengthened their professional skills and occupational safety

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

A challenge faced by the project is the low number of actors serving the still small market for local sustainable products and services in Laos. However, through the project, there is a growing network of sustainable start-ups whose developments are having an increasingly positive impact on the local market and demand.



DYNAMIC MARKETS FOR FARMERS IN UGANDA

The project supports cocoa and honey producers by facilitating their access to advisory services and markets. Small-scale farmers expand their knowledge and skills, enabling them to improve the quality and increase the volume of their products. At the same time, they are supported in selling their products.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 7 997 people (35% women) were reached with activities
- 5 322 people (35% women) increased their annual income

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

The negative effects of climate change are particularly severe where the need for arable land competes between food and commercial crops. Imparting cocoa-growing households with the knowledge and skills to diversify their food sources, including climate-resilient crops and poultry farming, is therefore an important adaptation strategy and is being given greater consideration.



PROMOTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKET IN BENIN

The Béninclusif project contributes to economic growth in the sectors of fish farming and citrus fruit production through an inclusive market approach and aims to improve the living conditions and income of small-scale producers and processors. The project takes into account all stakeholders along the value chain and offers sustainable solutions to overcome bottlenecks in the market system.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 806 fish producers and processors (27% women) reached
- 303 citrus fruit producers and processors (14% women) reached

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

Fish farming in Benin is currently heavily reliant on the expensive import of fish feed. To address this challenge, the project has introduced an alternative (fly larvae) in collaboration with local actors and set up a distribution network that allows local farmers to produce fish feed at a lower cost and thus increase their income.



INNOVATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN CAMBODIA

The Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture project promotes the purchase of agricultural machinery and equipment as well as advisory services for the sustainable intensification of agricultural production. This leads to better soil health, which enables smallholder farmers to increase their productivity and income. In addition, support is provided for the development of technical expertise among agricultural engineering students.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- 1 988 farmers (33% women) reached
- 19 students (seven women) completed an internship

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

One identified obstacle to the conversion of conventionally run farms to sustainable farming practices is the lack of transitional funding. The project is therefore participating in a pilot initiative that provides financial support to farmers during the transition. A bonus system is used to incentivise more smallholder farms to adopt sustainable practices.



INCLUSIVE COFFEE IN HONDURAS

The Café Inclusivo project aims to influence the import and export promotion system for sustainably produced coffee from Honduras. Co-operatives, producer associations and social enterprises are supported to sell sustainable coffee at a price that reflects environmentally sound and socially responsible practices in production and trade. This leads to more income for smallholder farmers, greener communities and a more resilient economy.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

- CHF 1 758 average increase in annual net income per coffee farmer
- CHF 4 528 683 Increase in annual exports of sustainable coffee

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

To ensure the sustainability of the project activities, a new agreement was signed with the government. Workshops are also planned in order to hand over the training courses developed as part of the project to new partners and thus distribute responsibility for the continuation of export promotion between public and private stakeholders.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS THANKS TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP & STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Swisscontact has set out its position and future commitment to locally-led development in an internal paper. The focus is on empowering local communities by improving ownership in the design and implementation of projects. Two priority areas have been defined: increasing the use of participatory methods in project design and improving the quality of partnerships. Indicators are defined to measure localisation efforts in areas such as relationship quality, participation of local actors, coordination, financing, policy and standards.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

In the area of conflict sensitivity, Swisscontact has created an institutional framework that is integrated into the guiding principle of Inclusive System Development (ISD). The three-stage cycle for conflict sensitivity is based on a concept from Swisspeace and includes a context analysis, an understanding of the interaction and the steps of adaptation and learning. Significant progress has been made in integrating conflict sensitivity into projects, with a focus on training project management. The internal person responsible for conflict sensitivity monitors implementation, reviews action plans and supports the project managers as needed, while maintaining communication with those responsible from other organisations.

PROMOTION OF THEMATIC EXPERTISE AND INNOVATION

As part of the Development Programme, the quality of our results takes precedence over quantity. At the same time, we test new tools, approaches and services or prepare them for scaling up. We promote best practices by investing in knowledge sharing and thematic expertise to ensure high-quality project implementation and impact. With this in mind, a particular focus for Swisscontact in the past year was on deepening thematic expertise in the areas of vocational training, digitalisation and climate change. Thanks to the valuable support of one of our funding partners, two new experts in initial vocational education and training as well as for digitalisation in vocational education and training were engaged to support and strengthen Swisscontact's understanding of vocational education and training and labour market insertion. They will be actively involved in the design and implementation of the projects. Two additional people were also hired in the area of climate change and sustainable agriculture to advise the projects on these important topics and to promote knowledge sharing within and outside the organisation. In addition, the topic of skills that contribute to sustainable and environmentally friendly development, so-called "green skills", have been discussed more intensively in the projects in order to strengthen knowledge, skills and values that are necessary for shaping a sustainable economy and society.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OUTLOOK 2024

SOLUTIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

We have recognised that our efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change are of great importance. Therefore, Swisscontact integrates climate change solutions into its broad-based development strategy and considers climate change not as an isolated issue, but as an integral part of social and economic development. This includes promoting the efficient and sustainable use of resources. In particular, we would like to focus more on new solutions such as transitional financing for farmers. We also see the need to strengthen our learning and our contribution to environmental education in various sectors.

DIGITISATION

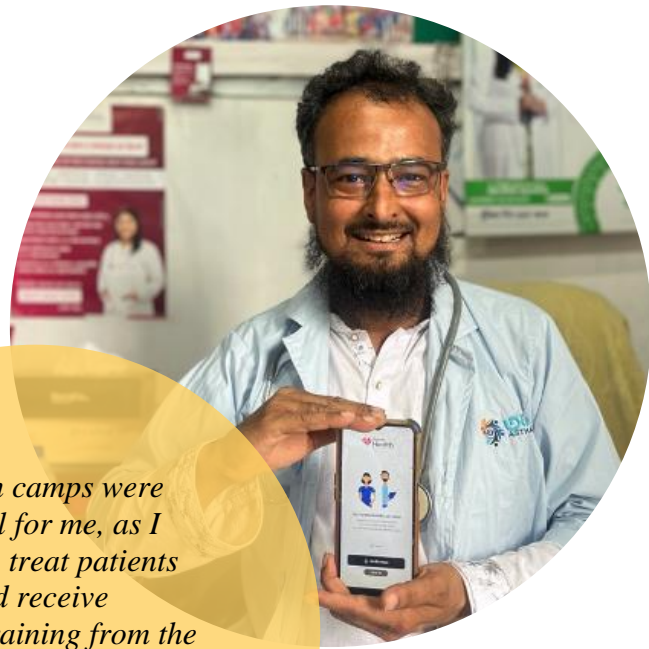
A further focus will continue to be placed on promoting digitalisation to increase impact. In today's digital world, the need to digitise and improve our work is an imperative that enables us to work more efficiently and maximise our impact. Digitalisation, for example, contributes to educational development by optimising programmes and directing investment towards educational initiatives that are proven to make a difference. Swisscontact will therefore drive digitalisation both in project work and internally. For example, through the use of artificial intelligence, in the development of e-learning or through a digital partner and project platform.

PHASE PLANNING 2025-2028

In January 2024, the new phase planning with a focus on climate, digitalisation and migration was submitted to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The experiences, insights and results gathered in the current 2021-2024 phase were used as a basis to further test and develop proven approaches and instruments. The plan also includes two pilot initiatives in Ghana and Ukraine. The conflict in Ukraine not only requires support in the form of humanitarian aid, but also in reconstruction. Here, Swisscontact is planning an initiative aimed at promoting the development of female entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. In Ghana, Swisscontact will focus on promoting skills that contribute to sustainable and environmentally friendly development (green skills) in order to support the country in combating climate change through innovative approaches.



PERSONAL STATEMENTS FROM
OUR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS
AND PROJECT PARTICIPANTS



"The health camps were very helpful for me, as I was able to treat patients directly and receive practical training from the doctors."

Mizanur Rahman, Bangladesh



"When I received a call with a job offer after my training as a barista, I cried with happiness and could hardly believe it."

Jakelyn Roxana López Mucia, Guatemala



"I was able to gain valuable experience as part of the project. The coaches enabled me to greatly improve my job search skills."

Marwa El-Dinawy, Lebanon



"The training not only advanced my professional development, but also had a positive impact on my social life."

Ailton Paul, Mozambique

BILLING & FINANCING 2023

The Development Programme is financed by several private and public donors. The programme received a financial contribution from SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA). We would like to thank all our funding partners for their contributions and their trust in our work.

FINANCING (CHF)	2023
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	4 200 000
Contributions from other partners	13 389 665
Total financing	17 589 665
OPEN AMOUNT	0

SWISSCONTACT

SWISS FOUNDATION FOR TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

We are a leading organisation for the implementation of international development projects. Swisscontact was established in 1959 as a foundation under Swiss law. We are independent, non-profit and politically and denominationally neutral.

MISSION

We use the potential of private initiative to promote sustainable development and prosperity for all in developing and emerging countries.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THIS

- 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.

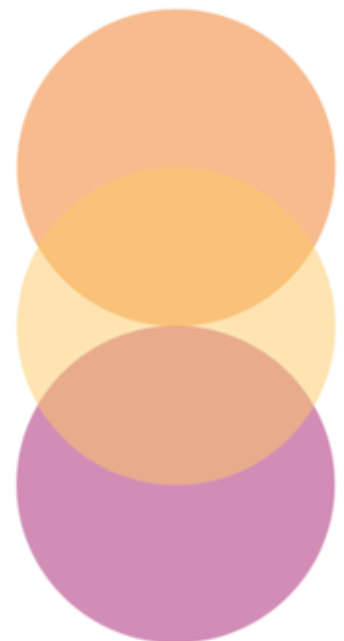
OUR OFFER

- Implementation of projects
- Coaching
- Practical training
- Applied research

PEOPLE

ENTERPRISE

ECONOMY



We create opportunities

Swisscontact
SWISS FOUNDATION FOR TECHNICAL
DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION
Hardturmstrasse 134
CH-8005 Zurich
Phone +41 44 454 17 17

www.swisscontact.org

Cover: Water kiosk in Bangladesh
Photos: Swisscontact employees and friends

ZEWO seal of approval: Swisscontact has been awarded the ZEWO seal of approval. 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)

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in good hands.**

