



Dear Reader,

twelve children and two teachers from the SEKEM School travelled to Stuttgart in July to take part in a youth exchange programme organized by the UNESCO. The programme had been set up on initiative of the German federal government within the framework of the Soccer World Cup 2006. All in all, 2006 children and their supervisors came to Germany from all over the world, 15 of them from Egypt. The Rudolf-Steiner Schools of Stuttgart alone proposed to host 250 of them.

The strong interest in European education and cultural programmes that exists in many countries, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East, shows that such exchanges are important instruments in bridging cultures and furthering mutual understanding. Their relevance is even higher when they are organized by „intercultural mediators“ - managers proficient in both cultures taking part in the exchange. For many years, foundations and project organizers in Europe have been demanding their increased involvement particularly in the EU programmes directed at young people.

Intercultural mediators also play an important role in SEKEM. They mediate between the cultural, professional, economic, or technical spheres and standards and alleviate differences between the cultural circles. This way, they ensure that everyone can learn from their challenges and team members.

This issue features a short contribution of one of the participants in the youth festival.

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SEKEM, Grow Group Holland Start New Joint Venture

SEKEM Firm Brings Innovative Production Technique to Egypt



For more than 10 years SEKEM Group's subsidiary Libra Co. has been producing greenhouse crops such as peppers, cucumbers and tomatoes and a broad selection of open field vegetables, medicinal herbs and spices. During the last years, the demand in both local and export markets for organically cultivated greenhouse products has grown substantially while specifications for quality assurance have become more and more demanding. Moreover, pressure on prices has increased due to a large number of other suppliers from other parts of the world working increasingly efficient and effective in the market.

In order to sustain Libra Co.'s growth the firm had already invested in large, modern greenhouses last year. Libra Co. has now also made the decision to make substantial investments in the early stages of the production chain of greenhouse crops: the raising of young vegetable seedlings. To reach the highest product quality at this stage - a strong, healthy, and pest-resistant seedling - Libra chose to implement an innovative technology called „grafting“. „Grafting“ is an internationally successful alternative to heavy chemical treatment against soil-born diseases, growth regulators or GMO's (genetically modified organisms).



The rootstocks used are bred resistant against diseases featuring better health and strength to provide variety in fruit. They are grafted on top of the rootstock to ensure best growth and production conditions. For the growing Egyptian agricultural sector the technique introduces enormous improvements as it guarantees higher yields, can reduce pesticide use, thus increasing competitiveness of the final product on the market both in terms of quality and environmental friendliness. Only few people worldwide are presently sufficiently experienced in implementing the technique

under circumstances as they exist in Egypt. Libra Co. teamed up with one of the leading companies in the field and built a strategic team with Grow Group from Holland. Talks between both companies started in early 2006 and eventually lead to the establishment of a joint venture business partnership between Libra Co. and Grow Group that was subsequently named „El-Mizan“ (Arab. „balance“). The foundation of the joint venture company was celebrated on 18 June 2006 in the Mahad at the SEKEM farm. The establishment of El-Mizan is co-funded by a support fund of the

Dutch government. The objective of the company is to create a „state-of-the-art“ grafting business to supply about 6 Mio. grafted and un-grafted vegetable seedlings to the suppliers of SEKEM and other major Egyptian greenhouse producers within the next three years. El-Mizan is the first large scale provider of grafted plants in Egypt perfectly matching SEKEM's general vision of developing innovative solutions for agricultural producers that are environmentally friendly and economically viable.

Tobias Bandel

Egyptian Youth Ambassadors to Visit UNESCO World Youth Festival

Children and Teachers from SEKEM Travel to Germany



„A time to make friends“: this motto became reality for young people from all five continents of the world. The city of Stuttgart was transformed into a meeting point for the world's youth as young people were invited to the German city for the UNESCO World Youth Festival. 2006 children from countries like Nepal, Egypt, Taiwan, Brazil or Burkina Faso arrived in Stuttgart to get to know better the city and their host country. The festival was presented under the auspices of the

FIFA World Cup 2006, that in this region culminated with the match for third place in Stuttgart on 9 July 2006. The „Ambassadors of SEKEM“, as the visitors were called there, had been invited by the mayor of Stuttgart and the festival directorate to take part in the UNESCO World Youth Festival 2006 from 2 to 10 July 2006. „We were twelve students and two teachers from the SEKEM School and guests of the Michael Bauer School, one of the several Waldorf Schools of Stuttgart“, recounts a participant. „Our helpful coordinator and organizer was Mr. Magdi Abdallah, the father of one of the German pupils.“ The children were able to take accommodation with the German host families allowing them to familiarize themselves with German culture and hospitality and make friends quickly. „Our families truly made it possible to form new

relationships and build contacts which exceeded all intercultural barriers. Thanks to them and the school's staff and managers, our visit to Germany was a great success.“

A supportive programme made up of sports, culture and leisure activities including numerous artistic and multicultural highlights facilitated the creation of friendships with Germans and other guests from all over the world. Organized visits to different places in Stuttgart, e.g. the Daimler Stadium, the Mercedes Benz automobile museum, the Wilhelma zoo, Hohenpark Killesberg, the Ritter sport chocolate factory and the old city of Esslingen helped the visitors to familiarize themselves with the region. There was even a chance to watch the football matches on the Schlossplatz, Stuttgart's main square offering an open-air screening to all passers-by.



A visit of so many children to Germany from places afar naturally brings about small stories of special individual experiences.

Noura Nasser Abdelshafak, for instance, will be returning home from Germany with a new wheelchair in her baggage. The 16-year old girl has been suffering from polio since the age of four and also has to use crutches to walk.

She cannot walk for longer distances alone at all. Her father, a peasant who has to care for five children, cannot afford a wheelchair for Noura either. During her stay in Stuttgart a wheelchair had been organized to make it possible for her to take part in the events of the youth festival. Some of her German friends came up with the idea to donate a wheelchair for her to use even when in Egypt.

Parents of the Michael Bauer School in Vaihingen where Noura, her Egyptian friends and other children from as far away as Brazil were hosted, reacted promptly. They approached the Weber + Greissing, a supplier of medical appliances who subsequently gave a wheelchair and a pair of new crutches to Noura as a gift. During the farewell party at the Michael Bauer School the presents were given to the girl who can now begin a new, largely independent life of her own. The new-won mobility has brought her a little closer to realizing her greatest wish, to begin her studies of medicine in Cairo.

Salem Al Masry & Bijan Kafi

Germany - it really is a piece of paradise! It was a great pleasure to go to this beautiful country. The Germans are very friendly and they have such a spirit for sports. I did not feel like a foreigner, really as if I had been in my own house. I also enjoyed experiencing German orderliness and cleanliness - it was a pleasure to use the comfortable German public transport and also the streets were clean everywhere! I can say that a nice dream came true for me in Germany.

Ahmed Gamal (SEKEM pupil, 11. grade)

My name is Mohamed. I am 20 years old and I just finished my third year at the faculty of science. One of my hobbies is to make friends in other countries. When I was in Germany I found all the students and their teachers to be very open and friendly. I really enjoyed my time with the host families, they were very friendly too and their children were really nice with us. They often accompanied us on our outdoor programmes.

Stuttgart has many places to see and the programme of our trip to Kelsberg was great. There was enough time to swim, dance, meet new friends and play. The day we went out for sports we played football and practiced rock climbing. Germany is such a beautiful green country - it's green everywhere! We also went to Munich once and I really enjoyed to see the city's old town. The journey was a very good chance to tell our German friends about our own culture and traditions, our religion and also SEKEM. Our supervisors even prepared a surprise for us in that they took us to the river Neckar on a boat. I also liked visiting the Mercedes museum! Germany is such a well-organized country; I particularly liked its streets and trains. Getting the chance to see the soccer world cup in Stuttgart downtown was the best and a very special opportunity. I now we have so many friends in Stuttgart - thank you SEKEM for this chance to see a new country!

Mohamed Berry (former pupil of SEKEM)



New Stables Inaugurated

SEKEM extends shelters for cattle



On 10 July, a particularly large cloud of dust moved across the SEKEM farm. The last animals - 75 cows and their calves - moved into the new stables. In the beginning of 2005, Toni Sarvas, student at the University of Hohenheim, Germany, had begun planning the new buildings as part of his diploma thesis together with SEKEM's technicians. Later the initiative's employees of the metal workshop took over and erected the new construction made from elements built by them.

The way the new stables are built is meant to accommodate the local environment optimally. It had to be easy to build and as robust as possible. New obstacles had to be overcome with the installation of the new facilities for milking since a cheap solution had to be found for a fairly complex system that needed to be constructed locally.

All main parts of the new building are now directly adjacent to the feeding places making the entire stable much easier to manage.

At the same time the building offers substantially more free space and the ceiling of the roof is now higher to allow for extra protection against the sun and more wind to enter the resting area. Additional space has been provided for directly adjacent to the stable for storage of feedstuffs and composting.

The move was not an easy one for SEKEM's cows and their calves; most of them did not move „voluntarily“. With the extension SEKEM now has more room available for a total of around 200 cows and 300 calves. „We can now cater for much more animals with less personnel and under conditions even healthier than before“, says Angela Hofmann, agricultural manager in SEKEM. „Milk production methods have been significantly optimized. At the same time we have begun a project that eventually aims at a substantial reduction of the usage of high-energy and an increase of the quality and diversity of natural feedstuffs.“

Angela Hofmann





„Snowwhite“ in Arabic



It has already become a tradition for the children of the „Chamomile Children“ project to perform a Eurythmy play based on a fairy tale every summer. This year the small theatre group had chosen „Snowwhite and the Seven Dwarfs“.

During the extensive summer school programme that is on offer every year during the summer months and includes artistic courses, 4 weeks of daily Eurythmy instruction had been prepared for 50 children. The courses were offered by students of SEKEM's Eurythmy teacher training facility as their coursework includes practical training and theoretical instruction. The students worked with great enthusiasm with the children to learn the various complex moves of Snowwhite and the Seven Dwarfs and as they attempted to recreate

the difficult characters of the Queen and the Mirror.

The summer activity thus served as a great opportunity of training for the youngsters as the learning of the precise moves and gestures and their exact order requires utmost attention and concentration. As every year, the final public performance presented the concluding high point to week of work for the young artists.

Martina Dinkel

Welcome, Sherif Osman!



We are glad to introduce our readers to Mr. Sherif Osman who took over the position of Training Specialist last year.

After his Bachelor in Accounting from the Faculty of Commerce at Alexandria University and a Certificate in Human Resources from the American University in

Cairo, Mr. Osman has gathered experience from working with different companies like Hewlett-Packard Egypt, Intel Egypt, CompuMe (Dubai) and New Horizons Egypt. Asked about his goals, Mr. Osman replies: „I seek a position as a human resource executive in a growing, environmentally conscious company that will utilize my current skills in training and developments supervision, staffing and recruiting, compensation and human resource information systems. At the same time, I hope to gain experience in performance management and electronic human resource management.“

We extend our welcome to Mr. Sherif Osman and wish him best of luck and success.

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