**Country Investment Facility - Sao Tome and Principe**

**Key Results**

The Country Facility Investment is being implemented in partnership with Ministry of Youth, Sport and Entrepreneurship and two Districts that account for more than 60% of the country youth population, aiming at promoting and driving an innovative concept that could encourage young people to become social entrepreneurs. The approach includes (i) promotion and development of leadership and awareness about social entrepreneurship; and (ii) networking skills development, resource mobilization, business development-oriented planning and management for youth groups interested in social entrepreneurship,(iii) launch of challenge for youth to identify problems in their communities and propose social businesses as solutions.

Since the implementation started in May 2019, the following key results have been achieved:

* 4 Social Business Ideas Development Support Centers were created and equipped;
* 60 people trained for the first time in social business mentorship
* Out of 450 of young people that signed up for social business ideas, 150 were selected to attend the social entrepreneurship online training, assisted by 30 Local mentors
* 120 young people successfully completed all mandatory training activities;
* Out of 88 projects submitted for funding, 30 projects were pre-selected for assessment by an independent panel;
* 15 Micro social businesses ideas were approved and received a seed fund, comprising different sectors, including food processing, recycling, solar energy, tourism, information technology and agriculture;

**Worthwhile Experiment?**

The project partnered with Brazilian Yunus & Youth NGO to deliver the online training. The trainees were provided with mobile phones with access to internet, enabling them to take the course any time and wherever they were. This approach proved to be effective and efficient as it reduced dropouts or absences due to conflict with other activities in which the participants were engaged, or even the need to cover the transport cost to attend the training. The overall methodology was quality assured by ACCENTURE, an international private company expert in entrepreneurship.

The initiative has catalytic effects and several development partners have expressed interest in scaling up, by extending to the remaining 4 Districts. It was an innovative new concept with potential in the country and led eventually the country to join the regional platform of YOUTH CONNEKT.

The initiative was considered of paramount importance by the Government that is willing to embrace it as one of the strategies to both address youth unemployment and concrete problems affecting the population, thus advancing the implementation of SDGs. The Prime-Minister became the champion of the programme.

Some of the business ideas presented by the youth were innovative.