

SEKEM Insight

SEKEM's Journal for Culture, Economy, Society and Ecology in Egypt

Editorial

Dear Readers,

some European friends of SEKEM are celebrating two anniversaries this year. While the association of SEKEM friends in Germany is celebrating its 30th anniversary, the members of "SEKEM Austria" are delighted to look back at 10 years of successful development work in cooperation with SEKEM.

Numerous events in Germany and Austria form the programme of the various festivities. On 17 May the annual SEKEM Day organised by the German SEKEM Friends will be held in Stuttgart. It includes an extended marketplace where SEKEM products may be purchased and its cultural program also includes a lecture by Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish. He will also speak on 21 May at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Austrian SEKEM friends at the KunstUni Graz, the city where he began his pharmacological career. The cities of Stuttgart, Graz and Cairo are part of a close twinning relationship.

Those as yet unable to meet Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish are cordially invited to the events at Stuttgart and Graz.

Your Team of Editors

Find SEKEM also on the Internet at:



School Garden

SEKEM School
Garden is Renovated

Anniversary 1

30 Years of SEKEM
Friends in Germany

Anniversary 2

10 Years of SEKEM
Friends in Austria

SEKEM School Garden Undergoes Major Renovation

In an ambitious project, the school garden of the SEKEM School undergoes a professional redesign. In addition to biodynamic farming, permaculture is also to be used when the project is completed.



Team members create a herb garden in the form of a spiral as part of the new SEKEM school garden.

The school garden of the SEKEM School has been in regular use for as long as the school itself exists – around 20 years. In August 2013, teachers of agriculture together with Soraya Abouleish and a number of students have made the decision that it is time for an extensive refurbishment.

They quickly agreed that part of this renewal should include an area dedicated to experimentation with permaculture. Towards the end of last year, Ashraf

El Shafaki joined the „Garden Team“ to dedicate his work to this cause. Ashraf is a certified designer for permaculture systems. Since his joining the team, he has been working as an honorary advisor to the SEKEM School and together with others has designed the new permaculture section of the school garden.

Respect for Nature

The useful purposes of a school garden are manifold, also in SEKEM. The



The team experimented with different irrigation systems that reduce water consumption.

most obvious cause also at the SEKEM School is to inspire children to experience agriculture themselves, to guide them and to help them to deepen their practical and theoretical knowledge about how agriculture is conducted and what it means to the production of our food. To assist in the design, the construction of and the care for the garden and trains the five senses of especially the youngest pupils as they experience new colours, smells, and tastes and receive the opportunity to touch and maybe even plant guava, chamomile and many other species. In doing this, they experience literally “first hand” where their food comes from. The SEKEM School’s pupils of the third grade, for example, plant their own wheat, provide for irrigation, harvest by hand and produce from it their own bread – which is then of course eaten at school. This encourages everyone involved to develop a deep respect for the foods that they consume on a daily basis.

The children experience the satisfaction of treating nature respectfully with their own hands through their manual labour – an activity that often meets with little respect in Egypt. The majority of young people seek a future career as a doctor, pharmacist or engineer. Few want to be farmers.

Cooperation in the Group

Another goal of the school garden is to inspire students to become good collaborators in teams and other groups and to continually practice these “team skills”. By looking back on their own work, they experience how quickly complex tasks can be achieved together and then celebrate their achievements together with their friends.

The organizers have set out to discover these and many other features of a school garden and to have as many children as possible benefit from its advantages. In addition, they intend to experiment with different agricultural techniques, first with biodynamic farming and permaculture. There already is the garden’s own compost production. Apart from the immediate aim of providing a private garden with good compost, the students shall also learn that waste is not all alike, that, for instance, green waste can be reused to maintain the healthy organism of the garden.

While rebuilding the garden, the young organizers face the same challenges as the founders of the SEKEM

farm. The water supply was one of them. In addition to sprinkler irrigation they also now employ a drip irrigation system and they ensure a consistent water supply by burying large clay jars, so-called “ollas”, in the desert ground. In addition, mulch is now being used to reduce the overall water demand of the plants. They also wish to experiment with accompanying vegetation (“intercropping”), for example, with tomatoes and basil on the same bed of seedlings. In addition, shrubs and bushes such as Moringa and Jatropha shall also be used.

A Cookbook of Traditional Food

At the end of 2013, the organizers discovered the project “1000 Gardens for Africa” run by the “Slow Food” movement. Together with Slow Food, they have decided to join the project which involves a dedication to put greater future emphasis on the production, processing and consumption of native plant species originating in the Egyptian desert. The idea is to let this work result in a cookbook produced by the students themselves that shall collect traditional recipes that they received from their own grandparents. Aurelia Weintz, the local Slow Food Representative in Egypt, is actively supporting the school garden team in planning and the practical application of many good ideas and “best practice”.

Although the plans for the redevelopment of the SEKEM School garden were begun in September 2013, the plan could only be put into practice this year. By February 2014 the work on the garden renovation had begun and remains a work in progress. However, after only 6 weeks, the first tangible results are beginning to appear, as evidenced by the pictures in this article. They have inspired so many of the students at the SEKEM School that more and more of them wish to join the growing team of supporters.

Soraya Abouleish



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! More information:
<http://www.slowfood.de>
http://www.slowfoodfoundation.com/welcome_en.lasso
<http://SEKEMschoolgarden.wordpress.com>

Celebrating 30 Years of Support to SEKEM from Germany

On 17 May 2014, the German SEKEM support group will celebrate its annual SEKEM Day at the Liederhalle Stuttgart – and with it its own 30th anniversary.

All major initiatives need long-term support in the background to gain traction. Thus, behind the globally acknowledged and respected SEKEM initiative in Egypt, a number of privately organised and funded support groups do their work, specifically in The Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. For 30 years, the “Association for Cultural Development in Egypt” – or in short the SEKEM Friends Germany – has been supporting development in Egypt. Intensive cooperation of the association with SEKEM has in the past not only helped in the establishment of the SEKEM school, but also of a wealth of other social, economic and cultural initiatives in the country.

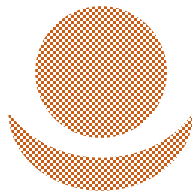
Thus, at the German friends, an initiative could develop for a long time as a collaborative work that is surprisingly versatile in its activities and cultural complexity. For the co-workers at the association, it was a special experience to witness the birth of many and diverse new projects, from the new educational institutions of early childcare to the latest development, the Heliopolis University. Therefore, after 30 years, the friends wish to pay tribute to this long time of success and achievements.

The Role of Culture

For SEKEM the unfolding of its cultural ventures, one word has always had a special meaning: culture. Culture “from the ground up” through biodynamic farming, culture in education at the Heliopolis University, cultural in its traditional sense as artistic and cultural initiatives, culture in the form of innovative architecture, culture as social culture: everywhere SEKEM has been trying to be culturally active and

innovative. Its outlook is always one focused on the future and its sustainable development. As Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, SEKEM’s founder, once said: “Those who do not plan a better future for themselves, will never know a good future”.

Looking back at 30 years of aid to SEKEM’s initiatives also means looking back at 30 years of gratitude to all sup-



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porters, donors, and volunteers of the SEKEM Friends Germany. It was only through their intensive collaboration that many projects could be realised.

SEKEM Day on 17 May in Stuttgart

To commemorate these achievements, this year’s SEKEM Day 2014 will be held on 17 May in Stuttgart in the presence of Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish and his son Helmy.

For this ceremony the German SEKEM Friends have succeeded in bringing a group of artists from SEKEM to Germany, a group that has worked extensively on Goethe’s “West-Eastern Divan” as a link between the global East and West. In their work, an impulse for artistic renewal from the Western Hemisphere

meets the artistic spirit of individuals from the Southern East which, in the form of Goethe’s “Divan”, now comes to life again for listeners from the West through a new interpretation. This matinee forms the main part of the event in the morning with an introduction by the Goethe expert Caroline Wispler.

In a round-table discussion in the afternoon, the task of “Building bridges between East and West” will be open for discussion with the public under the leadership of the SWR editor and journalist Martin Kilgus. The event will specifically focus on the cultural significance of “development and partnership between West and East”.

The public annual members’ assembly of the SEKEM Friends will follow in the afternoon after a coffee break. After the meeting, the public will be invited to stroll the premises and enjoy pictures of the SEKEM Farm and its development over the course of the last 30 years. In the foyer numerous SEKEM products will be once again available for sale, including children’s and baby clothing, dates, sesame bars, fruit spreads, spices and a variety of herbal teas, as well as special jewellery from SEKEM’s own handicraft workshop: earrings made of raw materials from the Egyptian desert: silver, minerals and stone tile from the white desert.

The SEKEM Day 2014 will be held at the Kulturzentrum Liederhalle Stuttgart, Berliner Platz 1-3, from 10:30 to about 18:30. Again, the event has been organised in cooperation with the City of Stuttgart, the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg and other initiatives that have come together because of the twinning agreement between Stuttgart and Cairo. The SEKEM Friends have for years been a part of this network and greatly enjoyed the collaboration. The organizers are therefore very honoured to receive the greetings of the State Secretary Klaus-Peter Murawski and the Lord Mayor Fritz Kuhn at the event.



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SEKEM Friends Germany

Impressions from SEKEM



Following an already successfully completed a solar thermal development project, SEKEM Energy GmbH, an Austrian company which works closely with the SEKEM Development Foundation in Egypt, recently launched a new project for the better placement of solar thermal energy solutions on the Egyptian market. The SEKEM Energy GmbH shares the vision of the SEKEM Foundation for Development concerning a global, sustainable energy supply and aims to help turn this into reality. The picture shows Helmy Abouleish of SEKEM, Birgit Birnstingl of SEKEM Energy and Markus Reichl from an Austrian partner celebrating the installation of the first solar panels of the earlier project.

In the new project, the project managers aim to build on the experience gained in the earlier project. In the course of the previous cooperation with the SEKEM Initiative, a demonstration plant of 40 square meters could already be installed near Cairo. That system provides preheated hot water for the SEKEM farm. A detailed report will follow in the upcoming issue of SEKEM Insight.

Accelerating Job Creation in Egypt through Inclusive Lending

A new project will provide access to finance to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and promote sustainable private sector job creation across Egypt. The US\$300 million loan approved by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors will open doors for women, youth and marginalized groups to start and grow MSEs utilizing innovative financing tools to expand access to credit. SEKEM has its own microfinance scheme for such groups.



THE WORLD BANK

"An inclusive financial system can play a key role in creating jobs and unleashing the entrepreneurial potential of innovative young Egyptians," said Hartwig Schafer, World Bank Country Director for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti.

The Promoting Innovation for Inclusive Financial Access Project will expand financial inclusion amongst low-income communities and unlock the market for lending to micro and small enterprises. Over 5 years the project is set to reach over 130,000 micro and small enterprises, 37 percent of which owned by women. In Egypt, small and young enterprises are the main source of new job opportunities. They account for more than 98 percent of enterprises, generate more than 85 percent of employment in non-agriculture private sectors, and 40 percent of total employment.

"The project will reach out to remote, rural and underprivileged areas in Egypt," said Sahar Nasr, World Bank Lead Economist and Project Team Leader. "It will unleash opportunities and provide income-generating activities to youth, women and entrepreneurs in marginalized areas."

Source: Worldbank

! More information:
• <http://www.worldbank.org/eg>

"Art and Sustainable Development" with Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish at the KunstUni Graz

FESTKONZERT 10 Jahre SEKEM Österreich



VORTRAG Ibrahim ABOULEISH: *Kunst und nachhaltige Entwicklung*

The University of Arts of the City of Graz, Austria and SEKEM cordially invite the public to a festive choral concert and lecture by Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish on Wednesday, 21 May 2014 at 17:30 clock. The event will take place at the György-Ligeti-room of the House for Music and Music Theater (MUMUTH) of the University of Arts, Lichtenfelsstrasse 14, 8010 Graz, Austria. It is organized on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the non-profit SEKEM support association of Austria.

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish will talk about the connection between art and sustainable development. In addition, soloists, the choir club, the great chorus of the University of Arts as well as the choir Forum Gleisdorf will perform recitals of works by Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Brahms under the overall artistic direction of Johannes Prinz and Franz Jochum.

The event is being held under the patronage of Governor Franz Voves, the Mayor of the City of Graz Siegfried Nagl,

Vice Mayor Dr. Martina Schröck and the Egyptian Ambassador to Austria, Khaled Shamaa. Following the event, the City of Graz will invite the public to a reception. Admission is free, however the organizers kindly ask the public to register at tickets@kug.ac.at.

Source: SEKEM Austria



Masthead:
The editors of SEKEM Insight wish to thank all contributors to this issue.

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Pictures:
1, 2: Soraya Abouleish, 4: SEKEM-Energy

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