



## **Fondation Diane and “Costa Brava, Lebanon”: Art & Green Entrepreneurship at the Service of the Environment**

*Fondation Diane Shedding light on long-term and radical solutions to the waste crisis problematic in Lebanon*

**5 August 2022  
Beirut, Lebanon**

Fondation Diane organized the 1<sup>st</sup> private screening of “Costa Brava, Lebanon” film by Mounia Akl, featuring Nadine Labaki and Saleh Bakri, at Grand Cinemas in ABC Dbayeh, to shed light once again on the waste crisis in Lebanon with the aim of presenting radical and long-term solutions. Having received positive feedback from prominent figures in the movie industry, the 14-award movie has also won the “Green El Gouna Star” award for best film under the environment category, and participated in local and international festivals including Cinémed, Venice and Toronto. The story of the film revolves around members of a rural family who lived in peace, until excavation works for a landfill started near their house, causing them despair, which confirms the tight bond between people and the environment.

In this context, Fondation Diane introduced five entrepreneurs and start-ups specialized in the waste management sector in Lebanon (solid waste, textile waste, electronic waste, organic and agricultural waste, and others), who brought forward remedies to this issue.

Supported by the foundation, these start-ups are “Green Track” (headed by Khoder Eid), “Lebanon Waste Management” (headed by Pierre Baaklini), “FabricAid” (headed by Omar Itani), “Ecoserv” (headed by Gaby Kassab), and “Compost Baladi” (headed by Marc Aoun).

Through this initiative, “Fondation Diane” aims at supporting “art that serves the environment”, as an additional step to contribute to eco-sustainable development. The overall purpose is to introduce to the audience the most effective green solutions to the waste problematic at the national level, and to increase awareness on the simple and sustainable practices that should be implemented to dispose of waste in a safe and profitable manner, which would mitigate environmental challenges.

At the beginning, a minute of silence was observed in memory of the victims of Beirut blast, followed by a moving speech by Georges Khabbaz. The event also included speeches by the organizer and the start-ups, as well as the movie screening and a discussion around it.

**Diana Fadel**, Founder and President of “**Fondation Diane**” opened the event by saying: ““Costa Brava, Lebanon” is the “1<sup>st</sup> Feature Film in the Arab World shot following Sustainable & Environmentally-friendly Practices”. Hence, we decided to support this film and to share it with an audience of leaders; this is our chance to talk about solutions! In fact, the film showcases the status quo and focuses on the problem, but it does not offer a solution! To this end, we decided to highlight efficient and radical treatments offered by five of the most successful start-ups in the waste management sector in Lebanon, who are already doing an amazing job!”

She added: "Lebanon has become a landfill on its own! And the famous yet shocking picture of the garbage river snaking around Beirut suburbs in 2015, made a worldwide hit and nearly became our brand image! We are tired of short-term and temporary solutions.”

She concluded: "crises bring opportunities, and our waste crisis opens new horizons. The solution lies in collecting, sorting and recycling in specific, and promoting the circular economy in general”.

Then **Khoder Eid** said: ““**Green Track**” was established in 2016, triggered by the closure of the famous Naameh landfill and by the concern that Tripoli’s landfill would exceed its capacity. Since then, we have been able to reach and collect the waste of more than 5,000 homes in Jabal Mohsen. With the help of women volunteers and housewives, we succeeded in spreading the concept of “sorting at source” and recycling in the North.”

**Pierre Baaklini**, Founder of “**Lebanon Waste Management**” confirmed: “Waste is a source of income for any state treasury around the world. However, in Lebanon, our officials would rather focus on short-term, inefficient and costly solutions through landfills that often do not comply with international

environmental standards... which harms people's health and disrupts the economic cycle. Our motto is "Trash to Cash" and we buy recyclable waste and pay every customer at our "drive-throw" kiosks that we set up in all Lebanese areas."

As for **Omar Itani**, he said: "Our mission at "**FabricAid**" is to collect, sort, clean and redistribute used clothes to disadvantaged people at micro-prices, in specific stores that we open in underprivileged communities. Our goal is to deliver good quality clothing into the hands of those who need them, while reducing fabric waste. Through 600 drop-off containers distributed in Lebanon and Jordan, and 15 stores, we were able to reach 120,000 people and distribute more than 600,000 pieces of clothing. We also succeeded in establishing the "largest clothing recycling facility in The Middle East."

In his intervention, **Gaby Kassab** explained: "As a specialized e-waste organization, "**Ecoserv**" was established in 2018 with the aim of spreading awareness around the serious threat posed by electronic waste and used batteries. When dumped in our landfills, e-waste releases toxic chemicals that can pollute the soil, water and air, and ultimately impact ecosystems and public health. To this end, we are promoting the importance of collection, storage, recycling, as well as the proper and safe disposal of this specific type of waste, through more than 140 drop zones and specialized bins available at universities, companies and institutions all over Lebanon."

At the end, **Marc Aoun** concluded: "Our mission at "**Compost Baladi**" is to collect organic waste (food leftovers, agricultural waste, animal waste and tree-trimming waste) from homes, companies and municipalities, and recycle them using the "earth cube" and "container composter" machines, to turn them into compost. Our goal is to reduce environmental pollution resulting from improper disposal of organic waste. Till date, we have been able to positively impact and benefit more than 20,000 farmers in Lebanon. We have also expanded our line of operations to include Jordan and Saudi Arabia."