



LLWB

LEBANESE LEAGUE FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS
الرابطة اللبنانية لسيدات العمل

HUB HIGHLIGHTS

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A BRIEF WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is a great honour and pleasure for the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) to be launching its first newsletter.



Since the inception of LLWB in October 2006, our aspiration, as founding members, was to share with our members, colleagues and community at large, eye-opening data, and address issues that impact the economy locally and regionally.

The Arab region needs to create 100 million jobs by 2020. Out of the 300 million population of the region, 100 million are between the ages of 12 to 24 years. Hence, the region has the highest level of youth unemployment in the world. Women are at the core of this population.

Despite the significant investment in the education of women in Lebanon reaching 92.5%, unfortunately women's participation in the work force does not exceed 26%. This indicator was among the criteria that prompted LLWB to put the spotlight on the need to stimulate women's entrepreneurship.

In this regard, we at LLWB, also sense the need to showcase success stories of achieving business ladies, demonstrating to the young, educated and competent women in Lebanon that entrepreneurship is the key in taking action as engines for economic growth.

Furthermore, LLWB is keen on soliciting capacity building programs for empowering its members in different areas. Such programs are being tailored-made this month for the newly-established LLWB Bekaa Chapter. This falls in line with our policy to expand LLWB outreach to the different regions in Lebanon.

There has never been more opportune timing than today, for the Lebanese educated women, to make a difference in the economy, by reacting to the demand for a more active contribution. Such involvement, we believe, will be an additional dimension to impact directly the development of Lebanon, empowering progress to a level that all Lebanese aspire to attain.

HANAN SAAB, R.PH
President (LLWB)

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 21: Mind Mapping workshop - Berytech bldg 10th floor Conference room

June: LLWB Networking event

LLWB LAUNCHES ITS BEKAA CHAPTER WITH 13 MEMBERS



The Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) are expanding further north to reach the Bekaa area where a group of 13 women have launched the new Bekaa Chapter in the presence of LLWB president, Hanan Saab, and Program Manager, Eva Turk.

The Chapter will consist of a small Executive Committee that will undertake a mapping exercise of the area to discover the needs of women in the Bekaa. The Chairperson is Najah Jaroush (see Guest Speaker section), the Vice-Chair is Vanda Ramia and the Chapter's Secretary, Lamice Chibani. All are women in business located in the Bekaa region.

The main duties of the Bekaa Chapter is to promote women in business in the area in line

with LLWB's main objectives and pillars.

"Bekaa is considered still as an under-developed area of Lebanon. Many activities are not present here such as capacity-building centers," said Jaroush. "We need to establish a common understanding of solidarity to move on to achieve our needs as a rural society through active associations."

The Bekaa ladies will meet periodically to plan for programs that fit within the needs of the area. They do not hold autonomous status which means that they have to report back with their findings and decisions to the main LLWB hub in Beirut.

"What is important is to highlight the positive aspects where women can grab the opportunity

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by working from home and facing lesser competition in some sectors. These are all compelling factors for any person starting a business," said Eva Turk, Program Manager at LLWB. "We at LLWB are looking to support those women who are willing to take on this type of challenge and make a difference in their society, which is one of the main reasons why the LLWB Bekaa Chapter was launched.

The 13 members who launched the Bekaa chapter are: Najah Jaroush, Inas el Abd Mais, Riwa Terzikhan, Mary Sughayar, Afdouk Nakad, Vanda Ramia, Rose Tabet, Maha Maalouf Kassouf, Claudine Touma Bou Nasr, Haya dassouki Kassem, dalouli el Orra, Ghada Bitar Jaroush, Lamice Chibani.

NEWS



B2B MEETING AT LLWB TAKES OFF WITH GREAT SUCCESS

LLWB organized a B2B meeting on January 8th at the LLWB offices in Berytech to give opportunities for its members to network and create new business opportunities among themselves. The meeting was attended by 15 members where each member introduced her business and answered questions.

The success of this meeting was evident where most members discovered prospects for new business opportunities. It showed how a brief exercise such as this can actually lead to the expansion of one's network and business. Most members exchanged contacts and were provided with brochures and information about other members in the meeting.

The success of this pilot meeting has encouraged members to plan a B2B meeting on a bi-monthly basis.

TOASTMASTERS' PUBLIC SPEAKING WORKSHOP GIVEN FULL MARKS

William Coombe, former President of Toastmasters International - AUB, conducted a two-day workshop on Public Speaking at the Berytech Building on 15th & 16th January, for LLWB members.



The workshop was sponsored by LLWB as a capacity building exercise for its members and was attended by 17 participants. It was mainly related to the use of communication skills in public speaking. Coombe deliberately kept the second day as a day for role plays and activities, with the first day for the more theoretical side of the learning process. This gave the participants an opportunity to practice what they had learnt. Certificates of completion were delivered by the end of this event. Feedback from participants was very positive and they recommended it highly to anyone looking to gain more confidence in matters of speaking in public.

CENTRAL BANK AND ESA ORGANIZE "TRAIN THE TRAINER" PROGRAM

Hanan Saab, President of LLWB, and Christine Sfeir spoke of their experiences as women in business at the "Train the Trainer" Program organized by Banque du Liban (BDL) & L'Ecole Supérieure des Affaires (ESA) in Beirut.



The program was run by Prof. Jacqueline Fendt, from the ESCP Europe. It provided participants with methods enabling them to approach young entrepreneurs with practical advice on starting a business. The two-day training session took place on 21st & 22nd February, at the ESA building. Saab and Sfeir spoke on the second day sharing their success stories of young women entrepreneurs in Lebanon. This was followed by a Question & Answer session.

GUEST SPEAKER

... with **NAJAH JAROUSH** (Chairperson of LLWB Bekaa Chapter)

Why did you decide to get into your field of business?

I graduated as an Agricultural Engineer and in early 1990's, I was asked by a friend of mine to do the garden for her house in Chtaura. Following this, I started to receive more offers to design landscapes. From then on and through hard work, I started to gain the reputation of a landscape architect.

How was it perceived by your community as a woman in this type of work?

At the beginning, the laborers were a little bemused to be working with a woman. But later on, they realized that with me it was serious business and they had to follow a strict working code. I also had to prove myself and work twice as hard as my male counterparts to be accepted in this field. I gave a lot of my own time in guiding the staff, using logic and science. This opened the door of acceptance and trust. Taking the extra mile has made me a reference in the landscape design and execution field in my area.

What are the greater needs in your area? (Education, agriculture, technology, etc.)

We need to establish a common understanding of solidarity to move on to achieve our needs as a rural society through active associations. Agriculture is the best practice followed in Beqaa even though it still needs a lot of guidance and coaching with respect to sustainability and eco-friendly management.

How do you keep a balance between your work and personal life? (secrets)

I have a patient and very helpful mother who gave her time to our children. My 3 daughters are adults now, I involve them in my work and daily experience. My husband is a very understanding person and supports me fully. As a mother, I always feel guilty, having sacrificed the peace and calmness at home and turned it into a hectic demanding life.

If you had to go back in time, would you have done the same things? Why?

If I have to pass the wisdom of the gained experience to new evolving business women, I would say that you learn by doing, and a problem has many facets to approach. Never close the door, study it, analyze it, and the problem will disintegrate. If I have to do it again, I would do it with a confident attitude this time, demanding a strict payment schedule before execution. This is my failing trap! (She Smiles)

Any plans for the future? Work? personal?

The future is a surprising element to me. No matter how much I plan and dream, the future brings me engagements beyond my expectations. Being flexible, I blend in with what is on offer, confident that it is in my best interest. I do plan at work and at home, but I am always expecting the unexpected. The best way to describe it is through these two quotes: "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail" (old saying) and "If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans." (Woody Allen)

EDITORIAL

WOMEN REACH THE TOP FOR THE GREATER GOOD

International Women's day is celebrated every 8th March of every year. It is a symbolic day to offer appreciation, respect and love for women's achievements in political, social and economic fields. In many countries, especially in Eastern Europe and the Far East, such as in Belarus, China (for women only), and Russia, it is marked as an official holiday.

Many question why 8th March was chosen as International Women's day. Rumour has it that it was as a result of a protest that was staged in New York City on that day in 1857 by women who worked in textile factories demonstrating against poor working conditions and low wages. Others in Europe claim that 8th March 1907 was the day when International women's day was inaugurated. In fact, it was finally given official recognition in 1975 by the United Nations.

Whatever is the reason or the purpose of having it on a certain date, the important issue is that it is a day to show solidarity amongst women and with women, in their cause and their plight for equality and fair treatment.

Since then many women have made it to become top in their professions or political and social life. Some of the ones that strike me most are those women who made it in the business world and political life. A world that is mainly occupied by men and to achieve success in these sectors is an even greater achievement.

Anita Roddick, now dame Roddick, is one of those women who started her business following her many travels and interests in environmental activism. She was the woman behind the internationally renowned the Body Shop, with currently 2,100 shops around the world and 77 million customers. She started it with one small shop in Brighton, England. It set her apart from all the others because of her dedication to environmental and social change.

Ruth Handler Barbie was another woman who had a vision. She created the famous doll that we all remember from our childhood, after her own name. The idea came after she was watching her daughter play with paper dolls that looked like adults. Her husband at the time thought it was not a profitable idea, and look where she got to now.

As for political life, we should not forget the Iron Lady, Baroness Margaret Thatcher who was the proof in the pudding when she became the first woman Prime Minister of Great Britain. She proved through her character and determination that a woman can achieve what she wants when she puts her mind to it.

Another great woman in politics who showed, that even when not living in the West, a woman can still obtain top ranks. Sonia Gandhi is one of the wisest woman politicians with vision who managed to claim the love



of her own people with her political skills. Her party won the elections in May 2004, but she refused to take the prime minister's seat. This way she was able to reign over her country without having to be responsible for any mistakes that the government might make.

All these women and many more have achieved and are achieving great things through their vision, passion and love for their environment and people. It does not have to take someone to be a genius or an heir to a great fortune to make it to the top as a woman. Simple ideas with creative and practical means can ensure success.

This is my message to all LLWB members. No matter what you are doing in business, as long as you have your heart in it and the good of your community or environment, you will make it. Always be determined to reach the top no matter how disappointed at times you might be. Never give up and you will eventually reap the fruits of your hard work and unique vision.

SONYA J. SABBAH

WORLDWIDE UPDATES

Eva Turk, LLWB Program Manager, Najah Jaroush and Lamice Chibani from the LLWB Bekaa Chapter attended the MEDAWOMEN organized by BUSINESSMED in Tunis. It took the shape of a forum that focused on strengthening economic ties between countries in the Mediterranean basin. There were 13 countries present and over 10 speakers who participated in the first day panel. Speakers were from GTZ, the World Bank, Vital Voices, and other top decision makers. The second day focused on B2B meetings as a networking exercise.

MEMBERS' CORNER

Maya Bikhazi Noun: (founding member) recently opened a new café in Monnot street called "Le Fil". Maya has also given birth to a beautiful baby girl whom she called Sophia.



Congratulations to Maya & family!

Lina Ali-Ahmad Sadek: one of our founding members has recently given birth to a beautiful baby girl whom she called Marya. Congratulations to Lina & family!



NEW MEMBERS

Teresa Abboud: Illustration and Animation 2D Business Owner

Rania Elias Mhanna: Commerce/Trade/ Retail Para-Medical Business Owner

Haya Dassuky Kassem: Jewelry Designer Business Owner

Nisrine Abou Saleh Slim: HR Training and Consultancy Business Owner



LLWB member and Creative Director at Raidy Printing company **Marie-Joe Raidy**, came up with the "eco-friendly" concept in 2005, the first time in the Arab world. As a result, Raidy Printing has won this year more than 5 international awards and recognitions for innovation, creation and implementation.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

"There is a woman at the beginning of all great things."
Alphonse delamartine

"Women make up more than half the resources available to any country. If that half is not being channeled into the economy and not being made part of the decision making process, then that country's economic potential is bound to suffer."
Saadia Zahidi,
Head of Women Leader's Programme,
World Economic Forum (WEF)

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