



Dear Reader,

the issue of climate change is making headlines everywhere - and rightly so. The modern media - primarily the internet - allow everyone to fight it from the comfort of their own home. Specifically the offsetting of CO2 emissions from flights is gaining in popularity. It is easy and flexible to do any-time and anywhere by those who travel.

Usually a traveller trusts a "man in the middle", an agency selecting the projects to be supported. Thus there is usually no personal relationship between the donor and the project. It is just an act of financial support. SEKEM's new project ECOPROFIT goes beyond that. Not only is the project itself directly known to the donor and can be visited at any time personally. The Egyptian initiative also allows its supporters a direct and personal relationship to the people benefiting from financial donations. The project and its people are empowered to directly reach out to their donors, get in contact with them, and possibly even share the "story" of SEKEM and its work in greater detail than normally possible. Through a personal visit the project can also come to life in entirely new ways.

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SEKEM Opens New Production Facilities in Minya



Helmy Abouleish and the president of the governorate El Minya, Ahmed Dia et Din, open the new facilities

On Tuesday 7 April the new facilities for drying onions, garlic, and herbs have been eventually inaugurated in the city of Minya.

Special guest was the president of the governorate El Minya who traditionally cut the red ribbon and opened the new facilities for business in a festive ceremony together with Helmy Abouleish. All participants subsequently took part in a presentation demonstrating the work of SEKEM and the new production facilities in Minya. After the event everyone could participate in a guided tour across the entire farm

grounds and inspect the new production work flows.

The new farm of approximately 800 hectare that was only recently purchased on premises close to the city and will eventually be the chief supplier for the raw materials to the new drying plant also located at Minya. Wells are currently drilled on the grounds as water has to be brought to the surface from depths of up to 200 metres. The first trucks carrying compost for preparing the grounds have also already reached the farm.

Sandra Poettrich

New Activities of the Dutch Support Association

The Dutch Vriendenkring Sekem with some 180 members has been promoting and supporting Sekem for over 10 years. In the last couple of years Ibrahim Abouleish has become a regular guest to the Netherlands. We organise public lectures to enable more people to learn about Sekem's achievements and to meet its founder. At such visits, we also arrange meetings for Dr. Abouleish with business people, people from governmental and non-governmental organisations and other interested institutes dealing with CSR, development aid, sustainable agriculture and technology, and incidentally with young Muslim key persons from the diverse Dutch Islamic communities.

The board is actively informing on Sekem's philosophy and achievements by giving lectures in and outside the anthroposophical circles. Two of our board members for instance participated in the service of a protestant church dedicated to inter-religious dialogue and development aid. The story of the prophet Joseph/Yussuf was told from a Christian and a Muslim perspective, and there was ample opportunity to inform the audience about the several working areas of Sekem. One of our board members, who is a practising Muslim, gave a presentation for a society of students with Moroccan roots about the work of Sekem from an Islamic perspective. Jan Diek van Mansvelt, who is an emeritus professor in organic agriculture advising Sekem on sustainable agriculture development, also contributed to this presentation, which took place in the month of Ramadan, a period when Muslims use to organise meetings at dusk to break fasting and discuss topics related to the purpose of life.

The Friends support the work in Sekem directly, for example through a yearly gift to the eurhythmics acad-

emy and through our participation in the funding of the 13 Villages Project. One of our members regularly visits the Sekem School and instructs its teachers on making flutes of bamboo and how to use them. Last year, one of our members decided to donate a considerable amount of money for the support of the Chamomile Children for the next 5 years. This enabled the start of the Sekem Community School for children from 12 years and above who lack basic education. In Sekem Insight no. 79, March 2009, this is discussed in more detail.

We also funded the visit to Sekem of some leading members of two development projects in Sudan and Mali, the first with the displaced Nuba community in the Heiban region, the latter with the Bella population of Mopti. This resulted in the start of a composting project supported by the local authorities of Mopti. A further meeting with a representative of a Somali organisation working in the Puntland Autonomous Region has not yet led to tangible results.

"Brandaan Reizen" organises visits to Sekem for some 20 participants on a yearly basis. The personal meeting with the "miracle in the desert" and its founder, the hospitality encountered in Sekem and the enthusiasm of the organiser Dick Blokker resulted in a number of keen supporters of Sekem and of the Dutch Friends.

During the last visit of Dr. Abouleish to the Netherlands a new project was launched. The Vriendenkring will campaign for the collection of a considerable sum for the enlargement of the program for mentally handicapped children in Sekem. The sum collected – together with a share from the Sekem Development Foundation – will be doubled by a Dutch development aid fund.

Also planned are a series of meetings by Dr. Abouleish on Islam for members of the Anthroposophical Society, Waldorf School teachers and teachers on Islamic schools.

Hendrik Jan Bakker

SEKEM Helps Neutralise CO2 Emissions from Air Travel

SEKEM's chief goal is to further positive and sustainable development of man, society, and the environment. All activities supporting these goals are to be strengthened while those hindering them are to be purposefully identified and minimised in their effect. This, for instance, includes emissions of the dangerous greenhouse gas CO².

With SEKEM's work becoming increasingly popular and international relationships expanding visitor numbers to the Egyptian initiative are on the rise, too. These trips are usually incurring flights that release substantial quantities of CO² and other harmful greenhouse gases into the air.

As all living organisms perish when they retreat back into themselves SEKEM intends to keep up the dialogue with other people and cultures. Thus, new ways to counteract the harmful pollution must be found.

0.7 gigatons of CO² are released through air travel globally every year. This represents around 1.6% of all global CO² emissions worldwide. However, since emissions from air travel are released into the atmosphere at a much higher altitude their effect is substantially more harmful than it would be on mean sea level. Since regulation by the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) prohibit the taxation of kerosene it is practically impossible to integrate the societal and environmental costs incurred by air travel into the prices.

Technical improvements like air travel cannot be reversed and a society not harnessing the benefits provided by new means of transportation is virtually unthinkable. Since global transactions in the cultural and economic spheres do also positively impact the lives of billions of people such a move also is

not desirable. It is thus a question of quantity and proper measure. With reference to Immanuel Kant Wilhelm Schmid once postulated an “ecological imperative”: “Act in such a way that you anticipate the consequences of your deeds as you wish other people would.”

To anticipate the consequences of air travel SEKEM has recently inaugurated its newest institution ECOPROFIT. ECOPROFIT gives everyone the opportunity to calculate and offset their CO₂ emissions resulting from air travel. This is done by using certified climate certificates that have been generated through composting on SEKEM’s farms. Besides the reduction of emissions these certificates also enable the creation of workplaces and support measures to improve the quality of the desert soil.

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish supports the new initiative and values the opportunity to also contribute to the positive and sustainable development of Egypt. In April together with his wife Gudrun he has offset his flights for the first time using ECOPROFIT.

Helmy Abouleish, CEO of the SEKEM Holding, also praises the new options and vows to offset all of SEKEM’s

business-related flights. Because of the multitude of factors impacting on the actual consumption of fossil fuels in planes (distance, wind, type of plane, occupancy, altitude) it is impossible to accurately calculate the emissions. ECOPROFIT therefore for the moment bases its calculations only on the distance actually travelled, by far the most relevant factor. Additional forms of calculation will become available in the future.

Naturally not only flights to Cairo can be offset using ECOPROFIT. Next to private travellers the new initiative specifically addresses travel agencies and businesses wishing to offset all their flights in one convenient annual “package”.

To offset a flight please contact the address mentioned below stating your itinerary details (start and destination and stopovers if relevant). ECOPROFIT will also be happy to answer your questions on the calculation of the emissions, the generation of CO₂ certificates, and the costs of general administration of the programme. Each flight neutralised is being acknowledged by a certificate. Please contact martin.haagen@SEKEM.com

Martin Haagen

Future Finance and Economics Commission Meeting at SEKEM

Diverse, inspiring and delivering numerous concrete policy proposals – the first meeting of the WFC’s Future Finance and Economics Commission from March 27th to 30th turned out to be a real success. WFC Councillor Ibrahim Abouleish cordially hosted the meeting at the SEKEM community near Cairo. The 13 attendees included Councillors Frances Moore-Lappé and Olivier Giscard d’Estaing, member of the Board of Advisors Margrit Kennedy, and WFC founder Jakob von Uexküll. Council members Riane Eisler, Prabhu Guptara, and Chico Whitaker could not attend the meeting, but are determined to take part in the commission’s further work.

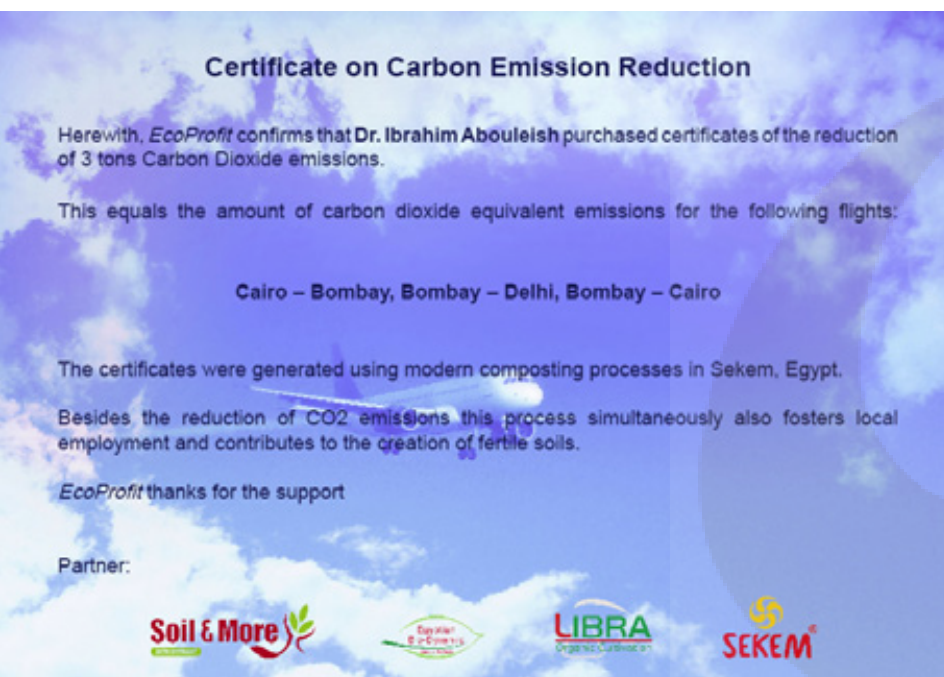
The commission started by debating the very foundations of future finance and living economies serving people and planet, how new measures of human well-being can trigger an economic paradigm shift and which frame and wording is appropriate to foster this transition.

In the second part of the meeting, the discussions about the role of complementary currencies and a new taxation based on the depletion of natural resources led the commission to a number of concrete policy recommendations to curb speculation and to break the dominance of finance.

Helmy Abouleish, Managing Director of SEKEM Holding, organised a business dinner with the Egyptian Junior Business Association. More than 30 entrepreneurs discussed trends in future finance, monetary policies and sustainable economy with Councillors and invited experts.

The commission took home plenty of new ideas to transform finance – and the insight that SEKEM itself is the very best place to develop sustainable economics.

Stefan Biskamp



SEKEM Education Science Centre Scores New Successes

The SESC is the SEKEM Education Science Centre at the SEKEM School that is offering interactive science classes on environmental topics to pupils from both local and international schools. One-day field trips encompassing a range of practical activities are developed from a wide variety of subjects including chemistry, biology, physics, and geography.

Much emphasis is placed on the holistic education of the pupils and on the close interconnection of practice with theory periods.

Until today almost 2.000 pupils took part in SESC-organised day trips. This includes some pupils from international schools that have already taken part. These international partnerships are foreseen to expand as their fully-financed participation enables a broad spectrum of activities that can be offered to local state-run institutions.

Last March saw two professional education sessions for teachers from the vicinity of SEKEM. It was the goal to incite environmental awareness in the instructors using group activities and experiments that would allow them to personally experience the need to discuss environmental issues in class. The project is supported by the "British Council".

The person in charge of SESC at SEKEM, Mohamed Berry, will this year be supported by the SEKEM chemistry teacher Mohamed Hassan particularly in the planning and execution of the field trips.

Over the course of 2 months I was personally able to contribute to the planning of such trips in February and March of 2009. I had completed my own studies in chemistry and geography as a high school teacher last December and was eager on using the time productively until my practice period in Germany. I had the chance to fully become involved

in SESC's work and be engaged in most of its areas of work and planning. I specifically contributed to the organisational and logistical development of new field trips as a group leader and carried them out in cooperation with SEKEM teachers. The new activities were supposed to be tailored to the profile of SEKEM and the potential of the location. Thus I selected the topics "chicken and egg" as well as "cow and milk" for my trips. I was keen on inciting a sense of understanding for the intricate interdependencies among animals and people by letting the pupils work with ordinary daily items such as milk or eggs. In 8th grade the pupils got the chance to actually "breed" eggs, survey the daily development and analyse the eggs anatomically. In 5th grade the pupils visited the cows' stables to answer their many questions about animals and how they are domesticated. They even got the chance to produce real butter.

I greatly enjoyed working with the Egyptian teachers and pupils and there would be countless more projects to begin and complete. However, I already achieved a lot during the intense albeit short time that I had by working collaboratively with many SEKEM co-workers, teachers, and social workers.

Susanne Biebrach

New Certification Available to SEKEM Firems

On 6 April Naturetex received its confirmation from ICEA, the Italian certification body for organic textiles, that its entire production chain from cultivation to the finished product is now compliant with the GOTS certification standard. The Global Organic Textile Standard had been developed by an international working group over the past years and replaces the national standards for organic textiles. This represents great advantages for producers like Naturetex that sell their products to a wide variety of target markets. Until today shipments to the USA

had to comply with different sets of standards than those to Europe or Japan. That was the reason why Naturetex staff was particularly delighted about the new development. Naturetex had already produced in compliance with the international demeter standard before.

Three of SEKEM's firms have again been certified by FLO-Cert International also according to the Fairtrade criteria and are thus allowed to sell their products bearing the Fairtrade label: Lotus (for herbs and rice), ISIS (for fruits and vegetables and several of the teas) and Naturetex for cotton, yarn, garments, and finished textiles. Moreover, SEKEM's Adlia Farm has renewed its certification according to the Global GAP standard, the international certification for safety in the production of foodstuffs made from agricultural products. This standard has become a requirement in fresh produce retailing and in most of ISIS' international business relationships.

SEKEM co-workers congratulate the firms on their achievements and hope that the certifications will support the sale of high quality organic products in Egypt and worldwide.

Christina Boecker



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