



Dear Reader,

in December, the fourth and last report on development in the Arab World by the UN Development Programme was published. The report of 2005 particularly deals with the situation of women in the region.

It states that, generally speaking, much progress has been achieved in the Arab World in the past decades. Fewer theocratic governments are still in power today and the call for participation by citizens is being answered more and more often. Civil society activities have increased substantially in all countries, also due to the positive effect of the Internet.

Making these developments last will to a large extent depend on the active involvement of women in the region – to their personal benefit and that of their societies. The report states that this is not usually the case today. Women, too, must be given more opportunities to contribute their abilities to the beneficial development of their own livelihoods and thereby the wellbeing of their countries.

SEKEM strives to encourage all Egyptians – men in the same way as women – to develop their talents in a self-responsible way. Historically grown societies deserve respect and support wherever they lend a sense of security and self-esteem to their populaces. Where they hinder development, however, we together have to look for better ways for creating suitable environments for our lives.

Your SEKEM Insight-Team

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13 Villages Project: Solid Waste Recycling

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Solid Waste Collection, Recycling Improves Rural Hygiene



Roland Schaette (SEKEM Friends) and Yvonne Floride (SEKEM) work with villagers in Gelfina

The „13 villages project“ implemented by SEKEM with the financial support of the European Union and practical assistance from volunteers in Egypt and Europe builds on holistic integration and the concertation of a great number of diverse actions. While their emphasis is placed on public health and its development through counseling of and care for pregnant women, these aspects of the project are enhanced by practical and infrastructural aid such as the avoidance and disposal of waste, training and other educational measures, adult education and assistance to small entrepreneurs.

SEKEM Insight has reported on the progress of the project's first stage

in health care in the past editions. An important action area includes the care for the public space and thus the protection of the health of the villagers and their livestock. A part of the project is thus a set of dedicated measures on “solid waste recycling” directed at approximately 2.000 households scattered over the 13 focus villages.

An expert was put in charge of the putting in place of a concept that would allow for a sustainable system of collecting, transporting and preparing for recycling of the wastes of these households. It was to be developed together with the workers of SEKEM during the planning phase of the project. During

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this phase, not only the quantity and various qualities of the waste had to be taken into account. The system also had to be affordable and robust enough to be accepted and used continuously by the farmers and villagers under the difficult rural circumstances. After a thorough analysis, the concept was to be developed systematically for all 13 villages in the project.

An important part of it was the organization of the recycling itself. Firstly, a collection area had to be identified and designated that would allow for the easy and hygienic collection, sorting and recycling or disposal of the waste. Its costs had to be calculated in a first preliminary report to assure the system's affordability for the villagers also in the very long term. A second collection site was later attached to the first one to allow for more effective separation of the various sorts of waste.

The most practical solution for the collection and transportation of the waste proved to be a 65-horsepower tractor with a suitable high-wall trailer. Until now all waste had been collected manually using simple donkey carts. An unacceptable technique particularly in terms of hygiene. Moreover, collecting and sorting waste by hand also no longer is acceptable for many from a social standpoint - even under the strained circumstances in rural and poor Egypt.

For a long time the Egyptian society has been shaped by social structures often hindering the introduction of even the most obviously positive developments. The setting up of a systematic waste collection system in urban Cairo, for instance, took decades to complete. Too many social groups "benefited" from the existence - or absence - of certain institutions based on age-old tradition. A professional waste disposal concept



Gelfinas clean streets shine again after extensive cleaning works

for Cairo could only be developed during the past 20 years, because the resistance of particularly the "Zabballin", the traditional waste collecting caste, proved too strong to be dismissed easily. The adherents of the Zabballin traditionally are to collect, sort and „recycle“ most waste in Cairo by reselling it. Some have even achieved modest wealth and continue to insist on their historic prerogatives.

But things do can change even in the countryside. With sensitivity and perseverance SEKEM has again and again shown that much development can be achieved through small steps. And it has been doing so for the past 30 years.

Additionally, to jump-start the project, Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish donated an additional 10 acres of land in the name of SEKEM. This will allow the initiative's co-workers to quickly begin their work and avoid additional red-tape.

Bijan Kafi

Benefit Concerts for SEKEM in Germany and Egypt

A series of benefit performances in Germany and Egypt shall make the work of the initiative more widely known in both countries and present its key achievements of the past years. The Cairo events will be kindly supported financially by the Goethe Institute.

Initiated by the young violinist Henja Semmler, the first benefit concert will take place on 16 January 2007 in the "Alte Aula" of the University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg. Henja Semmler (violin/viola) and Tido Semmler (piano) will play pieces by J.S. Bach, L. Berio, R. Schumann and D. Schostakowitsch.

Tickets are available for € 12,- (€ 8,- reduced) via the organizer of the concert, the German association for the advancement of cultural development in Egypt. Please contact: tel. +49-234-8936995 or www.sekem-freunde.de.

Bijan Kafi



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Media Award for Development Goes to SEKEM Feature

Geseko v. Lüpke Receives Recognition from the President of the Federal Republic of Germany

The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Horst Köhler, and the Federal Minister for Development, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, awarded the recognition of the media ward for development policy 2006 on 11 December 2006 in the Great Ballroom of the Berlin deputies' house.

With 150 guests present the independent jury bestowed upon the 5 winning contributions the prizes in the categories print/internet, TV and radio it had selected prior to the event. In his laudation, Thomas Krausch from the commercial TV station SAT 1 recognized this years' awardees.

The journalist and author Geseko von Lüpke was bestowed with the prize in the category radio for his feature "SEKEM – The Desert Miracle" that had been aired on Bavarian radio, the NDR as well as Austrian and Swiss radios. In his contribution, von Lüpke recounts the history of the Egyptian initiative and its founder, the farmer and pharmacologist Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, who returned to his motherland after 20 years in Europe to realize the dream of his life. The feature introduces listeners to the foundations of SEKEM's work on the basis of organic agriculture within the framework of a holistic approach to development in which economic advancement is tightly integrated with cultural, edu-



Geseko v. Lüpke receives the recognition from Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul and Horst Köhler

ational and health projects. In the laudation, particular emphasis was placed on SEKEM as proof of the possibility to change the world against all contrary opinion.

In his address, President Horst Köhler encouraged the media to "report on development policy much more and in longer features in order for readers to understand better and in a more differentiated way the issues that concern peoples' lives in Asia, Africa, and Latin America." He was particularly interested in the SEKEM initiative. Minister Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul

applauded the contributions of the 11 recipients of the prize because "they have through their outstanding quality contributed to building the awareness of the public audience of the need for industrialized and developing countries to cooperate as equal partners."

Geseko v. Lüpke

New Bottling Facility for ISIS

Expanded Production Brings Enhancements for Juice Production

SEKEMs firm ISIS recently could inaugurate a new manual bottling facility for the production of orange juice.

The Egyptian interest in ISIS' products continues to be strong. Particularly orange juice is in high demand. To able to support its expansion and supply the market with a high quality product the recent purchase of the bottling facility had become a necessity.

The plant that has just been installed now allows for a bottling of more than 1.000 bottles per hour. The entire system prefers manual labour over full automatization to comply with SEKEM's ideal of leaving work in the hands of the individual and not the machine. With the new purchase ISIS will remain capable of producing a high quality organic product in the future and even extend production.

*Bijan Kafi,
Wolfgang Schulz*



The new bottling facility at ISIS



Impressions from SEKEM



The SEKEM School, shaped by the appearance of the SEKEM initiative

Our picture shows the main entrance of the SEKEM School. The building is shaped by the distinctive visual characteristics of the SEKEM buildings: white walls to reflect the aggressive sunlight, colourful and often asymmetric window frames and elements reminiscent of anthroposophical buildings as they are widely known in Europe. The school that was founded in 1989 by the Society for Cultural Development in Egypt (SCD) today serves more than 300 pupils and provides living and learning space to them in the Egyptian countryside. Curricula are strongly influenced by artistic subjects, particularly in manual and music education.

Learning from Winning Alternatives

New Book Publishes Portraits from 25 Years of Award History

The book "Projects of Home—Outlooks onto a different Globalisation" has just been published by the Munich-based publishing house oekom. In 12 individual portraits the book compiles interviews, essays and lectures of recipients of the Right Livelihood Award. It will also contain a section on Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, founder of SEKEM. The Right Livelihood Award or "Alternative Nobel Prize" is considered to be the most prestigious award in

sustainable development and innovative thinking.

"For 25 years the 'Right Livelihood Award' honors [...] people who have achieved outstanding results in their field of work, be it environmental protection, peace or human rights", the press release states. With their alternative solutions the awardees bring hope and courage to other parts of the world. "Their projects and initia-

tives show that solutions for many pressing global problems are indeed proven and ready for use."

The book is available immediately for € 19,90,- from all book stores.

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