

# SEKEM *Insight*

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

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

the past weeks have been marked by riots and violence in Egypt. SEKEM is relieved that so far neither the initiative's co-workers nor facilities were harmed. However, when an entire country is threatened to be drawn into a seemingly unstoppable spiral of hatred, that can only be a small consolation.

For more than 35 years SEKEM has been trying to set a positive example for intercultural tolerance, personal advancement, and social integrity. It has done so through the promotion of its ideals, its social and cultural projects, and its products that are produced responsibly and help advance sustainability in Egypt. All its interventions have always focused on the strengthening of the material and spiritual welfare of communities alike.

SEKEM will continue to work for the goal that, in these communities, people may find the opportunities they need to meet each other with empathy, tolerance, and respect for the dignity of their fellow human beings. Please find a formal statement by SEKEM on the current events in Egypt on page 3.

## Your Team of Editors

Find SEKEM also on the Internet at:



### Heliopolis Uni

Center of Excellence  
Begins Service

### Offsetting CO<sub>2</sub>

SEKEM Helps Mitigate  
Climate Change

### SEKEM Initiative

Statement on the  
Turmoil in Egypt

## Heliopolis University Centre of Excellence Opens

With full day of events and games, the newly inaugurated Heliopolis University Centre of Excellence, created as part of the EduCamp project, opens.



Teachers from the EduCamp project working with participating children.

26th June 2013 marked the opening of the Heliopolis University Centre of Excellence. Developed under the EduCamp framework that seeks to improve sustainability education for children and young adults through better learning materials, this Centre will serve as an educational hub for years to come.

The day provided both the school teachers and school students with

interesting and engaging events and activities to celebrate the Centre of Excellence's official opening.

The teachers' day started with a number of teaching members of the EduCamp project giving presentations about EduCamp, its goals and projected outcomes, in addition to a presentation by the Heliopolis University president. This was accompanied by an introductory video to SEKEM, the

founding organisation of Heliopolis University.

The presentations were greeted with great enthusiasm by the attendees, and EduCamp members and the teachers engaged in much positive discussion regarding the multitude of benefits they saw in the EduCamp project. One of the attending teachers exclaimed that to him EduCamp was not merely a project, but an undertaking through which the participants can actively contribute to supporting their country. The teachers expressed their gratitude to EduCamp, SEKEM, Dr Ibrahim Abouleish, and even to the German people for their contribution.

Meanwhile the schoolchildren were taken across the picturesque university campus for a eurythmy class, an activity they greatly enjoyed. Afterwards they were taken to the university art pavilion where each student painted a watercolour of flowers, under the supervision of an art teacher. The results were vivid and colourful, and during their breaks the students enjoyed fresh grapes and juice in the gardens of the Heliopolis University campus. After lunch, the teachers tried an activity developed in EduCamp called "Bye, bye oil". The activity showcased the need to phase out fossil fuels and replace them by renewable energies.

Meanwhile the students participating in EduCamp learned about wind energy by building miniature wind fans out of wood and paper. Once constructed, the teachers told them to move the fans forward at speed, causing the blades to spin and thus demonstrating in an easy and fun way how wind can move and power objects.

The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all those attending, and the teachers especially left the day feeling both enthusiastic and positive regarding their future work with EduCamp.

*Bianca Fliss*

## Working With SEKEM to Offset CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissions

It is summer and many of our readers are possibly enjoying their holidays during these weeks. While some of us stay at home to relax, many will be travelling to distant places, foreign countries, and cultures to get to know the tastes of new food, see new sights, or make new acquaintances. Some of us may find themselves one a train or in the car with a bad conscience, wondering if all the travel and the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by them are really necessary.

You, your family, and your friends now have the opportunity to offset their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by purchasing carbon credits that help SEKEM's company Libra generate high-quality, low-emission compost to further organic agriculture in Egypt.

### How Does the Compensation of CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Work?

Global warming naturally has an impact spanning the entire world. The overall effect is indifferent to the exact location where in the world the emissions were generated. Through the application of innovative composting technologies, SEKEM together with its partners has been able to implement a system in Egypt that allows for the mitigation of approximately one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gases (CO<sub>2</sub>e) per 2 tons of compost. The emission reductions achieved through this method are then certified by the German TÜV Nord as "carbon credits" that are registered in an internationally recognized registration „Markit Environment.“ These credits can then be used to offset the emissions generated, for instance, by a private journey by plane.

To compensate these emissions, the buyer will receive a certificate confirming the amount of credits that

are subsequently deleted from the registry.

### How are the Credits Generated?

Since 2007, the SEKEM farms at Adleya and Alexandria have been producing TÜV certified carbon credits under the regulations of the Kyoto Protocol through a special composting process that aims to avoid greenhouse gas emissions. Normal composting produces methane, which is 21 times as aggressive to our climate as carbon dioxide. A special treatment of the compost, for example through regular turning of the compost heaps, avoids the generation of methane.

### Why Offset with SEKEM?

SEKEM invests the proceeds of the sale of its compost to other organic companies in the advancement of the composting technique, the expansion of the plants, and other climate-friendly projects that are too small to receive certification themselves. SEKEM also carries out projects in vocational and general education of the rural population living in the vicinity of its farms. This way, SEKEM has been creating and securing jobs for rural communities for years and has successfully promoted sustainable, climate-friendly development in Egypt.

Current projects include measures to improve the soil in the desert thereby combating desertification. Compost is used to convert low-quality desert ground outside of the Nile Valley into arable land. It replaces chemical fertilizers, which are a source of greenhouse gas emissions, and increases the soils water retention capacities. It also improves long-term food security.

*Christina Anlauf*

! More information:  
• <http://www.educamp.lfi.rwth-aachen.de/educamp/>



**YOU CAN VISIT SEKEM YOURSELF:**  
[WWW.SEKEM-REISEN.DE](http://WWW.SEKEM-REISEN.DE)  
[WWW.AVENTERRA.DE](http://WWW.AVENTERRA.DE)

! More information:  
• Mrs. Thoraya Seada ([thoraya.seada@SEKEM.com](mailto:thoraya.seada@SEKEM.com))

Cairo, 20 August 2013



Dear friends, partners and customers of SEKEM,

The past weeks were marked by upheaval and confrontation in Egypt. We at SEKEM are grateful for your good thoughts in which you have included us, and the support we have received during this period by our friends, partners, and customers. We are happy to be able to announce that, so far, neither employees nor SEKEM institutions have come to harm.

We are appalled by the many victims of aggression and the general lack of mutual empathy, goodwill, and a capacity for compromise among everyone involved in the recent developments. We at SEKEM believe that these troubled times, through which Egypt and its citizens are going these days, clearly show how difficult the path for the Egyptian people towards a democracy that is appreciated and supported by everyone remains to be. We fear that the past events show that this path will be a long one.

The missing political framework currently gives aggression and confrontation leeway under which all Egyptians are suffering disproportionately. At the same time, the recent weeks have clearly shown the continued, admirable desire and need for self-determination of all Egyptians. We remain convinced that this can be a basis on which a peaceful, safe, and democratic future for all may be built if all actions that may lead to further aggravation of the situation are renounced. The positive qualities shared by all Egyptians should now receive our full attention as a people, not those that divide us.

We are convinced that this can be achieved only on the basis of an inclusion of all the groups within the people of Egypt for which the prosperous development of the country is a true concern. Dialogue, transparency, and honesty among everyone should be carefully nourished so that people may recover their confidence in themselves and their self-elected government.

We at SEKEM will help to ensure that this path can be gone equally by all Egyptians. We do so through our ideals, our social projects, and our products and together with our national and international partners and customers. We would like such a process to begin in the form of a respectful and insightful dialogue among all parties involved in order to allow the country to move into a prosperous future based on the principles of sustainability.

The SEKEM Community



## Impressions from SEKEM



From 24 to 26 June 2013 Dr. Abouleish was a guest at the „Africa-Europe Entrepreneurs’ Dialogue“ in Accra, Ghana. At the event, Dr. Abouleish told of his own experiences and contributed ideas related to SEKEM and its cooperative business model that it pursues in collaboration with international partners. He also contributed a article to the event’s published proceedings. The event itself concentrated on the fostering of entrepreneurship, the creation of sustainable business opportunities, and the development of new partnerships. Almost 40 entrepreneurs from 19 African and European countries were present at the conference to forge contacts and lasting partnerships to promote sustainable business practices across continents in the long-term future.

The objectives of the dialogue were twofold: The participants wanted to take further steps towards sustainable business opportunities and promote the discussion on future challenges and opportunities by bringing together entrepreneurs from African and European countries as representatives for new, innovative, North-South and global partnerships. It also served as a platform to outline the role of the private sector as an essential partner on the road to ending global poverty and for a more sustainable development in general.

A declaration from the workshop was produced as a summary document containing the main prospects for greater involvement of the private sector in the global development debate after 2015 and the end of the Kyoto protocol.

## Future Policy Award Announces Nominations of Disarmament Policies

The World Future Council has today announced the nominations of the Future Policy Award 2013. This year's award seeks to highlight disarmament policies that contribute to the achievement of peace, sustainable development and human security. In response to a worldwide call for nominations, the World Future Council has received 25 nominations of best policy practice. Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish is supporting the WFC through its participation.

With global military spending currently exceeding \$1.7 trillion annually, a billion people continue to suffer from hunger. More still have no access to safe water, food, adequate health care or education. By promoting the exchange of best practices, the Award showcases innovative policy approaches to advance disarmament and create better living conditions for current and future generations.

The aim of the award is to raise global awareness of these exemplary policies and speed up policy action towards just, sustainable and peaceful societies.

Following a call for nominations, a list of 25 eligible policies has been compiled. The policies reflect a geopolitical spread of approaches to disarmament and cover initiatives designed to tackle the problem of small arms and light weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction.

A jury of notable experts will evaluate the nominated policies according to their positive impact on sustainable development and human security goals. The winning policies will then be announced at a ceremony on 23 October 2013 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Source: WFC

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

## Joseph Wilhelm, Bertram Verhaag Win B.A.U.M. - Environmental Prize

For its commitment to environmental protection and sustainability through film documentary, Bertram Verhaag, a long-term supporter of SEKEM, has received the B.A.U.M. - Environmental Prize in the category of media and art. „Bertram Verhaag shows that – despite quotas – it remains possible to reach a wide audience through cinema and television documentaries that do not overwhelm the audience with information, but that instead allow for identification with the protagonists“, the jury justified this year's choice. Bertram Verhaag has directed a well-known film about SEKEM.

Joseph Wilhelm also received the B.A.U.M.-Environmental Prize. In the category „small and medium-sized enterprises“, the founder and CEO of Rapunzel natural food received the award for his efforts in the areas of environmental protection and sustainability. Rapunzel, a well-known German producer of organic food, pursues a holistic approach that goes beyond the mere production of high-quality organic food and also touches social commitment: In addition to organic cultivation, its approach includes production according to Fairtrade standards and strong commitment to a GMO-free agricultural future. For many years, Rapunzel has been supporting the work of SEKEM.

As Joseph Wilhelm comments: „Our commitment to sustainability stems from our own deep conviction that there is no other way to keep our Earth livable for many generations to come. The award of the B.A.U.M.-Environmental Prize symbolises for me the high appreciation and the recognition of decades of work.“

Source: Bio123

! More information:  
• <http://www.denkmal-film.com>  
• <http://www.rapunzel.de>

## Anthrobuch Donates Again to SEKEM


The online bookstore anthrobuch.com, headquartered in Munich, has been selling mainly anthroposophical books for years making use of a new sales concept. Through their purchases at anthrobuch.com, buyers automatically assist a variable number of charities from all over the world. SEKEM has also already benefited in the past. These days, it has received a donation for the second time.



Anthrobuch.com offers almost all available anthroposophical books and directs 5% of all sales to the benefit of a social institution. The beneficiaries include institutions supporting independent education such as Waldorf schools or special education facilities. This way, countless charitable projects in Germany and around the world have already been promoted.

Source: SEKEM friends

! More information:  
• <http://www.anthrobuch.com>



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

**Editor:**  
Bijan Kafi, Christina Anlauf

**Contact:**  
SEKEM-Insight  
c/o SEKEM Holding  
P.O.Box 2834, El Horreya,  
Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt  
[insight@SEKEM.com](mailto:insight@SEKEM.com)

**Pictures:**  
1: Bianca Fliss, 4: Organisier

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