



# Impact Report

## 2022 – 2023





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## Note from the Director

Dear ACIE Community,

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past two years, I am thrilled to share the extraordinary expedition we have collectively undertaken at the Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACIE) at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK).

Since its inception, ACIE at USEK has been steadfast in its mission to cultivate creativity, offer unwavering support, and guide aspiring entrepreneurs toward resounding success. It brings me immense joy to witness the transformative impact we've had on the entrepreneurial landscape within our esteemed university.

Our commitment to empowering students and entrepreneurs is not merely a statement; it is a lived reality as we walk alongside each innovator in their unique journey, ensuring they have the indispensable support to navigate the challenges of starting and growing a business.

I extend my deepest gratitude to every member of the ACIE community—entrepreneurs, mentors, partners, educators, experts, and supporters—for your integral role in this incredible journey. Together, we have cultivated an environment where ideas not only take root but flourish, connections thrive, and lasting impacts are made.

As we stand on the cusp of another year, let us anticipate more growth, increased collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to making a meaningful difference in Lebanon through entrepreneurship.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Nancy Saliba, PhD  
Director, ACIE-USEK





## 1. Executive Summary

### Program Impact 2022 - 2023:

Engaged Startups	48
Awards (won or finalists)	31
Secured Grants - Startups	\$221 K
Secured Funding – ACIE	\$650 K

### Flagship Programs

- ACIE, the official incubator for SAFIR - EU Funded Program: A multi-pronged effort across 9 countries, fostering youth participation, and supporting 1000+ young leaders.
- ACIE partnered with Gener8tor - US-based accelerator, in launching the first Healthtech program overseas. The program has enabled 5 early-stage startups in health, biotech, and foodtech to scale.
- ACIE, the official incubator for Idealab in North Mount Lebanon, under the ActSmart Partner Growth program, in partnership with Berytech and co-funded by the Embassy of the Netherland.
- ACIE partnered with Berytech in managing Nexlabs- EU funded program: Incubation including tailored support and expertise to SMEs in the water-energy nexus, facilitating their growth.

### Programs in numbers:

Programs Implemented	6
Validation Sprints	4
Workshops & Trainings	38
Entrepreneurship Talks	9
Mentors & Experts Involved	64

## 2. 2022 & 2023 in Numbers

The Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACIE) is an entrepreneurship support center at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK). ACIE's vision is to create entrepreneurs who generate robust ventures. The center provides incubation, acceleration, and entrepreneurship support programs, connecting startups with a strong network of mentors, coaches, trainers, and other key resources.

The following report comprehensively demonstrates ACIE's efforts in empowering entrepreneurs, advancing innovation, and creating impactful collaborations both locally and globally.

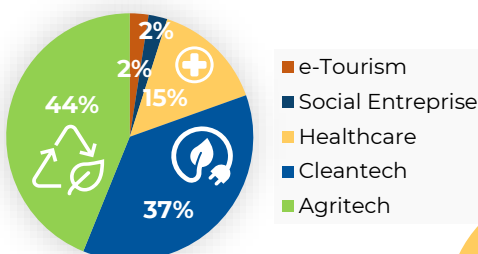
### • ACIE Related Numbers



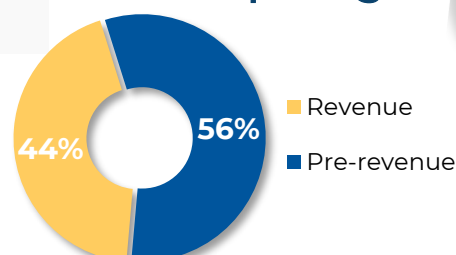
### • Startups Related Numbers



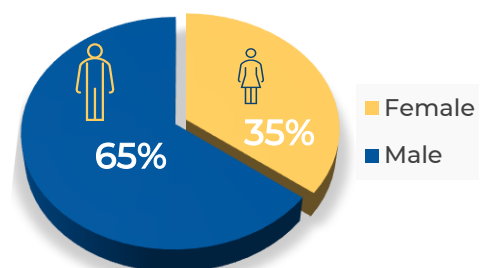
### Sectors



### Startup Stage



### Gender



## 3. Programs

### 3.1 SAFIR- EU funded program



Safir is a project supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the socio-economic inclusion of young people in 9 countries across North Africa and the Middle East. It aims to create an environment that encourages the civil participation of young people.

ACIE at USEK was selected to implement the incubation, acceleration, and other activities in Lebanon throughout 2022 and 2023 including:

- 2 Months Incubation Program
- 6 Months Acceleration Program
- 1 Hackathon to raise awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Support the creation of innovation spaces in higher education institutions.
- Matching with the Lebanese University (UL).
- Participation in drafting of a regional guide on social entrepreneurship and incubation.

#### Incubation Phase

13 Startups

5 Workshops

30 Coaching Sessions

8 Women-led & 5 Men-led Startups

19 Women & 8 Men Participants

#### Acceleration Phase

6 Startups

6 Workshops

€100k Cash Grants

72 One-on-One Coaching Sessions

3 Community Animation

## Safir Startups



### Impactful Stories:



UWYTA benefitted from a cash grant enabling them to have a workshop, buy equipments, recruit employees, design new products and boost their sales.



AYKI benefitted from a cash grant enabling them to develop a permaculture site, conduct experiments enhancing their knowledge in biodiversity, sustainability, and organic farming.

**Hackathon:** raising awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

15 Trainers & Mentors

5 Workshops

19 Women Participants

11 Men Participants

\$ 1,000 Prizes

28 Lebanese Participants

2 Palestinian Participants



## 3.2 Partner Growth Program



The IdeaLab program is a two-month validation program hosted by ACIE at USEK in North Mount Lebanon in partnership with Berytech and co-funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Lebanon. Two rounds of the program were implemented in 2023 and three other rounds will take place throughout 2024 and 2025.

**10** Training Sessions

**12** Trainers

**140** Business Follow Up

**120** Clinics

**18** Prototypes developed

**18** Outreach Activities

**20** Selected Startups

**2** Batches Completed

**700** Outreached Individuals

**\$27,000** Cash Grants

### IdeaLab cohort one



### Impactful Stories:

- Three startups were nominated for the Agrytech accelerator program at Berytech .
- G Algae successfully joined Agrytech.
- Cigarise and TRACKIT were nominated for the Cleantech acceleration program at Berytech.



### 3.3 Nexlabs Incubation Vouchers



Nexlabs is a program co-funded by the European Union under the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme initiative partnered with Berytech.

ACIE-USEK offered tailored technical support to four SMEs in developing their innovations in the water-energy nexus, validating them in the market, and further strengthening their know-how by granting them 20,000 euros worth of technical support.

The aim of this collaboration was to support innovators, researchers, and startups to validate their innovation, and technology, develop their business strategy, and test their go-to-market strategy.

**6** Group Coaching

**55** Technical Assistance sessions.

**24** One-on-One Clinics

**24** Mentorship Sessions

#### Nexlabs Startups



**Recycler**

**Removal of  
Microplastic and  
Pharmaceutical  
Pollutants from  
Wastewater**

#### Impactful Story:



AI Mawsam benefitted from €20K of Technical Assistance from this program. The startup pivoted its business model and was connected with important prospects in Lebanon.





### 3.4 ACIE Healthtech Accelerator Powered by Gener8tor

ACIE HealthTech Accelerator, a free, five-week, no-equity accelerator program was implemented in February and March 2023 in partnership with Genr8tor, a US-based accelerator. The program targeted early stage startups in the healthtech, biotech & foodtech industries. The program is designed to set a path for startups to participate in equity-based accelerator programs and investment opportunities.

- 5** Startups                      **\$ 10K** Cash Grants
- 5** Weeks                         **2** Mentor Swarms
- 5** Workshops                 **4** Group discussions

#### Accelerated Startups



#### Impactful Story:



EZOMed connected with key actors in the healthcare industry to get FDA approval.

### 3.5 Entrepreneurial Mindset - Student Motivation Program

This one-year program was launched in July 2023 and is designed to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to become successful entrepreneurs.

The outreach phase included on-campus activities.

**11** Outreach Activities    **1.5K** Students Outreached    **241** Students Engaged

The program included case studies, debates, brainstorming sessions, seminars, and networking events with successful entrepreneurs.

**280** students participated    **7** workshops and activities.

**3** Speakers Series    **1** Networking event for students

#### - Ideation and validation Sprint programs for USEK students:

Over the 2022/23 period, the ACIE team conducted ideation sessions and validation sprints at different faculties at USEK, promoting entrepreneurship education.

**6** Ideation Sessions    **75** Ideas Developed    **245** students

**5** Validation Sessions    **49** Ideas Developed    **172** students

### 3.6 Events & Competitions

#### - Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) 2022

The Entrepreneurship World Cup is one of the biggest and most diverse startup pitch competitions and support programs of its kind. ACIE at USEK is the national host for the EWC in Lebanon.

**370,000** All-Levels Entrepreneurs

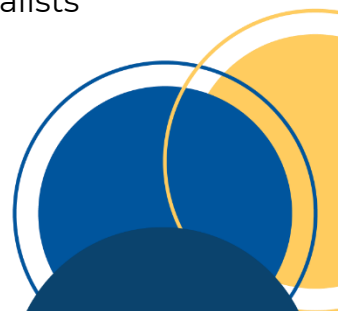
**200** Countries

**\$3 Million** in Cash Prizes

**\$150 Million** in-Kind grants

**111** Lebanese Startup Applicants

**10** Lebanese Startup Finalists





## - Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW)

ACIE-USEK was hosting the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) in Lebanon for the past 2 years. GEW inspires people everywhere through local, national and global activities, connecting participants to potential collaborators, mentors and investors.

### GEW 2022:

5 Partners engaged

24 Activities

### GEW 2023:

30 Partners engaged

7600+ Participants

135 Activities

Lebanon ranked 9th Worldwide.

## - NASA International Space Apps Challenge – Lebanon

ACIE-USEK hosted the NASA International Space Apps Challenge hackathon competition for two consecutive years with more than 220 participants. The challenge brought coders, scientists, designers, storytellers, makers, technologists, and innovators around the world together to use open data from NASA and its Space Agency Partners to create solutions to challenges we faced on earth and in space.

## - Babson Collaborative Student Challenge



The Babson Collaborative invites students from member schools from all over the world to participate in an entrepreneurship competition. Participating students are called to create a business venture addressing one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

1 winning team from USEK in the 2022 global competition

1 winning team from USEK in the 2023 local competition

### Impactful Story:



After winning the local phase in 2022, UWYTA ranked second in the global challenge, after competing with other 24 member schools affiliated with the Babson Collaborative for Entrepreneurship Education

## - “Ehki” Tech in USEK

One-day tech event in partnership with “Ehki Mena” where experts in the tech field presented Lebanon’s innovation frontier, AI’s impact, digital transformation, and ways of connecting the Lebanese tech diaspora to the ecosystem environment in Lebanon and how to draw a better future for it. The panel discussion addressed Lebanon’s tech needs from a policy, private sector, and NGOs perspective, aiming for a collective vision.

**6** Tech experts      **6** Panelists      **150** Attendees

## - Roundtable discussion with the Finnish Embassy in Beirut

### ‘There is still hope - Youth-led Startups as Agents of Change’

Three startup ventures at various stages of their journey shared their experiences, challenges, and contributions to and aspirations for Lebanon in a panel discussion moderated by ACIE director.

The event gathered 50+ leaders, experts, politicians, ambassadors, researchers and ecosystem partners. The panel was followed by an interactive discussion with the audience and a networking cocktail.

## - Be Your Own Boss (BYOB)

The BYOB workshop is a practical, activity-based training which provides step-by-step business skills important for environmental scanning, identifying small business opportunities, and developing and operationalizing a small business plan. The ACIE team delivered five training sessions to USEK students during spring 2023.

## - Entrepreneurship educators: Training of Trainers (ToT)

Three weeks of training of trainers were organized and held at AUF (*Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*), in June & September 2022, and in July 2023.

**12** USEK Faculty members benefitted from the trainings.

**3** main topics covered: Design thinking and support mechanism to student entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Mindset and Entrepreneurial skills and competencies.

## 4. Memberships

### - Babson Collaborative

The Babson Collaborative for Entrepreneurship Education is a global entrepreneurship education membership organization connecting universities around the world that are building and expanding their entrepreneurship ecosystems.



### - EcoSwitch Coalition

The EcoSwitch Coalition is a network of organizations and enterprises that support eco-entrepreneurs in Lebanon.



### - MIP Network

The Mediterranean Innovation Partnership (MIP) Network for youth entrepreneurship and technology transfer in the agrifood sector aims at favoring knowledge sharing, and transferring for entrepreneurship, business creation, and innovation.



### - Global Entrepreneurship Network - GEN

The Global Entrepreneurship Network is a 501(c)3 organization that operates an array of programs in 200 countries aimed at making it easier for anyone, anywhere to start and scale a business.



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### Visit ACIE website:

[www.acie-usek.org](http://www.acie-usek.org)