

JCI LEBANON 2021

Christopher Arida

Business, Economic and/or Entrepreneurial Accomplishments

Christopher is an entrepreneur and environmental activist who always focuses on social contribution. During his university studies, he was the Vice President of the Air and Waste Management Association student chapter. In 2020, he led two beach cleanup events with over 65 volunteers in five different Lebanese areas. In collaboration with Empower, a company in Norway, and as a response to the crashing Lebanese economy and sanitary crisis, they made 400 USD from selling plastics collected from the cleanups and donated the money as medicine to the elderly.

Despite economic challenges, Christopher was able to start a recycling business with the municipalities in Lebanon. In January 2020, working with three municipalities and over 750 households, he invested in a small waste sorting facility and provided door-to-door waste collection service for over a year. However, when it became clear that the current situation and COVID-19 pandemic would make this venture a very challenging one, Christopher set out to develop a new business that was scalable.

Through automating many activities within the waste management sector with AI software, Christopher knew he could operate at better margins and run a more optimized facility. However, it would be too costly to pay for someone else to develop the software, so instead Christopher learned the programming himself, developed a proof of concept and led a team through Berytech (an accelerator for Lebanese startups). After adapting to many challenges, his concept – Diwama – gained international recognition and traction, and now it is in the top eight startups in the final phase at the Berytech Accelerator, and it has been supported and funded by various organizations around the world such as Plug and Play, Alliance to End Plastic Waste, Veolia Middle East Spark Accelerator, Makesense, Ma'an Social Incubator, Astrolabs, Global Incubator Network in Austria, and many others.