



Dear Reader,

a few weeks ago, Rome was the site of the „Web4Dev“ conference. For most of our readers, its name will only be an acronym, hard to comprehend and difficult to pronounce. The term, however, or what it stands for, is currently a hot topic in development cooperation. It refers to the use and relevance of modern internet-based communication technologies in development aid. Many of our readers may not see the relation between both. But modern information and communication technologies are not only superfluous gadgetry in developing countries. Even in the poorest ones, they can be of great value.

For once, many marginalized peoples can secure new livelihoods through them, for instance by opening Internet cafés in the Congolese bush. On the other hand, the term refers to technologies that permit global civil society organisations to cooperate faster, more transparently and efficiently, and thus more successfully. So-called „ICT“ help them to target their resources more appropriately, economize on synergies and improve impact through efficient partnerships.

SEKEM has been working with modern Internet technologies for a long time. The newest development project, realized in cooperation with the European Union, is also managed using sophisticated technologies for accounting, monitoring and evaluation. Even if it often does not look like it, high-tech can have a substantial impact also for the poorest of the poor.

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Together for the Community

Pupils of the SEKEM School Contribute to Community Development Through Small Projects



Pupils from one of SEKEM's partner schools collect waste and clean the streets of their villages

For the last few years class 9 of the SEKEM School has been engaged in the development and execution of a very special annual project every summer following the examinations.

While the lower classes enjoy fun and games during the summer holidays in the Summer School Project (as we reported in 'SEKEM insight' July) these students are engaged in community work. They begin by examining their communities in search of special challenges that fit in with their individual social

interests. This way, each class finds its task for the students' particular social concerns.

This year the students of class 9 focused on the refurbishment of a run-down public school in a nearby village. SEKEM social workers had been advising the villagers of this and other hamlets surrounding the SEKEM mother farm on social and health issues. These activities form a part of the programme on poverty alleviation in the region financed jointly by the German support association and the European

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Union. Social workers from SEKEM, supported by experts in health, community development, education or environmental engineering, visit the communities regularly during outreach missions to advise on any issues of urgent developmental concern. In this context the teachers of the SEKEM School met and communicated with teachers of village schools that were already taking part in the project. The 'Ali Kamal-School' in Chalil A'mr was one of them. The difficult situation of this publicly run school was immediately visible to all workers involved. Some of the classrooms were bad shape and in dire need of substantial renovation. The To-Do-List was long and included blackboards, windows, floors and much of the interior equipment. The SEKEM students had found this year's social project.

The „SEKEM Friends in Germany“, the aforementioned support association, agreed to fund the project. Then, at the beginning of June 2007, a number of students of class 9, supported by several specialists, a trained carpenter, their class teachers and some students of Ali Kamal School itself, they set out to repair interiors and even completely refurbish some of the infrastructures of the the village school. The participants quickly found plenty of opportunities for work: furniture had to be mended, walls to be painted, floors to be cleaned and doors and blackboards needed significant repairs. The pupils replaced window panes and fly screens in two of the school's classrooms. It took them an entire week to



The SEKEM pupils climb Mount Moses together with their teachers as the successful conclusion of this year's social project

finish their job. Eventually the classrooms for the new first graders that were to arrive later this summer were in very good shape and ready to be used again.

In September the students decided to pay „their“ school another visit. They had expressed the wish to visit the pupils that had just arrived and witness one of their first sessions in the newly rebuilt classrooms. As expected, all students were happy to be able to attend class in freshly whitewashed rooms writing and reading on sturdy seats and repaired desks. The SEKEM students could see first-hand that their great efforts had met with approval and had made the

start into the new school year for the new first grade of the school a much more pleasurable one.

After their hard week in 'Ali-Kamal-School' class 9 embarked on a well-deserved short holiday trip to the Sinai. Everyone was expecting quite a different experience. After a ride of several hours on

a bus through the Eastern deserts of Egypt the students explored the village of Milga on the South Sinai peninsula and spent the evening playing and chatting around the campfire of a Bedouin encampment.

The following day they visited St. Catherine Monastery and took the chance to study the cultural and artistic heritage of of Greek-Orthodox Christianity - a startling and educational experience for all of the student who usually grow up in all-Muslim families and village or town communities. Back at the camp, after an excellent meal cooked by their Bedouin guides, they shouldered their bedrolls and provisions and set out to climb Mount Sinai. Having spent a cold and lonely night on the very top of the mountain the students excitedly observed the sun rise in the morning over the mountaneous deserts of the Eastern Sinai between St. Catherine and the Gulf of Accaba - a breath-taking and unforgettable experience.

After four days the students returned to their families with happy faces and joyful memories.

All teachers and students involved in the project would like to take the opportunity to thank their partners from the German „SEKEM friends“ for their financial support.

Amin Abdallah, Teacher



Two students try out one of the refurbished classrooms

New Book on SEKEM Published



After much preparation the new book on SEKEM has just been published.

The author Daniel Baumgartner in his essay that is accompanied by many photographs by the photographer Michel Bader delineates the creation, development and relevance of the SEKEM vision of the initiative's founder, Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish. The eleven chapters of the book demonstrate SEKEM's manifold activities in the commercial, cultural and social institutions and through its worldwide partnerships. The book also focuses on the concept of development as it is expressed through the ideas of the founders, and the interrelation of the three-folded concept of the economic, legislative and social realms.

Many pictures accompany the text and allow a glimpse into the multi-faceted world of the organisation.

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish has contributed a preface. Orders through all book stores, the SEKEM web store or the support associations. In Germany: info@sekem-freunde.de or 0711-791995. In Switzerland: sekemverein@gmx.ch. In Austria: sekemoesterreich@gmx.at or 0316 381097.

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Ramadan's Traditional Products

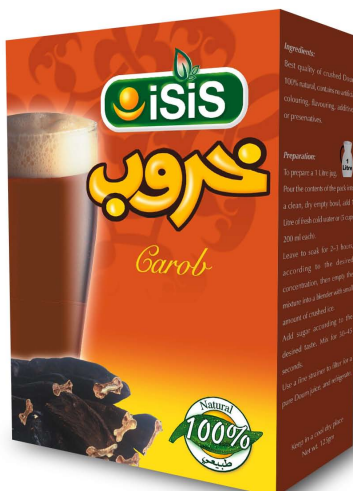
This year Ramadan, the month of ritual fasting, fell on September and October thus coinciding with the start of autumn. Since Egyptians enjoy traditional dishes during Ramadan, the important month formed an obvious opportunity for SEKEM's marketing team to specifically market ISIS' assortment of typical oriental drinks.

At the same time during autumn when the temperatures begin to wane the consumption of hot beverages begin to increase proportionately. Thus two important selling periods coincide. Tarek Nabil, Marketing Manager at ISIS, was from the start convinced that concerted action would be rewarded by great success. However, plans were even exceeded at the end of the period: *„I am sure that the expansion of our assortment has substantially contributed to this year's success. The strong portfolio making use of many different forms of display are more easily recognized by customers in the shop than a few single packages.“*

The assortment now includes three variants of oriental drinks in loose powder form: Tamr-Hendi, Doum nut, Carob. The same three varieties are also available as filter bags. Doum nut, Carob, Tamarind and Hibiscus are also available as ready-to-drink variants in glass bottles of 250ml and 1l. ISIS advertised specially priced bottles over the last weeks, for instance four 250ml glass bottles at the price of three, or two 1l bottles for a special price.

The marketing team of ISIS has thus had a splendid start into a very strong season and even hopes to exceed prior successes in the months to come.

Christina Boecker



Impressions From SEKEM



Grapes from SEKEM's production

Many products by SEKEM's firms reach European markets. Chances are, the next time you visit a German organic food store or supermarket, you will purchase a SEKEM product even if it is not branded as such. Products that are sold on European markets for instance include potatoes, citrus fruits, or Egyptian cotton processed into delicate garments. SEKEM also sells herbal teas, cereals or rice to organic food stores around the world. It is less well-known that SEKEM also sells fresh grapes grown in the former deserts of the Western Nile delta. They are also grown along the streets that lead to SEKEM's mother farm on vast stretches of formerly bare grounds. Most of these delicious fruits are enjoyed throughout the late summer by customers of stores in Western Europe.



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