

Diana Fadel's Speech during the "EcoSwitch Festival 2022"

Good afternoon,

I am very glad to welcome you all at the 2nd annual event, organized by the partnership of two trustworthy institutions: "Fondation Diane" and "Cewas Middle East" plus the "EcoSwitch Coalition" partners... established by the "SwitchMed" program two years ago, in order to support and strengthen the eco-entrepreneurs national sector.

On behalf of all of them, I can tell you, young and less young entrepreneurs, how proud we are, to see you all, here, determined to stay in Lebanon and to contribute in building and re-building what will constitute the future of our beloved country.

You could have easily chosen many other easier paths, but you decided to resist, to work hard and most of all, to innovate in eco-sustainable products and services. You cannot imagine how grateful we, all, are for your smart passions, unbeatable commitments and tireless drive!

Thanks to you, our community of green changemakers is growing despite all the challenges we faced and are still facing in Lebanon.

Fondation Diane is honored to be the implementing partner of SwitchMed, the Green Entrepreneurship Support program in Lebanon, funded by the European Union with the support of MedWaves.

This program aiming to foster green entrepreneurship by strengthening the national ecosystem, create the "EcoSwitch Coalition", a national partnership that has been extended to include 24 support organizations, NGOs or businesses.

These support organizations are committed to empower entrepreneurs in the green and blue economies and to further build that strong national eco-entrepreneurship system that will generate sustainable job opportunities and pave the way for impactful actions in the environment in Lebanon through collaboration, knowledge-sharing and networking opportunities.

We should of course emphasize the support of the "Asfari Foundation" through (Y-Leap) its Youth Learning, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, aiming at supporting the activities of the Coalition through a practice

community of eco-entrepreneurship, innovation labs and a green pipeline support portal...

Our Vision at “Fondation Diane” is to give birth to a new citizen who is aware of his rights and duties, thriving to make Lebanon a pioneer country in Eco-sustainable Development in the region. Our mission is to mobilize the citizens to contribute to Lebanon's Sustainable Development and encourage the institutions to support financially and operationally creative minds who are actively engaged in making a change via the 17 SDGs.

In 2012, Fondation Diane was pioneer by confidently taking sustainability to the next level, while identifying through Viridis, its Green Investment Fund, the very innovative and best Green Start-ups, often in their very early business stage, where no investors nor financial institutions were eager to provide them with the financial and operational support they needed in order to grow and achieve their goals.

Viridis is constantly trying to demonstrate that Eco-sustainability and Profitability are not incompatible but rather reconcilable. It strives to make green businesses emerge and serve as success stories from our country. Until now, we have supported and invested in 14 green start-ups and SMEs in different sectors such as Healthy Food Production, Transportation, Waste Management, Renewable Energy, Eco-tourism and Rural Sustainable Development in addition to the acquisition of RayMondo our green industrial incubator.

Most importantly, we are all here to resuscitate your motivation, dear entrepreneurs, to mobilize and support you, to make you aware of your power as a responsible citizens who act accordingly towards eco-Sustainable Development, hoping that Lebanon becomes again, thanks to you, dear innovators and fighters, the country we dream of, and earns back its nickname “Switzerland of the Middle East”.

Together hand in hand we can make our suffering country greener and rising again! Thanking you for all your invested efforts and wishing you the best of luck in all your future endeavors!