



***RCBC Marhaba: 2021-2022***  
***Issue No. 2***  
***September***

## ROTARY CLUB BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN

Charter Date June 21, 1995  
Club Number 30893  
District 2452 Rotary International

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Marhaba Editor  
***PP Mona Jarudi***  
[monajarudi@gmail.com](mailto:monajarudi@gmail.com)

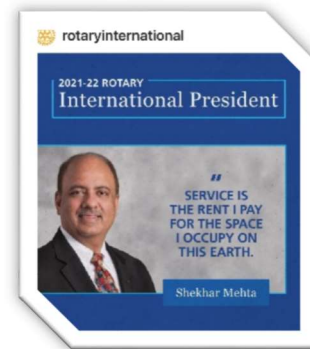


**SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES**  
District 2452

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## Letter from the editor

PP Mona Jarudi



*After months of hibernation, we are back, dusting off the cobwebs and cranking up our engines of Service to a higher gear. Despite all what our country has been passing through, our club Beirut Cosmopolitan was always in the lead of finding projects to help our communities rise up from their woes and help them see the light of hope. We can never mention enough our gratitude to all our partners in Rotary all over the world for helping us realize our goals.*

*Yes, we are back and our first in-person meeting on September 28 showed how much we missed our fellowships and personal interactions. Throughout the lockdowns during the pandemic, Rotary provided the umbrella for Rotarians to stay engaged, focused and active in community service. Clubs managed to retain their members and in some instances attract new ones. Interactions among clubs, locally and globally, rose exponentially thanks to the power of online meetings. Moreover, the message from Rotary International President Shekar Mehta "EACH ONE, BRING ONE" resonates loudly among us and every club is determined to grow the Rotary family and increase the avenues for Service.*

*This month, our club focus was education which is also RCBC's President theme for this year: Education in Lebanon. This sector which used to be one of the best in the world, is suffering with the decline that Lebanon is experiencing. We are all working together to find ways and means of keeping this sector afloat to ensure a better future for our children. There is no better investment than that of education and eliminating illiteracy where needed.*

**SEPTEMBER**

**BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY MONTH**

"Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself."  
John Dewey

Rotary

TAKE ACTION: Join Rotary, Get Involved

Icons: Hand, Heart, Lightbulb, People, Book, Building

### **BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY MONTH**

**"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people"**

— Chinese Proverb

## Online Club Assembly

### VIANNEY BASSE

New members Classification Talk

SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

After a month-long summer break, the club reconvened on September 7 in an online meeting. President Sona welcomed everyone and briefed the members with updates of activities and work progress of the different committees, with special appreciation for their diligent work over the summer break.

This briefing was followed by the second classification talk introducing the club's new member Rt. Vianney Basse who transferred to our club from Rotary Club Shanghai Elysée. Vianney's journey with Rotary began in 1990 when he was a Rotary Youth Exchange Student in Michigan, USA. This experience at a young age entrenched him in the world of Service which later on in his career prompted him to move from Corporate life to entrepreneurship in service.

### Rotary Club Shanghai Elysée



After years managing countries in crisis at the office of the French Prime Minister, to being an advisor for international and administrative affairs in France, Director at PNB Paribas, a partner with a head hunting company, he came to Lebanon as the Lead Delegate and Head of Operations for IECD- Institute European de Cooperation and Development and SDA. His mission in Lebanon is providing vocational training to underprivileged youth in many fields. Recently he signed an MOU with Schneider Electric Energy Company in Lebanon that will help hundreds of students in 13 technical institutes ensure sustainable and best in class online education to earn certification and prepare for a better future.

His work as a Rotarian in Shanghai reflects his humanitarian side and love of service in the community. Vianney was instrumental in starting Shanghai Butterfly Football Cup to help kids with a very rare genetic disease Epidermolysis Bullosa. This disease makes the skin so fragile that it can tear at the slightest touch. 32 companies participate in this event for fundraising.



Rotary Youth Exchange Student 1990-1991  
Michigan, USA



**A warm welcome to our new member Rt. Vianney**



Online Business Meeting With **Mr. Walid Katergi**  
Associate VP of Development (AUB)

**"SCHOLARSHIPS: THE KEY TO THEIR FUTURES AND TO OURS AS WELL"**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

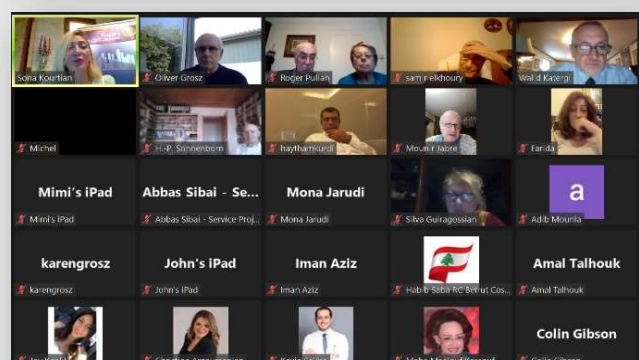
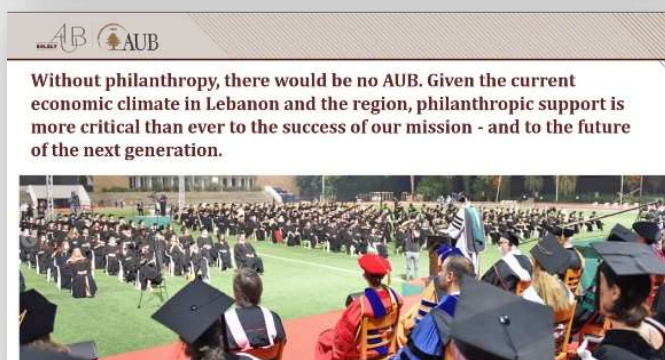
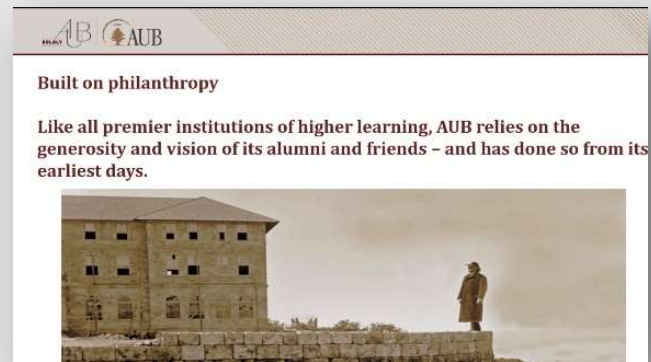


September in Rotary is the month of Education and Literacy. To highlight the theme, our club hosted Mr. Walid Katergi, Associate Vice President of Development at the American University of Beirut. He addressed club members and guests on a most relevant topic nowadays: education challenges in the dire economic situation that Lebanon is passing through.

Mr. Katergi joined AUB in 2003, a 155 yr old prestigious American Institution that also includes a 300-bed quaternary care Medical Center. He leads the fundraising team for AUB and works closely with the team in New York that fundraises for the Americas. He earned his CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive) in 2012, first one in the Middle East.

In a detailed and comprehensive talk, Mr. Katergi clearly affirmed that the situation in Lebanon is worse than anywhere else due to its multi layered challenges: COVID-19 pandemic, economic and financial collapse and the disastrous impact of the August 4, 2020 Beirut Explosion. Every Lebanese has been affected but the effect on students has been more profound. Some cannot pay to enter a university and those who are university students cannot find the financial means to graduate.

AUB deeply recognizes the importance of education for a better future. In the past years, AUB dramatically increased financial aid to the needy students and have come up with different models that philanthropists can use to assist AUB in funding these scholarships and aid. The need, however, far outweighs the resources at hand. That's why AUB reaches out to donors, philanthropists and alumni to bridge the gap for students and give them the necessary cushion to see their future materialize.



**Online Business Meeting With Dr. Fadi Asrawi**  
Associate VP of Development (AUB) / Professor  
Dean of School of Business / Administration & Economics  
Haigazian University

**"THE IMPACT OF THE LEBANESE FINANCIAL CRISES ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION"**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021



Following through with the theme of September, RCBC hosted Dr. Fadi Asrawi to talk about "The impact of the Lebanese financial crisis on higher education".

Dr. Asrawi is currently the Dean of the faculty of Business Administration and Economics at Haigazian University, one of the oldest universities in Lebanon. He has a PhD in Economics and Public Policy from the University of Southern California. He had an illustrious career that landed him in the academic field that is close to his heart.

Dr. Asrawi started his presentation by painting the all too well known grim picture of the country in all its sectors. He went over all the factors that led the country to its abyss. It's true that Lebanon historically, experienced periods of instability but it never sank so low especially in its most important sector, education, a sector that was always a source of pride for every Lebanese. The institutions of higher education were hit hard by the failing economy coupled with the crippling effect of COVID-19. University leaders are faced now with having to make difficult decisions to keep their institutions solvent.

The economic and financial crises has had far reaching effects on both the supply and demand sides of higher education. On the supply side, higher education institutions have experienced cuts to multiple revenue sources, including charitable giving and endowments. On the demand side of higher education, the downturn of the economy has affected incomes and unemployment rate, therefore there is a reduction in economic well-being and stability. Unfortunately, universities cannot rely on tuitions alone to keep them operational. They rely heavily on grants, endowment returns and fundraising, all of which have been proving difficult in the past two years which is reflecting on the number of scholarships that universities can give to their needy students, plus all the cost cutting measures needed to keep universities viable.

On a lighter note, Dr. Asrawi highlighted the long standing alliance between Haigazian University and our club, Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan. Haigazian founder Stephan Mehagian was a Rotarian in Phoenix, Arizona. The Past President John Markarian was an honorary member of our club. Moreover, Haigazian is involved with two of our Global Grants: NewGen Peace Building project where ten students participated in a peace project finalized on September 19, with RCBC Rt. Christine Arzouminian mentoring this team. And the other GG still in the pipeline is the German Evangelical Academy of Technology in Abaiy, where students will be taught vocational business management and Haigazian was going to be the Beirut Campus of GEAT. This GG was initiated by the late Tony Asfour with PP George Beyrouti.

Dr. Asrawi concluded this in-depth presentation with words of hope that recovery of our Lebanon is possible, albeit difficult and necessary steps have to be taken. Recovery will be even more probable when the political will exists and the well-being of the country is put above all.



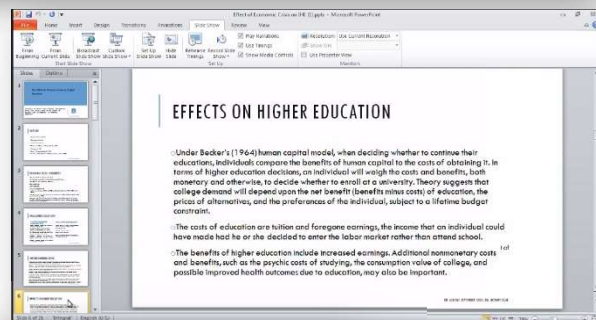
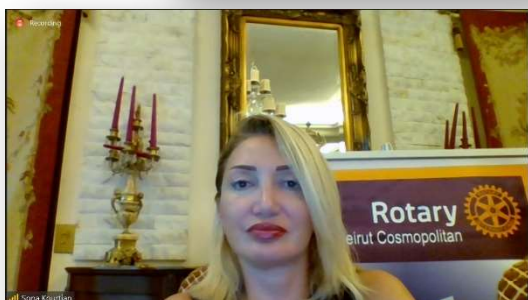


## CASE OF HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY



"What encapsulates the past 65 institutional years is neither the troubles of Lebanon, nor our high-profile events, conferences and accomplishments. It is really our mission that continues to be inspired by a powerful legacy built around a name, Armenag Haigazian a Christian martyr, a man of faith, a learned personality, a profound thinker, and a committed leader who loved his Armenian people and its land, and immersed himself in the noble service of all humans. Eventually, the evaluation of 65 years is a matter of a spirit and an ethos. It is the respectable people the University has prepared, the values it has instilled in people in and around Haigazian, the peaceful community it has created despite the trials of time, the hope it has generated for the young generations, the resilience it has projected, the researchers it has empowered, the vast and deep knowledge it has imparted, the family atmosphere is has woven, and the uprightness it has instructed. It is a value system, based on a mission, in line with a longstanding and far-reaching Armenian Evangelical educational philosophy. The fruits of all the above are transmitted through the holders of more than 4,500 degrees from Haigazian, thousands of other alumni, and many more thousands of trained teachers and leaders." ~ Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian

DR. ASRAWI, SEPTEMBER 2021- HQ- ROTARY CLUB

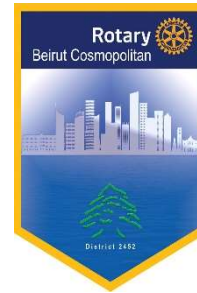


**Business Meeting in collaboration with RC de Beyrouth  
With Mr. Maroun Chammas**

*Former President of Petroleum Importing Companies of Lebanon  
Vice Chairman & General Manager of Medco Holdings*

**"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE"**

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021



On September 28, Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan together with Rotary Club de Beyrouth hosted Mr. Maroun Chammas, Vice Chairman & General Manager of Medco Holdings, to address the audience on the most important and pertinent issue plaguing Lebanon today: Oil and Gas Crisis.

This meeting was the first in- person meeting after a long hiatus imposed by Covid. It was very highly attended by members of both clubs, and members of Rotary Clubs in Lebanon: RC Aley, RC Beirut Cedars, RC Beirut Center, RC Cadmos, RC Saïda, RC Tripoli, RC Hammana

Upper Metn. DGE George Azar and AG Ghada Ayoub and many other distinguished guests graced the evening.

Mr. Chammas was introduced by P Sona. Mr. Chammas entered the entrepreneur world at the age of 12, which led him and his brother in 1995 to become pioneers in Lebanon's digital frontier by establishing the first internet access company IDM and in 2018 by investing in Cable Vision, the largest content and TV broadcasting company. While representing the third generation of the Chammas family as vice chairman and GM of Medco Holdings (Number one National oil and Gas downstream company) and through his role in Berytech for 15 years, he plays an active role in shaping the ecosystem of Lebanon by supporting and nurturing Lebanese innovation venture capital and entrepreneurship. In 2018, he was awarded Lebanon top 100 from Fortune Magazine.

In his sobering remarks, Mr. Chammas explained the historical background of the current fuel crisis the country is experiencing today and more importantly, how the country can overcome this miserable situation and return to a semblance of normalcy. He stated that the crisis really started several years ago when the Central Bank, joined by the banking sector, started facing a hard currency imbalance between demand and supply. To address this issue, the Central bank resorted to the so-called, financial engineering to attract injection of hard currency deposits to the banking sector, by offering high and unsustainable interest rates on those deposits. Sadly, and in the absence of real structural reforms that will reduce government appetite for deficit spending, it all came to a screeching halt with the start of the revolution in October 2017.

Lebanon needs approximately \$10 million a day to meet its energy needs of Diesel fuel and Petrol. The end user price of both items was heavily subsidized by the government which compounded the deficit run by the government. To address the situation, the government, finally, decided to lift the subsidies of fuel, in spite of running the risk of social unrest as a significant portion of the population, of over 60% who are currently below the poverty line, will not be able to afford the much higher prices. The problem is compounded by the large scale smuggling across the border because of the significant price differential that exists between the two counties.



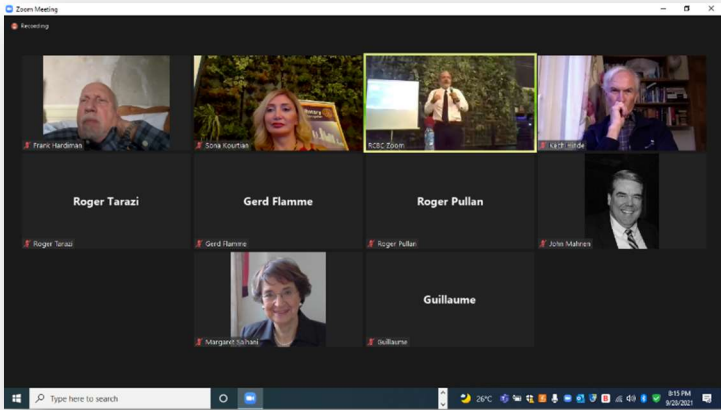
Mr. Chammas concluded his in depth analysis by stating that the crisis will markedly ease when the smuggling is largely controlled and the subsidies completely removed. He also suggested that the product coming into Lebanon should be CONTROLLED to only satisfy the needs of the Lebanese market. And the subsidy should be for certain people only, by creating a platform with QR Code so the person can apply using ID card and Driving License. Also, Lebanon needs to develop its public transportation system to address the needs of the underprivileged and the poor. One would hope that the current government will take seriously its negotiations with the IMF and the donor countries as a first step in the right direction to heal this country.

This very important seminar was followed by a fellowship evening where everyone enjoyed seeing one another after a long dry spell, putting the not- so- good memories of lockdown in the recesses of our minds.

**CHEERS to Life and Rotary Fellowship Spirit!**









# Rotary Network Reaching Out

One of the perks of being a Rotarian is the sense of belonging to a large local and international family. When a Rotarian is on a personal or business trip, they can reach out to any Rotary Club, attend the meetings, forge new friendships and explore avenues of Service.

With this spirit, RCBC RT.Jean Paul Moubarak visited recently RC Paris Quai D' Orsay where he was warmly received. Present at that meeting was IP Liliane Nachar, Karine Sinander from RC Orgryte-Goteborg (Sweden), PP Gregor Engels from RC E- Club Cologne, Germany, PP Pierre Yves Samson and other friends.



This meeting led to fruitful discussions exploring avenues of cooperation between RCBC and the two prominent French and German Clubs.

In August, Minke Haveman and Yvanka Hellugie, two Rotarians from Rotary Noord-Groningen, The Netherlands, were visiting Beirut and reached out to P Sona. With no advance planning, they were treated to a wonderful spontaneous program of a walking visit through Beirut to show them the city with a special attention to details.

This visit left our Dutch friends with such good memories that translated into financial support for one of our projects this year targeting Education in Lebanon.

**RCBC is very thankful to have friends who care from all over the world!**





MANY  
HAPPY  
RETURNS



**September**

Rabab Safieddine - September 1

Sylva Guiragossian - September 9

Karim Naamani - September 15

Christine Arzoumanian - September 21

Vianney Basse - September 21