A call for Lebanese diaspora’s contribution to economic development
From Lebanon to the world

Men and women of Lebanese descent have excelled in politics, business, culture, technology and scientific research.

Elie ABOUD
a member of the French “Les Republicains” party, is also a member of parliament.

Carlos SLIM
is considered as one of the richest men in the world. CEOs of several prominent national and multi-national companies.

John ZOGBY
founded the Arab American Institute that promotes Arab American participation in the U.S. electoral system.

Carlos GHOSN
is the CEO of Renault-Nissan.

Nicolas George HAYEK
was the chairman of the Swatch Group.

Ralph NADER
was an independent candidate in the US presidential elections of 2008.

Salim EDDE
started Murex Company and is the current CEO of L’Orient-Le Jour, a prominent Lebanese daily newspaper in French.

Amin MAALOUF
a franco-lebanese author, was elected to “l’Académie française” in 2011.

Philipe HABIB
was top US diplomat, was quoted as being one of the best of his time by the New York Times.

Jacques SAADE
is the CEO CMA-CGM, a leading worldwide shipping group based in France.

Amale ANDRAOS

Mario KASSAR

Gabriel YARED

Hady EL KHOURY

Elias COREY

Nicolas George HAYEK

Amale ANDRAOS

Mario KASSAR

Gabriel YARED

Hady EL KHOURY

Elias COREY

Amin MAALOUF
is the US producer of box office films such as Rambo, Terminator 2, Basic Instinct and The Doors.

Mario KASSAR

is an internationally acclaimed American actress.

Salma Hayeck

is the co-creator of Keefak, an App aimed at learning Arabic. www.keefaktheapp.com

Hady EL KOURY

is the only trumpeter in the world to play Arabic music with its quarter tones.

Ibrahim MAALOUF

is the engineer who invented the IPod.

Tony FADEL

is the inventor of a medical device which detects arterials diseases in only 20 seconds. www.popmetre.com.

Majid HALLAB

App “E-Fiester” allows users to organize parties and order presents for those events on-line. www.efiester.com

Robert HARFOUCH

received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1990.

Elias COREY

was awarded the 1960 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his work which is fundamental to the practice of tissue and organ transplants.

Peter MEDAWAR

has won several prestigious awards such as the European Award for honor, a “César”, an Oscar, and a Golden Globe for best soundtrack.

Gabriel YARED

founded CardioDiagnostics, an US established medical technology company with global R&D offices specialized in cardiac care solutions.

Ziad SANKARI

is a New York-based architect. She is dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Architecte, Planning and Preservation and co-founder of WORKac.

Amale ANDRAOS
**Focusing on diaspora: diversified profiles**

The Lebanese diaspora is very diverse in terms of who are they, where they live, when they migrated, what they do and how they support the home country.

**Where are they?**

The Lebanese diaspora is estimated between 10 and 13 million people spread all over the world. Worldwide the largest Lebanese community can be found in South America where more than 8.5 million people of Lebanese descent live: 6 million in Brazil, 1.2 in Argentina and 1 million in Colombia.

![Map of South America with countries highlighted]

**When did they migrate?**

The Lebanese migration occurred in three distinct phases.

**1870**

The first wave started in the 1870s with a massive migration of peasants from the Mount Lebanon region to South America. Some also migrated to the US & Egypt.

**1926-1960**

The second phase occurred between 1926 and 1960. The numbers were not as large as the first migration and the destination this time was West Africa.

**1964-1990**

The third phase occurred between 1964 and 1975 when the Lebanese emigrated to the Gulf States. Since 1975, migration has continued on a massive scale. The war between 1975 and 1990 was the main cause of this migration.
New wave of migration occurred between 1992 and 2007

This new phase has very distinct characteristics and included a large number of educated persons. Based on two studies done by the Université Saint-Joseph in 2001 and 2007.

Moreover, the emigration did not solely concern low-income families. All classes seem to have been affected, with a majority of the migrant being financially at ease.

Although these Lebanese migrated to different parts of the world, 3 out of 4 migrants are young, aged between 18 and 35 and highly qualified.
What do they do?

The majority of Lebanese emigrants are independent economic agents and work as entrepreneurs, consultants, traders, lawyers, bankers or doctors.

As per the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, 47.0% are employed in highly skilled jobs according to Connecting with Emigrants OECD report.

How do they support the Lebanese economy?

Lebanon is one of the countries which receives the most remittances world-wide, in 2015 it was 17th, according to the World Bank Migration and Remittances data released in September 2015.

The majority of these remittances in 2015 came from Arab countries, West Africa and South America.

According to the World Bank data, remittances from the Lebanese diaspora were estimated at around 7.49 billion USD in 2015 and 7.44 billion USD in 2014, more than 16% of Lebanon’s GDP.
Focusing on home: where do they invest?
What does Lebanon have to offer the Lebanese diaspora?

Lebanon’s Economy major assets

Lebanon has a free-market economy and a strong laissez-faire commercial tradition.

The Lebanese Law does not restrict foreign investment. The Lebanese economy was able to achieve real annual growth of 2%, the last 5 years despite the Syrian crisis and its negative impact.

Lebanon’s Gross Domestic Product by sector in 2013 was estimated to be:
- Agriculture: 4.6%
- Industry: 20%
- Services: 75.4%.

The Lebanese labor force is estimated a 1.6 million. This number does not include refugees and displaced Syrian, around 1.5 million.

Lebanon has the largest proportion of skilled labor in the Arab countries.
The Banque du Liban issued in 2014 Intermediate Circular 331 to encourage Lebanese banks to invest in the equity capital of startups, incubators, accelerators and other companies working in the knowledge economy.

This innovative scheme made available around 400 million USD to support creativity and innovation around 200 million USD have already been committed by banks and invested in start-up funds and companies.

In addition, according to a study done by Wamda Research Lab, the governments of MENA countries have adopted more than 200 economic reforms since 2008 in order to sustain the development of knowledge economy.

MENA start-ups have been highly awarded in worldwide competitions.

On the other hand, in a ranking exercise that featured 91 higher education establishments from 16 countries, the American University of Beirut ranked first in the Arab region for social sciences, second in medicine and came in fifth overall.

Most Lebanese diaspora professionals are eager to invest in the ICT industry. The main niches are e-commerce, Arabic content programs and the creative industry. These are closely followed by services, especially banking and retail which target the huge Lebanese diaspora.

The main drivers highlighted by diaspora professionals are skills, salaries and tax advantages. Lebanese workers are considered flexible, creative, and fluent in Arabic, French, and English and are comparatively less expensive than the OECD workers based in the Gulf countries.

A favourable tax system in Lebanon allows diaspora professionals to create their businesses in their home country, something they would not be able to do in other countries.

Lebanon is the best place from which to penetrate the Arab markets of the Middle East and the Gulf Countries because of its strategic geographic location.
Did you know that...?

The earliest known settlements can be found in Lebanon: About 7,000 years ago, a small Neolithic fishing community settled along the Mediterranean shore and several of their monocellular huts with crushed limed stone floors can still be seen.

In Byblos, the different layers of ruins from successive civilisations indicate habitation since the Neolithic era. Legend and history of the Mediterranean have been closely intertwined for several millenniums. It is closely linked to spread of the Phoenician alphabet, the first written alphabet in history.

The country’s name is known to be the oldest in the world and has remained unchanged for over 4000 years, quoted 63 times in the Bible.

According to an 1881 law book written by Oxford University professor Thomas Holland, the law schools in Rome and in Beirut existed as of 450 B.C.

Lebanon, whose area is 1/40 of the total Arab Peninsula, produces 70% of the publications in the Arab world. Lebanon and Tunisia were the first Arab countries to have a constitution.

Lebanon has the biggest proportion of arable land in the Arab world.
The Lebanese are well-known for their spirit of adaptability and their ability to face adversity. They are sailors and merchants, of different religious backgrounds who have been co-existing for centuries. Lebanese are considered as one of the most resilient population of the world.

The Lebanese are extremely resilient. Perhaps due to the war experience, the Lebanese have learnt to find solutions to problems or obstacles.

There are different institutions, associations, think tanks for the Lebanese diaspora inviting them to invest in their home country in different sectors and regions.

For administrative and legal matters

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (www.investinlebanon.gov.lb), the national investment promotion agency, is able to advise you regarding, starting a business, cost of doing business, the taxation system, investment incentives, financing your business, the legal framework and the labor regulation.

French Arab Chamber of Commerce (www.ccfranco-arabe.org), Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, Bader Young Entrepreneur (www.baderlebanon.com) and the Center for Entrepreneurship (www.cfe.bau.edu.lb) can also advise you and provide information about the administrative and legal frameworks in Lebanon.
**Looking for advice?**

Some of the international Lebanese expatriates groups, national and regional incubators, accelerators and BSOs that could support your project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LebNet</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lebnet.us">www.lebnet.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room 961</td>
<td><a href="http://www.linkedin.com/groups/5011483/profile">www.linkedin.com/groups/5011483/profile</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese Business Connection</td>
<td><a href="http://www.linkedin.com/groups/63408/profile">www.linkedin.com/groups/63408/profile</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum des Experts Libanais</td>
<td><a href="http://www.forumexpertslibanais.com">www.forumexpertslibanais.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association franco-libanaise des professionnels de l’informatique</td>
<td><a href="http://www.afpi-france.org">www.afpi-france.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Lebanon Tech Hub</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uklebhub.com">www.uklebhub.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon for Entrepreneurs</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lfepartnership.com">www.lfepartnership.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berytech</td>
<td><a href="http://www.berytech.org">www.berytech.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beirut Creative Cluster</td>
<td><a href="http://www.beirutcreativecluster.org">www.beirutcreativecluster.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Incubator Association in Tripoli</td>
<td><a href="http://www.biatcenter.org">www.biatcenter.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Startup Weekend Beirut</td>
<td><a href="http://www.beirut.startupweekend.org">www.beirut.startupweekend.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart ESA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.esa.edu.lb/fr/smart-esa">www.esa.edu.lb/fr/smart-esa</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAMDA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wamda.com">www.wamda.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIT Enterprise Forum Startup Competition</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mitarabcompetition.com">www.mitarabcompetition.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArabNet</td>
<td><a href="http://www.arabnet.me">www.arabnet.me</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endeavor Lebanon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.endeavorlebanon.org">www.endeavorlebanon.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back to Roots</td>
<td><a href="http://www.btrlebanon.org">www.btrlebanon.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCIA-BML</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ccib.org.lb">www.ccib.org.lb</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Access to funding**

Funding can be obtained from private and public institutions.

**Kafalat** ([www.kafalat.com.lb](http://www.kafalat.com.lb)) is a Lebanese financial company which aims to assist small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to access funding. Kafalat guarantees banking loans for investment in agriculture, industry, hospitality and ICT. Companies benefit also from subsidies loans provided by the Lebanese government.

**Banque du Liban** and its Circular 331 ([www.bdl.gov.lb](http://www.bdl.gov.lb)) provide support to the startup business ecosystem.

**MEVP, Venture Capital Firm** ([www.mevp.com](http://www.mevp.com)), **Social and Economic Action for Lebanon** ([www.seal-usa.org](http://www.seal-usa.org)) and **SME Toolkit Lebanon** ([www.lebanon.smetoolkit.org](http://www.lebanon.smetoolkit.org)) are other potential sources for funding.
This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount-Lebanon and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union or of the Program’s management structures.

The MedGeneration project has a total budget of EUR 1.92 million, funded 90% by the ENPI CBC MED programme and 10% by the partners or other co-financing sources.

The 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation initiative funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).