

WeMed  
Mediterranean  
Sustainability  
Award 2022

# WEMED MEDITERRANEAN SUSTAINABILITY AWARD 2022

Success stories of sustainable  
businesses in the textile, clothing  
and fashion sector.



This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of MedWaves the UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre for SCP and Texfor and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union or the Programme management structures.

# About the STAND Up! Project

There is a pressing need for transition to an environmentally and socially responsible circular model in the textile sector, a traditional key industry in the Mediterranean with an undoubted cross-border nature. The very word “textile” seems Mediterranean like: clothes cross the sea basin from textile manufacturing to clothing production and from consumption to re-use and recycle. The solution to accelerate this transition is innovative entrepreneurship, which, in addition to its positive environmental benefits, will generate employment in the region. This transformation is the underlying idea behind STAND Up! which intends to support textile entrepreneurs and eco-innovative ventures in 5 countries and help them seize the business opportunities that the green evolution will generate. To achieve this ambitious goal, the project will undertake many actions in training, financial grants, market stimulation, technology transfer, IPR protection, etc. As a result, the SMEs of the textile and clothing sector will be more competitive and, at aggregate level, the value chain will be strengthened, and new Mediterranean cross-border linkages established.

The main objective of this project is to enhance scalable, replicable and inclusive circular economy ventures in the Mediterranean by developing an ecosystem of business support, innovation, and technology transfer that will lead to sustainable job creation for youth and women.

STAND Up! has led an increase in the income of existing green SMEs as well as the creation of new sustainable textile enterprises. This has generated a natural demand for new jobs that has been met by high skilled people. Concretely, 400 ideation-stage ventures have been supported to help them generate employment opportunities and 20 early and growth stage ventures have been assisted in maintaining stable employment and create, at least, two new direct jobs each.

Besides this direct and indirect impact, the stimulation of innovation and sector aggregation have minimized negative environmental impact along the garment lifecycle and facilitate the region’s transition towards sustainable consumption and production in the textile and clothing industry. All in all, the project has marked a significant step change in each region’s ability to harness the power of eco-innovation and entrepreneurship in the textile (Italy and Spain) and clothing (Lebanon, Tunisia and Egypt) sectors.



STAND Up! project is funded by the ENI CBC MED Programme (<https://www.enicbcmed.eu/>)

**The Project is led by MedWaves, the UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre for SCP (Barcelona, Spain), and is jointly implemented by the following Project Partners:**

TEXFOR. *Confederation of the Spanish Textile Industry (Sabadell, Spain)*

BTF. *Berytech Foundation (Lebanon)*

SEKEM. *Development Foundation (Egypt, Ash Sharquiyah)*

CETTEX. *Textil Technical Centre (Tunisia, Tunis)*

PRATO. *Prato Textile Museum Foundation (Italy, Toscana)*

CITET. *Tunis International Center for environmental Technologies (Tunisia, Tunis)*

**THE PROJECT’S DURATION IS 39 MONTHS (JULY 2020 - SEPTEMBER 2023).**

For more details, see <https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/stand-up>



## About WEMED AWARD 2022

WeMed, the Mediterranean Sustainability Award, is a Flagship Initiative of the Mediterranean strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), a strategic guiding document adopted by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention, for all stakeholders to translate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional, sub-regional and national levels of the Mediterranean region.

The WeMed Award is organized by MedWaves, the UNEP/ MAP Regional Activity Centre for SCP and recognises success stories of sustainable businesses and other actors supporting them. It raises awareness about the role of sustainable entrepreneurs as key drivers for the transition towards a green, circular, and blue economy in the Mediterranean, as well as the challenges that they face and the important role of different actors to support them (public authorities, business support organisations, educational organisations, financial actors, civil society organisations...). The award also offers visibility to the contributions on behalf of ventures within the green, blue and circular economy to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the Mediterranean region.

2021 was the first edition of the award that take place periodically with different thematic focus and categories.

In this second edition, organized by MedWaves and Texfor – Textile Industry Confederation, the award recognizes success stories of sustainable businesses in the textile, fashion and clothing sector. This edition is funded by the ENI CBC Med Programme in the framework of the STAND Up! project – Sustainable Textile Action for Networking and Development of circular economy business ventures in the Mediterranean. The project aims at enhancing scalable, replicable and inclusive circular economy ventures in the Mediterranean by developing an ecosystem of business support, innovation, and technology transfer that will lead to sustainable job creation for youth and women. It is jointly implemented in Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Spain and Tunisia by MedWaves, Texfor, Berytech Foundation, Sekem Development Foundation, Tunisian Textile Technical Centre, Prato Textile Museum Foundation and the Tunis International Centre for Environmental Technologies.

The aim of the current edition was to:

1. **Recognize successful cases of start-ups with sustainable business models within green and circular economy in the textile, fashion and clothing sector in the Mediterranean region, led by women (no age limit) and/or youth (up to 35 years old).**
2. **Inspire other start-ups/entrepreneurs within the textile, fashion and clothing sector from the Mediterranean region into integrating environmental and social innovations within their business models.**

## This catalogue presents the top start-ups proposals submitted to the WeMed Award 2022



Winners of the 2022 Edition: Rifò, Hoopoo, Sepiiaa and Grade A

Founder

Palestine\_ Nablus

## *Aisha Dweikat*

My name is Aisha Dweikat, a green business owner & circular economy addict. My education in interior designing together with my passion about the environment enabled me to start an innovative green startup that is taking part in achieving ecological impacts in addition to supporting females to survive local circumstance as in Palestine.



In 2013 the company started out making jewelry from silver and discarded olive wood, before expanding in 2015 into accessories based on salvaged fabric from factories and workshops before throwing it to landfill. From tote bags to table runners. All designs feature aspects of classic Palestinian artwork. “My design is about environment meeting heritage”. This mix produces the perfect souvenir for the curious and environmentally conscious shopper.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

Passion and love to work with design and creating something of several values from waste based on my skills and knowledge.

As a design school graduate, I had challenges in finding my dream job especially within high unemployment rates in Palestine, but my project allowed me to create an opportunity for myself to work and develop my skills and experience in design in addition to creating job opportunities for other females in marginalized areas. The ambition is to create a high-quality Palestinian brand that is marketed and promoted outside Palestine and raising awareness about circular economy values and culture in Palestinian society.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Accumulation of textile waste in the streets of Nablus.  
Problems of excessive consumption and environmental pollution.  
The absence of a product in the local market with designs, sizes and colors that meet the customer's desire.  
Main goal is to spread awareness about excessive consumption, which will eventually be reflected in the reduction of solid waste, and at the same time the recycling of fabrics and artificial leather that have not yet been delegated to landfills and those that are on their way to be. Sent to landfills.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

Lack of funding sources for this sector.  
The lack of a sound infrastructure at the present time there are no ports or airports.  
Lack of experienced and skilled manpower in this field.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes, I believe that there is a qualitative shift in the way textiles and fabrics are produced and consumed towards the path of sustainability, with the existence of institutions and organizations that support sustainable production and consumption initiatives and work to put pressure on decision-makers to change excessive consumption policies and enact laws that support investment in these industries.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

I joined the SwitchMed platform in 2016, which had a great impact on the development of my work and helped me move forward, whether through training, incubation mentoring, or through the opportunities available to participate in all events and funding opportunities at the level of the Mediterranean countries. And since Stand Up is one of SwitchMed partners, there were opportunities available to attend trainings and seminars via the Zoom platform organized by Stand Up.



## Founders

### *Laura González*

PhD in Textile Engineering.

Five years in research and teaching. Ten years in pattern making and tailoring.

### *Carla González*

Graduate and Master in Textile Engineering. Four years in R&D and management of circular economy projects.

### *Ariadna Crespi*

Graduate in Textile Engineering. Master in Industrial Engineering. Four years technical textile for furniture and commercial technician.



Bäloop is a pioneer in the development of B-One, a plastic material 100% recycled from textile waste. We revalue textile waste, mainly destined to be incinerated. We are a benchmark in the sustainable market, reintroducing waste back into the industrial value chain, generating a circular economy for the textile sector.

Bäloop is a triple impact company, since we obtain environmental, social and economic benefits.

In addition, bäloop acts as a circular economy consultant for companies in the textile sector, helping them to improve their processes and revaluing their textile waste.

Why did you decide to launch your business?

Bäloop was born in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, when single-use textiles became much more noticeable in our society and generation became massive.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Bäloop revalorizes the most difficult to recycle textile waste: single-use textile waste and mixed textile fibers. By revaluing these wastes, we prevent them from going to incineration or controlled landfill, avoiding all emissions derived from these practices. It also allows companies to generate valuable products with the textile waste they generate.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

The biggest problem we face is process innovation, which in the end means a significant increase in the cost of production, which is very difficult to assume for small companies. In many cases, it is also difficult to access technology because companies are focused on production and not on innovation.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Absolutely yes. Consumers are increasingly aware that another consumption model is possible and better than the current one. We need to decrease in many aspects to return to value durable, repairable and ethically produced products and proximity.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

The project has helped us to enter an entrepreneurial ecosystem where we can see ourselves reflected and identified. We have also been greatly helped by the experts we have surrounded ourselves with to improve our business model. Also, the economic bonuses have helped us to finance pilot tests.



**Barbara Annunziata**

Sustainable Fashion Designer.

Architect.

Academic lecturer in Accademia Italiana fashion design University.

Digital Business Development Officer.

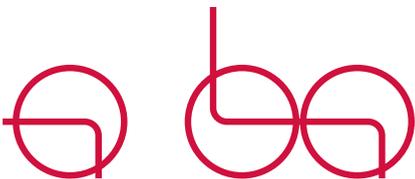
Blockchain e Tutela del Made in Italy.



The a-ba project designs and creates an entirely sustainable fashion product, traced from the yarn to the dress (blockchain), recounting the ethical work of the Social Tailoring that makes it and the creativity of those who design it.

The storytelling and the supply chain are entrusted to an emotional-label (QR-code) communicating with the final customer who becomes the ambassador of the new philosophy.

FROM FIBER TO CLOTHES. a-ba proposes an 'architecture of the body' with a design for-all, an ambitious project, economically virtuous and sustainable setting new standards of a circular economy production process. a-ba is a 100% made in Italy product. (Rome-home made)



Why did you decide to launch your business?

a-ba changes the philosophy of wearing clothes: buy less, use better. In contrast to the fast fashion model, we trigger a revolution in cyclicity through an ethical and transparent supply chain, using natural or recovered fibers, with low environmental impact / reprocessible / disposable / compostable.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

We offer performing garments that combine comfort, ergonomics, transversality, style. A simplified design that reduces production times and costs. We offer the added value of an inclusive working model: prototyping and production are entrusted to Satoria Sociale Action Women of Castel Volturno (CE) which sees five Nigerian women protagonists of a job insertion process that can trigger a virtuous circle by matching different cultures and traditions.

What is the biggest problem/challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

Use secondary raw materials, reprocess old garments, save water in the production cycle and reduce co2 production. Reintroduce the production of hemp, we were the first exporters in the world, during the 1930s! Being a raw material that requires less water. Furthermore, hemp production waste is used in many different fields: medical, construction, etc.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

There are major changes afoot on the part of fabric manufacturing companies. I am lucky enough to collaborate with a company in Como that produces certified fabrics and is making the whole supply chain transparent through blockchain technology. I think the road to sustainability is clear enough, more effort needs to be made to undo the negative effects produced by fast fashion in the past.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

The STAND Up! project has increased my awareness of ethical choices to be made upstream. The use of the green business model tool has provided me with greater critical skills regarding my entrepreneurial choices.



### *Celina Tamagnini*

She entered the world of marketing and communications as soon as her feet touched the ground in Europe, from Argentina. In 2019, after 20 years working for communications departments across diverse sectors, a change in direction saw her create Circoolar, a business with a positive impact on people and the planet.

Her mission: Female empowerment.

Her saying: “It doesn’t matter what you’ve been, what matters is whom you aspire to be”.

### *Luis Ribo Ramon*

His passion for branding and sustainability has led to a career involving both, combining the most commercial of objectives (profit) with the most social (purpose) for 20 years. In 2019, he crossed paths with Celina and joined the Circoolar world.

His mission: Uniting social purpose and work.

His saying: “People will forget what you said or what you did, but they’ll never forget how you made them feel”.



Circoolar wants to help companies wear their sustainability with pride. It is the first completely ecological and ethical workwear company in Spain and the first to be awarded the Bcorp certification.

Circoolar is a company with a three-fold impact: firstly have an environmental impact because we manufacture our garments from eco-friendly materials; we then make them in local social workshops to whom we donate 10% of our profits (women and immigrants in vulnerable situations) and professional workshops in Spain, Portugal and Morocco. Furthermore, we offer a post-consumer collection service to give the garments a second life and close the circle of the circular economy in the textile industry. Naturally, in the coming years, we want to position Circoolar as a profitable benchmark company for the sustainable workwear sector and push for international expansion.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

In 2019, Celina Tamagnini and Luis Ribo pooled their more than 20 years of experience working in medium-sized and multinational companies to found Circoolar. They understand the corporate world and its need to communicate, make tangible and publicise environmental and social values. Enhancing their commitment to fight against the negative environmental and social impact in the textile industry, and thanks to their expertise, consolidated networking and seniority, they laid the foundations for the launch of one of the innovating B2B companies in sustainable workwear and merchandise. In 2 years, Circoolar became the first Bcorp-certified workwear company in Spain.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Nowadays, textile waste, to mention just one of the consequences of the fashion industry, is no longer the “little brother” of other more infamous types of waste. In Spain alone, more than 1 million tonnes of clothing ends up in landfills or incinerators yearly because we only recycle 12% of it. But perhaps even more worrying are the social inequalities generated during the production of that clothing, which is often manufactured by vulnerable collectives like women and children in underdeveloped countries

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

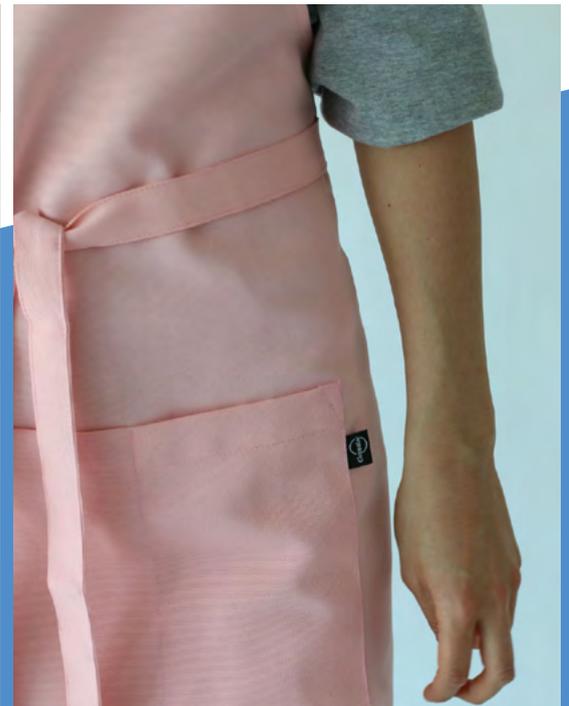
A textile sustainable model requires high level of investment due the local production and source are not suitable for the competitiveness of the industry. Following the first point the Price barrier for the final costumers. High investment at the recycling processes. The industry is strongly focus on bigger orders for bigger clients.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

We strongly believe this is possible. Circoolar is an example of what its possible making business with a purpose: to turn a industry into a more sustainable and circular economy model, to positively impact in the environment and in peoples’ lives. Relocating production in the Mediterranean by stablishing more strategic alliances to improve competitiveness, specially at the recycling part of the total supply chain.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

The project has helped us to enter an entrepreneurial ecosystem where we can see ourselves reflected and identified. We have also been greatly helped by the experts we have surrounded ourselves with to improve our business model. Also, the economic bonuses have helped us to finance pilot tests.



### *Christiane Issa Nahas & Lara Abras Saade*

Christiane is a volunteer and the president of a Lebanese NGO called “Maison de La Vierge des Pauvres” located in the Bekaa Valley. Lara is also a volunteer and member. The NGO was created 11 years ago and now we are a group of 18 members working hard every day to provide support to around 600 families monthly. Lara is a mother of 3 children and Christiane mother of 2 and also working since 20 years at a family winery. We are very dedicated to social work; our NGO now is part of a federation (Federation of associations of Zahle) with 4 other associations, joining all our efforts to unify our databases in order to avoid supporting the same families at the same time. Like that we will help them have self-dependency and we will contribute for a better community. Christiane’s mission in the federation is to collect donations from the zahliot diaspora to help warm families during winter time. She is a member of the Zahle Hometown association which was created by the mayor of Zahle Municipality.

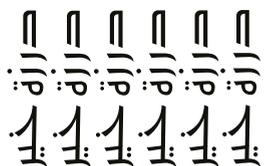


“DARZIT KHEIR” which means sewing for a good cause is the name of the project that was started in July 2022 by a group of members and volunteers working for a Lebanese NGO called “Maison de La Vierge des Pauvres” (MVP reg.# 2314) located in Zahle in the beautiful Bekaa valley. The idea came as a rescue solution for MVP who was and is still struggling during this difficult period in Lebanon to support the hundreds of families registered at their association and who are still increasing for the past 10 years to become around 600 families today. MVP provides support to these families in need on a monthly basis with medication, milk, diapers, electricity bills of patients in need and on oxygen machines and much more.

After many brainstorming sessions and sharing of ideas, we, as a group of dedicated members and volunteers at MVP came with the idea of selling products that could be produced by the local community to the profit of MVP in order to sustain its mission. MVP’s team are mostly women who are active in the business world as well as working moms and so the idea of empowering other women and integrating them into the business and social world was a priority.

We have then decided that our project would include sewing and creating a certain line of products to sell; but we then had to make it the most profitable possible. We visited many textile merchants and manufacturers and discussed with them the possibility of donating some leftover fabrics which were no longer of use to them. That way we would economise on the cost of fabric while minimizing the waste. We were pleased to see that the reactions from these merchants and manufacturers were very positive and we were able to secure many donors and that way reducing the cost of fabric to zero. As the world of fashion is very large and has many segments, we had to decide where to start and what to sell. And after

## DARZIT KHEIR



meeting with designers who are part of the MVP group of family and friends; we decided to begin with simple and easy to make handbags and bags. These designers will be happy to voluntarily help in the design and monitoring of the finishing of these bags. We have till now around 8 knitters one of which specializes in crochet and 2 volunteers on the project. The knitters were asked to do mock-ups for many types of bags such as clutches, makeup pouches, tote bags, crochet bags and took part of workshops in order to set-up the pilot models and agree on the way of making of each product. The crochet threads will be bought by us as well as many needed accessories such as zippers and applications for decoration purposes.

In summary, the Darzit Kheir initiative has the following objectives:

- To create a source of revenue that could benefit MVP and ensure the continuation of its mission.
- To create jobs for knitters who are in financial difficulty.
- Reduce any possible waste of fabric and help protect the environment by re-using the leftover fabrics.

At the end, this is a project that will always be taken care of with much love and dedication from the MVP family hoping to be able to continue in our mission and to help even more families in need. We are lucky to have a network of people from many backgrounds who are willing to provide their services and help. However, it is also a project that will need funding especially at the beginning and until sales start and become profit generating. We trust that this initiative will enlighten and encourage other NGOs or companies or also individuals to take action and start helping to build a better community.

**Why did you decide to launch your business?**

We decided to launch this business in order to generate more revenues for the association (Maison de la Vierge des Pauvres) and to create job opportunities for the knitters in need.

**What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?**

With this new initiative, we are creating job opportunities for the knitters and we are able to generate more revenues to the association Maison de la Vierge des Pauvres so it can continue in its mission of helping the community and the people in need. It is hard to be able to help the same no. of families or a regular basis therefore by generating these additional revenues we will be able to secure this regular commitment.

**What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?**

As the country is passing through financial and economic crises, the biggest challenge for many industries would be the fluctuation of the exchange rate as well as the instability in the past few years as to consumer consumption and trends.

**Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?**

Of course it can happen. Awareness is the key to such a shift and in a country and in a region where many NGOs are present; any kind of awareness can be relayed to the consumer. It might take some time but Lebanese and neighboring societies have seen in the recent years all kinds of changes whether financial, economic, political, and has always been able to adapt and choose the best way to succeed in what they do. We believe that sustainability has been a challenge that we were able to achieve by standing altogether. Lebanon has also always been known internationally in the fashion and textile industries.

**In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?**

Additional funds will help the project in many ways:

- Ensuring the funds to buy the essential needed threads and accessories
- Providing our knitters with all the essential techniques needed to produce certain items.-
- Investing in our knitters: we discovered that most of the knitters do not have the capacity to renovate their machines or buy new ones or invest in new needles that are used for thicker fabrics such as leather.
- Extend our line of products into more sophisticated products that need expensive materials
- Have the opportunity to centralize our business operation in one working space where all the knitters can work.

### ***Caroline Perdrix***

studied at la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne, and at Arts Décoratifs de Paris. After having worked for Louis Vuitton, David Koma and Saloni, Caroline presents her first collection at MuCEM in Marseille. Winner of the Festival Off “European Capital of Culture”, she co-founded the ready-to-wear brand Atelier Bartavelle and the art of living TABLE, as well as the association Itinérance. Craftsmanship is at the heart of his work.

### ***Alexia Tronel***

is a graduate in economics and political science. Her professional experience in sustainable development has taken her from the business world to Paris, to Rome with the UN and to La Paz in an NGO. Co-Founder of the ready-to-wear brand Atelier Bartavelle and the Itinérance association, she supports brands in their CSR repositioning and strategy. She speaks in several schools and conferences.



Since 2018, the ITINÉRANCE association has brought together a community of craftswomen and changemakers in the Mediterranean.

Through the gesture of know-how, ITINÉRANCE weaves links to give visibility, economic and creative power to artisans in the Mediterranean basin.

### **OUR 3 MISSIONS:**

#### ***Our social mission: unite and support communities of craftswomen***

ITINÉRANCE brings together invisible and isolated women to connect them and forge links between them and the actors of the fashion industry. Craftswomen are mapped to generate new economic opportunities.

#### ***Our Cultural Mission: raise awareness & promote***

Intangible cultural heritage is a key factor in maintaining diversity.

Each year, a community of craftswomen is highlighted by co-creating a capsule collection called “edition”. Through exhibitions and media content, their know-how, their heritage and their cultures are highlighted and disseminated to the general public.

#### ***Our Educational Mission: Transmit & Train***

ITINÉRANCE values the role of fashion and design schools in the transmission of ancestral and contemporary know-how, as well as the importance of training new generations in current issues. The association offers training to students and professionals.

Why did you decide to launch your business?

It takes a lot of time to find and create a relationship with artisans. We had a lot of demand about it.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Craftswomen in the Mediterranean basin are faced with major economic, social and environmental challenges. These economic & social inequalities are accentuated by climate change. Women represent 80% of the workforce in the fashion industry. This industry is the 2nd largest employer of women in emerging countries.

The Mediterranean is a strategic crossroad for the textile industry. At the heart of these exchanges from one bank to the other, we find the textile suppliers of the EU - Turkey (3rd), Morocco (8th), Tunisia (9th), Egypt (16th), Albania (17th) - and the main European sponsors - France, Italy and Spain.

The diversity of traditional craftsmanship in these countries is on a decline, replaced by industrial measures with high environmental and social impact. Yet craftsmen are true transmitters of memory. For lack of being able to develop a viable economic model, some do not have enough orders and therefore their incredible know-how extinguishes.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

My country, France, is a key player in the fashion industry. It has a major part to play to change the paradigm, the narratives behind the value of a garment.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

I definitely think it is great to focus on a regional scale and to draw more local projects that will enable to protect and transmit crafts.



## Founders

Lebanon\_Bauchrieh

### *Jocelyne Saade*

mechanical engineer, Master in renewable energy. Experience in procurement and bidding departments.

### *Nabil Khallouf*

business Planning & Execution Manager. Experience in Projects managements with many associations and NGOs.

### *Naji Flitty*

archeology & Arts. Experience as workshop supervisor.



Upcycling the sheep wool wasted and burned in Lebanese mountains by producing blankets for beds, thermal insulation for construction and pellets fertilizers for agriculture. Our products are ecofriendly and can compete with the imported one.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

Every year in Lebanon, shepherds waste more than 2500 Ton of sheep wools, while it could be a financial support for them to survive. Knowing the importance of these materials and aware of the importance of industry sector to support the economic Lebanese, we decided that we should start.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

More than 80% of the blankets in Lebanese market are made from dacron materials, which are imported and contain polyester releasing chemicals affecting our health. While we have an alternative local, organic and renewable materials: sheep wool. The resulting products are ecofriendly and long life duration. We are creating new job opportunities.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

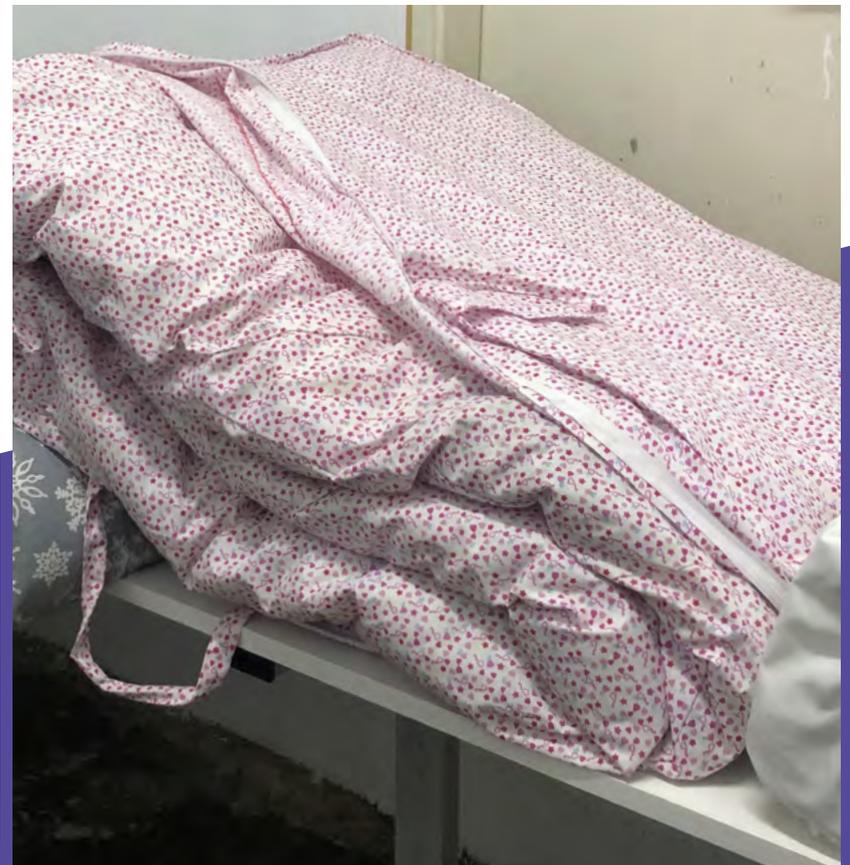
There is no awareness enough to switch from synthetic materials to healthier one. The purchasing power lead for cheaper products which might be sometimes synthetic.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes, if we are using a good raw material that have a long-life duration, a good instruction on how to clean and maintain, interaction of eco conscious mind will be important. Later on, once other people saw the impacts and the good quality they will follow. It will take time to have a large market.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

To think more about every step in the production process and to alternate any chemical materials to more organic ones. By thinking to reduce the waste during the production, it lead us with some researches to reduce the waste of 25% from the sheep wool and produce a new product: pellets fertilizer.



## Founders

Italy\_Calangianus\_Sardinia

### *Fabio Molinas*

Fabio's passion is Industrial Design, dealing with innovation projects related to product, interior and design strategy. His goal is to find new ways of using materials, concepts and products giving a "twist" to their normal uses, finding solutions in line with the current industrial background. In his projects, there is always an emotional component linked mainly to the territory and its people.

### *Alessandro Sestini*

Alessandro loves innovation and sustainability, within 20 years of experience as CEO of various companies and after selling the shares of his previous start-up, he decided to undertake a new challenge at the helm of Lebiu to offer the market a series of textile products with excellent physical characteristics and with a high content of bio-based ingredients, designed to respect the environment and reduce harmful emissions deriving from textile production and leather tanning.



We define Lebiu as a fresh-agile company where materials are produced free of toxic components and polluting processes, a system where waste becomes the future of textile industry.

Our mission is to provide eco-fabrics, introducing the new applications of cork waste in a more ecological way, thanks to bio-based contents and the high percentage of cork residue.

Our products come from the Stopper Industry leftovers placed in Sardinia, providing a much more animal-friendly alternative and a more ethical and democratic fabric that can be used for plenty of applications.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

There was a need from at least 10/15 years ago that was envisioning what, unfortunately, Now we know. Earth is depleting its resources, and Plastic pollution is the new contemporary drama, together with global warming and loss of biodiversity. We started investigating 10 years ago on next-generation materials and after an exhaustive R&D we are now able to confirm that non-armful materials for fashion are created to substitute petrol-based items.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Our mission is to protect the environment through bio-based materials with the lowest environmental impact. Our recipe are vegan-based and reduce the use of water in the entire production process due to a specific technology applied.

Our materials are GRS and USDA certified, tracking processes and raw materials at its origin.

Being sustainable is not only about materials and processes, but it also integrates social values that reach people an its culture.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

Of course, we have the possibility to become the most important sustainability hub in Europe due to our geographic position that allows to generate renewal energy, our feedstock processing and up-cycling (first in EU) and our Italian know how in creativity, providing high quality products from useless resources.



Founder

Egypt\_Alexandria

***Mahmoud Gaber***

Mahmoud is an architecture graduate and masters graduate in international business from AAST. He is passionate about design and embracing new production methods, fuelled by a fashion experience in local, European and American markets.



A mid-sized family owned textile factory established in 1974 as one of the pioneers manufacturers in readymade garments industry. Our goal is to meet the latest fashion trends with supreme quality at a competitive price. Also we adopted a formula of authenticity, commitment, sustainability and quality. Consequently, we are able to meet the domestic and foreign market needs.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

In accordance to the challenges enforced by the environmental and post pandemic economy a new method of production had to be introduced to deliver a fashionable, environmental, sustainable and affordable item in the market. So after reviewing the available raw materials in the market a prototype was adopted to embrace the use of recycled, open end yarn and left over fabrics which are an eco-friendly substitute to the traditional long threads (acrylic, polyester and cotton) raw materials.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

We established the prototype on the sustainable society index pillars. First, **human well-being** as we are depending on the trained labor more than the machinery so every worker have equal chances with proper training. Second, **environmental wellbeing** as we have best utilized recycled materials that were an unpopular option in the local market. Also with the increase in demand, we have created a medium to long term plan to produce recycled yarn from local waste which can be up to 212k tons annually. Finally **economic wellbeing**, there is a reasonable profit margin ranging from 20-25 percent of the initial investment. This will enable us to keep the product going and reinvest in R&D.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

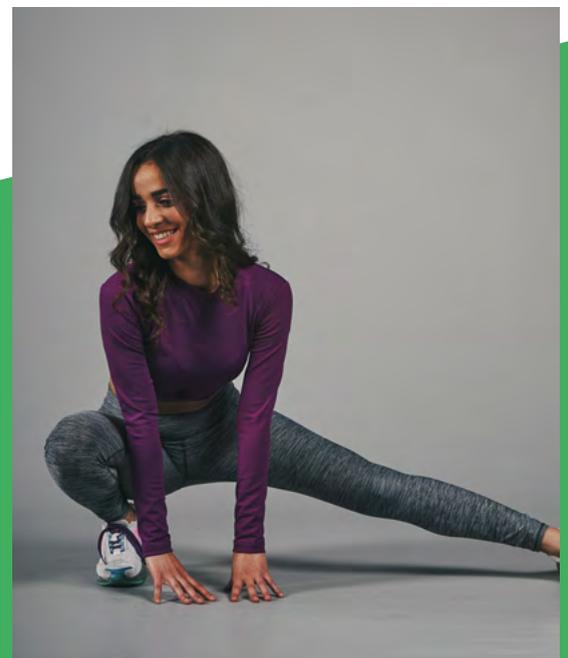
Domestically, producers are constrained by the average annual income for the Egyptian family in which they spend 4.8% of its annual income only on clothing hence they price margin must be strict. Also, the accessibility for SMES financing. Internationally, Proper presentation of the Egyptian products in the foreign market and the economic recession the occurred after the pandemic that lead to a global increase in raw material prices accompanied with a decrease on demand.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes I do believe that sustainability is inevitable and eventually most factories will shift to this approach, because it solves most of the current and future global problems. For instance, when you recycle or use recycled yarn you avoid many production's bottleneck that causes a burden on the factory not to mention the end user. Ranging from the availability of raw material, water usage, carbon foot print, energy saving, longer lifespan for clothes to affordable products.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

The knowhow transferred from experts in the business will aid me in planning on how to collect waste, sort it and use the proper technology to create the best recycled yarn. In addition, the proper marketing tools to raise awareness with retailers and end-users regarding recycled garments.



### *Federico Sainz de Robles*

Fede is an industrial technical engineer by the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV), with training in fashion design (by IED Madrid) and a masters in textile engineering (by CEU). In 2016, after 5 years of working at the laboratories of the Textile Technology Institute (AITEX) he founded Sepiia, a fashion company that uses technology to revolutionize everyday clothes



Sepiia is a fashion company that implements technology in the fabric of its clothes to make them more efficient and sustainable. Their shirts, blazers, polos, t-shirts, trousers, or dresses are designed to make your life easier: they are stain-repellent, wrinkle-free, and neutralize body odor. They make their clothes in Spain and Portugal using recycled materials and remain recyclable at the end of their lifecycle. The designs are timeless and versatile so you can wear them all the time, and save time on a daily basis since it's easy care.

Why did you decide to launch your business?

We could not understand how, with all the technology around us, the clothes we use hadn't evolved yet, and the quality has only worsened with time. I decided to create the next generation of clothes that saved time and resources and were made in Spain and Portugal.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

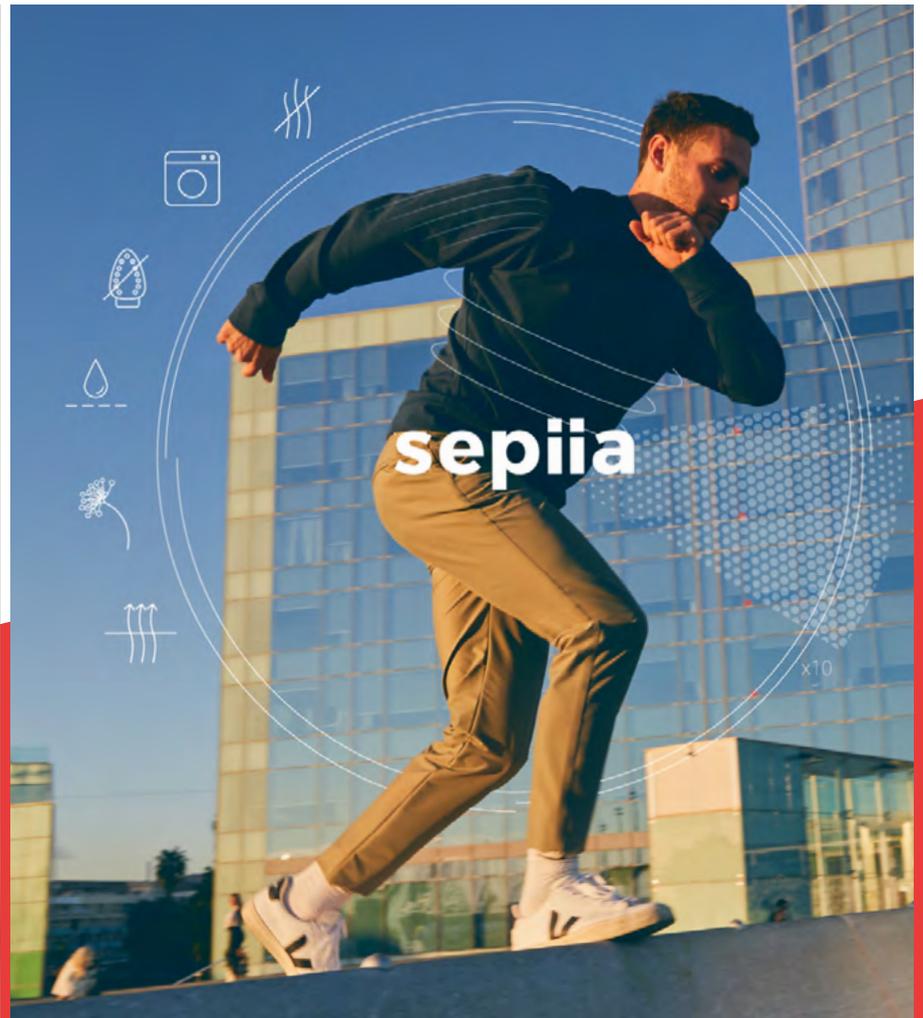
We make quality clothes with technology so you don't have to wash them so often, saving time and energy since they don't need ironing. They are circular garments: recycled and recyclable. They are durable and timeless so you can wear them often and reduce the number of clothes you need.

What is the biggest problem/challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

The fashion industry is not what it used to be in Spain. The industry has relocated to Asia and is not easy to find the right service providers. Greenwashing will soon become a problem if we don't agree on industry standards and use data to prove it.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes, it's happening already. We believe that the interest in sustainability and local production is way higher after the pandemic; the importance of supporting your own industry became obvious and we had time to reflect on our impact as a society, which shifted priorities for consumers.



**Álex Cerón**

has a degree in sports sciences, a guide and canyoning trainer for more than 10 years. In addition, his family has been dedicated to textiles for more than 80 years (3rd generation).

**Jorge Vera**

is a telecommunications engineer and cybersecurity specialist. Mountain lover and practitioner of outdoor sports such as canyoning, climbing, mountaineering or skiing.

**Álvaro González**

has a degree in law and a master's degree in sports management. He is an entrepreneur in the textile sector with his family in Argentina and a former Proesi athlete.

Álex and Jorge knew each other from working together on other projects and companies. Álex and Álvaro were classmates in a master's degree in sports management at the INFEC in Barcelona in 2019. Here they completed a final master's project on the NEWEX feasibility study.



Newex has developed the first 100% sustainable and specialized suit for canyoning, made in Spain and also recyclable. It achieves this by eliminating neoprene, a highly polluting material derived from petroleum, and replacing it with ecoprene, a raw material of vegetable and sustainable origin. Newex is **founded** on:

- **SUSTAINABILITY:** reducing by +95% its emissions of polluting gases.
- **SPECIALIZATION:** it is a project created by and for canyoners.
- **INNOVATION:** the team behind the project has +20 years of experience in the sector.
- **CIRCULAR:** recycles and gives a second life to this type of product, avoiding +15Tn/year of waste of textile origin from canyoning in Spain.

**MISSION:** make the highest quality equipment possible for sustainable canyoners, always in balance with the planet.

**VISION:** to be the benchmark brand of sustainable canyoning in the world.

Our **values** are respect, camaraderie, solidarity, nature and balance.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

We never imagined that newex would come into existence and become a reality. The motivations that made us take this path were 3: our passion for **canyoning**, the **textile heritage** of our families and the **moment of ecological and social alarm** that our planet is experiencing. Newex was born **with the aim of making canyoning a sport that is much more sustainable and respectful of the planet.**

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

We managed to reduce polluting emissions from this raw material in production by almost 100%, eliminating neoprene. Newex is committed to local production with small local workshops in Barcelona, less than a 50km radius away. This makes the project sustainable both ecologically, socially and economically for our territory. In addition, we give a second life to ecoprene and neoprene products, avoiding contamination due to the disposal of +15 Tn/year of this residue. Also betting on social initiatives for the recycling and reuse of these products, with people at risk of social exclusion due to gender, origin or social stratum.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

Local production and recycling of textile waste are the problems of society in Spain. We have lost the textile tradition of so many years in our country by making productions abroad. On the other hand, the textile and fashion industry does not recycle its own waste and disposes of it by burning or dumping it, with the enormous environmental problem that this entails. At newex, we create value by example, from local production in our country and from recycling our waste and any of the same type, contributing our hand to solve a problem.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

This has to be the primary objective. A different way of doing things is possible, responsible consumption and production is the way to make the textile and fashion industry a respectful sector with the planet.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

It is helping us find collaborators in the Mediterranean who share our philosophy of sustainability and responsibility. Give visibility to our work to exemplify that it is possible to do things "right" with the aim of making this way of producing and consuming responsibly grow throughout the continent.



## Founders

Lebanon\_Kleiat

### *Georges Issa*

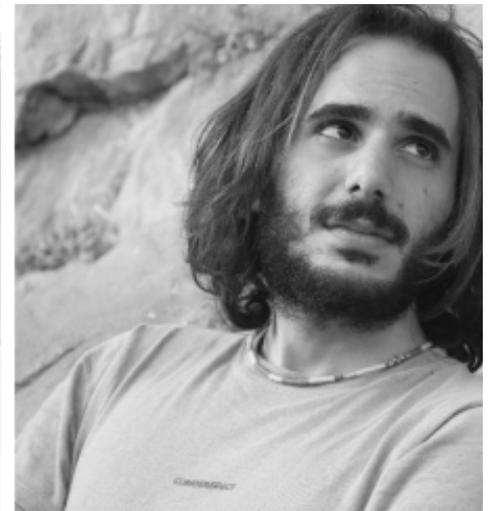
is 32 and is a climber, architect and product designer who works at a Norwegian startup in Oslo. He is responsible of everything design at Climberspace.

### *Jad Issa*

is 28 and is a Mechanical Engineer who works full time on Climberspace. He is the main cobbler of Climberspace and the one behind all the resoling work we do.

### *Elias Issa*

is 26 and has a bachelor degree in F&B management, he used to work as a chef, but currently is committed to Climberspace. His main responsibilities are sales and customer service. We are also all avid rock climbers, Georges since 2012 and Jad and Elias since 2017.



Climberspace is an outdoor company that offers resoling services for climbing and outdoor shoes, and that designs and produce outdoor apparel and products for the regional climbing and outdoor community.

Our company specializes in providing high-quality outdoor products and apparel, as well as resoling services for outdoor shoes. Our goal is to help customers enjoy the great outdoors with gear and accessories that are designed to help you in enjoying the outdoor activities. We offer a range of products including bags, pouches, climbing products and apparel, all of which are designed to provide the durability and functionality needed for outdoor adventures. In addition to our own line of products, we also offer expert resoling services to help extend the life of your existing outdoor footwear.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

We decided to launch Climberspace during the 2020 economic and covid crisis in Lebanon, when we had no access to buy or repair our climbing shoes abroad, so we decided to fix our own. People started asking us to fix theirs, so Climberspace grew from that and evolved into producing other relevant products that the community was asking for.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Our main challenge is diverting waste from the landfill by encouraging reuse and upcycling. When a climbing or outdoor shoe is worn out, it is usually thrown away because it does not serve its purpose anymore. At Climberspace we have developed a facility to fix those shoes, where we replace the old unusable rubber with a new one that makes the shoe as performant as a new one and add a new lifecycle to it. This process can be done several times for every shoes. We also work on producing products from fabric leftover from the furniture industry that otherwise would go to the landfill.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

Our biggest challenge is the access to industry knowledge, where someone like us with an idea and motivation can learn from and be mentored. Everything that we have done so far was a result of us educating ourselves, trying, failing until we succeed.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

We believe so. We realized that people are having more and more awareness on the importance of consuming sustainable products. People have been asking us for that, and everything that we do that has a positive impact on the environment is highly successful. An example of that are our upcycled products that are 100% made from fabric leftovers, people were paying a price equal to a new one, even though it was upcycled.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

1. Access to mentorship and expert guidance: STAND Up! programs provided us access to experienced mentors and advisors who can provide guidance and support to help businesses navigate the challenges of starting and growing a company.
2. Opportunities for networking and exposure: STAND Up! offered us a range of networking and exposure opportunities, such as pitch events, demo days, and industry conferences. These events provided us with valuable opportunities for startups to connect with potential customers, partners, and exposure to relevant people.
3. Structured support and resources: STAND Up! provided a structured program of support and resources designed to help our business grow and develop.



## Founder

Egypt\_Cairo/Alexandria

### *Leena Ramadan*

Hoopoo, is an inspirational story about passion, determination and humanity. Fueled by the love to explore, the curiosity to find answers and the enthusiasm to create, Leena started design-ing her own fashion pieces to make a statement about the person she really is. Adventurous, unique, catchy and different are basic criteria to what she started off creating with touch of bohemian look and feel. Catering for different occasions, Leena managed to expand her knowledge about fabrics, colors, cuts and trends.

But what's next? How to really put one's heart into what they do? By telling stories, but where do stories and fashion meet? Hoopoo is where they meet. Inspired by stories of people from all the different places Leena has been to, locally and internationally, every story has taught her something, inspired her somehow and resulted in a beautiful piece with a charming tale behind it. experience that Leena has gone through from one her travels.



Hoopoo is a bohemian - inspired brand about self-expression.

Each piece speaks for an experience, making it more memorable and beautiful. Every detail is to ensure a unique statement, in a comfortable easy-going attire.

Stories are our thing. Part of who we are, is the stories behind the talented hands carefully crafting each design to be the unique piece that will be part of your journey. The artists bringing designs to life are strong determined free women, making a living from what they believe in, fashion.

Hoopoo is a culture-infused brand, inspired by local and international fashion trends customized for a comfortable yet different fashion experience. All pieces must check quality, comfort and a vivid sense of identity crafted by local hands and infused by culture.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

I decided to launch my business as I directly touched a market need in the comfortable, boho kind of fashion, as I stopped shopping for years and started to implement my own designs promoting the that we can feel comfortable in our own skin with loose, breathable and comfortable wear.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

- One of the brand's core value is sustainability, that includes authenticity as we believe in the work of hands rather than machines which is ethically made \*Free from human exploitation
- Egyptian local materials have been our choice from the beginning, **small** to medium workshops with local workers executing the designs to achieve a slow fashion model and to guarantee a flawless pieces made with dedication and love.
- Also local production helped in creating new job opportunities **and** reducing the emission of CO2, electricity & heat.
- Digital printing in our Fabrics as it is a far more sustainable option since it uses less energy, produces less waste, and has a smaller carbon footprint overall.
- Another thing, We use paper bags in our packaging rather than plastic bags, as paper bags are 100% biodegradable, reusable, and recyclable.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

The retreat of the Egyptian pound against the foreign currencies which lead to the increase of the material prices, manufacturing prices and marketing prices.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes, As the consumer behavior has changed throughout the previous years, people has become more aware of the resources and the consumption and how to adapt to more environment friendly solutions, also reducing the waste through recycling has become a trendy act that people would participate in.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

As a WeMed golden prize winner in southern area, STAND Up has supported me all the way starting by the access to finance training to receiving the award that would help me to scale up my business.



Founder

Lebanon\_Beirut

***Riham Hijazi***

an electrical engineer with over 13 years of experience in the telecom and technologies sector, and with a passion for creating fashion with purpose.

***Rasha Hijazi***

a graphic designer with over 8 years of experience with creative agencies and has a passion for creating beautiful brands with minimalist aesthetics.

***Hussein Ameen***

a mathematician with a passion for pattern making and energy-efficient processes, is an expert in supply chain management, fashion production and retail.



Necess aims to democratize sustainable and eco-friendly fashion by offering affordable basics created from plant-based fabrics and recycled material while incorporating ethical production. Necess fuses science with fashion to create items that can withstand the test of time and have as low an impact as possible on the environment. Made with renewable energy, and using fabrics like Tencel, rain-fed organic cotton, recycled polyester, and focusing on designs that last season after season, we aim to create a garment that is as good as it looks.

**necess**

Why did you decide to launch your business?

After 2020 and the COVID pandemic, we felt much closer to our planet and we became more aware of how huge our impact is as humans on the future and how our actions are in direct connection to the well being of the environment and the society. We had been living in excess. Realizing the effect of over-consumption and non-conscious consumerism, we felt we have a duty to address this issue as people who are producers of fashion and clothing that we, from day one called it purposeful. It was time to bring science deeper into the production and retail equation.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

The fashion industry is one of the main contributors to the current environmental crisis. Excessive garment waste, high water consumption, high polyester compositions. Not to mention the unethical production practices that include but are not limited to unfair wages and child labor. Fast fashion, over the past decade, has become the problem by encouraging over consumption through cheap prices. The alternatives, which are supposedly the solution, are all high-end and inaccessible to 80% of the population. We believe the solution to a problem that was created because people want affordable items needs cannot be solved by high-end items. Our mission is to democratize sustainable fashion through eco-friendly innovative garments that are affordable.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

In Lebanon, the consumers are not much aware of the implication of over-consumption and of how severe the impact of fast fashion is. Raising awareness about this and shedding light on the importance of sustainable fashion is very important.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes of course; People are starting to gain awareness about sustainable fashion and environmental issues. Maybe not as much as it is in other parts of the world, but we will get there. Talking about the facts, which is something we intentionally like to do at Necess, and describing with numbers the impact of fashion, is something we believe will help create a higher level of awareness.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

I believe the best part of the STAND Up! program is the network of people and organizations who share our values and vision. We hope that this network will bring together more environmentally-impactful actions.



***Niccolò Cipriani***

was born in Prato in 1987. He graduated in International Economics and Management at Bocconi University in Milan in 2014. He worked as Junior Buyer at EXPO 2015 and as Programme Coordinator and Manager for the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) at the Hanoi Office, in Vietnam.



Rifò is a sustainable fashion brand which was born to solve two global existing problems: overproduction and overconsumption. Since its foundation, Rifò wants to combine circular economy, ethical choices and traditional production by making high quality garments and accessories with recycled and recyclable textile fibers. Our mission is to promote a change towards an ethical and sustainable economic model for the clothing industry.

Why did you decide to launch your business?

In July 2017 Niccolò was in Vietnam and got the idea of creating a sustainable fashion brand after having seen with his own eyes that there was a problem of overproduction and overconsumption within the fashion industry.

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Rifò is a sustainable fashion brand that promotes a change towards an ethical and sustainable economic model for the clothing industry. For this reason, we produce garments with recyclable materials using regenerated textile fibers. Our core values are responsibility, quality and sustainability.

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

We think that the biggest challenge in the textile industry is to develop the necessary technologies to recycle all the materials. Currently, there are some limitations in the recycling technologies available and only few mono-material garments can be recycled.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

Yes, we think that a shift is happening in the consumer behaviour. Fashion brands are also getting more aware about sustainability and the need to convert their business towards a sustainable production.

In which way did STAND Up! Project help your startup?

The STAND Up! Project will help us by giving us the possibility to have an expert in sustainability issues in order to define how we can improve our business and overcome the challenges we face.



## Founder

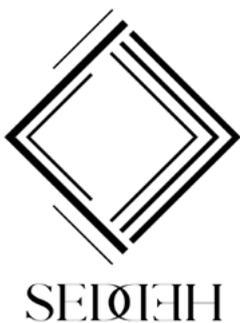
Palestine\_Ramallah\_West Bank

### *Nejmeddin Mohammad*

born and raised in occupied Palestine. A highly creative gender marketer and meta-cultural communicator with passion for fashion, art & sustainability. Since the age of 14 he was encouraged from his mother to become an entrepreneur. Today, he founded an environmental, social initiative called Seddeh. He likes traveling, hiking, creating new things and many more.



Seddeh is an online environmental social initiative that focuses on selling top-end secondhand clothes, shoes, and vintage clothes, but also aims to create a community that advocates for sustainability within the Palestinian society. Seddeh came as an answer to multiple social and environmental problems; most of which is helping lower-income people in finding good decent quality clothes. Seddeh on top helps on supporting an important environmental aspect; as it looks to contribute towards the preservation of the environment through recycling clothing and extending the life cycle of each item.



Why did you decide to launch your business?

'I cared about the environment since a young age and became paperless on the age of 15. Around that age, I started my exploration with sustainability and fell in love with every aspect of it. After living in different parts of the world, i started realizing how Palestine doesn't have any sustainable fashion or vintage fashion communities. From here my journey has started in 2019.'

What problem or challenge is solving your project in terms of sustainability?

Seddeh works on preserving the environment through recycling clothes and extending the life cycle of each item; believing that the love in every item never ends and instead of wasting it, we try to expand that love and find a new home for it. By doing so and by extending the lifecycle of the fashion item, it helps in reducing the pollution resulting from clothes manufacturing (as each one kilo of preserved clothes will save 14.63k of CO2, lower water consumption by 27.42 M3 and saves 268.41 MJ of energy).

What is the biggest problem/ challenge for you in the textile industry in your country?

Looking at it from a macro level, the Palestinian society is still far behind sustainability and preserving the environment. There is a huge gap in sustainable practices, recycling, the proper way to waste things and many other factors. In a more micro level, the textile industry lacks the awareness and the necessary knowledge about the topic, which is leading to the practices put in place.

Do you think that a paradigm shift in the way textile and cloth are produced and consumed towards a more sustainable one can take place in your country and in the Mediterranean?

I do believe that Palestine and the Mediterranean will become more sustainable with every passing day. As we are having having more initiatives like Seddeh that would not just sell products but also spreads awareness about the right sustainable practices to be taken; will help in educating people more about sustainability. Also, along side with globalization and the fast spread of information, more people are becoming aware about the environment and preserving it.





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**STAND Up!**