

## From “Hill” to “Hell”, we won’t give up

**From October 2019, economic, political and financial crises have hit Lebanon, affecting all aspects of life: the scene has resembled a snowball, descending from the “hill of paradise” (where most believed they lived) down to the “hell” that everyone is now struggling to leave.**

In brief, all sectors have deteriorated: the local currency, which has lost 90% of its value against the US dollar, public health and social security, accompanied by inflation and economic recession and followed by inevitable negative growth and a sharp decrease of GDP. Even Worse has been the illegal and incomprehensible capital control implemented by private and the Central banks so that access to bank deposits has been virtually denied!

For nationals and foreigners alike, these crises have been the hardest felt in the history of Lebanon or further afield.

Influential decision makers, while celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lebanese government instead of taking recovery action and legislative measures, have done virtually nothing. The majority of the population believes that most government and legislative leaders have fallen willingly into a deep coma, so as to maintain the dominance of ‘the establishment’ over all aspects of Lebanese life: after the last four years it might be said that to swim the English Channel would be easier than to accomplish a simple transaction in public office.

It is clear that every Lebanese individual and entity has been affected by the situation: employees, companies, middle and small enterprises, freelancers and inevitably the NGOs; the list goes on... Since the major role of an NGO is to support and help individuals and communities in need, it is obvious that demands would increase in times of crisis. NGOs cannot support others without economic

assistance, so those in Lebanon have been struggling over the last four years, with high and continually increasing demands meeting low and decreasing financial resources.

At AEP, board members and the executive team, as well as our local and international friends, are all working hard to keep the association functioning effectively. The aim is to maintain our mission and continue the work our predecessors started 40 years ago: to support our executive team and their families, despite the downfall of their salaries and, most important, to assist – from our modest resources – targeted beneficiaries who remain in need. For us, giving up is not an option; we will continue in the stormy sea, though it may be arduous and challenging, since the shore of safety is yet far away.

On behalf of AEP, I should like to thank all the “achievers”, in particular our local donators and international sponsors: we are still surviving due to your generous and endless support.

**Unfortunately, Lebanon is still in the middle of a dark tunnel. Our promise to all who trust & believe in our mission and to those who are supported by AEP, is to continue with the same spirit, armed with little more than faith, solidarity and hope. We believe and hope that everything must have an end and that at the end of the dark tunnel a light will rise. Meanwhile we will keep moving...**

**Antoine Eid**  
Treasurer – Board member



# Success stories

## > Amal Hazimeh | expert in homemade preserves

Originally from Saraaine in the Bekaa region, Amal Hazimeh is a 57-year-old mother. An excellent cook, she sells her own preserves, such as stuffed grape leaves, pickled eggplants, pepper molasses, and jams, all of which are highly appreciated by her clients. To finance the glass bottles and jars needed for packaging her specialties, she borrowed \$500 from AEP. The loan allowed her to expand her production to include vegetable oils, which, unlike preserves, are not seasonal products and so can provide her with a steady income. She now works from home and sells her products at local markets in the area.



AMAL HAZIMEH



AMIRA DIB

## > Amira Dib | a scent of thyme and olives

Amira Dib, aged 49, lost her husband two years ago. With four children to support, including a daughter with special needs and a young boy under 15, she had to take matters into her own hands. After participating in an AEP training course entitled "How to Start a Business and Manage Your Budget," she applied for a \$300 loan from the association to purchase raw materials to produce marinated thyme and olives. With the support of her neighbors and volunteer associations, to help with marketing, she started her business and opened a small shop where she sells her homemade products, all of which have proved very successful.

## > Rana Kazan | hello artist!

As a 37 years old mother, Rana Kazan is passionate about painting. After training with other artists and exhibiting her work, she dreamed of opening a center to teach painting and the plastic arts. As the country's economic situation was an obstacle to realizing this project, she taught at home before obtaining a \$1500 loan from AEP to equip the "Art of Soul" center she had longed for. Today, she is fully fulfilled in her profession and, of course, her art!

## > Ghorra Moawad | online ready-to-wear

Ghorra Moawad, a widowed mother of three children, is 56 years old and lives in the Zgharta region. Eight years ago, she opened a boutique selling imported or locally made clothing, which was doing well until, due to the economic crisis, she was forced to relocate her store closer to home, to reduce rental costs. When the Covid19 pandemic hit, she bravely turned to online commerce, with the help of an AEP loan to save her business. She managed to repay the loan by promoting quality local products, including colorful bracelets she made herself, appealing to a young clientele.



GHORRA MOAWAD



RANA KAZAN

# Success stories



HANADI YOUSSEF

## > Hanadi Youssef | family grocer

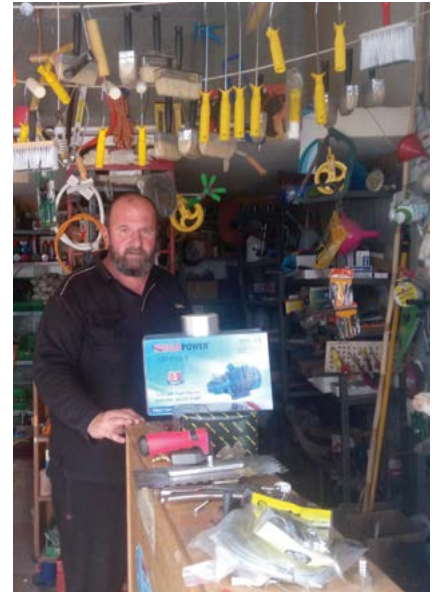
Approaching her fifties, Hanadi Youssef lost her husband after ten years of marriage due to a serious illness. Being disabled herself, she returned to live with her mother who entrusted her with the management of the family grocery store. However, the decline of the Lebanese pound affected the store's supply. Hanadi sold her stock without being able to replace it, quickly emptying the shelves. She then turned to AEP to obtain a \$1000 loan to purchase in bulk. One year after obtaining the loan, Hanadi merchandise successfully manages the store. Her shelves are stocked, and she meets the needs of her customers. She has fully repaid the loan and is now seeking another to protect against any future unforeseen circumstances.



RAED ISSA

## > Raed Issa | house renovator

Raed Issa, originally from the Batroun region, works in the security forces. He is married, father of a single daughter, and lives with his ill mother and unemployed elder brother. As his pension is no longer sufficient, Raed specialized in house painting and renovation, becoming renowned for the quality of his work and competitive rates. He also provides stable employment to his brother, who assists him on projects, thereby avoiding the need to hire other workers. To purchase the scaffolding and essential tools he lacked, Raed took out a loan from AEP. Today, he earns a decent living and can provide for the needs of his entire family.



JIHAD CHAKAROUN

## > Jihad Chakaroun | specialist in sanitary products

Originally from the Nabatieh region (southern Lebanon), Jihad Chakaroun is one of our eldest and most loyal borrowers. He began his career in his father's sanitary products shop in the Ghazieh region. Drawing from his experience, he returned to his village of Roumine to establish his own business in the same field. Five years ago, he applied for a \$3000 loan from AEP to expand his range of products. This initiative allowed him to build a loyal customer base in the village and surrounding region. After repaying his initial loan, Jihad applied for further loan of 9,000,000 Lebanese pounds in 2022 to remain competitive. His business now provides for the needs of his two sons and daughter.



RIMA BAYYADA

## > Rima Bayyada | livestock breeder

Rima, a courageous thirty-year-old, is married and a mother of two. Her husband, Mounir, works in agriculture and livestock breeding. Faced with economic difficulties and increasing expenses related to the children's education, Rima applied for a loan from AEP. With this money, she bought seeds and livestock feed, which increased their income through the sale of milk and livestock. Furthermore, the acquisition of new animals provided employment for one of Mounir's brothers. Today, thanks to this loan, Rima and her husband benefit from additional income that alleviates their financial difficulties.

## Objectives for 2024

- > Remain true to AEP's mission
- > Expand our outreach
- > Diversify AEP's portfolio
- > Leverage awareness of AEP's reputation
- > Strengthen our Financial Stability

## Emmaüs Asia Regional Board Meeting in Lebanon : 02-05 April 2023



Members of the Regional Office of Emmaüs Asia with AEP team

The meeting of the Regional Office of Emmaüs Asia was held in Beirut, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Two days were dedicated to meet and discuss the following:

- 1- Self-sustainability plan for Asian groups
- 2- Perspective for 2023 ASP & FAP programs
- 3- Discussion with Basma & Zeituna representatives on Post-emergency & Reconstruction projects for support to Turkey and Syria earthquake victims
- 4- Session with an external expert on Emmaüs' first global report on its fight against poverty
- 5- Meeting with Arc En Ciel representative to discuss the ongoing projects aligned with EI objectives
- 6- Advocacy, political actions and campaigns

The last day was spent in North Lebanon, on the field with AEP team to meet several active borrowers and further encounter the needs of the beneficiaries and to make sure that the values, goals and mission of the association are met.



Meeting with Members of the Regional Office of Emmaüs Asia



### B5 project update

As of December 31, 2023,

**527 grants**

have been successfully disbursed through AEP to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) impacted by the Beirut port explosion, representing a significant contribution (~20%) to the overall success of the B5 project, funded by the Lebanese Financing Facility (LFF), a multi-donor trust fund established in December 2020 and managed by the World Bank and implemented by KAFALAT SAL.

### The artisanal production of chocolate

This year, **1,250 kilos of chocolate** were prepared with great care by seven mothers passionate about this work for more than 10 years. AEP chocolate is a mission of professional assistance, encouraging small artisans to realize their dreams and contribute to the need of their households. This high-quality artisanal chocolate is made with an utmost love, affection and know-how to offer our customers an exceptional taste.



## ASP 2023 : Annual Solidarity Program Funded by EI



Presentation of certificates following training

**The initiative consisted of supporting both current and potential borrowers (small entrepreneurs) and AEP employees (high and mid-level employees). The scope of support for those pillars consisted on delivering trainings and workshops to:**

- Empower borrowers by offering training to ensure potential startups and pre-established businesses grow: A total of 8 comprehensive training sessions were conducted, reaching 130 active, young and potential entrepreneurs. The sessions covered financial literacy, budgeting and leadership development topics.
- Equip AEP employees with a capacity building program: two training sessions on Digital Marketing and one on Communication and customer relationship management were held.



**130**  
**entrepreneurs**  
have benefited  
from 8 training sessions

## FDF Project : A helping hand for green fingers



Through this project funded by FDF, AEP was able to support its borrowers and staff by:

### – Offering subsidized loans to farmers

Sixty-seven small farmers have benefited from this initiative. Thanks to FDF, we were able to offer subsidized loans to these entrepreneurs which had a significant impact on their businesses and livelihoods, both in the short and long term. It provided them with access to credit, improved productivity, boosted their income, reduced poverty, and had a positive impact on the economy.

A total of 20 young individuals were provided with subsidized loans, enabling them to establish their own businesses. By not burdening them with excessive financial commitments such as high interest rates and fees, we have helped these young entrepreneurs to gain faith in their capabilities and become productive contributors to society. We firmly believe that supporting youth in starting their businesses is a crucial step towards achieving sustainable development and fostering economic growth in the community.

### – Supporting the AEP team

This support had a significant impact on both the well-being of our workforce and the overall productivity of the organization. The current economic challenges and the sharp devaluation of the Lebanese pound have created an immense financial strain on our employees, making it increasingly difficult to cope. With this support, we have not only helped to alleviate their financial burdens but have been a source of motivation and stability during these uncertain times.



# Achievements

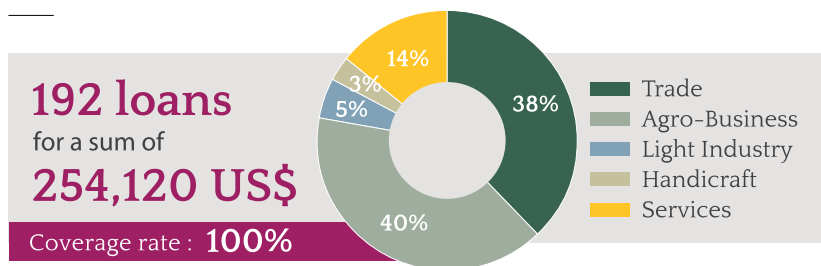
Ever since its foundation in October 1984 until the 31<sup>th</sup> of december 2023, the “Parabank” has granted:



Comparative table between years 2017-2019 and 2020-2023 highlighting the below figures

	Number of Disbursed Loans	Value of Disbursed Loans (in USD Fresh)	Average Loan Size	Youth	Women	Jobs Created
2020-2023	718	\$ 547,108	\$ 762	37%	42%	45%
2017-2019	1342	\$ 5,312,555	\$ 3,959	41%	37%	65%

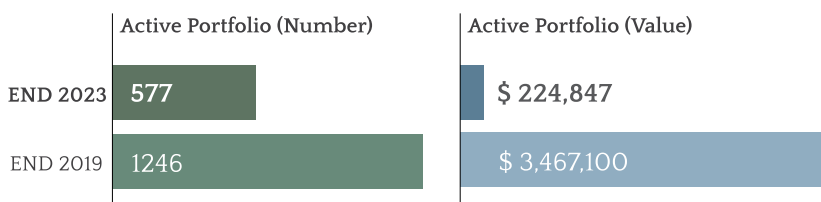
## Year 2023 Status



## Regional distribution of active portfolio

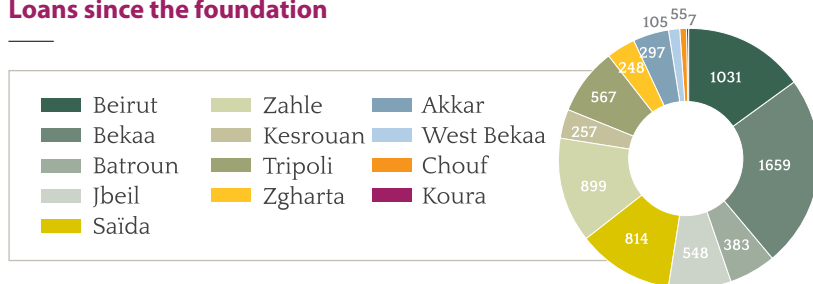
Region	Number of active loans
South	45
Beirut	29
Tripoli	47
Akkar	80
Zgharta	51
Koura	27
Batroun	25
Jbeil	30
Central Bekaa	65
North Bekaa	126
West Bekaa	33
Chouf	19

## Comparative chart between year end 2023 and year end 2019



NB: Portfolio shrunk due to Lebanese currency devaluation during crisis; Disbursements resumed in Fresh USD loans, starting January 2023.

## Loans since the foundation



**President :** Camille Chedid  
**Vice-President :** Wafaa Abou Charaf  
**Secretary :** Dolly Haddad  
**Treasury :** Antoine Eid

**Members :** Chady Rached, Roger Melki, Nicolas Sbeih, Janet el Tawil

**Planning and coordination :** Lara Hassoun

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## How to help the AEP?

The AEP needs your financial and/or technical solidarity and support. If you are convinced with the efficiency of its socio-economic action, many participation options are proposed to you: donations, loans, professional advice for the creditors or informing your neighborhood about the goals and actions of the AEP.

### YES, I WISH TO HELP THE AEP

Name and family name (Mrs., Ms, and M.) \_\_\_\_\_

Complete address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### BY DONATING

I wish to pay the annual subscription :

100 Euros

or 100 US\$

I wish to make a donation to support the AEP in its action :

Amount of the donation \_\_\_\_\_

L.L. or

Euros or

US\$

The donations are paid to the AEP via :  check,  postal check,  cash,

Bank transfer: IBAN : LB7300220000000242112219500 N° compte: 0242112219500

IBAN : LB020022000002400X0122195000 (US\$ fresh account)

IBAN : LB74002200000069400122195XF Account N°: 69400X0122195900 (Euros fresh account)

Swift Code : MEDLLBBX Bank Name : BANKMED - ACHRAFIEH BRANCH

### BY ADVISING

I wish, depending on my competences, to advise the creditors in their professional activity.

Field \_\_\_\_\_

available time \_\_\_\_\_

### BY INFORMING

I wish to inform about the goals and actions of the AEP.

Number of required bulletins \_\_\_\_\_

- Check the mentions that interest you and send this page to the AEP address.

**The team of the AEP is at your complete disposal for any information on this number: 01/382610 from 8h till 16h from Monday to Friday**

AEP's Address

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