

Enabling Social Innovation in Comoros

Country Snapshot

Social innovation refers to "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and the planet" ¹

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Comoros' social innovation ecosystem

-  Direct focus on social innovation  Connected but indirect focus on social innovation  No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Official Definition of Social Innovation



No formal legal definition of "social innovation" has been identified in Comorian primary law. Innovation is referenced through the Plan Comores Emergent 2030 national strategy and the UN Cooperation Framework. As a small island developing state (SIDS) and one of Africa's smallest economies, Comoros' social innovation is primarily driven by community-based and diaspora-linked initiatives, with a growing role for government and international partners. ^{2,5}

Government Body for Social Innovation



- Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economy: Coordinates national development planning, fiscal policy and macroeconomic management under Plan Comores Emergent 2030. ²
- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Tourism: Leads agricultural and fisheries innovation — the primary social innovation sectors in Comoros' predominantly rural and coastal economy. ⁴
- Ministry of Education and Research: Oversees education, vocational training and research; a foundational pillar of human capital for innovation. ²
- Ministry of Social Affairs: Governs social protection, community development and welfare programmes. ⁵
- UNDP Comoros: Leads international support for governance, SDG programming and enterprise development. ³

Government Strategy for Social Innovation



- Plan Comores Emergent 2030: National economic transformation strategy targeting middle-income status by 2030; elevates tourism, agriculture, fisheries, digital economy and social equity as innovation-relevant transformation pillars. ²
- UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026: Structures UN programming across governance, social development, economic diversification and climate resilience; innovation is a cross-cutting enabler. ⁵
- National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and NDC: Climate adaptation and mitigation framework driving community-based resilience innovation in a highly climate-vulnerable SIDS context. ⁵

Policies, Laws & Regulations

- Plan Comores Emergent 2030: Overarching policy framework embedding innovation across all sectors.²
- Investment Code: Governs business registration and foreign investment, including for social enterprises.²
- NGO / CSO Regulatory Framework: Governs civil society organisations — the primary vehicles for grassroots social innovation in Comoros.⁵
- Fisheries Law: Governs sustainable fisheries management — a key social innovation vector for coastal community livelihoods.⁴
- Environment Protection Framework: Enables environmental and social management for innovation projects.⁵

Official Statistics

Comoros is not included in the GII 2024 or 2025 due to insufficient innovation data coverage. Key available development indicators include:

- ~43% of population living below the national poverty line, driving urgent need for community-based social innovation in livelihoods and basic services.⁴
- ~60% of the population is under age 25 — a significant youth dividend for social innovation if supported by education and enterprise access.⁴
- 40%+ of GDP contributed by remittances from the Comorian diaspora — one of the highest remittance-to-GDP ratios in Africa and the world; a critical informal social innovation finance source.⁴
- ~51% internet penetration (2023) — growing digital connectivity enabling mobile-based social innovation.⁴

Government Programs

- Social Safety Net Programme (Filets Sociaux): World Bank-supported conditional cash transfer and community-based safety net programme targeting the most vulnerable households.⁴
- Agricultural Innovation and Food Security Programmes: FAO-supported programmes improving smallholder agricultural productivity, food security and climate resilience.⁴
- Comoros Digital Initiative: Emerging government commitment to digital transformation; e-government services and digital connectivity are Plan Comores Emergent 2030 priorities.²
- Climate Resilience and Coastal Adaptation Projects: UNDP and GEF-supported programmes building community resilience in coastal and island communities most exposed to climate shocks.³

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders

- UNDP Comoros: Primary international partner supporting governance reform, social protection, enterprise development and SDG programming.³
- World Bank Comoros: Funds Social Safety Net, education, health and digital economy programmes.⁴
- FAO Comoros: Leads agricultural innovation, food security and fisheries sustainability programmes.⁴
- Comorian Diaspora networks (estimated 300,000+): A central social innovation actor; remittances (40%+ of GDP) finance livelihoods, enterprise, education and community development.⁴
- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and faith-based organisations: Primary vehicles for grassroots social innovation in health, education, women's empowerment and community development.⁵
- University of Comoros: Provides limited but growing research and human capital capacity.²



Support Initiatives

- Support modalities are primarily UN-system and World Bank-led: UNDP SDG programming, World Bank Social Safety Net, FAO agricultural innovation, and GEF climate resilience projects. The Comorian diaspora is the most significant non-government innovation support mechanism, funding enterprises, education and community projects informally. ^{3 4 6}



Collaboration

Collaboration is structured through the UN Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 and World Bank country programme. Inter-agency coordination among UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, WHO and World Bank governs social innovation programming. Government-diaspora collaboration is informal but significant, with the diaspora providing capital, skills and market linkages. Regional collaboration through the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and COMESA provides additional frameworks. ^{5 4}

FINANCE



Financing Schemes

- Diaspora remittances (40%+ of GDP): The dominant informal social innovation finance source; funds livelihoods, enterprise, education and community development. ⁴
- World Bank: Social Safety Net, education, health and digital economy investment. ⁴
- UNDP, FAO, UNICEF: SDG programming, agricultural innovation, child nutrition and education. ^{3 6}
- GEF (Global Environment Facility): Climate resilience, biodiversity and environmental sustainability grants. ³
- AfDB and bilateral donors: Infrastructure and social development financing. ⁴



Financing Inclusivity

The diaspora remittance channel is the most inclusive financing mechanism, reaching households across all income levels. The World Bank Social Safety Net targets the poorest households. However, formal enterprise financing for social innovators is very limited, and women, rural communities and youth face disproportionate barriers to capital access. ^{4 5}

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public awareness of social innovation as a formal concept is limited. Community-level innovation is embedded in agricultural practices, mutual aid, diaspora-linked enterprise and religious community networks. The Plan Comores Emergent 2030 narrative is increasing awareness of transformation and innovation at the national level. Discourse centres on "community development", "entrepreneurship" and "diaspora investment". ^{2 5}



Research

Research capacity is very limited. The University of Comoros is the primary academic institution but is significantly under-resourced. UN agency reporting, World Bank assessments and FAO programme evaluations provide the most systematic evidence base. Data gaps are significant; Comoros is not in the GII 2024 or 2025. Research on social innovation as a formal discipline is nascent. ^{4 5}

Education & Human Capital



Comoros has improved access to primary education but quality and completion rates remain challenges. Youth (60%+ under 25) represent a significant potential human capital dividend for social innovation. Diaspora networks supplement formal education through remittances and skills transfers. Digital connectivity (51% internet penetration, 2023) is creating new pathways for digital education and enterprise.^{4 5}

Entrepreneurship



EIU Business Environment Ranking



Innovation Capacity



Entrepreneurship

Comoros' entrepreneurial ecosystem is nascent. Plan Comores Emergent 2030 targets tourism, fisheries, digital economy and agriculture as innovation-relevant sectors. The diaspora is the primary entrepreneurship enabler, linking overseas capital, skills and markets to domestic enterprise. Formal startup and social enterprise support is very limited but growing through UNDP and World Bank programming.^{2 4}

Social & Environmental Consciousness



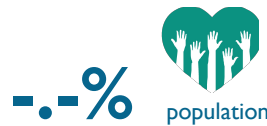
Solidarity

Comoros-specific data not reported in the 2024 index. Community solidarity and religious mutual aid (Zakat and Sadaqah) are deeply embedded in Comorian culture, reflecting strong informal giving traditions.⁸

CAFWorld Giving Index 2024



Political participation



Volunteering



Sustainability

Comoros-specific EPI ranking not publicly available at time of publication. As a SIDS, Comoros faces severe climate vulnerability — cyclones, coastal erosion, sea level rise and drought — making climate adaptation the most urgent social innovation priority.⁹

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024