

Chapter 8

Utilizing the Lebanese Diaspora to Promote Circular Economy Entrepreneurship: A Strategic Policy Proposal for Post–Crisis Recovery

Sarah Hassan Chahine

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5109-130X>


Lebanese International University, Lebanon

Amira Ahmad Daouk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4955-1685>

Lebanese International University, Lebanon

Najib Boulos Bou Zakhem

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5260-6851>

Lebanese International University, Lebanon

ABSTRACT

Lebanon is undergoing an unprecedented convergence of crises—economic collapse, institutional failure, and environmental degradation—undermining public confidence, reducing economic productivity, and exacerbating social fragmentation. This chapter argues that circular economy (CE) innovation, supported by targeted diaspora engagement, is an effective and contextually plausible pathway toward national recovery and resilience. CE is defined as a regenerative model that reduces waste, reuses materials, and focuses on localized production and repair. CE can

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meet urgent socio-economic demands and enable long-term sustainability in fragile contexts like Lebanon. The chapter highlights Lebanon's socio-economic context and critiques structural weaknesses in entrepreneurship. It emphasizes the diaspora's untapped potential in expertise, networks, and capital. International case studies (India, Rwanda, Philippines, Ireland, Tunisia) support this. A three-pillar policy framework and mitigation strategies are proposed. The crisis becomes a catalyst for inclusive, sustainable innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is the Circular Economy?

The circular economy (CE) is an economic system that is focused on maximizing the use of resources via closed-loop (circular) systems to reduce waste and optimize the benefits from the rethinking, reuse, repair, refurbishment, and recycling of products and materials. CE can be differentiated from a linear economy (take-make-dispose) because CE attempts to break the link between economic growth and consumption of resources and contribute to sustainability and resilience (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). Examples of CE may include: product design with maximum intended longevity, ease of repair and maintenance, facilitated sharing economy, take-back recovery systems of materials. Increased intention to maximize longevity and minimize environmental harm, while still contributing to new business models, innovation, new jobs, and economic diversification (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

1.2 Lebanon's Crisis and the Socio-Economic Relevance of CE Innovation

Lebanon is facing a complex crisis that incorporates the elements of economic collapse, dysfunctional administration and social unrest, and environmental degradation. Since 2019, Lebanon has been in a severe financial crisis, with the national currency losing over 90% of its value and inflation rates soaring to trigger chronically high levels of national poverty that approach 80% of the population (World Bank, 2023). Lebanon's financial instability, in combination with the deterioration of its infrastructure and administrative problems that weaken public services provided (e.g., electricity supply and garbage collection), has not only resulted in the use of a greater number and more expensive private generators, but also increased reliance on private generators, and environmental pollution (International Monetary Fund, 2023). In precarious situations like the one that Lebanon is experiencing, it is possible to consider circular economy (CE) innovation as a realistic and beneficial middle space

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