

## Editorial

### Dear Readers,

in recent years SEKEM's Vocational Training Centre has grown into a school for comprehensive vocational education and training. Around half a dozen training programs offer courses in carpentry, electrical engineering, computer technology and other fields to about 60 trainees who are presently receiving training. In cooperation with the Mahad adult education institute, these courses are also offered to adults.

The various programmes by the centre – in short „VTC“ – will be receiving an extension this year in the form of a school for welders. The new professional profile is specifically on demand in the growing sector of solar technologies. So far, versatile, well-trained welders are very hard to find in Egypt.

The project, which is presently being realized by the Austrian company SEKEM Energy in cooperation with another Austrian partner and partly financed by the German GIZ is now showing first signs of progress. SEKEM Insight introduces the project and its objectives in this issue.

### Your Team of Editors

Find SEKEM also on the Internet at:



### New VTC School

Courses for Professional Welders

### Annual Report

Business Report and Outlook

### Speeches

New Speeches Available on the Net

## Vocational Training Centre Adds Courses for Welders

The SEKEM Vocational Training Centre already offers a variety of courses for prospective skilled workers. Its latest addition, thanks to Austrian partners, is a school that will train professional welders.



*Future-proof: Well-trained welders are needed especially in connection with the construction of solar power plants. They are still difficult to find in Egypt.*

In the edition of SEKEM Insight that was published at the beginning of the year, we reported on the upcoming introduction of a training course for welders. These welders were to be specifically trained to construct, maintain and repair solar power systems. In the last few months, the project has taken off to a good start.

The development of the course was launched and is led by the Austrian company SEKEM Energy and carried out in

partnership with Fronius, another partner from Austria. SEKEM Energy is an independent company, founded by long-time supporters of the SEKEM Initiative, which is based on its philosophy. On the one hand, it develops holistic sustainable energy concepts from its base in Austria and also cooperates closely with SEKEM in Egypt. This cooperation extends from the transfer of know-how and technology to jointly implemented projects. All collaboration aims to be



SEKEM's Vocational Training Centre already includes modern facilities and is frequently supported by German teachers on a pro bono basis. The new school for apprentice welders will be a remarkable addition.

always in keeping with the original spirit of SEKEM: to find sustainable, environmentally friendly and nonetheless economically viable solutions to pressing development problems – and to realise them through partnership international.

## An Austro-Egyptian Partnership

This idea has now also brought the Austrian company Fronius on board of the team. It will provide the technical equipment for the construction and supply of the school for young welding apprentices. Fronius is a family company that has been setting standards for welding equipment since 1950. It has received many awards for its technical innovations and proven, durable products as well as its international presence in this market.

This dedication to innovation and the idea of SEKEM Energy to break new ground in solar energy training in Egypt have led the two companies to initiate a project that aims at founding a school for training professional welders. The project was formally launched in the fall of 2013. It will allow prospective Egyptian apprentices to receive a solid basic vocational education in welding. The German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) cofinances the project.

## Deficits in Technology and Training

As became apparent also during the first solar thermal project that SEKEM Energy has begun carrying out a few years ago in SEKEM, significant deficits in the sector of solar power generation still wait for their solution. These deficits include both issues in the technical design and manufacturing of modern and, above all, safer technologies as well as the lack of a good education in handling and maintaining existing equipment and machinery. In the past, these deficits have been identified and examined and a search for practical solutions has begun.

The result of months of planning work has now born fruit. The current project aims at establishing a basic vocational education course which will be based on European teaching standards and high-quality technologies. In addition, the new school will be able to rely on modern and safe welding equipment provided by Fronius. This way they can offer apprentices broad knowledge and training in a number of different, state-of-the-art welding techniques.



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

## “Welding Does Not Have to Be a Dirty Job”

The interest of Fronius in the project – aside from playing a part in a meaningful and important development project – particularly focuses on the advancement of the public image and appeal of the profession of the professional welder.

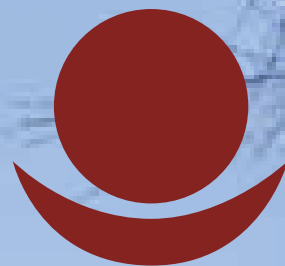
The training including theoretical but also a large number of practical units is expected to begin in autumn 2014 as a part of a number of other relevant apprenticeships at the vocational training centre on the SEKEM farm. Furthermore, individual units of the course will be offered separately as continuing education programmes for adults through SEKEM's Mahad institute. The Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland (BFI, Institute for the Advancement of Vocational Training) was commissioned to take care of the development of these differentiated training modules and the curriculum.

The beginning of the project will see the preparation and furnishing of the premises at the VTC. To this end, an existing building on the site of the SEKEM Farm with five welding berths will be renovated and equipped with teaching materials. Subsequently, a team from the BFI will train future teachers on location. They will obtain a certification after completing the training and are expected to begin teaching their own apprentices in autumn (in a first phase coached by the BFI).

## Unique Training Opportunity

The uniqueness of this training in Egypt it will provide students with an exceptional training in a future-proof vocational profile. Easy access to the course and great practice orientation to modern fields of application (energy systems, storage structures, solar panels etc.) shall ensure this. In fast growing markets such as renewable energy the new course will allow newly emerging industries to rely on qualified Egyptian welders, familiar with modern technology. The considerable interest the project has so far generated was apparent already at least year's kick-off event in SEKEM.

SEKEM Energy



SEKEM-Freunde  
Deutschland

Verein zur Förderung  
kultureller Entwicklung  
in Ägypten e.V.

# SEKEM

## Tag 2014

Samstag, 17. Mai 2014 um 10.30 Uhr  
im Schillersaal der Liederhalle Stuttgart

## TAGESÜBERBLICK

### 10.30 Uhr

#### MUSIKALISCHER AUFTAKT

SEKEM-Chor

#### BEGRÜSSUNG

Dr. Roland Schaette, Vorstandsvorsitzender

#### GRUSSWORTE

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish,  
Gründer der SEKEM-Initiative

Staatssekretär Klaus-Peter Murawski

Oberbürgermeister Fritz Kuhn

Dr. Hans Werner,  
Mitbegründer des SEKEM-Vereins

#### MATINEE

SEKEM-Eurythmie-Ensemble: Dichtung und  
Musik aus Orient und Okzident.  
Anschließend: Einführung in Goethes West-  
östlichen Divan, Caroline Wispler

### 13.00 - 14.30 Uhr

#### MITTAGSPAUSE

Ausstellung und Verkauf von SEKEM-Produkten

Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Liederhalle  
Berliner Platz 1-3, 70174 Stuttgart  
ÖPNV: U9 und U14 bis Haltestelle Berliner Platz (Liederhalle)

### 14.30 Uhr

#### MUSIKALISCHER AUFTAKT

SEKEM-Chor

#### GESPRÄCH IN DER RUNDE

#### BRÜCKEN BAUEN ZWISCHEN ORIENT UND OKZIDENT

*ZUKUNFT GESTALTEN – DIALOG ERMÖGLICHEN –  
PARTNERSCHAFTEN STÄRKEN*

Dr. Frederic Stephan, Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart

Rainer Lang, SEZ Stiftung Entwicklungs-  
Zusammenarbeit

Dr. Antje Tönnis, GLS Zukunftsstiftung  
Entwicklungshilfe

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schad,  
Universität Witten / Annen

Ulrich Walter, Lebensbaum

Waltraud Bandel, SEKEM-Freunde Deutschland

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, SEKEM - Initiative

Helmy Abouleish, SEKEM - Initiative

Moderation: Dr. Martin Kilgus, SWR International

### 16.00 Uhr

#### KAFFEPAUSE

Ausstellung und Verkauf von SEKEM-Produkten

### 17.00 Uhr

#### MUSIKALISCHER AUFTAKT

SEKEM-Ensemble

#### MITGLIEDERVERSAMMLUNG

#### SEKEMS ENTSTEHUNGSGESCHICHTE:

Ein Spaziergang in Bildern, Dr. Roland Schaette

### 18.30 Uhr

#### MUSIKALISCHER ABSCHLUSS

SEKEM-Chor



# The SEKEM Annual Report 2013

With the start of 2014, SEKEM will replace its quarterly business reports formerly published in SEKEM Insight with a more comprehensive annual report. More detailed information is available in its annual Report on Sustainable Development, in which SEKEM management illustrates the progress and the challenges of the initiative along four dimensions of sustainable development. The 2013 edition of this report will be published in June 2014. Below SEKEM Insight summarizes the key developments that have influenced the way of SEKEM in the year 2013.

## The Political Situation in Egypt in 2013

Three years ago, the Egyptians rebelled against the regime of Hosni Mubarak in power at the time with a strong desire for democracy and greater social equality. The difficulty of this process was underestimated by many, as quickly became apparent with the majority of the population through the events of the following months and years. Having come to power through a controversial election, President Mohamed Morsi was asked in June 2013 by the population to relinquish his post. Many felt dissatisfied with the perceived radicalisation of political life during his one-year rule. Mohamed Morsi did not yield to public demand of millions of Egyptians encouraging Egypt's military to intervene which ultimately deposed the President and abrogated the Constitution. Supporters of Morsi then barricaded themselves in several locations in Cairo and other cities and kept protesting against the forced ouster of the President. The forcible eviction of these camps by the military then led to a further increase in violence from all sides involved in the clashes.

A transitional government then decided to reactivate emergency laws that hitherto prohibited organised

protests of any kind. In addition, a curfew was put in effect for 17 states in the country.

## The Way Forward

In the meantime, a committee of ten delegates was appointed with the task of revising the constitution, which was submitted to another committee of 50 delegates involving representatives of many stakeholder groups. This committee then revised the constitution and submitted it to the interim president. The interim president then in January 2014 called on the people of Egypt to vote on the draft constitution through a referendum. Participating Egyptians supported the new constitution with over 98% of votes based on a voter turnout of over 40%, representing a higher participation rate than in the referendum of 2012.

From an economic perspective, there were other changes and setbacks throughout the year. Egypt still suffers from a sharp decline in its GNP (gross domestic product), the Egyptian stock market temporarily disintegrated as did export quotas. The inflation rate has strongly risen and there are many more unemployed Egyptians today than three years ago. Industrial production has suffered and more than 4,500 companies had to shut down since the beginning of the revolution.

## SEKEM's Way

To the delight of the SEKEM community, the SEKEM Group can report generally positive results in 2013 which it has been able to attain also due to the continued confidence of our friends, donors, supporters and partners in these difficult years.

Despite these adversities, SEKEM has been able to mostly meet its plans in 2013 and the Heliopolis University for Sustainability ended its successful first year. The following page presents basic information concerning the past financial year along with some additional information of the business outlook for the year 2014.

*Thomas Abouleish*



# Economic Development in 2013 and Outlook 2014

**Its sustainable business model, its continuous efforts to optimise processes and maintain excellent relationships with suppliers and customers has enabled SEKEM to achieve an overall positive result in 2013, despite the difficult circumstances in the country.**

The months from April to October were marked by exceptional instability in the country. The curfew enacted by the interim government has also left its mark in the sales figures, as this has reduced the available time frame for distribution and sales activities to a more limited number of hours per day. The monthly review of business activities of the SEKEM Holding, whose core businesses are targeting local market companies, clearly reflect these new circumstances. On the other hand, SEKEM companies recorded a very positive business development in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the year that may be interpreted as an early sign for economic recovery in the country.

An optimised range separation of the SEKEM production companies (called SEKEM Holding) and its agricultural activities (called SEKEM Agriculture) has enabled SEKEM management to better target resources and improve processes. This means that business-oriented companies in the SEKEM Holding have managed to maintain sales and become more profitable in the course of their business.

The share of exported goods in relation to the local market has grown by 2%, which is mainly due to the international sale of organic textiles through SEKEM's company for natural garments, NatureTex. Sales of the SEKEM Holding company encompass mainly food products (73%), herbal medicines (17%), and organic textiles (10%).

In 2014, SEKEM aims to further increase its efficiency and that of the usage of available resources. The generation of new customers and the expansion of existing business relationships to both local and international destinations shall further stabilize and improve sales. Enhanced distribution processes, marketing efforts, online presence, web and social media activities shall have a positive impact on sale as well as customer understanding and the quality of service.

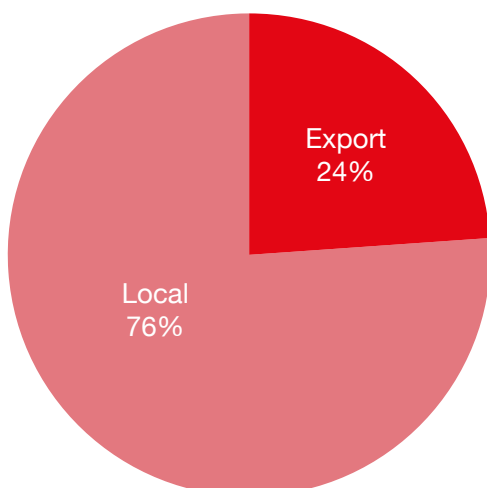
To achieve these objectives, SEKEM will be pursuing several strategies:

- Increase efficiency,
- Expand marketing,
- Optimise the use of existing capacities and resources,
- Debt reduction,
- Exploration of new funding opportunities (strengthening of equity, mezzanine debt, and long-term loans for the holding company and subcontractors).

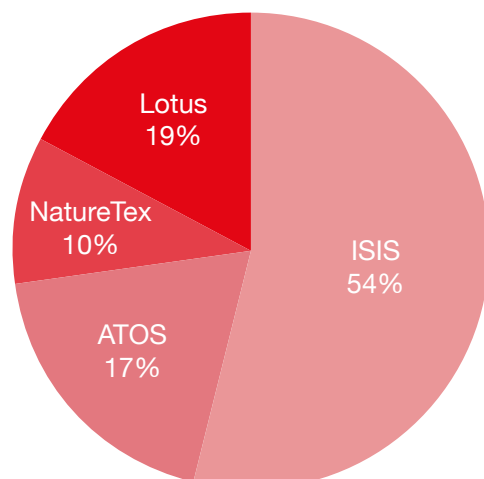
In recent years, SEKEM has succeeded in spite of adverse business conditions, to stabilise revenues and improve margins. In 2013, the overall turnover of the SEKEM Holding was EGP 251 mio.

*Thomas Abouleish*

## SEKEM Holding Local vs Export



## SEKEM Holding Consolidated Revenue



## Impressions from SEKEM



For many years, Claus-Wilhelm Hoffmann, the former mayor of the German city of Biberach together with the German support group of SEKEM has been supporting the cultural activities of the SEKEM Development Foundation (SDF). 15 years earlier, the Red Cross of Biberach had provided SEKEM with a used ambulance vehicle which has since entered service in SEKEM to provide medical care to over 40.000 people every year in the villages surrounding the original SEKEM Farm. Now, another used ambulance has been made available to SEKEM by Biberach's Red Cross branch.

The SEKEM community would like to thank Claus-Wilhelm Hoffmann for his tremendous support and the Red Cross District Association of Biberach in Germany as well as the SEKEM Friends German, who have made possible the transport and the technical overhaul of the car.

Now the car's „First Aid“ equipment must be refurnished. Anyone wishing to support the SEKEM Friends Germany in this task may donate to the following account: account number 870013, BLZ 66650085, Sparkasse Pforzheim Calw.

## Seed Currently the Most Endangered Cultural Good

For the second time already the “Rudolf-Steiner-Kulturgut-Express” will make its way through Austria on rails. Leaving Salzburg on 6 June at 8:30 in the morning, it will gather around 150 artists, scientists and practitioners from many fields in practical anthroposophy and provide them with a discussion forum on the acute questions associated with endangered seeds and agricultural monocultures. The “Kulturgutexpress” aims to facilitate the discovery of practical answers. Participants will make two trips of around 450 kilometres each and organise a conference in Croatia bearing the motto „Agriculture at the Centre“.

The occasion of the trip is the 90-year anniversary of biodynamic agriculture, practiced also in SEKEM. „It's about initiative and social artistic processes, that is the social sculpture“, explains Vera Koppehel who initiated the trip together with Peter Daniell Porsche. 90 years ago, landowners, farmers, doctors and artists came together in the town of Koberwitz, today a part of Poland, with a number of urgent questions: they intended to oppose the transformation of the farmers into the producers, the leaching of soils with chemical and nitrogen use and develop an alternative approach to agriculture. An educational initiative originated by Rudolf Steiner sprang from this meeting that aimed at redefining the relationship between earth and man. Today, Demeter is being considered the most sustainable form of agriculture. „Back in the day, the participants felt: We have participated in an important cultural event. We need to continue the work“, Vera Koppehel adds.

The violinist Miha Pogačnik will participate as contributing artist. SOS Save our Seeds, Software AG Foundation, the Foundation on Future Farming, GLS Treuhand as well as Milo Tesselaar from Austria and Reinsaat will participate as “travel companions”.

Source: Kulturgutexpress.com

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

## More Speeches by Helmy and Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish Available Online

Another speech by Helmy Abouleish is again available online as a video recording. His contribution to an important UK conference is supplemented by a lecture by Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish at the Oikos WinterSchool, which is also available on the Internet.



Helmy Abouleish spoke at the „emerge conference” in Oxford, UK in November 2013. Emerge aims to engage and connect university students and young professionals aspiring to drive transformational change, with current global change-agents leading entrepreneurial ventures, businesses and sector-defying organisations. On the occasion of the event, Helmy Abouleish spoke about the issues on the way to establishing a „revolutionary” initiative such as SEKEM in a country facing tremendous developmental challenges.

In March Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish spoke at the Oikos WinterSchool in Witten, Germany. The Oikos WinterSchool strives to be a part of global change processes towards greater sustainability and contribute through a constructive-minded process. It is an established conference of Oikos International, a worldwide student organization that supports and promotes sustainability at schools of business and economics. This year's central question was “Green Economy or Post-Growth Society? – How can economics and businesses shift towards a more sustainable future and which way could be the most promising to do so?”.

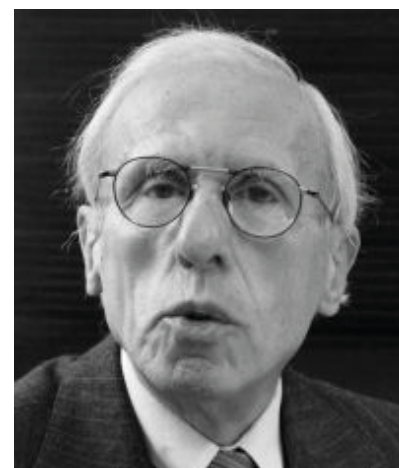
Source: various suppliers

! More information:  
• <http://bit.ly/1o03l0r> (Emerge Oxford)  
<http://bit.ly/1hXpDbX> (OikosWinterSchool)

## Lecture on the Situation in Egypt by Dr. Bruno Sandkühler

On Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 18:00 the Karl Franzens University of Graz invites the public to a lecture by renowned Egypt scholar and SEKEM supporter Dr. Bruno Sandkühler entitled „Egypt Waking Up - Thoughts on Interconnections Among Ancient Egypt and Current Societal Events”.

The organizers of the Austrian SEKEM support association wish to thank Professor Dr. Wolfgang Benedek for his assistance in facilitating the cooperation with the institution and in the preparation of the event. Details are available via the link below.



! More information:  
<http://bit.ly/1hY81wv>



**SEKEM**

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

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**Pictures:**  
1, 5, 7: SEKEM; 2: Bijan Kafi; 8: emerge conference, Hardenberg Institut

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