

Section Name: Lebanon Section

Bachar El Hassan, Chair.

Section Vitality

Please provide information about the date of last Section elections, date of next elections, and do you have the practice of Vice-Chair becoming the next Section Chair. Section ExCom meetings (list them and provide brief summary if appropriate). List the activities carried out to retain and recruit members and the results obtained.

- The Last elections took place on Tuesday December 29, 2020. The next elections will take place in December 2022.
- The vice chair is in general the favorite candidate to win the elections for the next chair position, but it not automatically done.
- Four executive committee meeting have been held since the last R8 Meeting. In these meeting we evaluated the work done in 2020 and planned the work to be done in 2021.
In addition one issue was always present in all these meeting: The 2021 membership renewal of IEEE Lebanon members that become very difficult because the economic situation in Lebanon that lead Lebanese Banks to make online payment became very limited in Lebanon.
- We also held a General Assembly where more than 120 members were present. During the GA the section financial report and the work done during 2020 was presented. Also each chapter and affinity group presented a brief of his work done during the past year and his plan for the next year. In addition each student branch has the occasion to present what they did during 2020. Finally, awards was distributed to the best chapter, best Affinity Group and best Student Branch of 2020.
- We Just want to mention that IEEE Lebanon section got the award of the Outstanding Region eight medium section in 2019
- Finally because of the economic, sanitary and security situation in Lebanon, many planned events have been canceled in 2020. But nevertheless the year 2020 was very fruitful.

Students

List of Student Branches (SB) in your Section, the newly formed or dissolved SBs, if any since the last meeting reporting (Oct 2020). List the student meetings held and Section activities addressed to Students and Young Professionals.

IEEE Lebanon section has 19 students Branches

- American University of Beirut
- Saint Joseph University School of Engineering
- University of Balamand
- Lebanese University - Tripoli
- Lebanese Univ Faculty Of Engineering-Hadath
- Lebanese University Faculty of Eng – Roumieh
- Lebanese University, Faculty of Sciences
- American University of Science and Tech
- Beirut Arab Univ – Dibbiyeh
- Beirut Arab University - Tripoli

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- Holy Spirit University of Kaslik
 - Notre Dame University-Lebanon
 - Islamic University of Lebanon
 - Lebanese American Univ
 - Lebanese International University
 - Rafik Hariri University
 - Antonine University
 - City University - Tripoli
 - Arts, Sciences & Technology University in Lebanon AUL.

The majority of these student branches are very active. They organize many events per year. Each year 2 or 3 student's branches from Lebanon section are among the outstanding students branches of Region 8. For example in 2020 American university of Beirut students Branch and Lebanese University Tripoli Student Branch were selected among the outstanding students Branches of IEEE Region 8.

The main problem of this year was the membership renewal of students because of the economics collapse in Lebanon. To maintain the vitality of these students Branches the IEEE Lebanon section decided to support each students Branch with the amount of 325 fresh USD. This allowed each branch to have at least 24 members.

Affinity Groups

List of Affinity Groups (YP, LM, WiE, SIGHT, etc.), list of SB AGs, newly formed or dissolved AGs/SB AGs, if any since the last meeting reporting (Oct 2020). List the activities intended to support affinity groups.

IEEE Lebanon section has 4 affinity groups:

- Young Professional Affinity Group
- Life Members Affinity Group
- Women In Engineering Affinity Group
- SIGHT.

Those 4 affinity groups are very active.

- Young Professional Affinity Group are very dynamic and each year they held the IEEE Students and Young Professionals Lebanon Congress. The last SYPLC took place in September 2020 and preparation for the SYPLC 2021 will start soon. The section always supports all the activities of YPAG. In

In addition Lebanon section IEEE Young Professionals team, in collaboration with the 2020 IEEE R8 Entrepreneurship Initiative ambassadors in Lebanon, organized during 5 days the "Entrepreneurship Summit" which is one of the Entrepreneurship Initiative's flagship programs. It aims to rally the initiative's ambassadors in the region to create entrepreneurship events in their sections. These events include talks, panels and most importantly, a pitch competition. The aim was to bring forward to IEEE members and other students and young professional in Lebanon the opportunity to benefit from a suite of Entrepreneurship workshops, participate in a regional entrepreneurship competition, and access mentorship and networking op-

portunities with experts in the regional entrepreneurship ecosystem. To do so, the team is organizing a national Entrepreneurship Summit under the theme “Smart Sustainable Cities”.

- Life member affinity group is growing in Lebanon. They are also very active and got last year a grant of about 25K USD for renewable energy project in Lebanon that they are still working on it.
- WIE affinity group played an important role in Lebanon section and has a lot of cooperation with WIE in other sections. On March 8 this year they organized an online event entitled: “International Women's Day - Women in Excellence from Lebanon”. They invited active ladies from Lebanon to tell their experience in the occasion of the world women day.
- Lebanon Section SIGHT was established in 2018. It was one of the first associations that worked on the ground after the fateful explosion in Beirut. SIGHT had a big role in recruiting volunteers from IEEE Lebanon Section to help those affected by this explosion.

Chapters

List of Chapters and SB Chapters in your Section, the newly formed or dissolved Chapters, if any since the last meeting reporting (Oct 2020). Indicate how many have reported on time and received rebate. Highlight some of the activities.

IEEE Lebanon section has three chapters and three joint chapters:

- IEEE Communications Society Lebanon Chapter
- IEEE Computer Society Lebanon Chapter
- IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society Lebanon Chapter
- Joint Chapter, AP03/MTT17/MAG33 (CH08691)
 - Antennas and Propagation Society
 - Microwave Theory and Techniques Society
 - Magnetics Society
- Joint Chapter, IE13/PE31/CAS04/PEL35 (CH08625)
 - Industrial Electronics Society
 - Power and Energy Society
 - Circuits and Systems Society
 - Power Electronics Society
- Joint Chapter, RA24/IM09/CS23 (CH08807)
 - Robotics and Automation Society
 - Instrumentation and Measurement Society
 - Control Systems Society

3 Chapters out of six got a rebate and 3 affinity groups got a rebate.

EMBS Lebanon chapter has a flag conference that is held each 2 years: ICABME, The sixth edition of this conference will take place in October 2021.

ComSoc organizes each year the IEEE Lebanon communications workshop (IEEE LCW) that took place more than 10 times and will be organized this year in September 2021.

RAS is always an important partner of all robotics competitions that take place in Lebanon. Members of RAS serve always as co-organizers and Jury members of those competitions.

Computer Society started last month cooperation with Arab AI organization and will be the responsible of the competition of Arab AI in Lebanon.

Power Chapter got the award of most active chapter in Lebanon during 2020. They organized more than 10 high level events among them distinguished lecturer invitation: Professor Jovica Milanivich who made a webinar on “Present and future approaches of power quality monitoring”. They are also the technical sponsor of IEEE ICM conference that took place last year in Jordan and will take place in 2021 in Morocco.

Antenna and Microwave Chapter organize periodically the Electromagnetic day in Lebanon. They are in deep cooperation with order of engineers of Tripoli and organized many joint events with them.

Industry

List the activities carried out to foster relations with Industry and the results obtained.

IEEE Lebanon Section continues its deep cooperation with industry and maintains its previous relations established during the last years with many Lebanese industrial entities:

Alfa, Ericsson, Nokia, ZRE Lebanon, BDD, Foo, Arabnet and the order of engineers of Tripoli.

The IEEE cooperation with Lebanese industry has a positive effect on IEEE Lebanon section:

- Internships for IEEE student members
- Support of IEEE Lebanon Section activities.
- Improve the knowledge of IEEE Members
- Presentations about IEEE and its activities and benefit of being an IEEE Member are done. Thus big numbers of Lebanese Electrical engineers will have the opportunity to learn about IEEE.

It is worth mentioning that in order to improve the relation of all our affiliated chapters with the industry sector, a new subcommittee called the Industry Subcommittee was established. All chapters and affinity groups had a representative in this subcommittee and it is coordinated by the Section’s industry Ambassador.

Activities since the last report

Highlight some of the activities in your Section, with special attention to the things that work well, and things that don’t, so that your acquired know-how can be used by other Sections.

- IEEE Lebanon section General Assembly 2020.
- The “Entrepreneurship Summit” organized by YP Lebanon Section in November 2020.
- Souk el Taka : Project on renewable energy coordinated by Life Member Affinity Group.
- More than 10 webinars organized by different chapters and Student Branches.

Planned activities

Highlight some of the future activities and initiatives in your Section.

Many Events are organized each year in Lebanon by IEEE Lebanon section and its chapters and Affinity groups and student branches. We are going to mention here only there flagship events that the section will organize during 2021:

- IEEE IMCET 2021: IEEE International Multidisciplinary Conference on Engineering Technology.

IMCET is the flagship conference of the IEEE Lebanon Section with participants from all over the world. This is intended to be an international conference with focus on regional and developing world aspects in electrical, communications, computer and biomedical engineering. The objective of the conference is to provide high quality research and professional interactions for the advancement of science and technology.

This year IEEE IMCET 2021 will take place in December 2021. Call for papers will be sent before the end of March 2021

- IEEE Lebanon Section Student Competition 2021.

In 2019 IEEE Lebanon Section introduced a National competition among all Electrical and Electronic Engineering Students. It will be repeated each year. Its goal is to maintain a connection between Electrical Engineering students from all institutes in Lebanon to IEEE. During this competition, presentations about IEEE and the benefits of being an IEEE member are clearly explained

This student competition will take place this year during June 2021.

- IEEE Lebanon Grand Tech 2021.

IEEE Grand Tech (GT) is an IEEE Region 8 Computer Society initiative. It is a yearly technical one-day event focused on computing technologies. IEEE GT Lebanon is aimed to be the largest technology-related student conference in Lebanon, and brings together distinguished professionals, researchers, and entrepreneurs who will share their experiences and current work in computing technologies. The event aims to group an audience of 200~250 telecom/computer engineering young professionals, graduates, researchers, and IEEE student members from all Lebanese Universities.

This year IEEE Lebanon Grand tech is planned to take place in May 2021.

- IEEE Lebanon National Day. Since many years the IEEE Lebanon National Day is organized each year. It is also a big gathering where always new students discover IEEE. Last year, IEEE Lebanon Section National Day took place in October Online. It was very successful and more than 300 students and young professional for different places in Lebanon were present.

This year IEEE Lebanon National Day will take place in October 2021.

How Region 8 can be of help to your Section, members, and activities

List any challenges you Section is facing and what support is required from the Region 8. Please, also, give us your suggestions for agenda items that you want to be discussed during the R8 Committee meeting.

The Region can play a very important role in fostering industry connections by helping local sections and chapters in establishing a network of connections with different international companies and entities within the Region itself. Local sections are usually unaware of potential partnership with international companies due to lack of information. The Region can therefore maintain and share a database of potential companies working closely with IEEE and looking for new links with different local sections and chapters.

Any other issues of interest:

The major challenge that we are facing is the actual non stable situation in Lebanon. We are afraid currently of not being able to maintain a proper membership renewal process, which would directly affect membership retention.

As it is known, IEEE Lebanon section has grown up quickly during the last years and has reached more than 1700 members in 2018 which lead to the reception of many membership retention awards.

During the last year, the economic situation collapsed dramatically. A huge devaluation of the Lebanese Lira occurred. The price of one USD passed from 1500 LBP to more than 10000 LBP today. As a direct consequence, the banking system put very restrictive condition on withdrawal and on online payment. To reduce bank runs and prevent the default of Lebanese banks, several restrictions were enforced including:

- Heavy limitations on cash withdrawals in Lebanese pound and in foreign currency (small to none)
- No exchange from Lebanese pound to US Dollar using the official rate of 1515 LBP/USD. In that case, people have to reply on exchange offices with rate a exceeding 10000 LBP/USD
- Very big Limitation or cancellation of the use of credit cards for online payments or payments outside Lebanon.

We have received many request from IEEE members to find a solution for the payment of their membership renewal fees. Other members especially students asked to waive them or alternatively help them with a reduction of the fees. The IEEE Lebanon Section is seriously concerned about losing a big portion of its members due to the current crisis.

Attached a presentation we made about this issue. We are still hoping that IEEE will reduce membership fees to IEEE Lebanon members.

A study about IEEE membership fees all around the world was done. This study is uploaded in separate file with this report. We hope that this study will be taken into consideration to reduce fees for Lebanon IEEE members.