



Dear Reader,

religion is an important factor in development assistance that is not to be underestimated. On the one hand faith as such still retains far greater importance for the daily lives of people in many developing countries in Africa and on other continents than in Western Europe. On the other faith-based initiatives belong to the most important participants in the fight against poverty and disadvantages.

For instance, nobody knows exactly how much financial assets are invested by religiously motivated civil society organisations in the Arab world. But since the assistance for people in need represents a central component of the Islamic faith these will most certainly exceed all expectations.

Those who visit a Central African country will immediately notice the everpresent role faith plays in the lives of people as well as the variety of religious organisations actively involved in development. Boys wearing „God is my hero!“ on their t-shirts are no seldom sight.

Religion also plays an important role in the social work of SEKEM. It represents the third pillar next to science and culture on which the integrative work of the initiative rests. To combine all three aspects fruitfully and peacefully through its manifold social projects and its attempts to stimulate individual human advancement is its task.

Your Editorial Team

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Science Education

Economics

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SEKEM Products

Environment

Soil Protection
Through Compost

SEKEM Engaged in Dialogue for Development and Education

iEARN helps pupils and teachers to improve their knowledge in science and technology collaboratively



Pupils experimenting at the iEARN conference

For some years the SEKEM school has been in close contact with iEARN Egypt, the organizer of a world conference 2007 for the promotion of science education for children and teachers alike. iEARN is a non-profit network and aims to improve the knowledge of technologies such as the Internet and the sciences in young adults and their educators. They are not only to improve their own knowledge but through their work to contribute to the advancement of mankind on a grander scale.

The organization has been in existence for 16 years and Egypt has been a member since 1999. iEARN is free for the Egyptian state institutions but private schools are required to cover costs presently amounting to 300 Euros per pupil per year. This and the fact that the SEKEM School had no Internet connection until a year ago had so far prevented it from becoming an official member.

When the world conference approached, some teachers dared to give it another go and ask for special

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conditions. Fortunately these were granted to the school and Sekem teachers were thus allowed to participate in the conference without being official members. In addition the possibility existed to gain additional scholarships for the participation of other guests. Altogether 5 teachers applied for the support of the organisation. With their project „From the Seed of the Wheat to the Loaf of Bread“, pupils from the lower grades won a scholarship for three additional teachers that even included accommodation at Mubarak City, participation fees and meals. One teacher decided not to take accommodation in Mubarak City and thus allowed participation for 6 further teachers who commuted daily from the Sekem farm (2 hours in each direction). The world conference was for many teachers the first opportunity ever to discuss their work with fellow educators from other countries. Through their contributions (one 45-minute presentation and two 1-½-hour workshops) they literally and metaphorically placed themselves next to teachers from all over the world. They held all their speeches and presentations in English and of course without using notes. The participants of their sessions visibly recognized their achievements.

For more than 10 years each third grade has been sowing and harvesting wheat and baked bread from it. The teachers presented this and other school projects such as the communal building of



A pupil and her teacher engaged in an experiment



Teachers from the SEKEM School at the iEARN conference in Mubarak City

a furnace to demonstrate their educational value. In addition they provided factsheets and other written materials. To demonstrate their projects more clearly, they had brought into the conference center some of the works of the kindergarten classes. All participants of the workshops even received samples of original Egyptian wheat.

The chemistry teacher (Mr Mohammed Hassan) had worked on the chemical effects of red cabbage juice as an indicator for acids and caustic solutions and had constructed several experimental settings with workplaces in the conference centre. He began to produce the red cabbage juice, then proceeded with the testing of food and other substances, compared the test results of a litmus test with those gained using the cabbage juice and finally succeeded in neutralizing a liquid again using acids and caustic solutions. Concluding his experiments, he demonstrated a „magic experiment“ in which the red cabbage juice took on a differed colour inside a „seemingly“ clean test tube. The physics teacher (Mr Mohammed Samir) had arranged experimental settings that could all generate sounds in various different ways.

Mr. Claus Charisius had visited the SEKEM School multiple times and succeeded in familiarizing the teachers with conducting physical experiments in particularly educational ways. For the SEKEM School

he had constructed two sand flutes, two water violins and also brought along five innovative „Chladnic“ instruments. He had also built and refined a monochord.

Armed with these educational gifts Mr Mohammed Samir could demonstrate how deep and high-pitched sounds can leave visible traces. He then proceeded to showing the interrelations of intervals on the monochord and engaged all the participants in the building of small panpipes.

The teachers held all their workshops in English, included their participants in their experimental settings and described their progress to the audience. Some had been concerned that even given the large number of participants - 1000 teachers from ca. 70 countries - not many of them might find their sessions interesting enough. They had thus decided to „advertise“ each others courses without any selfishness and thus proving their team spirit. Whenever one of them was in need of assistance, everyone was there.

The courses that had indeed begun with only a few participants thus eventually experienced more visitors than the room could hold. Many of the visitors had simply found out that SEKEM's teachers were about to show particularly interesting experiments.

Yvonne Floride

Less Greenhouse Gases Through Compost

How SEKEM contributes to reducing carbon dioxide through composting



Agriculture through composting even on arid soils

The topic of environmental challenges and the climate change in particular are discussed in the media every day and therefore continue to strike everybody's attention. We are all aware that we face great challenges if we are to preserve conditions on our planet to allow future generations to flourish.

Fertile soils are the basis for agriculture. Due to intensive agricultural practices, around 11% of the arable area worldwide, around China and India together, has almost lost its fertility within the last 25 years. Annually, about 24 billion tons of fertile topsoil is lost due to erosion, salinization, use of chemicals. Due to these developments the number of people living in urban centres is expected to increase dramatically. The socio-economic and environmental conditions in over-populated cities are well-known.

Together with Soil & More International BV, from The Netherlands, SEKEM took the lead to explore opportunities, to contribute proactively to this challenge apart from promoting and supporting organic agricultural practices in Egypt.

Soil & More International BV is a worldwide leader of advanced composting technologies and cooperates with SEKEM in setting up a state of the art, large scale composting site. The first objective was to apply Soil & More's unique composting technology to supply Egypt's fast

growing agriculture sector with a suitable alternative to the commonly used harmful chemical fertilisers and secondly, to register this composting site as project for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission at the UNFCCC, (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). Soil & More's composting technology, management and monitoring system qualifies as an emission reduction tool, according to an IPCC methodology. As the first

entity worldwide this project was validated as an emission reduction project by TÜV-Nord in May 2007, proving that it qualifies as a CO₂ emission reduction project according to the regulations of the Kyoto protocol. It will generate and sell 60.000 emission reductions widely known as carbon credits in 2007. Under the current regulations of the Kyoto protocol, this compost site will annually reduce the same amount until 2012.

Currently both parties are busy with the establishment of more joint emission reduction projects in Egypt. Apart from that, Soil & More has setup comparable composting reduction projects in South Africa and Mexico.

Like in Sekem, these local projects are able subsidize the cost of compost production with the returns from the carbon credit sales, allowing them to offer the compost at competitive prices.

The demand for the compost exceeds expectations, especially from conventional businesses. Thus more and more conventional growers suffering from depleted soil are convinced of the commercial viability of the product.

A success story which puts SEKEM in the leader's role in Egypt for the reduction of gas emission, which fits perfectly into SEKEM's strategy of using environmentally friendly production methods wherever possible.

Tobias Bandel

First Youth Summer Orchestra Performs in SEKEM



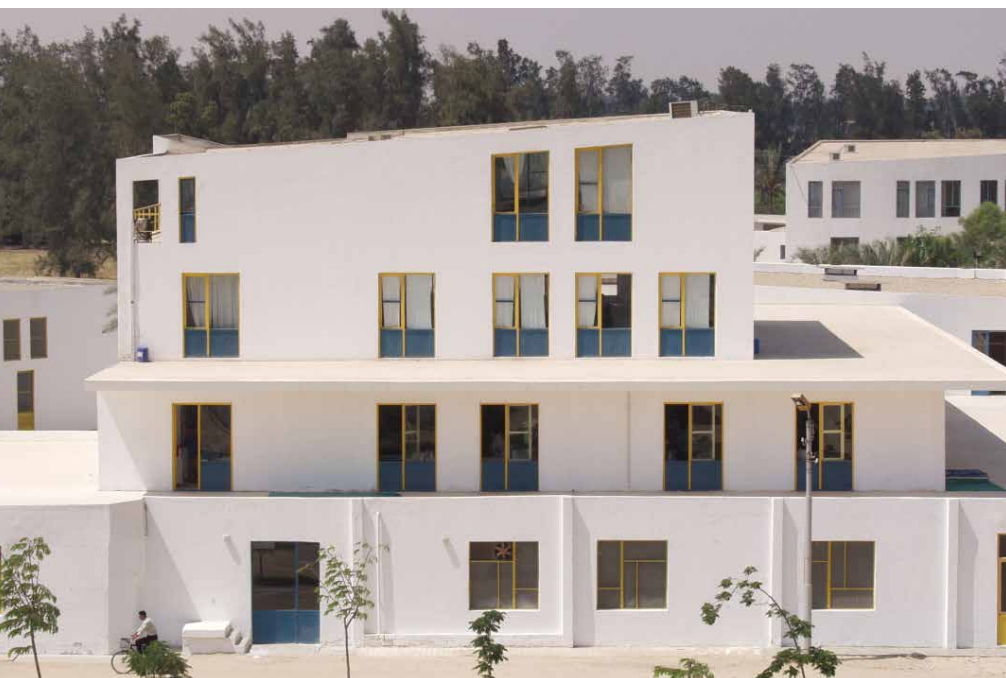
This year, from 31 Juli until 9 August, SEKEM saw the first Youth Summer Orchestra on the grounds near Belbeis and in Cairo. A group of adolescents from Europe had arrived to work on the Haffner Symphony by Mozart together with local musicians. Former interns had been invited just as friends of SEKEM that had served their civil service at the initiative years before. They were joined by the children of SEKEM's workers and other visitors from Germany and Egypt. This multi-faceted and multi-cultural orchestra was also accompanied by professional Egyptian musicians and conducted by the leader the Cairo Symphony Orchestra.

Thanks to the particularly able conductor all the individually rehearsed voices could be integrated successfully into a full-scale symphony orchestra that performed excellently as a group just as the artists had done individually. The finishing touches were put on by three well-frequented public concerts at the SEKEM Academy and for the SEKEM employees on the main farm. All participants and visitors were equally delighted with the result and wish for a repetition the coming year.

Bijan Kafi

ISO Certification Again Successful

Production of groceries passes new, more demanding examinations



The expansion of Naturetex allows for larger production facilities and better quality control

Already in last July SEKEM's firms had been tested again by the TÜV Management Service GmbH for compliance with all major international quality assurance systems. The inspection checked for compliance for instance with ISO 9001:2000 for general quality assurance, ISO 14001:04 for the management of environmental safety and OHSAS 18001:99 for safety at the workplace.

New this year was that not only HACCP procedures had to be tested in workplaces involved in food production but also ISO 22000:05 that now includes HACCP for the safety in production of foodstuffs.

This involved tremendous preparations for all those responsible in the firms as plenty of internal restructuring measures had been implemented during the year. Most of them had the aim to impose better and clearer structures on all workflows involved in commercial production.

ISIS now encompasses the production of packaged groceries including tea bags that had formerly been produced by Atos, as well as fruits and vegetables

that had been packaged by Hator in the past.

Herbs, cereals and seeds are now processed under the new name Lotus.

All firms also had to undergo this years COAE organic certification procedures. COAE checks for compliance with European organic food regulations and international demeter standards.

All inspections were passed successfully by the firms of the SEKEM Group and all of them can now look forward to another year of certified organic cultivation and production of high-quality products.

Samaa Shehab



SEKEM fresh vegetables - guaranteed organic!

Impressions from SEKEM



Locals from the vicinity of the SEKEM farm

SEKEM's institutions have through the years largely succeeded in convincing its surrounding villages of the need of their development measures and the quality of their offerings. Today, the initiative frequently cooperates with many so-called CDAs (Community Development Associations). They often form in the course of projects many of which are financed by the European Union or other donors. The two villagers on this picture are taking part in a session held in one of the towns and in the presence of SEKEM representatives realizing a social development action in the area. They discuss the challenges of the project and how they can tackle them together. Frequently, these CDAs create „spin-off“ projects bringing about new developments such as the recent refurbishment of a small town school.



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