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Zein AUB Innovation Park Brings Startups from Beirut to the World

The Talal and Madiha Zein AUB Innovation Park ([Zein AUB iPark](#)), the American University of Beirut's (AUB) flagship startup accelerator, witnessed steady growth in startup participation and program engagement in the first half of 2025. From Beirut to Paris, via Doha and Cyprus, Zein AUB iPark startups marked a steady progression through key international events—each one building on the last and expanding their presence on the global innovation stage.

In February 2025, fourteen Zein AUB iPark startups showcased their ventures at [Web Summit Qatar](#), one of the region's largest tech gatherings. Following the event, [Zaker](#), [Walleti](#), and [DonaLeb](#) successfully incorporated in Qatar, positioning themselves to tap into the local market and build partnerships with regional accelerators. Several startups also attracted potential investors, while others forged collaborations with leading Gulf-based partners, laying the groundwork for future expansion.

The momentum continued with the *Demo Day* in Pafos, Cyprus, co-organized with AUB Mediterraneo, [Octopus Capital](#), and [CrowdBase](#). This first-of-its-kind gathering in Cyprus took place in April and brought together Lebanese and regional startups and investors. The event not only encouraged some startups to begin incorporating in Cyprus, but also opened doors to the European Union, giving founders access to a broader market and invaluable mentorship from EU-based experts.

Shortly thereafter, Lebanese-led ventures participated in the [Elevate Bootcamp Demo Day](#) in Limassol, where they impressed investors with human-centered, scalable solutions. [Parenity](#), co-founded by Ghina Hneini and Khalil Yaker, won the audience vote for their perinatal care platform, a recognition which helped raise Parenity's profile and initiated new investment discussions. DonaLeb, founded by Yasmine Darwich, stood out with its corporate wellness solution integrating social impact and employee engagement. The event also generated new leads and potential collaborations for DonaLeb.

On April 29, the flagship *Demo Day* at the Beirut Digital District, Lebanon, welcomed over four hundred fifty attendees. Startups seized the spotlight, with Walleti attracting a key investment that enabled them to scale their digital wallet service locally, and Zaker forging a pilot

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partnership with a leading Lebanese university as a direct result of connections made during the event. The dynamic environment, featuring live pitches, startup booths, product demos, and a fireside chat, bridged innovation with opportunity and highlighted how participating founders were able to transform exposure into tangible business growth.

In May, Zein AUB iPark startups traveled again to Limassol for the *Reflect Festival*, where eight ventures, including Parency and DonaLeb, engaged directly with European ecosystem players. Notably, DonaLeb initiated talks with a Cyprus-based healthcare provider interested in piloting their corporate wellness platform, while Parency's exposure at the event led to mentorship from EU-based experts focused on scaling their perinatal care solution across Mediterranean markets.

This interconnected journey reached a high point in Paris, where the outcomes of previous events set the stage for even greater achievements. At [VivaTech](#), Europe's largest tech and innovation event, Zein AUB iPark co-organized the first official Lebanese Pavilion, inaugurated under the patronage of General Joseph Aoun, president of Lebanon. Five Zein AUB iPark startups, drawing on their recent successes, showcased their innovations to a global audience. During this week, DonaLeb secured a strategic partnership with a Paris-based HR firm, expanding their reach into the European wellness market, while Waleti began discussions with French investors, laying the groundwork for their first international round of funding. The event was also marked by high-level engagements, including a reception at the *Résidence des Pins* hosted by Ambassador of France in Beirut Hervé Magro, and meetings with French and Lebanese officials, which opened new doors for international cooperation.

"Innovation flourishes where bold ideas meet the right opportunities. Our mission at Zein AUB iPark is to enable, connect, and empower these innovators, turning passion into sustainable, world-changing ventures," said Dr. Yousif Asfour, AUB's chief innovation and transformation officer and executive director of Zein AUB iPark. "Each step this year has opened the door to the next, allowing our founders to prove themselves again and again, on regional and global stages."

As the second half of 2025 unfolds, Zein AUB iPark continues to serve as a catalyst, building momentum, opening borders, and championing the people behind Lebanon's most promising ventures.

ENDS

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About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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