

PITCH IT FORWARD

Investing in Women-led
Innovation

The project "Cultural and Creative Industries" is implemented by the GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut. It improves employment and income opportunities for creative professionals in six partner countries; Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa and operates mainly in the music, fashion, design and animation sectors. In addition to promoting the development of entrepreneurial, digital, creative and technical skills through training programmes, the project aims to strengthen the framework conditions and the ecosystem of the cultural and creative industries.





Pitch it Forward

Investing in Women-led Innovation

A program designed exclusively to empower creative women design entrepreneurs in the culture and creative industries in Lebanon

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About Goethe-Institut Libanon and FANTASMEEM

The **Goethe-Institut** is the **Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute**, active worldwide. We promote the study of German abroad and encourage international cultural exchange.

FANTASMEEM is a program initiated by the **Goethe-Institut Libanon**, adopting a holistic approach towards fostering creative entrepreneurship as well as encouraging collaborations and knowledge sharing in the design industry in Lebanon. The program provides training, mentoring, and networking opportunities and fosters creative entrepreneurship by offering small grants, access to free practice-oriented qualifications, and more visibility for designers from all kinds of design fields in Lebanon.

FANTASMEEM is part of the global project "Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI)" aiming at improving the employment and income opportunities for those working in the CCIs in its six operating countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa) by promoting entrepreneurial, digital, creative and technical skills.

FANTASMEEM Team



Hiba Shehab

Project Manager



Hala Barakat

Project Assistant

About Transformeus

A renowned management consultancy firm specializing in strategic business advisory services. With a team of experienced experts, their dedication lies in helping organizations achieve their goals and drive transformative change. **Transformeus** consulting expertise spans over various industries, offering tailored solutions to optimize operational efficiency, enhance corporate governance, and implement effective operational standards.

As members of esteemed international institutes such as ICMCI and SMDC, the company demonstrates a commitment to sustainability through active participation in the UN Global Compact. With a collaborative approach and deep industry knowledge, **Transformeus** empowers businesses to thrive in a dynamic and competitive landscape while creating a positive impact.

Transformeus Team



Dr. Maurice Mouawad

Consultant / Generalist



Zeina Asfar

Principal Consultant



Yasmine Hammoud

Associate Consultant

The Initiative

The **Pitch it Forward** program is a collaborative initiative between the **Goethe-Institute Libanon** within the framework of **FANTASMEEM**, Cultural and Creative Industries – and **Transformeus Consulting**. This pioneering initiative has been exclusively prepared with a primary objective to provide comprehensive assistance to established creative women designers, enabling them to expand and thrive while acquiring essential skills and knowledge necessary to attract potential investors.

The 23 entrepreneurs taking part in the **Pitch it Forward** have the opportunity to access a series of workshops covering essential topics such as investment readiness, lean business model canvas and effective techniques for pitching and storytelling. The program culminates to a final pitching event where the designers will have an exceptional platform to showcase their creative design businesses in front of industry experts and potential investors.



The Objectives



Amplify Your Pitching Power

Learn the art of crafting compelling pitch decks that captivate potential investors and make your ideas irresistible. Gain the skills and knowledge needed to effectively showcase your business and present your innovative ideas with confidence.



Access expert Guidance

Benefit from the knowledge of industry experts and successful trainers who will guide you throughout the program. Gain invaluable insights, strategies, and practical advice to propel your business forward



Expand your Network

Connect and possibly collaborate with like-minded women design entrepreneurs who share your passion and drive. Unlock new business opportunities through our networking even.



Enhance your business

Have the chance to pitch in front of Industry experts and potential investors, secure funds to expand and develop your business | Start-up.



Master the art of storytelling

Unlock the secrets of impactful storytelling and develop a pitch deck that conveys a clear message to potential investors. Learn how to structure and deliver your ideas in a way that captures the interest of your audience, leaving a lasting impression.

Program Components

Throughout the weeks between August 8th until September 13th, 2023, the entrepreneurs will engage in a comprehensive learning journey that combines online and in-person workshops for a total of 26 hours. Guided by industry experts and successful trainers who will offer their knowledge and insights, the entrepreneurs will receive invaluable advice, strategies, and practical tips to propel their businesses forward and navigate the competitive business landscape effectively.

The following workshops are thoughtfully crafted to help entrepreneurs effectively showcase their businesses and confidently present their innovative ideas.

Entrepreneurship through Innovation Workshop

This workshop shall provide a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship, covering the mindset, essential qualities, and distinctive traits that contribute to the success of entrepreneurs. It also delves into the application of design thinking and focuses on developing the necessary skills to identify and assess potential business opportunities within the market. Preceding the Workshop, a 30-minute introduction where the entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to draw inspiration from an influential guest speaker, meet the organizers and the trainers.

Investment Readiness

To enhance entrepreneurs' business skills and assist them in the preparation of a solid and captivating pitch deck that effectively addresses investors' inquiries, an online investment readiness session shall be conducted.

The workshop will focus on investment attraction strategies, offering insights on how to position a business effectively, creating realistic financial projections such as budgeting, cash flow manage-

ment, in addition to a comprehension of key financial metrics, and the utilization of financial management tools.

Business Model Canvas

A business model canvas online session shall provide entrepreneurs with a structured framework to analyze and develop their business ideas, equipping them with a comprehensive understanding of their business model components and making informed decisions. The training shall emphasize the importance of analyzing and testing business assumptions to validate and adapt their model accordingly. It highlights the on-going process of refining and adapting the business model to meet evolving market demands and optimize business performance. Following the training, a coaching session will be conducted to provide entrepreneurs with the opportunity to present their models based on their respected businesses and address any related questions.

Pitch Deck & Storytelling

Entrepreneurs will also undergo online training sessions focused on perfecting their pitch deck

and storytelling abilities. They will learn the art of crafting captivating pitch decks that leave a lasting impact on potential investors. By developing their storytelling skills, entrepreneurs will be able to effectively communicate their vision, values, and unique business ideas in a way that resonates with investors and propels their businesses forward. The entrepreneurs will also benefit from a coaching session, which aims to provide them with guidance and feedback in refining the content and structure of their pitch deck.

Leadership Skills

Aiming to enhance the abilities of entrepreneurs in fostering a culture of innovation and creativity, this leadership session focuses on forward-thinking approaches. The workshop emphasizes the significance of leadership in the growth and management of a business, providing guidance on developing essential leadership skills such as effective decision-making, strategic thinking, team building, and conflict resolution.

Pitch Performance Rehearsal

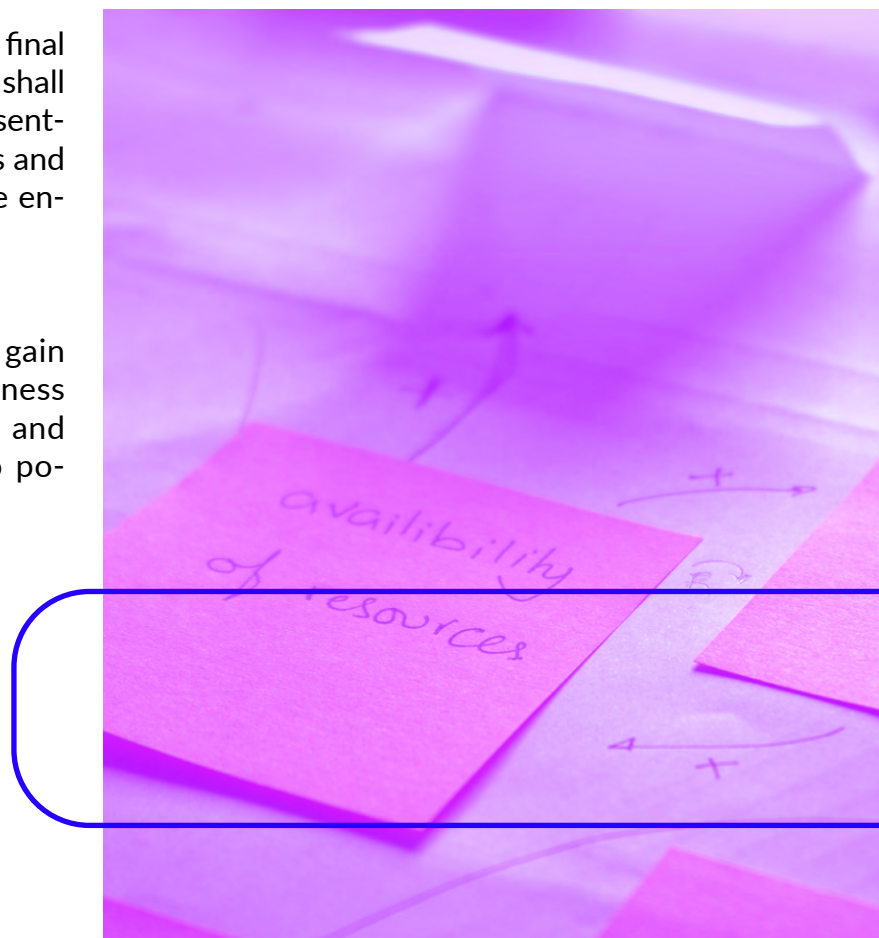
To ensure the entrepreneurs' readiness for the final pitching event, an in-person rehearsal session shall provide them with practical experience in presenting their stories and pitch decks to their peers and trainers within a supportive and collaborative environment.

Finance It Forward

Through this training, entrepreneurs will gain the expertise needed to present their business ideas and financial plans with confidence and precision making them more compelling to potential investors.

Pitching Event

The program culminates in an exciting in-person pitching event, where entrepreneurs will have the chance to showcase their creative businesses and present their pitches to a panel of industry experts and potential investors. This event is a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs to potentially secure funds, expand their businesses and networks, form collaborations, and further develop their innovative projects. Each entrepreneur will get 15 minutes of stage time (5 mins to pitch and 10 minutes for Q&A from the jurors). After the pitching event, a celebration will take place where the four winners will be announced. The winners will receive additional individualized 1:1 mentoring sessions between mid-September and the end of October. Certificates will be handed over to all entrepreneurs for their successful completion of the program.



Schedule

Date	Timeframe	Workshop/ Event	Location	Trainer/Coach
8 AUG 2023	3:30 - 7:00 PM	Entrepreneurship Through Innovation	Online	Andre Abi Awad
10 AUG 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Investment Readiness	Online	Constantin Salameh
14 AUG 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Business Model Canvas	Online	Constantin Salameh
17 AUG 2023	4:00 - 6:00 PM	Coaching: Business Model Canvas Group 1	Online	Constantin Salameh
18 AUG 2023	4:00 - 6:00 PM	Coaching: Business Model Canvas Group 1	Online	Constantin Salameh
21 AUG 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Pitch Deck & Storytelling	Online	Andre Abi Awad
28 AUG 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Coaching: Pitch Deck & Storytelling Group 1	Online	Andre Abi Awad
29 AUG 2023	4:00 - 6:00 PM	Coaching: Pitch Deck & Storytelling Group 2	Online	Andre Abi Awad
4 SEP 2023	4:00 - 6:00 PM	Leadership Skills	In-Person	Andre Abi Awad
5 SEP 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Finance It Forward	Online	Dr. Maurice Mouawad
7 SEP 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Pitch Performance Rehearsal Group 1	In-Person	Andre Abi Awad
8 SEP 2023	4:00 - 7:00 PM	Pitch Performance Rehearsal Group 2	In-Person	Andre Abi Awad
12 SEP 2023	3:00 - 7:30 PM	Final Pitching Event Day 1	In-Person	A panel of jurors
13 SEP 2023	3:30 - 9:30 PM	Final Pitching Event Day 2 (3:00 - 7:30) + Celebration Gathering (7:30 - 9:30)	In-Person	A panel of jurors

Meet the Entrepreneurs



Bahia Jamal

Bahia Jamal is an accomplished interior architect and a respected university professor. She holds a master's degree in scenography and a doctorate in Art and sciences of Art. Throughout her illustrious career, Bahia has always been driven by a desire to explore uncharted territories in her field.

With a wealth of experience spanning 25 years, Bahia now seeks to embark on her own project, driven by a vision that surpasses traditional aesthetics. Her aspiration is to establish a product line specializing in furnishings and decorative items.

Bahia draws inspiration from diverse sources such as cultural experiences, literature, and the boundless world of art. This infusion of varied interests lends her work a fresh perspective and vision, enabling her to create serious and innovative designs.



Camilia Safatli

Camilia Safatli, is a talented interior designer having an impressive 16-year track record of hands-on experience in interior architectural and design project management. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated exceptional proficiency in handling a diverse range of projects and leading cohesive teams from the initial conception to the final turnkey delivery. Her deep understanding of design processes has consistently enabled her to deliver innovative and captivating spaces.

As the proud owner of a design professional firm, Camilia takes great pride in the work of her firm and the talented team that collaborates with her. The projects undertaken by her firm showcase exceptional design and architectural interpretation, serving as a testament to their commitment to excellence. This dedication has proven to be invaluable in fostering effective collaborations with clients and articulating ideas with clarity and precision.



Chrystele Karam

Chrystele Karam, founder of Blocksfinj, a pioneering foam venture based in Lebanon. Blocksfinji is dedicated to the creation and design of foam materials that draw inspiration from architecture, art, and industrial craftsmanship.

With a degree in Architecture, Chrystele's fascination with design and industry was sparked during her childhood while playing amidst the towering foam blocks at her family's foam factory.

In 2017, Chrystele began working with her father, an expert in chemical engineering leading to the development of cutting-edge foam materials and groundbreaking designs, which they proudly brought together under the brand Blocksfinj.

Guided by Chrystele's innovative leadership, Blocksfinj stands as a living testament to creativity and innovation. It sets new benchmarks for the future of foam-based design, showcasing the boundless possibilities when artistic vision and industrial expertise intertwine.



Diane Ferjane

Diane Ferjane's life journey has been one of cultural richness and creative exploration. Born to a Lebanese family, she grew up between two captivating worlds - France and Lebanon. Her fascination with the fashion world sparked a passion that she was determined to pursue.

Diane participated in various fashion shows, theatre productions, and even movie sets as a costume designer.

In 2005, Diane's destiny took a significant turn, when she launched her very own brand.

In 2010 she decided to bring her collection to the capital city, Beirut, and launched her store in the authentic neighbourhood of Mar Mikhael, where her pieces matched the traditional character of the area. However, the tragic events of the Beirut Blast in 2010 brought challenges that led Diane to make a difficult decision. She had to close her physical store, but the demand for her exceptional pieces persisted, inspiring her to adapt and embrace the virtual realm.



Elaina Saadeh

Elaina Saadeh, is a dynamic entrepreneur blessed with a multitude of talents and an array of diverse passions. Her journey commenced with a solid foundation in audio-visual studies, where she masterfully honed her creative and technical abilities.

Entranced by the realm of handicrafts, Elaina embarked on a crochet learning odyssey a few years ago. This new path led her to dive into the art of crochet, continuously refining her skills and exploring various techniques.

To elevate her expertise to new heights, Elaina decided to share her wealth of knowledge with the world. Thus, she created her very own YouTube channel. Her mission is to impart her wisdom and teach people how to craft stunning crochet clothing, with a special emphasis on designing captivating cosplay outfits. Elaina's unwavering dedication to her craft and her engaging teaching style made her an invaluable resource for both novices and seasoned crochet enthusiasts alike.



Farah al Hajjar

Farah al Hajjar, a visionary in the very essence of her name, which signifies “Joy”. Her background in interior design has kindled a unique passion for infusing furniture and spaces with a profound sense of soulfulness. With an extensive journey spanning over five years, which encompasses event planning and product design, Farah has seamlessly embraced sustainability and embarked on a profound shift toward eco-consciousness.

The embodiment of her creative vision comes to life through “BEIT FARAH,” a concept brand that she has established. This innovative venture boasts three distinct lines of products including clothing and furniture crafted by repurposing scrap fabric, integrating traditional weaving, and fostering community involvement to combat textile waste and promote sustainability.

Through “BEIT FARAH,” she aims to revolutionise the design industry, leaving a positive environmental impact and inspiring conscious, creative living.



Jessica Saber

Jessica Saber, a remarkable 33-year-old entrepreneur, possesses a unique blend of creativity, business acumen, and a deep-rooted commitment to sustainability. With a BA degree in Arts, specializing in cinema and television, she honed her skills over 12 years in the competitive fashion styling industry.

Coming from a family of skilled tailors, Jessica’s passion for fashion started early. At 27, she took a leap of faith and founded “VINTAGESOUL_101,” a project aiming to introduce second-hand fashion and redefine sustainable style. Despite challenges in an industry that often prioritizes fast fashion, her determination and belief in her mission drove her forward.

“VINTAGESOUL_101” became a platform to educate the community about the importance of sustainable fashion and its positive impact on the environment. Embracing upcycling, Jessica transformed discarded materials into stylish fashion pieces, showcasing her creative genius and commitment to making a difference.



Laetitia Mourad

Laetitia Mourad, a talented fashion designer and stylist based in Beirut, possesses a solid educational background in Fashion Design and Pattern Making, as well as a Master’s degree in Fashion Styling. Her career includes working at esteemed fashion houses such as Louis Vuitton in Paris and Alexander McQueen in London, where she honed her skills in crafting captivating leather goods like bags, small leather items, and belts.

Currently, Laetitia is embarking on an exciting venture with Paris-based designer and art collector, Youssef Chehab, to establish Faux-Neons, a captivating luxury sustainable brand that celebrates diversity and individuality. Central to their vision is a strong commitment to sustainability, achieved by sourcing eco-friendly materials and promoting ethical practices within the fashion industry. The brand’s essence lies in infusing each garment with exaggerated components, creating powerful statements that celebrate the beauty of daring expression.



Lara Mortada

Lara Mortada, an accomplished interior architect possesses a deep-rooted passion for sustainability and design innovation. Armed with a Master's degree in Interior Architecture, Lara has been leaving her mark in the industry for approximately a year and a half. However, her true driving force lies in entrepreneurship, she channeled her creativity and dedication into the development of "The Loop," a remarkable piece of sustainable and versatile furniture that challenges traditional design norms.

Her enthusiasm for making a difference extends beyond her own projects. she played a pivotal role in conceiving an online platform that connects skilled laborers with interior designers and consumers, forging valuable partnerships.

Constantly seeking growth and learning, Lara remains on the lookout for sustainable projects that align with her vision. She enthusiastically engages with fellow entrepreneurs who share her commitment to creating a better future through design and innovation.



Liliana Halwani

Liliana Halwani, an enthusiastic architect, has navigated her career journey with a steadfast commitment to leaving a lasting, sustainable imprint on the Earth. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she actively engaged in diverse entrepreneurial competitions, sparking within her the ambition to pursue her aspiration of becoming an eco-conscious entrepreneur.

Embarking on this journey alongside Liliana, is Najwa Shaar, a proficient graphic designer. Together, they are working on the idea of utilizing construction waste and natural elements to craft sustainable cladding finishes for building facades. This inventive approach yields a substantial reduction in waste directed toward landfills, thereby contributing to the principles of a circular economy. Moreover, their initiative plays a pivotal role in bolstering Lebanon's culture and creative sectors, placing a paramount emphasis on aesthetics and architectural distinction.



Malak Ghaddar

Malak Ghaddar's interest in glass fusing sparked in 2011, during her pursuit of a master's degree, where her graduate project revolved around creating art pieces from glass fusion. This exposure to glass fusing ignited a deep passion for the craft within her. Furthermore, her fondness for statement jewelry motivated her to explore the world of glass fusing as a means of creating distinctive pieces for her personal collection.

Later on, Malak rekindled her enthusiasm for glass fusing with the purpose of establishing a small business showcasing and selling her handcrafted creations. She found inspiration in the practice of recycling glass from various sources. This eco-conscious approach allows her to breathe new life into discarded materials, giving rise to one-of-a-kind art pieces that embrace both sustainability and individuality in their artistic designs.



Manar Chehab

Manar Chehab, the Founder and Chief Design Officer (CDO) of the impactful start-up “Earth Weavers”, is a remarkable entrepreneur and sustainable fashion designer. Through transformative training and upcycling initiatives, she empowers rural women, creating a positive impact on their lives. With a strong commitment to environmental preservation, she skilfully transforms fabric and curtain waste into breathtaking artistic pieces.

Since 2018, Manar has been the driving force behind “Kimono by Manar,” her own brand that has earned widespread recognition both locally and internationally for its unique creations. Not only does she make a difference through her brand, but she also takes pride in her role as a mentor, having trained more than 25 rural artisans in the art of sustainable design.

Manar’s dedication goes beyond her professional endeavors, as she actively volunteers in various social and environmental programs.



**Margherita
Abi-Hanna**

Margherita Abi-Hanna, a contemporary jewelry designer renowned for her structural lines and architectural intricacies, collaborates closely with local jewelry artisans to create each piece. Her designs exude a fearless sense of style while maintaining a timeless allure that transcends passing trends.

Presently based in the vibrant city of Beirut, Margherita finds inspiration in its vibrant atmosphere and rich cultural heritage, which fuels her boundless creativity. Her academic background in graphic and accessories design has led her to engage in dialogues with various design and art disciplines. These interactions not only challenge her artistic practices but also enrich her creative vocabulary and foster a supportive community of like-minded individuals.

Beyond her passion for crafting jewelry, Margherita strives to spark meaningful conversations and inspire others to adopt a conscious approach.



Maria Hasrouny

Maria Hasrouny is a passionate interior architect with a flair for creating inspiring and beautiful spaces. Specializing in home interior design, she has worked with various clients throughout her career. Currently, as the founder of her own business, she has embraced the freedom to unleash her creativity and impact lives through meaningful designs.

Motivated by the desire to make a difference, she took the leap to help families design a house that reflects their lifestyle. Her goal is to inspire people to design a home they feel connected to, a home that helps them grow.

Throughout her career, she has designed more than 300 residential and commercial interiors. Her vision goes beyond individual projects; She plans to coach other interior designers, and empower them to start their own businesses by providing them with the required tools, and planning guides. Thus, creating a ripple effect of positive transformation in her community, and enabling people to live authentically.



Michella Chehade

Michella Chehade, an immensely talented designer, holds a master's degree in Graphic Design. As a senior digital designer, Michella specializes in crafting captivating infographics for social media and television news. In addition to this role, she actively engages in creating communication and advocacy materials covering various design fields in the context of international causes.

This dual responsibility has played a crucial role in honing her skills and broadening her expertise. Her commitment to continuous learning and staying ahead of the curve in terms of innovation is a driving force in her career.

Michella's ultimate ambition is to establish her very own agency in the future, offering comprehensive solutions to clients worldwide. By synergizing design excellence with her diverse skill set, she aims to effectively communicate messages and reach larger audiences to bring success to collaborative projects and brands.



Mirna Al Alayli

Mirna Al Alayli, a young architect, boasts five years of freelancing experience, specializing in architectural, interior, & landscape designs. Her skills span over various areas, including sketches, 2D drawings, 3D models, and animations. Thriving on challenges, she actively participates in multiple competitions.

In 2022, Mirna took a significant step forward by establishing her own office, by the name Mirna Al Alayli Architects (MAA) for Design & Engineering Consultancy in Lebanon. This move marked her transition from freelancing to building a strong business, with the hope of introducing a fresh approach to the field of architecture.

As an architect with a bachelor's degree in Architectural Engineering, Mirna is characterized by her passion, self-reliance, attention to detail, and logical thinking. Her work showcases a harmonious blend of creativity and functionality, always mindful of sustainable and humane aspects in each project.



Nour Abi Habli

Nour Abi Habli is a passionate and talented professional in the fashion industry. In 2022, she established Wrapped SARL, an emerging local brand where she showcases her expertise in design, marketing, and management.

Through researching trends, sketching designs, selecting fabric patterns, overseeing production, and managing marketing efforts, she creates stylish and trendsetting garments. Recognizing the potential for international growth, Nour also spearheaded Wrapped Brand Readymade Garments Trading in Duque Free Zone, Dubai.

Nour's educational journey in the fashion industry extends beyond her business acumen. She holds certificates in Fashion Design, Styling and Consulting, and Fashion Business.

Beyond her career, Nour Abi Habli's journey reflects her passion, determination, and multi-faceted talents. With an unwavering commitment to the fashion industry, she is determined to make a lasting impact on the world of design.



Ola Shami

Leaving behind the world of mathematics in academia, Ola Shami courageously embraced a new path, dedicating herself entirely to nurturing Qasaed, a brand that weaves poetry into handmade jewelry.

Established in 2017, Qasaed, led by Ola's visionary guidance, has garnered a global following of more than 4,000 clients. By combining the elegance of Arabic Calligraphy with exquisite craftsmanship, each Qasaed creation becomes a vessel for heartfelt emotions and cherished life moments.

Ola, an accomplished poet, not only authored her own poetry book but also had the honor of being featured alongside renowned poets. Join Ola on the enchanting Qasaed journey, where poetry harmonizes with fine craftsmanship, and emotions are eternally celebrated through the captivating world of jewelry.

With the help of an e-commerce website, these poetic treasures now transcend borders, reaching art enthusiasts worldwide and adorning hearts with words that resonate deeply.



Randa Smaili

Randa Smaili, is a talented designer specializing in crochet items. Her journey in the world of crochet began with exploring ordinary projects like tablecloths and garments such as shawls and hats. However, as she delved deeper into the art of crochet, her creative vision evolved, and after two years of honing her skills, she found herself drawn to reimagining these traditional handicrafts in a fresh and contemporary way.

Randa's passion for crochet led her to conceive a brilliant idea - she decided to create safe toys for children, unique handbags, and thoughtful gifts for newborns. Her dedication to bringing new life to classic crafts and infusing them with a modern twist resonated with customers, setting her apart as an innovative designer in the field.

Her designs quickly gained popularity, attracting a growing clientele from various regions in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Canada, America, and France.



Rania Abi Azar

Rania Abi Azar, possessing a Ph.D. in food biochemistry and an established career within the academic realm, found herself drawn into the world of crochet fashion during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fueled by a vision to fashion crochet apparel and dedicated to empowering women artisans, the inception of Melagrana was catalysed by her role as founder and designer. Founded in 2022, the brand is currently engaged in retailing meticulously handcrafted crochet women's clothing with a particular emphasis on sustainability.

In its early stages, Rania undertook this endeavor as a solitary pursuit. Currently, a team of four women actively contributes to the ongoing initiative of Melagrana.

The brand offers a distinct, personalized handmade-to-order service to its clientele. This approach ensures not only the distinctiveness of each creation but also its alignment with the unique customers' preferences.



Rania Habib

Rania Habib, holding three master's degrees in Business Administration, mathematical physics, and digital journalism, embarked on her professional journey as a co-founder of a radio station. In 2014, she embraced a fresh endeavor by establishing "Business Motion," a Digital Marketing Agency with the primary objective of strategically positioning companies and organizations. This involved enhancing brand awareness and fortifying brand identities. Through unwavering diligence and commitment, coupled with a proficient team, the agency earned the trust of numerous clients.

"Business Motion" specializes in crafting intricate content, encompassing captivating visuals. The agency possesses a distinctive skill in constructing compelling narratives while presenting and simplifying complex information. Whether it involves data-driven animations or visually stunning storytelling, the company excels in producing content that captivates the audience.



Salma Yammine

Salma Yammine is a dedicated entrepreneur, businesswoman, and mother of three children. Driven by a profound passion for motherhood and a strong commitment to empowering women, she founded Salma Maternity and Machghalna.

The journey of building Machghalna has been filled with excitement, challenges, and moments of sheer fulfillment for Salma. Witnessing her sustainable workshop come to life and gaining the support of like-minded individuals has been an incredible experience.

With every step taken towards sustainability, Salma's belief in the power of entrepreneurship to create meaningful change is reaffirmed. She remains determined to make Machghalna a symbol of hope and inspiration, extending its impact beyond the fashion industry to touch the hearts of individuals who care about the environment. Each upcycled garment sent out carries a message of love and care for the planet, contributing to a positive impact on both the fashion world and the precious Earth.



**Zeinab
NasserEddine**

Zeinab NasserEddine, the founder of Zoe Gems, has a Master's degree in HRM (Human Resource Management). Her journey into the world of jewelry design began with the guidance of a skilled mentor based in Lebanon.

In August 2021, Zeinab established her brand, Zoe Gems, driven by a mission to create empowering fine jewelry that exudes the richness of vibrant cultural elements. Each exquisite piece is meticulously handcrafted with great care, using responsibly sourced, high-quality materials.

Building on this success, she took a significant step forward in early 2023, launching her own e-commerce website. To uphold her commitment to environmental consciousness, Zeinab decided to maintain a made-to-order business model, ensuring minimal impact on the environment while enabling clients to infuse their jewelry pieces with personal stories, making each creation truly one-of-a-kind.

Meet the Trainers



Andre Abi Awad

International Trainer & Business Advisor

Andre Abi Awad, is a very energetic and dynamic trainer who discovered his passion for training back in 2008. Initially, his workshops focused on Personal Branding, Business Networking, and Creativity. By 2010, Andre had established himself as an authority in the field of Entrepreneurship, and he quickly became a highly sought-after leader within the business and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Throughout his career, Andre has traveled extensively, sharing his unique training style in 54 different countries. His workshops are enriched with real-life stories and experiences, making them even more impactful.

Andre's influence and expertise have been recognized through various awards and accolades. Since 2016, he has been annually selected as the Top Professional Influencer in Lebanon. In 2017, Alhurra TV honored him with the title of Lebanese Entrepreneur Influencer, and he has been representing Lebanon in the Global Entrepreneurship Congress since the same year.

With over 15 years of experience as a seasoned business advisor, Andre has been instrumental in helping entrepreneurs build strong and successful companies. His qualifications as a Certified Value Builder Advisor, trainer, and speaker have solidified his position as a leading authority on business mastery. Over the years, he has supported more than 700 entrepreneurs in pitching and fundraising, making a significant impact on their success.

Beyond his individual efforts, Andre founded Entrepreneurgy, a thriving community of over 5,000 entrepreneurs. This community serves as a valuable resource, providing support, networking opportunities, and essential resources to business owners striving to grow and scale their companies.



Constantin Salemech

Founder & Managing Director of CSTouch

Constantin has a 40-year track record in funding, developing and transforming corporations, SMEs/NGOs and Start-Ups across the world as the CEO of HP Financial Services in EMEA and Asia Pacific (1984-2003) and as the CEO of global investment groups such as Safinvest, AMS Group and Al-Ghurair Investments (2004-2014) and as the founder of CSTouch (2006).

He joined Stanford's Graduate School of Business SEED Program in 2015 and provides advisory services to Stanford SEED social SMEs in both East and West Africa to help high potential SMEs in emerging economies scale and access equity and debt funding to accelerate their transformation journey and maximize their social impact regionally. Constantin was Head of Investments for the WE4F MENA Program (2020-2023) providing investment advisory services to a portfolio of 35 innovative SMEs across the MENA region. He assisted 22 companies raise US\$ 35 million in debt and equity funding in challenging times.

He is the Founding Partner of CSTouch, providing management consulting and financial advisory services to Fortune 500 companies (incl. Schlumberger, Emaar, Eurocontrol, Societe Generale, Al-Ghurair Investments, HP, APM Terminals, BASF, Safinvest, National Holding, GlobalCom, Alk Abelo & Huntsman), SMEs, NGOs and social enterprises in EMEA.

Constantin invested in several high potential and high social impact start-ups and SMEs in Africa, Lebanon and Europe while providing them with mentoring, advisory and coaching services to scale with a solid governance foundation. He delivers executive development workshops on financial management, sales & marketing, corporate governance, impact and investment management, strategic planning and human capital, performance & risk management.

Constantin holds engineering degrees from King's College London (1979) and MIT (1980), and an MBA from Stanford's Graduate School of Business (1984) with a focus on international finance.

Following his engagement as a Trainer in the "Pitch It Forward" program, Constantin will further extend his involvement by joining the pitching event as an investor.

Meet the Jurors

Investors



Eric Mimosz

Founder of Activ'way and Serial Entrepreneur

Eric Mimosz professional journey unfolds as a former international executive who has transitioned into roles as an entrepreneur, investor, board member, and advisor. His vast experience spans multinationals, family-owned companies, SMEs, and startups across EMEA, Asia Pacific, and North America, encompassing various sectors and functions.

He co-founded Activ'way from 2011 to 2022, spearheading its expansion across Europe and North Africa in diverse sectors. As a co-founder of Rio Services between 2009 and 2021, he undertook the setup of its business model, guided its scale-up, and facilitated its merger with a business partner. In the years spanning 2004 to 2010, Eric co-founded MPlus Company and assumed the role of Chairman of the Board, orchestrating the company's growth trajectory, fundraising efforts, and eventual merger with a European leader.

Since 2015, Eric Invested in Auto123 where he played an instrumental role in the company's transformation post-acquisition of a North American competitor. Eric's leadership contributions extended to his role as CEO Advisor and Board Member of Thuasne Group from 2004 to 2008, where he catalyzed the Group's evolution into a global leader through strategic acquisitions in Asia, executive recruitment, the formulation of a Go-to-Market model, strategic planning, and the implementation of a new governance framework aligned with the company's growth objectives, which amounted to over \$300 million.

As of 2022, Eric has also embarked on a journey as a Lecturer in an Entrepreneurship School in Spain. Beyond his professional pursuits, he finds joy in being the father-in-law of Nathalie & Pascal and remains an enthusiastic sports enthusiast.

Investors



Dr. Kamel Abdallah
Managing Director, Vita FB Capital

Dr. Kamel Abdallah is a serial entrepreneur committed to social impact startups and Enterprises. He is a National Food Security expert, specializing in turnaround management and leadership of large agricultural industrial groups in the region. He is the MD and CEO of Canal Sugar, a UAE-Egyptian multi-billion dollar agricultural industrial group in Egypt that aims to ensure Egypt Self Sufficiency in Sugar. With land reclamation of over 800 Sq.km the project encompasses a sugar factory that produces around 1 million tons of sugar a year, making it the largest sugar beets processing factory in the world. For over twenty years, Kamel has led large regional companies with an emphasis on the Middle East with turnaround mandates. He has served in Board Director/Managing Director/CEO positions in Agri/Food based companies, including Baladna QPSC, Aujan Industries/Rani Investments, and Exeed Industries/National Holding. He is a Co-Founder of a regional investment bank and an entrepreneurship academy that focuses on supporting startups in the UAE through mentorship and funding.

Dr. Kamel remains integrated with the industry and with academia, where he has served as Assistant Vice President of the American University of Beirut; and Professor of Strategy and Finance as well as being a tenured Prof and department chair at accredited business schools in the USA. Holder of a PH.D in Strategic Management & Finance, Dr. Kamel is also a mountaineer who has summited different mountains such as Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Ararat, and the highest peaks in the Levant and the GCC.

Investors



Asmahan Zein

***CEO of Ardi Ardak SAL | Partner at
Filovault Crypta SAL***

Asmahan Zein, the current CEO of Ardi Ardak s.a.l. and Partner at Filovault/ Crypta s.a.l., embarked on her journey as a Hotel Manager in Ivory Coast before establishing a profound career in logistics and transportation.

Notably, she played a pivotal role in co-founding Aramex Lebanon, where she dedicated 27 years of service. Within Aramex, she achieved the remarkable feat of becoming the first female President for the Freight Forwarders Syndicate.

Over the course of her illustrious career, Asmahan has contributed her expertise to several significant boards and initiatives. She has served as an Advisor to the Board of LLWB, Vice Chair of Ruwad al Tanmiya Lebanon, Executive Advisory Board Member of CCCL, and Executive Board Member of the Nature Conservation Center at AUB (NCC). As the Founder and CEO of Ardi Ardak S.A.L., she remains committed to entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, she has held positions such as Board Member of Rural Entrepreneurs, Member of RDCL, and collaborator with AUB's ESDU initiatives (Environment & Sustainable Development Unit). Her involvement extends to impactful roles such as Former Co-Chair of 3RF (Reform, Recovery, & Reconstruction of the Beirut Blast), Founder, Former Vice Chair, and Advisory Board Member of Amideast Lebanon, Former President of LLWB, Former Vice Chair of INJAZ Lebanon, and Former Chairperson of Seeders & LWAF (Lebanese Women Angel Fund).

Investors



Rima Freiji

Founding Member and President of Lebanese Private Sector Network | Chairwoman of TANMIA | Board Member & Chief Corporate Governance Officer of Wadi Holdings SAE Egypt

Rima Freiji currently serves as the Chairwoman of Tanmia, an Agricultural Development Company based in Lebanon, while also holding the roles of Board Member and Chief Corporate Governance Officer at Wadi Holdings SAE in Egypt encompassing a range of agricultural, and industrial ventures in both Egypt and Sudan.

Rima's leadership spans various key initiatives within the Group, including performance enhancement, development of top team leadership, corporate governance implementation, family governance strategies, and corporate restructuring endeavors.

Alongside her professional responsibilities, Rima is a devoted mother of three and actively participates in numerous influential associations. She is not only a founding member and President of the Lebanese Private Sector Network but also holds a Board Member position at the Syndicate of Lebanese Food Industrialists.

Rima's affiliations extend to the Lebanon YPO Chapter, the Aspen Global Leadership Network, the Family Business Network, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, and the Lebanese Business Leaders Association, showcasing her dedication to fostering growth and excellence in various sectors.

Investment Enablers



Corine Kiame

President of Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)

Corine Kiame is the President of the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB). From April 2015 till June 2023, Corine served as the Chief Investment Manager at Insure and Match Funding (IM) representing USD 79 Million in assets under management. She supervised the matching & insurance capital process and managed the work of the analytical team.

Corine was responsible for IM operations, including deal fund structuring, deal sourcing, investment project evaluation and valuation, business model validation, value creation and mentoring in investments, and supervision of exits from investments. Prior to joining IM, and for more than 9 years, Ms. Kiame was a Director at SHUAA Capital psc Dubai, UAE, where her responsibilities included Product Development, Strategy and Project Management, and Operations. In 2006 and 2007, Mrs. Kiame worked as an assistant fund manager on several regional funds representing USD 1 Billion in assets under management, covering fifteen Arab markets.

Corine holds a Master's in Finance from Paris IX Dauphine in Paris, an Executive Education Certification from Harvard Business School with emphasis on Private Equity and Venture Capital, an Executive Certification from Massachusetts Institute of Technology with emphasis on Venture Mentorship, is a founding member of the Seeders & Lebanese Women Angel Fund, and an Advisor to the Board of Director of USEK University.

Investment Enablers



Danny Maalouli

***Senior Advisor and Head of Investments, USAID
Lebanon Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF)***

Danny Maalouli is a seasoned investment professional renowned for his results-driven approach, boasting a wealth of expertise spanning over 18 years in domains such as venture capital, fund and portfolio management, global financial markets, macro-economic research and forecasting, multi-asset solutions, and financial modelling. Presently, Danny holds the position of Senior Advisor - Head of Investments at USAID Lebanon Trade & Investment Facilitation project.

Notably, he led as the Managing Partner at Flat6Labs Beirut, where he oversaw the Lebanon Seed Fund, a prominent \$20 Million Venture Capital fund dedicated to nurturing early-stage technology start-ups. Prior to this, Danny made significant contributions as an Investment Manager at Berytech Fund II, a notable \$52 Million Venture Capital Fund headquartered in Beirut, which specializes in supporting growth-stage start-ups at the Series A and Series B levels. His experience also encompasses his role as an Investment Advisor at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in Boston, MA, USA, as well as his tenure as a Senior Equity Trader at SHUAA Capital in Dubai, UAE, where he managed trading activities for multiple Hedge Funds, covering diverse asset classes.

Business Experts



Krystel Khalil

Director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Programs | Coach & Mentor for Social and Green Entrepreneurs

Krystel Khalil possesses over 14 years of experience in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship support, as well as communication and outreach. She has a strong background in program development and management, both within Lebanon and the Euro-Mediterranean region. Her primary focus is on aiding entrepreneurs in the growth of their businesses through coaching, training, and advisory services. Additionally, she is dedicated to empowering various stakeholders to cultivate their entrepreneurship ecosystems through innovation consulting and the design of impactful programs.

Krystel is a certified Mentor from Mowgli Foundation and Confideo Venture Mentoring (a program by MIT); Social entrepreneurship coach by IES Business School (Portugal) and a Green entrepreneurship coach by the EU Switchmed program (Spain) and a Certified EFQM assessor by the European Foundation for Quality Management, (Belgium). She holds a Master's degree in Business Marketing from Saint Joseph University and social entrepreneurship diploma from INSEAD.

Krystel's innovation and entrepreneurship expertise revolve around various sectors including social and green innovation, technology transfer, economic development, women and youth empowerment

Business Experts



Ossama Kaoukji

***Marketing & Creative Consultant |
Trainer, Mentor & Coach***

Ossama Kaoukji is a creative and marketing professional with more than 25 years' experience in strategic and creative senior management. His leadership spans the oversight of creative excellence across 15 country offices within the MENA network. Throughout his career he has worked with iconic brands across several industries, various markets and challenging times. With extensive expertise acquired at Ogilvy Middle East & North Africa, and deep insights of the Arab world markets, consumers, and local culture, Ossama offers today his know-how and competency through consultancy, training, coaching, and mentoring programs aiming at improving and growing participants' knowledge, capabilities, and skills.

He specializes in creativity, branding, marketing and commercial growth by developing creative and cost-effective strategies to help SMEs' brands and projects stand out from the clutter. He adheres to an open way of working the creative process, and considers that every project's innovative idea or activity must provide the power to engage, influence and reward its intended target audience.

Ossama has learned from the best in the creative disciplines and the new media marketing industry. He is passionate to pass it on to a new generation of avid entrepreneurs who strive for business growth while having fun.

Design Experts



Dr. Farah El Zein

Associate Professor | Green Entrepreneur | Researcher & Mentor | Arts and Culture Management Consultant

Dr. Farah El Zein holds the roles of Freelance Design Consultant and Head of the Design Department at AUCY. She has earned a PhD in Sustainable Interior Architecture and has contributed to research endeavors on topics encompassing sustainability, green energy, arts, and social change within the realm of architecture. Her expertise extends to enriching local artistic and cultural initiatives through her work in research planning, facilitation, and training. Her advisory positions have included engagements with The British Council Lebanon and Berytech, where she played a vital role in crafting a Green IPR Guidebook. In 2017, she founded GreenShift, a venture focused on Upcycled Furniture and Sustainable Interiors.

Dr. Farah's active participation in various events is evident, including her involvement in "Meet the Eco Designers - Women in the Spotlight" where she gained recognition from UNIDO for her urban furniture designs. She proudly represented AUCY at Milan Design Week, being selected as a finalist in the Ro Plastic Prize competition. Furthermore, she engaged as a speaker on Design Thinking at a Design conference in Amman organized by Goethe Institute.

Design Experts



Gaby Charbachy
Fashion Designer

With a deep passion for fashion, Gaby Charbachy established his own atelier in 2000, marking the beginning of his journey to craft enchanting red-carpet evening gowns, ethereal wedding dresses, and upscale cocktail attire. In 2014, the Gaby Charbachy brand embarked on a global presence by launching during Paris Fashion Week and in renowned fashion capitals such as New York, Milan, and Barcelona. This brand caters to contemporary, fashion-forward women who delight in transcending conventional boundaries. Distinguished by intricate cuts and meticulous attention to detail, the collection features audacious yet distinctly feminine dresses. In 2019, Gaby Charbachy introduced a ready-to-wear line named O F F S E T, branching out from the main brand with a unique trajectory. This line showcases pieces that are lightweight, comfortable, and infused with an edgy flair.

The Gaby Charbachy brand has adorned Red Carpets on a global scale and graced the pages of international magazines. Its representation spans prestigious boutiques across more than 30 countries worldwide, spanning North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

