

Dr. Guita Hourani Lectures at Lebanese Diaspora Energy Conference 2015

By LERC Staff
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Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) of Notre Dame University-Louaize lectured on Lifestyle Counter-Diasporic Migration and the Lebanese Returnees at the Lebanese Diaspora Energy 2015 Conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon on May 21, 2015 at the Hilton - Habtoor Grand Hotel in Lebanon.



Dr. Guita Hourani Lecturing at the Lebanese Diaspora Energy (Lebanon 2015)

For the second year in a row, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants organized this international conference to attract bright Lebanese emigrants and people of Lebanese descent “to awaken and deepen their ties with their homeland and with each other, and exchange experiences for the benefit of Lebanon.”

In her presentation, Dr. Hourani spoke on how the Lebanese migration is one of the largest migrations in relation with the size of Lebanon’s population. Her lecture looked at the ‘return’ motivations of some Lebanese emigrants and their families as a counter-diasporic occurrence. She revealed that their return demonstrates diverse mobility patterns and that some return at various points in their life course and in different familial situations.

She identified that one of the motivations for return can be classified under lifestyle counter-diasporic migration. These returnees choose to return for reasons pertaining to a) retiring in a better weather; b) retiring to a place where one’s pension can go a long way; c) return for the children to study in multi-lingual schools; d) return to take care of elderly parents or family members; e) return attracted by the Lebanese way of life which allows alternative lifestyles (the ‘good’ or ‘simple’ life); f) return to have international experience; g) return after success or failure and to start a new life near family and friends; h) return because of less expensive health system; and i) return because of what Lebanon represents as a cultural/spiritual attraction. The presentation contributes new insights into return migration, lifestyle counter-diasporic migration, and transnational identity.

Dr. Hourani recommended that Lebanon make proper policies and projects particularly in regard to infrastructure to cater to these returnees and to attract more of them back to Lebanon. These returnees create job and business opportunities, re-inhabit and re-imagine the countryside, and increase revenues for the treasury.

Dr. Hourani’s presentation was applauded by the hundreds of attendees many of whom gravitated around her asking her questions and commanding her work.