

**Plastic pollution** is a global and cross-boundary problem that disrupts natural habitats and crucial ecological processes, reducing the ability of ecosystems to adapt to climate change. Single-use plastics take up a larger part of the plastic pollution problem, with half of all plastic produced being designed to be used just once and then thrown away to persist in nature for 500-1000 years. Despite that, only around 10% of the plastic waste generated is recycled, while the remaining 90% ends up in landfills, burned or dispersed in the environment, polluting our land and marine ecosystems. Additionally, around 36% of the total plastic production is dedicated to packaging purposes, which encompasses items like single-use plastic products intended for food and beverage containers.



**nusaned** is a Lebanese-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Their aim is to empower and enable marginalized Lebanese communities by supporting sustainable development through a community-based approach. By offering access to food security, shelter, and continuous opportunities for creating productive economies, Nusaned works on building sustainable communities that are self-sustaining.



Funded by the European Union

### UNEA'S RESOLUTION (5/14) ON ENDING PLASTIC POLLUTION

In March 2022, the fifth resumed session of the United Nations Environment Assembly ([UNEA 5.2](#)), marked the historic adoption of the resolution 'End Plastic Pollution: Towards an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument'. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee ([INC](#)) is leading negotiations on this agreement, aiming to finalize by the end of 2024.

### PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE CONTEXT OF LEBANON



According to UNEPs [Waste Management Outlook for West Asia](#) plastics account for an estimated 11.5% of Lebanon's municipal solid waste stream. Few plastic recycling facilities exist in Lebanon and some are not operational due to lack of profitability, which has led to a large export culture whereby, in 2020, exports of plastics reached US\$102.41 million according to the [United Nations COMTRADE database](#).

For that, achieving a balance between environmental conservation and socio-economic opportunities for local communities is crucial, while addressing plastic pollution as it poses a shared challenge demanding collective action and innovative solutions toward prevention, reduction, reuse and recycling.



UNEP collaborated with the Lebanese NGO "Nusaned" to implement the pilot project Nudawwer in Beirut. Nudawwer (arabic word) refers to a circular or continuous movement in Arabic and the root of the word may also be associated with recycling. Throughout the project duration (July 2022 – December 2023), the emphasis is on drawing lessons learned from the testing phase to instil circularity, particularly the concepts of prevention and reduction, rather than just promote recycling practices within the community.



## MAR MIKHAEL - GEMMAYZE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The project is implemented in the mainly residential and commercial neighbourhood of Mar Mikhael - Gemmayze. Mar Mikhael-Gemmayze are located at the eastern boundary of Beirut in the Medawar district which has a total population of 8,112.

## NUDAWWER PLASTIC CIRCLE



The aim of the plastic circle is to understand the consumption and production practices in the neighbourhood and work on ways to reduce and treat non-organic waste and address restaurants as well as other key actors in the neighbourhood, including households, vendors, gyms, and a school. Prevention, sorting and recycling are in the focus, as are introducing engagement mechanisms to incentivize circular loops. Various stakeholders participate, earning points redeemable at local vendors and hence reinvesting proceeds into the local economy.

## DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE PLASTIC CIRCLE COMPONENT



**In-depth assessment**  
at global, regional,  
and local level



**Develop a detailed**  
roadmap for  
implementation



**Test / implement**  
the roadmap



**Showcase**  
insights to inspire  
replication

### Plastic Circle Good Practices

Nudawwer's model is based on involving several stakeholders in the process of reducing non-organic waste and sorted recyclable materials. The system is designed with an aim to be self-sufficient, local, and environmentally conscious, as all the actors both provide and receive valuable resources, be it recyclables, vouchers, or promotional and educational awareness campaigns. Among the good practices from the pilot exercise are:

- Conduct weekly walk-through audit
- Engage in meetings/interviews with staff and beneficiaries
- Target multi-stakeholders
- Train and inform involved stakeholders.
- Incentives: points system and data recording
- Changing behaviours and practices

### Points-to-Voucher system

For every 10 kg of plastics (equivalent to 186 points based on daily rate/Ton), users receive food and non-food vouchers that can be redeemed at selected local vendors. Several models have been put in place to ensure all stakeholders and the community benefit from the project:

- Model 1: Vouchers for employees of the participating entity
- Model 2: Voucher for the Reclamation worker collecting the recyclables
- Model 3: Donation
- Model 4: Vouchers for the participants themselves
- Model 5: Half the value of the voucher is put up for donation and half is given back to the users.

Since the beginning of the demonstration project, a total of 506 vouchers have been redeemed, corresponding to 25,650,000 Lebanese Pounds (LBP) .

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## United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading environmental authority in the United Nations system. UNEP uses its expertise to strengthen environmental standards and practices while helping implement environmental obligations at the country, regional and global levels. UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.



The SwitchMed programme is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNEP. It aims at achieving a Circular Economy in the southern Mediterranean by changing the way goods and services are produced and consumed. To achieve this, the SwitchMed provides tools and services directly to the private sector, supports an enabling policy environment, and facilitates exchange of information among partners and key stakeholders. [www.switchmed.eu](http://www.switchmed.eu)