



# Marhaba

## Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan Monthly Newsletter – May & June 2021

**RCBC MEETS TUESDAYS AT THE HILTON DOWNTOWN HOTEL, DOWNTOWN, BEIRUT  
BUSINESS MEETINGS AT 19:00**

### Club Charter Date

June 21, 1995

### Club Number

30893

### District

2452 Rotary International

### RI President

Holger Knaack

RC Herzogtum Lauenberg-  
Mölln, Germany

### District Governor

Mazen A. Alumran

Kingdom of Bahrain

### Assistant Governor

Rami Sarkis

RC Beirut Cedars

### RCBC Officers

2020 - 2021

### President

Habib Saba

### President Elect

Sona Kourtian Donigian

### Vice President

Joe Boulos

### Secretary

Farida Najjar

### Treasurer

Diana Cotran

### IPP

Adib Mounla

### Directors

Habib Bassoul

Mona Jarudi

Michel Mansour

### RCBC Online

[www.rcbclebanon.org](http://www.rcbclebanon.org)

[www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/beirutcosmopolitan)

[beirutcosmopolitan](https://www.facebook.com/beirutcosmopolitan)

### MARHABA EDITOR

PP Mona Jarudi

[monajarudi@gmail.com](mailto:monajarudi@gmail.com)

## President's Letter

Dear Fellow Rotarians and Friends,

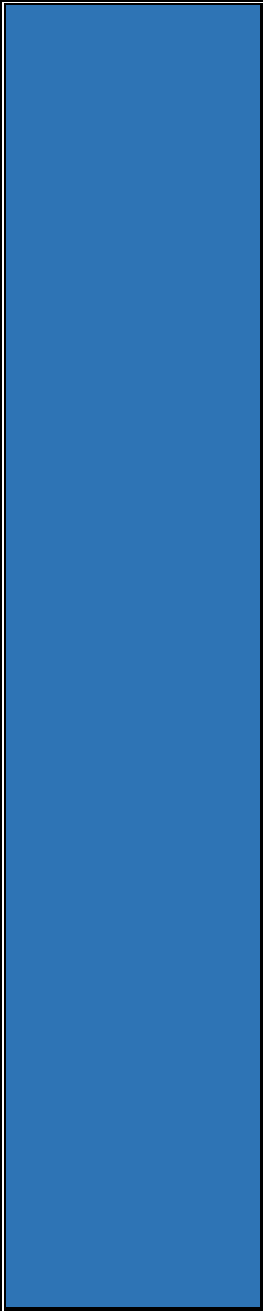
As the Rotary year 2020-2021 draws to a close we reflect on what has been quite an unprecedented 12 months.

We commenced the 25<sup>th</sup> Rotary year of our club in July 2020 with a clear roadmap coupled with our annual theme "Sustainable Living". This was in light of the need to address in a sustainable way the dire circumstances that our country and fellow country men and women were passing through with the situation in the country unraveling and with more than 50% of the population below the poverty line.

One month later with the Beirut Port explosion on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August our capital city Beirut along with our plans for the year were turned on their head. Overnight our priority turned to assisting in the Beirut disaster recovery effort in the aftermath of the explosion. We attended to immediate relief as part of a collective effort with our Rotaractors, Interactors not to mention local and international Rotary Clubs and friends.

We also focused on long term assistance with our support for the Karantina Public Hospital Paediatric section via a Global Grant project in collaboration with our local and international Rotary partners. In addition we contributed to the assistance of other Beirut Hospitals badly damaged by the port explosion (refer to Rotary International Magazine article below).

Continued lockdowns throughout the year and a rampant corona virus may have prevented us from holding physical meetings but it did not dampen our spirit to serve the community. Numerous projects and Global Grants in various stages from submission to execution to handover continued unabated. Regular meetings, with much appreciation to the Programs Committee, were maintained throughout the year via zoom with the additional advantage that we were able to welcome our international Rotarian friends and guests – the world was indeed in the palm of our hands.

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It goes without say that our country is passing through extraordinarily, if not uniquely, challenging times but we can look back with pride, over the last Rotary year, given the role we have played and the contributions we have made to make life for our fellow citizens a little lighter, a little better. It has indeed been a team effort and I would like to take the opportunity to thank our Board, which has been a cornerstone of stability despite the unsettling times, our committees headed by their respective chairs and the members of our club for their support throughout. I would be remiss if I did not also thank our local and international Rotary partners and friends, too numerous to mention here, for their tangible support and encouragement throughout the year. Without the support of all of you the year could not have been the success that it was.

Having just celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Rotary year of our club against all the odds, the story continues and here I would like to wish our incoming President and our incoming Board and club all the very best of success for Rotary Year 2021-2022.

Wishing everyone the best always, God bless!

P. Habib Saba  
President 2020-2021



# OUR WORLD

## DISASTER RELIEF

### Rapid response

*With help from around the world, Rotary clubs in Lebanon spring into action after a major disaster*

**T**HE CLOUDS OF WHITE smoke billowing into the air over Beirut were an ominous sign that something had gone terribly wrong in a storage hangar at the city's port. Then a fireball of orange smoke and flames erupted straight up into the sky.

The massive explosion on 4 August 2020 killed more than 200 people, displaced hundreds of thousands more from their homes, and destroyed or damaged many structures. It was caused by a dangerous mix of materials that had been stored in the hangar — including ammonium nitrate, oil, kerosene, hydrochloric acid, miles of fuse wire on spools, and 15 tons of fireworks.

As the magnitude of the destruction became known, Rotary clubs in Lebanon and around the world asked themselves what they could do to respond to a disaster that was playing out amid a deadly global pandemic. They soon realized that hospitals, some of which had been severely damaged, were in dire need of help. Beirut-area clubs received donations from clubs around the world; some worked with clubs outside Lebanon to apply for global grants from The Rotary Foundation.

Antoine Kaldany, past president of the Rotary Club of Beirut-Cedars, says the needs were acute at the Lebanese Hospital Geitaoui-University Medical Center. "We knew very early after the blast that Beirut's main hospitals were partially destroyed and overwhelmed by the number of victims," Kaldany says. "The emergency rooms were damaged but were still treating the wounded from the neighborhood.

Everybody witnessed the medical staff's heroic actions. Doctors and nurses were operating in dramatic conditions."

Located less than a mile from the explosion, the Geitaoui hospital sustained extensive damage. The Beirut-Cedars club consulted with the Rotary Club of Bad Homburg v.d.H. in Germany and used a global grant to replace medical equipment, including ventilators and monitors for MRI machines, an imaging machine that enables doctors to see inside a patient during surgery, laparoscopic and endoscopy towers, and a cystoscope.

Erhard Krause, the Bad Homburg club's director of international service, says his club didn't hesitate to work with the Beirut-Cedars club; they'd already been collaborating since 2018 on a project to assist Syrian refugee children. The Bad Homburg club also brought in support from nearly 30 other German clubs. "It's satisfying to bring together so many clubs to make a substantial contribution to restoring health care in Lebanon in such difficult times," Krause says.

Also in desperate need of assistance was Karantina Hospital. "The Rotary Club of Beirut Cosmopolitan identified Karantina Hospital for aid because it is the only public hospital in Beirut and because it is recognized for its support of needy pediatric patients. Such patients do not otherwise have easy access to private hospitals," says Habib Saba, the club's 2020-21 president.

When the explosion made international news, the Beirut Cosmopolitan club received offers of help from its network of clubs world-

**17**  
Peace networker

**19**  
Rotaractors boost small businesses

**20**  
Friends for life

To learn more about how global grants can expand your projects' reach, go to [myrotary.org/take-action/apply-grants](https://myrotary.org/take-action/apply-grants).



wide, as well as from clubs it had not connected with previously. "It was a truly humbling experience to have Rotary clubs from all corners of the globe contact us, whether they knew us or not, and, in the wake of the explosion, express their desire to assist," Saba says.

The club partnered on a global grant with the Rotary Club of Whitby Sunrise, Ontario. Steve Rutledge, the Whitby Sunrise club's Beirut relief project chair, says a team made up of members from both clubs reviewed the hospital's critical needs, as well as the scope and estimated costs of the proposed project. The clubs focused on restoring the hospital's pediatric and neonatal wing, using grant funds to replace all of the operating room equipment and provide 19 pediatric beds and other furnishings.

To garner extended support, Whitby Sunrise members created a video that showed a health care worker making a plea for help while

walking through the damaged pediatric ward; then the club developed Zoom presentations. In total, 60 clubs from seven districts in Canada were among the more than 150 clubs across the globe that participated in the global grant. "The scale of this global grant project, in terms of budget and number of collaborating clubs, makes it a showcase of the international goodwill and dedication to service of the Rotary family for a truly worthy cause — children," Saba says.

The Rotary Club of Beyrouth (Beirut) organized another global grant, to supply respiratory devices to a hospital whose equipment had been destroyed as well as to hospitals that received an influx of COVID-19 patients. Rita Méouchy, director of international service projects for the Beyrouth club, says they received support from other clubs in Lebanon and used an online fundraising platform to collect donations. They also received offers

of help from clubs as far away as Nepal, Australia, and Europe.

Those offers were gratefully accepted, but the global grant, with the Rotary Club of Paris acting as the international sponsor and three other French Rotary clubs and District 1660 lending support, was the crux of their efforts. "Receiving a global grant enabled us to execute important projects with large budgets," Méouchy says. "We would never have been able to achieve these projects relying on our limited financial capacity."

Other global grants aimed at alleviating the difficulties at the damaged hospitals included one hosted by the Beirut-Cedars club, with the Rotary Club of Schenefeld, Germany, acting as the international sponsor. That grant will supply medical equipment to St. George Hospital University Medical Center, which was rendered non-operational following the blast; 160 patients had to be evacuated. "The devastating

Like many buildings near the site of the explosion, Beirut hospitals were left with extreme damage, often making it difficult or impossible to treat patients safely. This led to a sudden surge in demand at other hospitals not directly affected by the blast.

Photos courtesy of Habbat Saba and Haggop Dantzagulian


**OUR WORLD**

"Everybody witnessed the medical staff's heroic actions. Doctors and nurses were operating in dramatic conditions."

loss hit the heart of the hospital," the club's global grant application states. "In order to resume its mission of providing excellent health care services to the community, a lot of work was needed on different levels of the hospital."

The Rotary Club of Hammana-Upper Metn also received a grant to aid St. George Hospital; the funds would pay for equipment for the care of newborns. Bruce Allen, a member of the Rotary Club of Castle Hill, Australia, says the club was glad to partner on that grant. "While the international partner is not physically involved in the logistics of the program, we are still very much part of it," he says. His club raised funds in various ways, including starting

a GoFundMe page and a hosting a dinner at a Lebanese restaurant.

Another grant was awarded to the Rotary Club of Kesrouan, Lebanon, which is supplying three humidifiers with high-flow oxygen and one medical ventilator for treating COVID-19 patients. This equipment went to hospitals outside Beirut that have taken in patients who would otherwise have been treated in Beirut hospitals.

Throughout the year since the blast, Rotary members have been steadfast in their support of the Beirut clubs. The assistance "speaks volumes to the Rotary spirit and the universal values that bind us as Rotarians worldwide," Saba says.

— ANNEMARIE MANNION



A global grant organized by the Rotary Club of Beyrouth helped pay for ventilators, including portable models such as this one, which make it possible to care for patients without putting them into over-taxed intensive care units.

**The explosion and its aftermath**

**551 tons**

Power of the blast in TNT equivalent

**200+**

People killed in the blast

**6,500+**

People injured in the blast

**300,000+**

People left homeless by the blast

**\$15 billion+**

Cost of the damage from the blast

**Short takes**

In early 2021, Rotary signed the World Health Organization's #VaccineEquity Declaration, which called on global, national, and local leaders to accelerate the equitable rollout of vaccines in every country.



Take a look back at Rotary's 2020-21 achievements in General Secretary John Hewko's Report to Convention at [rotary.org/conventionreport](https://rotary.org/conventionreport).



**Online Business Meeting With HE Mr. Kwon Young-Dae**  
**Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Lebanon**  
**"FACTORS BEHIND KOREA'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS"**

May 4, 2021

On Tuesday May 4, RCBC hosted HE Mr. Kwon Young-Dae Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Lebanon.

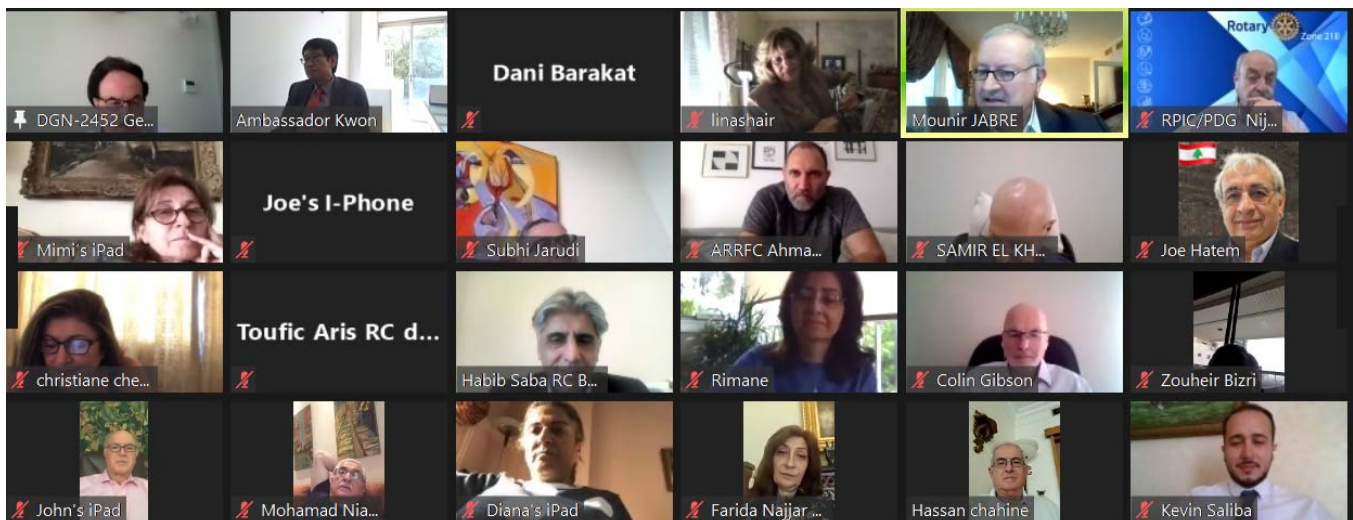


In a talk titled "Factors Behind Korea's Economic Success", Ambassador Young-Dae chronicled the Korean economic miracle from a devastating war that ravaged the country and divided it into two Koreas, to being the present day powerhouse. There were four guiding principles that fueled this transformation: Research and Development led by the State, Export, Investment in Human Resources and a strong work ethics. As a result, GDP per capita rose from less than \$100 in the fifties to more than 30 thousand today.

The evolution of the industrial base is also worth noting, The start was with light industry followed by focus on heavy industry. The next phase was building a strong Service industry and finally turning Korea into a Technical capital-intensive industrial hub. Korea today is gearing up to enter the 4th industrial revolution based on AI, Robotics, Electric car battery and a Hydrogen Electric car.

The journey was not without its many challenges: the Asian Financial crisis two decades ago, and more recently the pandemic that ravaged the world. The values that guided the nation through difficult and good times are called Sum-Bi Spirit Values. Those are based on Loyalty, Piety, Benevolence, Righteousness, and Propriety.

The pride of country and passion was resonant with HE's remarks. If only Sum-Bi will be adopted in countries where the absence of these values is the major obstacle that stops the wheel of development and prosperity from moving forward. Lessons to be learned!



**Online Business Meeting With Mr. Ramy Boujawdeh**  
**Deputy General Manager of Berytech**

**"AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD, HOW CAN INNOVATION LIFT  
A SECTOR AND GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH"**

May 11, 2021

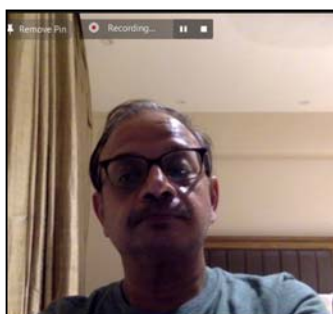


A Lebanese-Canadian, with a BA in Agriculture Engineering from AUB and a MS in Business Management and Economics, Ramy joined Berytech to lead the Incubation and Entrepreneurship Business Development arm that supports innovative Lebanese startups and SMEs. He designed and leads the A.C.T. Smart Innovation Hub initiative, a first of its kind in MENA focusing on both Agtech and Cleantech. He actively supports social causes such as education, sustainability, agriculture, environment and gender equity.

In a highly detailed and scientific presentation, Mr. Boujawdeh identified the challenges in the Agri sector and how to turn these challenges into opportunities.

The challenges identified are: Global food security problems such as population growth, water, land degradation, political turmoil. Other challenges include brain drain, poor practices and lack of innovation. These challenges are juxtaposed with strong human capital, striving entrepreneurial ecosystem, government interest in productive sectors, funding opportunities, international expertise and the MENA market. The recommendations to the road of translating plans into action are:

- Promoting partnerships with NGOs respective ministries to generate interest in the Agri sector.
- Promoting Spin-off with small group of companies engaged in Innovation.
- Working with universities on selection of research projects that can be commercialized
- Holding more Agri- Food Ideation camps to promote the concept of Smart Agri-Food Innovations.

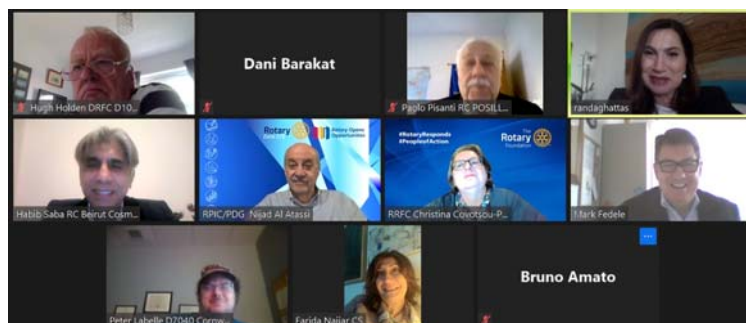


Online Club Assembly With Dr. Robert Sacy  
Head of Mother & Child  
Karantina Public Hospital & Karantina GG International Partners

May 18, 2021



In keeping with club operations, this meeting was earmarked by President Habib to inform and update the members about Service projects, Global Grants in the pipeline and those approved and various club business items of importance. Of special significance was the update on the Karantina Public Hospital Global Grant project with Guest Speaker Dr Sacy present to share with us the activities of the Paediatric section of the hospital. The meeting provided an opportunity to thank all our international partners, who were with us via zoom, for their important contributions to the Global Grant project.





## RC BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN JOINTLY WITH RC METN, RC SAHEL METN AND RC SAIDA

### Online Business Meeting With Mr. Ghassan Rahbani

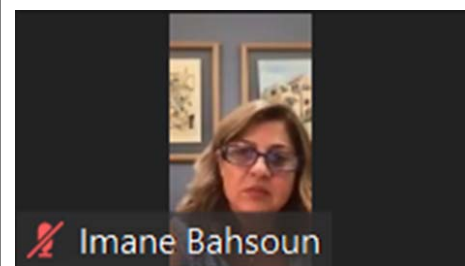
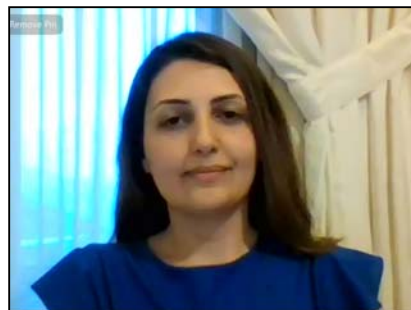
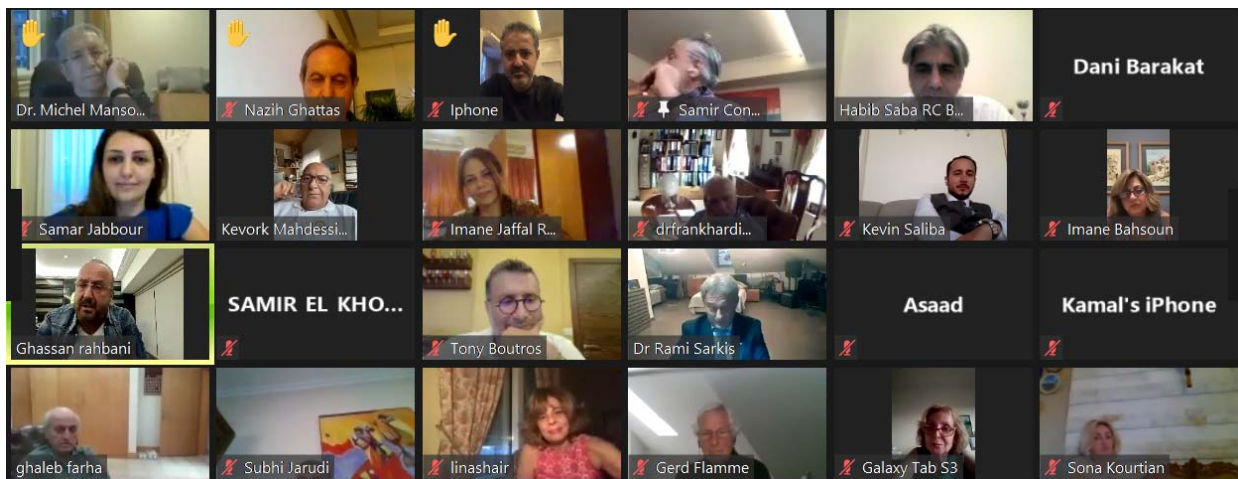
#### Renowned Lebanese Musician

"AN HOUR WITH GHASSAN: MUSIC, CORONA, LEBANON"

May 25, 2021



This meeting provided an opportunity to have a relaxed discussion with Mr Ghassan Rahbani of the renowned Rahbani family. Initiated by AG Rami Sarkis it brought together the four clubs that he was responsible for, RCs Metn, Sahel Metn, Saida and Beirut Cosmopolitan, with their Presidents forming the panel to engage in a Q&A with Ghassan.



Online Business Meeting With Dr. Sherene Seikaly  
Associate Professor of History at the University of California  
"THE MATTER OF TIME: HISTORICAL LESSONS ON SURVIVAL"

June 1, 2021



In a riveting, soulful and sincere presentation, Dr. Sherene took us into a very personal journey of her ancestor Naim Cotran and how the different time periods he lived through witnessed a change of social status reflective of those periods. Dr. Seikaly is an Associate Professor of History at University of California, Santa Barbara and is the author of a book and coedits the Journal of Palestine Studies and Jadaliyya.

Following the lessons of a ghostly ancestor, Sherene Seikaly discussed the story of her great-grandfather, Naim Cotran. Her piece, "The Matter of Time" began in Sudan in 1916 and ended in Lebanon in 1951. She traced Naim's multiple subject positions from a white-adjacent colonial official in Omdurman, to a "backward" and "rootless" native in Palestine, to a dispossessed refugee in Lebanon. Seikaly spoke of the multiplicity and ultimate narrowing of subjectivities under settler colonial rule, which initiated the temporal abeyance and the presence-absence that Palestinians wrestle with until this day. She recently stumbled across family papers that she did not know existed. From them she learned that her great-grandfather had been haunting her thinking and research for the last two decades. She wrote a book about him without knowing it. In her talk, Seikaly took up Naim's invitation to escape national and colonial epistemologies, and ponder the relationships between historical writing and autobiography.

In the discussion, Seikaly fielded questions about the Palestinian condition in the wake of the forcible expulsion of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, the Palestinian Unity Uprising, and the Israeli assault on Gaza in May 2021. She insisted on the ongoing colonial condition and Israeli apartheid that Palestinians are subject to, while also demanding that the moment requires deep self-reflection and critique of Palestinian politics.



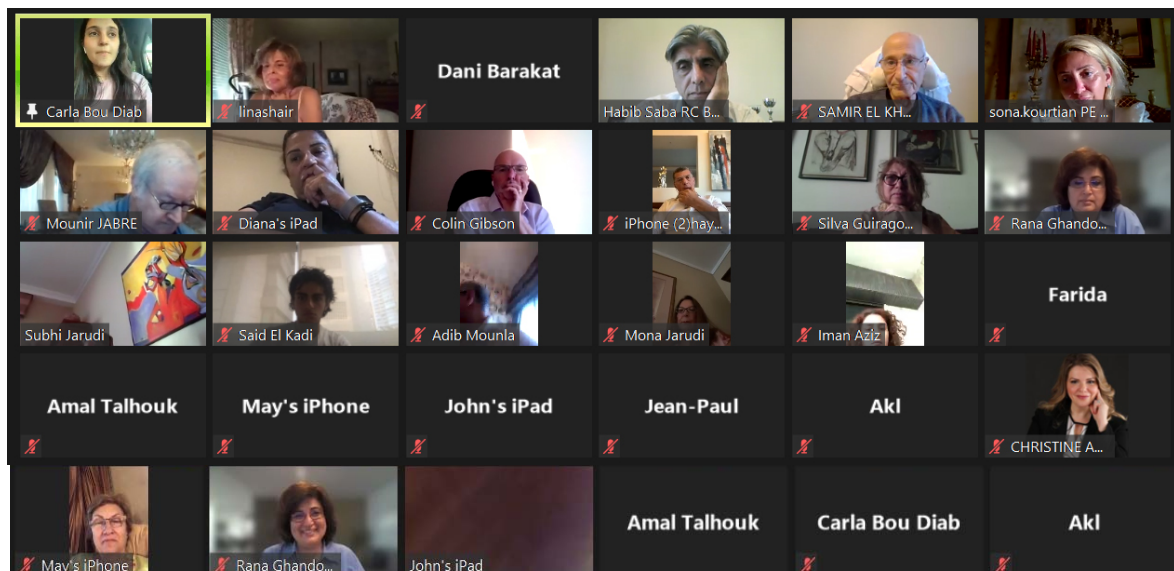
## Online Club Assembly

### Brainstorming session with PE Sona Kourtian For Incoming Year 2021-2022

June 8, 2021

Following a club tradition that was initiated by PP Habib Saba in his first presidency of the club, IP Sona Kourtian called for a virtual brainstorming session on Tuesday June 8. This session was very informal, where certain club matters were discussed such as venues, physical meetings, fellowships while leaving all other matters for the Incoming President to present in her strategic plan for RY 2021-2022.

The meeting was highlighted by the friendly tones and camaraderie among members who very clearly indicated their desire to have one physical meeting a month to keep the bonds of friendship alive and well.





25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY & THE HANDOVER CEREMONY  
BETWEEN P. HABIB SABA & PE SONA KOURTIAN DONIGUIAN  
ARTHAUS - GEMMAYZE

JUNE 15. 2021

In the beautiful garden setting of Arthaus, Gemmayze, RC Beirut Cosmopolitan hosted a very elegant evening for a dual celebration of the 25th anniversary of the club and the Handover Ceremony from P Habib Saba to Incoming President Sona Kourtian Doniguian.

This memorable evening was attended by club members, guests and several international clubs who graced us with their presence on the zoom platform.

The evening was enriched by speeches to mark both occasions from DG Ashot Karapetyan, as well as RCBC founding President Dr. Riad Saade, DGN George Azar and RRFC Christina Covotsu (via zoom).







Three new members were pinned that evening. Welcome to our Rotary family: Dr. Kevin Saliba, Mrs. Iman Aziz and Mr. Vianney Bassey.

## Club Assembly

June 22, 2021

The end of year club assembly provided an opportunity to review the 2020-2021, highlighting the activities of committees, the projects undertaken and the annual review of the financials. It also presented as a farewell meeting for RY 2020-2021 after quite an extraordinary 12 months.



## TOYS OF JOY – EID EL FITR

### ROTARY CLUB BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN INTERACT CLUB OF BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN

MAY 14, 2021



The orphanage was a scene of smiles and joy as several children received Eid El Fitr gifts. In keeping with our annual tradition, Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan Organized Toys for Joy Day on Friday, 2nd Day of Eid 14 May 2021. Due to Covid restrictions and respecting the wish of the Orphanage, Rt. Abbas Sibai together with some members of our Interact Club paid a visit to Dar Al Aytam al Islamiyah in Beirut and distributed toys and sweets to the kids and played games with them which brought lots of happy moments to all involved.

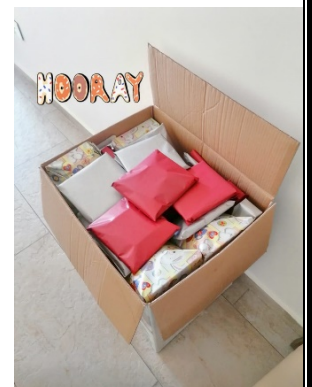
The ages of the beneficiaries ranged from 6 years old to 17 years.

According to Ms. Aisha, the Center administrator, "Rotary family added smiles not only to the kids but to others as well. Quality time and remembering

the kids are more important than the many gifts. It restores hope and faith in positive community ties."



The Rotary Club of Beirut Cosmopolitan is celebrating its 25th anniversary and 1st anniversary of its Interact Club. The club's legacy will keep growing from generation to generation with a motto of Service Above Self. Special thanks to all Rotarians and Interactors who placed efforts to bring smiles and joy to the children. Many thanks go to Interactors P. Said El-Kadi, VP. Celine Effendi, Member Tamer Imad, and Interact Advisor Rtn. Abbas Sibai for the success of this year's annual Ramadan project "Toys of Joy."



## RCBC SERVING THE COMMUNITY

### ROTARY CLUB BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN

### ROTARY CLUB CEDARS AND PARTNERS CLUBS FROM USA, GERMANY AND PARIS

### OASIS DE VIE CENTER

JUNE 1, 2021

- 1- RCBC together with RC Cedars and partner clubs from USA, Germany and Paris handed over Ventilators and PPE to Oasis de Vie center in Achrafieh. This project was made possible through a Global Grant aided by The Rotary Foundation.



### THE GEITAWI HOSPITAL

JUNE 14, 2021

- 2- RCBC handed over to the Geitawi Hospital ventilators and PPE. This was done in collaboration with RC Cedars.





## NEW GENERATION PEACE BUILDING IN LEBANON

JUNE 18, 2021

- 3- After three years of hard work and intensive seven months preparation, RCBC is proud to announce that this Project is finally underway for the first time in Lebanon and the Middle East.

New Generation Peace Building Program in Lebanon was made possible through a Global Grant facilitated by the Rotary Foundation, partner clubs in Lebanon( RC Tripoli Maarad, RC de Beyrouth, RC Keserouan and RC Saïda), D2452 and D 7570 in USA.

280 students from ten top universities across Lebanon applied to the program. 100 were selected and accepted. The director of the program Ms Patricia Schafer and Coordinator Jelena Jevtić arrived in Lebanon and started the workshops for the students to teach them the culture of Peace, and how to Be the Peace in their communities and beyond.

This project stems from our belief that youth are the future and there is no better cause than to cultivate a generation of peace builders amidst the chaos we live in.





INTERACT CLUB BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN

A STAR IS BORN

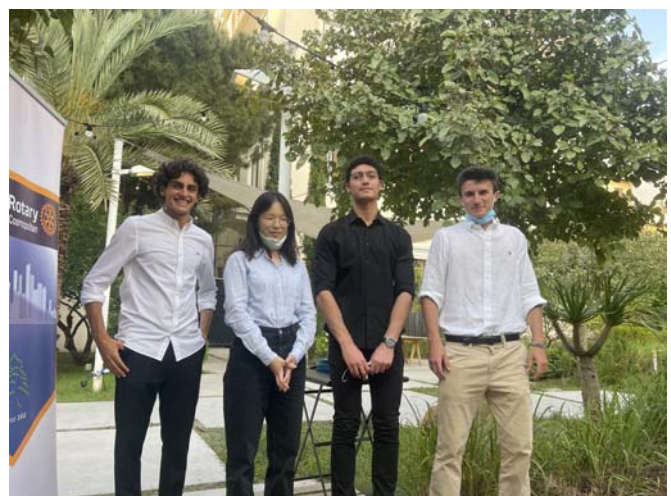
ANTWORK IN HAMRA

JUNE 4, 2021

After almost three years, RCBCIC finally was inducted formally into our Rotary family. A group of young people full of promise and signifying hope for the future of Rotary in Lebanon. In the presence of P Habib Saba, IP Sona Kourtian, Rt. Abbas Sibai ( RCBC liaison to the Interact club) and PP Mona Jarudi lovingly given the title of Godmother of this club, 15 young adults were pinned and welcomed.

Our best wishes go to this energetic group for a bright future and we look forward to doing lots of projects with them.

The event took place on Friday June 4 at Antwork in Hamra. Congratulations to all.



## HAPPY NEWS

1- RCBC proudly welcomed to our world baby Gabriela Boulos, first grandchild of Joe and Doris Boulos. Wishing the family lots of happiness and tons of smiles with their little angel.



2- Club Secretary Haitham Kurdi and family recently celebrated the graduation of their daughter Naya. Wishing the new graduate success and a bright future.



***Many Happy Birthday Returns***

**May**

Mounir Jabre  
Nasr El Baba

**June**

George Beyrouti  
Ghaleb Mahmasani  
John Edde  
Kaven Saliba  
Mimi Hamam

***THE END***