

SIF Egypt 2019

Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future

Educating the Self towards Community Development through an integral, socially-relevant & artistic approach

The Social Initiative Forum (CH) in collaboration with SEKEM & Heliopolis University (EG)
12th-15th of December, 2019 | Cairo, Egypt

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Introduction

What are the global challenges humanity is facing that calls for urgent action? Why is it important that an individual's unfolding be the center of social transformation? And how can education in its various forms be an agent for individual unfolding leading towards a sustainable future?

Organized by the [Social Initiative Forum](#), [SEKEM](#) & [Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development](#), **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future** discussed and explored different pedagogical frameworks and potential-unfolding activities that can support the becoming of the human being as the center of a sustainable future. The Forum offered keynote talks, workshops, open discussions, and artistic encounters which expanded how we view education — that is a lifelong unfolding of one's potential nurtured inside and outside the classroom including all learners of different abilities, cultures, age groups, and social backgrounds.



Included herewith is an overview of the Forum covering different perspectives from the organizing teams (Social Initiative Forum & SEKEM), our media partner (Info3), Forum contributor, and Forum participants (collated from post-Forum interviews and online Forum evaluation forms). This report also contains the financial overview of the Forum, plus our previous and upcoming events showing the continuity of our work and our aim to reach out to a global community who works on the individual's unfolding potential as a necessary step towards sustainable development.

Joan Sleight
The Social Initiative Forum Project Leader
General Anthroposophic Society Executive Board Member

Forum Program

	Thursday 12th Potential Unfolding in Formal Education	Friday 13th Potential Unfolding in Lifelong Learning	Saturday 14th Economy, Ecology, Culture and Society	Sunday 15th Stepping into the Emerging Future Together
09:00 09:30	Opening With music	Social Warm-Up		Keynote Talk Helmy Abouleish
09:30 11:00	Keynote Talk Florian Oswald Margret Rasfeld	Keynote Talk James Sleight Aonghus Gordon	Keynote Talk Simone Helmle Joan Melé	Panel Discussion Voice of Future Generation
11:00 11:30	Break			
11:30 13:00	Skills Workshops Practical tools to address the diverse challenges of today			Celebration Closure activity
13:00 14:00	Lunch			
14:00 15:15	The Space of Cultures			
	Bazaar Worldwide Initiatives	World Café Intercultural Exchange	Arctic Queen Meets Egyptian Musicians	
15:15 15:30	Break			
15:30 16:30	Artistic Workshops Developing social sensibility through art			
16:30 17:00	Break			
17:00 17:45	Keynote Talk Ben Cherry	Keynote Talk Ha Vinh Tho	Keynote Talk A. Schieffer	
17:45 18:15	Harvesting the day A moment to reflect on the day together			

*** Artistic workshops & other details about the Forum [here](#).

Our Partner Organizations

SEKEM is a sustainable anthroposophically-based community in Cairo, Egypt, whose main thrust is towards a future where every human being can unfold his or her individual potential; where mankind is living together in social forms reflecting human dignity; and where all economic activity is conducted in accordance with ecological and ethical principles. And **Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development** is a pioneer research institute working on individual consciousness, economic solidarity, social justice, & environmental balance.



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Creating Spaces for Individual Unfolding: SIF Egypt 2019 in Review

by Nicole Asis [PH] | photos: Narimeh Paepflow [DE], Nicole Asis [PH], & Samuel Leon Knaus [DE] | published on December 31, 2019 at socialinitiativeforum.org



“How can human development change our perspective of the world and what we do with it that can help shape a healthy, livable future?” – SEKEM CEO Helmy Abouleish, SIF Egypt 2019.

Attended by 250 people from 26 countries, SIF Egypt 2019 was held last December 12-15, 2019 at Heliopolis University in Cairo. The [Social Initiative Forum](https://socialinitiativeforum.org) collaborated with SEKEM and Heliopolis University to bring this year's International Forum to the MENA region. Aligning with SEKEM's Vision for 2057, the theme “Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future” was also an echo of Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish's vision how he dreamt SEKEM to be – a community in the desert where people come together to learn, live and

work as one while unfolding their individual potential. This symbiotic relationship between Education and Sustainability is also a relevant issue nowadays in the face of climate change, unresolved wars, and digitalization. We ask as a global community: how can we create a sustainable world for future generations? And how can education play a role in this paradigm shift?

How to Unfold Individual Potential “What kind of education do the learners of today and tomorrow need?”, asked Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum co-director Florian Osswald in the opening lecture. He proposed that the main aim of education in the digital world is to help learners be at home in their bodies. Through building a connection with one's Self, one can find his/her inner uprightness to relate to the world and with others in freedom. Schule im Aufbruch founder Margret Rasfeld emphasized that education is not preparation for life but it is life. This means that the curriculum should train the learners toward responsibility, resilience, and multicultural openness to live in a globalized society. Gross National Happiness program director Ha Vinh Tho, Ph.D. reiterated that pedagogy should focus on “Education of the Self”. Through Self-education, the learners connect within, with others, and with nature - bridging the thinking and the will through the heart.



Inclusion and engagement in society were also key aspects of education discussed in the Forum. TRANS4M co-founder Alexander Schieffer, Ph.D. illustrated how learners can be innovative and active contributors to society through an integral, research-based approach. In this way, holistic development enables one to be a conscious catalyst for change. Camphill Village West Coast managing director James Sleight shared how a focus on potential rather than disability empowered the intellectually-challenged adults in his community. Empowerment through doing meaningful work enabled them to produce high-quality products supported by the local communities in South Africa. Ruskin Mill Trust founder Aonghus Gordon, MEd also showed that craftsmanship unfolds the potential of at-risk youth he is working with in the UK because of the precise movements required in making something useful. The streaming motion of making vases and ‘objects of civility’ renders moments of reflection, calls forth the courage to create, and gives one a sense of purpose and pride, able to contribute to society.

On how we transform I-unfolding into We-becoming, Waldorf mentor Benjamin Cherry, MA emphasized that small acts of kindness- how the teacher relates to the students by perceiving their individuality – influence their

sense of Self and how they relate with others for life. Demeter Academy director Simone Helmle, Ph.D. highlighted that unfolding potential needs a space of collaboration - where one explores in this shared place and gives enough room for others to move in the same space as well. Moreover, Triodos bank Advisory Board Member and Ethical Banking expert Joan Melé made an urgent call to shift consciousness from a “survival of the fittest” mentality to that of “selflessness & otherness”. He also urged the participants to turn economy into a social art – conscious of the hidden value and of the hand responsible behind every product purchased. In this mutual support, brotherhood emerges out of carrying and being the guardian of each other’s becoming.



Exploring Spaces and Co-creating in Movement

Artistic workshops made this unfolding alive and hands-on. Monte Azul founder and Social Initiative Forum pioneer Ute Craemer led a workshop on what social art is and its nuances practiced in community work. Henry Saphir facilitated a workshop on “Empowerment Physics” and Nelson Avella related Anthroposophy with Capoeira. Besides his keynote lecture, Aonghus held a workshop on self-generated action and co-creating through clay. Also using clay as a medium, Paolo Apostolides explored “Urban Spaces & Material Narratives” in line with the “Ecology of Making”.

Nathaniel Williams utilized puppetry as an exercise for centering, while Simone de Picciotto and Hans-Peter Seeger used musical instruments from all over the world to create a cross-cultural listening space.

In Dialogue: Anthroposophy and Egyptian Culture Being in Egypt was also a good opportunity for a dialogue between Anthroposophy and Egyptian culture to take place. Islamic studies scholar Bruno Sandkühler, Ph.D. offered a discussion group and an evening lecture on “Islam, Individual Potential & the Anthroposophic Approach”. Florian Osswald and Pieter Holloway used Rudolf Steiner’s verse on Social Ethics to lead their discussion groups on creating a healthy social environment & ethical entrepreneurship, respectively. Social Initiative Forum project leader and General Anthroposophical Society board member Joan Sleight mentored a group on “Child Study” looking at the 3-fold & 4-fold nature of the human being in creating a child-centered curriculum. Philip Jacobsen gave an overview of the temperaments while Benjamin Cherry and Yachih Chan conducted an open discussion on “Anthroposophy as a Door for Human Encounter”. Working on the theme “From Inner Transformation to Social Innovation”, Ha Vinh Tho put Gross National Happiness in conversation with Rudolf Steiner’s Social Threefolding.



Experts from SEKEM and Heliopolis University also shared enriching ways of supporting the unfolding potential of Egyptians already in practice. Heliopolis University and SEKEM’s very own Omar Ramzy, Ph.D., Mohammed Anwar, MA, and Moamen Ghanem showed how they align SEKEM’s vision with UNESCO’s Education for Sustainable Development through Children’s University Project & EduCamp. Participants also immersed in traditional Egyptian music through singing and drumming with SEKEM’s music director Sherif Mostafa. SEKEM’s Nashwa Ahmed and Mona Abouleish explored the in-between space through eurythmy.

But the tangible manifestation of Anthroposophy’s breathing, living dialogue with modern-day Egypt resounds in SEKEM itself. In his concluding keynote lecture, SEKEM CEO Helmy Abouleish recalled his father’s vision of making a “miracle in the desert” possible through consciousness development. Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish founded SEKEM more than 40 years ago out of concern on how to counter the ecological challenges and educational decline eroding Egypt in the 70s. Turning the desert soil into a biodynamic farm was the first step in “making the impossible possible”. However, the key element that made this miracle endure for 4 decades is investing in the unfolding potential of each member of the community through research, education, social work and “Economy of Love”. Helmy Abouleish stressed that potential unfolding can only happen through the free will of the individual; what SEKEM offers is a chance to do so. “You cannot make them do it. They should do it



themselves,” Helmy pointed out, “what counts in the end, the key performance indicator at SEKEM is how many steps did each community member make, if he did make the step.” Supporting Unfolding Individual Potential remains the guiding principle of SEKEM, as they envision an “Adventus view of the Future” for their community and modern Egyptian society-at-large.

Multicultural and Intergenerational Exchange birthed New Impulses

The Forum made social organizations and anthroposophically-inspired initiatives from India, Brazil, Egypt, South Africa and other parts of the world known, seen and celebrated. Continued talks from WSIF Japan 2018 on forming a

Waldorf-UNESCO Affiliated Network also took place, with the support of Florian Osswald and Joan Sleigh. Led by Daisuki Onuki & Prof. Atsuhiko Yoshida from Japan, the discussion expanded to include partner schools from China, Egypt, Brazil, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Unity in diversity was also alive as an international circle of youth volunteers carried the whole event. Guided by project manager Nana Woo, these unsung heroes made the Forum dynamic, touching, and meaningful. Youth volunteers from Germany Magdalena Ries and Angelika Kobl led the “Harvest of the Day” while Hadeel Bahaa from Egypt and Teodor Nasar from Bulgaria took over as hosts. Besides opening a space for the unfolding of the youth, the Forum also made room for a moving dialogue between the young and the old. The concluding plenum

Voice of Future Generations honored pioneers Dr. Ibrahim, Ute Craemer, and Truus Geraets, while giving the young the space to express their intentions and dreams. The form also changed as the crowd sat in 4 concentric circles – the center occupied by the youth, while the elders stayed behind, enclosing the future in a warm embrace.

Youth volunteer Ritika Arya from India set the tone by saying that every conscious thought can lend as a template for others. Truus then led everyone with the I-A-O gesture that ensheathed the circle with an earnest quality. Ute followed with a moving speech, encouraging the youth to engage in social action imbued with spirituality, empathy and love.

Showing that youth is not only gauged by age, Dr. Sandkühler exclaimed, “my passport states that I am 88 years old, yet my heart feels not a day older than 30!” He also honored Dr. Ibrahim, along with the dearly departed and the spiritual guides that are watching with loving support and interest. Ben Cherry extended this honoring and gratitude to Rudolf Steiner, who brought Anthroposophy as a support to what being human is in modern life. Joan made a call to everyone, both young and the old to engage in the world with presence, participation, and purpose, no matter how uncertain the future seems. And Nana Woo asked the participants from Egypt to stand up as a commitment to continue the work after, out of their own initiative.



The intergenerational exchange was summarized in a beautiful metaphor by a young participant: “the young people are the past of the old, the elders having experienced the youthful stage of life. And the elders are the future of the young, as the youth look to them as an image of what awaits them, what the future can become.”

The Unfolding Continues SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future provided a fertile ground for diversity to be celebrated, intentions to be heard, and connections to be nourished. Everyone was filled with courage, hope, and inspiration – ready to take the next steps forward. And as this lifetime commitment to one’s unfolding and the fervent intent for a more humane future pulsate within, the faint echoes of each voice and united hearts sent us home. *I can feel my heartbeat. It’s beating in the rhythm of the freedom drum. If I say yes to the beat in me, I can set my spirit free.*

SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future

Video: Juan Bottero [AR] & Narimeh Paepflow [DE]



Social Initiative Forum Project Leader and [General Anthroposophical Society](#) Executive Board Member Joan Sleigh reflects on **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future.**

“How do we unfold our individual potential for the future? What does the future need? How can we empower people to take themselves on?... (Through) self-directed learning and learning from life, which is probably the biggest and most important tool for learning nowadays – (we can) step into life in all its challenges.” – Joan Sleigh, SIF

Project Leader and General Anthroposophical Society Board Member

[SIF Egypt 2019 video here](#)

Full of Confidence: Unfolding of Potential Becomes Visible Everyday

by Nadine Greiss [EG] | photos: Nadine Greiss [EG] & Narimeh Paepflow [DE] | published on December 18, 2019 at [SEKEM.com](https://www.sekem.com)



Full of excitement more than 250 people from all around the globe came to the **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future** that took place at [SEKEM](https://www.sekem.com) and [Heliopolis University](https://www.heliopolis.edu.eg) from 11 to 15 December. All of them were connected by the eagerness to learn from one another different ways and examples on how to unfold individual potential.

Sharing the vision and goals The Social Initiative Forum and SEKEM have a clear vision in common - that vision is to enable and empower all humans as individuals and as community members in the same time. “The SIF in Egypt brought together people from all

over the world who share a spark. This spark lies in believing in your own potential and in that of others,” described Truus Geraets. Truus Geraets and Ute Craemer initiated the World Social Initiative Forum (WSIF) in 2000 to create a network of individuals, initiatives and organizations who share this vision and belief.

“Everyone believed that the idea of SEKEM is impossible to achieve. But if there’s a lesson to learn from it: the impossible is achievable when you have a clear vision and a deep belief in the vision. Ibrahim Abouleish began to realize his vision 42 years ago. After he passed away, we decided to publish an even crazier vision for the future. And I am sure that we are going to realize this vision, because every day we see how individual potential is unfolding,” said Helmy Abouleish during his keynote talk on SEKEM’s Vision for 2057. Similarly, also Anthroposophy started as one man’s philosophy and became an international network all over the world. This network became clear too during the SIF as many of the involved organizations and participants came from an anthroposophical background.



Voices of the future On the last day of the Forum, the room was set up in circles. The youngest of the group were asked to sit at the center of the room while the elders sat at the widest circle. The discussion began by honoring the elders who paved the way until today, followed by the stories of younger participants who shared their inspiring ideas for the future. And the fact that potential unfolding is not limited to any age was expressed among others by Dr. Bruno Sandkühler: “My passport states that I am 88 years old, yet my heart feels not a day older than 30,” the expert for Ancient Egypt and longstanding SEKEM friend said. During the discussion many great voices have been expressed. And Heliopolis University became an open space for sharing arts and culture, exactly in the sense as its founder Ibrahim Abouleish dreamt it to be.

Although **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future** came to an end, the real future designing is only beginning – and unfolding individual potential will never end. SEKEM is happy to be part of this visionary network and looks forward to the upcoming developments for which the foundation was laid during the SIF in Egypt.

Seid jung im Herzen: Forum Review from Info3

Text: Andrea Kreisel [DE] | photo: Info3 | published on January 15, 2020 at info3-verlag.de

Der globale gesellschaftliche Wandel kann nicht stattfinden, wenn wir auf das Handeln anderer warten. Jeder Mensch kann selbst Vorbild für künftige Generationen sein. Wie gelingt es, individuelles Potenzial für die Zukunft zu entfalten? Mit dieser Frage beschäftigte sich das Social Initiative Forum in Ägypten in Zusammenarbeit mit der SEKEM Initiative. [Info3](#) war dabei.



„Wir sind soziale Wesen und brauchen ein offenes Herz, um in der Welt zu sein.“ So eröffnete Projektleiterin Joan Sleigh das Social Initiative Forum in der Heliopolis Universität für nachhaltige Entwicklung in Kairo. 250 Menschen aus 26 Ländern der Welt trafen sich, um gemeinsam an globalen sozialen Fragen zu arbeiten. Das übergeordnete Motto der viertägigen Konferenz in Ägypten lautete Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future. Zum ersten Mal seit zwanzig Jahren fand das Forum in einem arabischen Land in Nordafrika statt, zwischen Wüste und Nil, Pyramiden und Palmen: in SEKEM, einer Initiative für nachhaltige soziale und ökologische Entwicklung in der Wüste nahe Kairo. Im Vordergrund der globalen

Konferenz stand die Rolle der Bildung für eine zukunftsfähige Gesellschaft. „Die Frage ist, was brauchen Lernende, um selbst Führungskräfte der Zukunft zu werden?“, so Sleigh für das fünfköpfige Organisationsteam. Die SEKEM Vision, die auf den Gründer Ibrahim Abouleish zurückgeht, und der Initiativgeist vor Ort galten als Inspiration für die Tagung: ökologische Nachhaltigkeit, Zusammenleben in Würde und wirtschaftliche Tätigkeiten im Einklang mit ökologischen und ethischen Prinzipien.

Es ist schwer zu sagen, wo Bildung anfängt. Wie muss sie sein, damit sich Menschen frei entfalten können? Was macht Bildung für alle Menschen möglich? Read the rest of the article [here](#).

TRANS4M contributes an Integral Perspective in SIF Egypt 2019

by Alexander Schieffer, Ph.D. [DE] | photos: Mohammed El-Banby [EG] & Narimeh Paepow [DE] | edited: Nicole Asis [PH]
| published on December 15, 2019 at trans-4-m.com



An international network of educators, curative educators, social workers, researchers and individuals interested in holistic education and sustainability gathered for **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future** last December 12-15, 2019. Organized by the Social Initiative Forum and SEKEM, the network met at Heliopolis University in Egypt to share ideas on creative pedagogical practices that can help build a sustainable future.

TRANS4M co-founder Alexander Schieffer contributed two workshops and a keynote speech during the Forum. In the TRANS4M workshops entitled **Unleashing Human Gene-i-us – A Workshop for Integral Worldmakers**, participants were guided through the five-step GENE-I-US model, aligned with the five dance rhythms by Gabriele Roth. Combining conceptual input, practical tools, introspective

questions, and dance turned out to be a highly transformative format, that resulted in deep personal insights into the “unfolding of individual potential” of the participants. They also co-created a shared Mandala, summarizing their key findings. In the workshops, TRANS4M was strongly supported by Martina Dinkel, SEKEM’s director for Eurythmy and Performing Arts.

The subsequent keynote speech focused on a set of main principles of TRANS4M’s work that seemed particularly relevant to the conference theme: an integral emphasis on a whole life perspective, the inner purpose, cultural rootedness and transcultural interaction to stimulate social innovation. These principles were illustrated through a set of international cases from the TRANS4M body of practice: from SEKEM (Egypt); to the Agents of Transformation Course at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland); to Sadhana School (India); to Integral Green (Slovenia); and the EGIC (Egyptian Genius Innovation Community).

A highlight of this year’s Forum was the level of ownership, enthusiasm, creativity and professionalism that a team of youth organizers, led by SEKEM’s Nana Woo. Furthermore, the Forum was deeply enriched by being embedded in the innovative organizational and educational showcases of SEKEM and Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development. In turn, the dynamic, innovative and transcultural spirit of the Forum brought many evolutionary impulses back into SEKEM and HU. It was an inspiring Forum that made participants and organizers leaving the Forum enriched, energized, and further enabled to make his or her contribution to a more sustainable future.



The Voice of Future Generations: Reflections of the Youth

collated by Nicole Asis [PH] | photos: from youth volunteers | published on January 12, 2020 at socialinitiativeforum.org

Weeks after **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future**, we asked the youth volunteers & young participants how the whole Forum was for them; what insights & impulses did they keep from the whole experience; & what are the next steps forward in unfolding their individual potential.



Hadeel Bahaa, 28, Egypt

Student, Master's Degree in Education at Cairo University

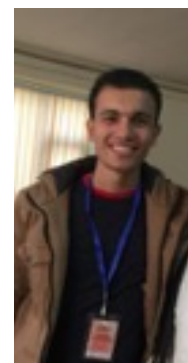
I have become more eager to create a curriculum that can integrate arts for healing purposes in communities that suffer from intellectual disabilities & to have a sort of "healing educational material" that can be tailored to each learner's needs. This can be through art, or movement, or building something – a material that can detect the potential of its learners & be designed accordingly. I also came out of the Forum dreaming to live in an eco-sustainable village that provides nonformal education to its members, where movement & working with one's own hands is the mode of education. I intend to bring that into learning environments & spread the idea of

experiential learning among educators.

Mohammed El-Banby, 21, Egypt

Student, Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at Tanta University Member of EGIC (Egyptian Genius Innovation Community)

It was a great experience for me to take this practical step to promote natural products in our booth, which do not affect the environment negatively. Also, it was a chance to spread environmental awareness among participants from all over the world. The Forum was very interactive & filled with experts who provided us a space to explore questions & answers. The intercultural exchange helped me to have a new way of looking at social work passionately. It also helped me know more about social initiatives that are going on all over the world & this really inspired me to contribute to the transformation of the world into a better place.



Noura Khamees Hamad, 28, Egypt

Early Childhood Educator, Online M.Ed of Innovation in Education at the University of South Wales

SIF Egypt 2019 was a unique opportunity to network with amazing people & learn about great educational initiatives across the globe. The formal & informal discussions that took place were stimulating & uplifting. I could feel that the Forum's energy was filled with warmth, openness & curiosity. Through the workshops, I was able to view my work from a unique perspective that has helped me to unfold my potential & develop innovative approaches in dealing with children at work & even with myself. The conversations that I had were invaluable in strengthening my

commitment to value diversity & sustainability in education & to give back to my community. I am forever grateful to participate in this Forum that revealed the great effort that is being done worldwide inspired by Anthroposophy & the future work needed to continue Rudolf Steiner's legacy.

Magdalena Ries, 31, Germany
Experiential Educator & Changemaker

I traveled all the way from Germany to Egypt to take part in SIF Egypt 2019 hosted by SEKEM. Since I was in a Waldorf school, I have been interested in getting to know this visionary project in the desert. I have always wanted to find out how Anthroposophy can contribute to global challenges & changes in a healthy, human way. So it was super interesting to experience SEKEM, to meet all these engaged people from all over the world, & to explore together how individual potential can be unfolded for the future. I got really inspired by what is already being done in this field. However, one big question is left & still forms a big question mark inside me. What is the new that wants to emerge for the future? What is the impulse of the youth to create a new future? How can we really empower everybody to speak up, to dream, to share their visions & their personal struggles? I deeply believe that we need to look at all these aspects if we really want to see the whole picture of “potential for the future”. We need to include the periphery & empower the center! Here I feel a deep wish inside my heart that we practice to listen, to be aware of each other, & to be courageous to create soul spaces – spaces where everybody feels safe, seen. That one can unfold & be!



Roxanne Johanna Ziersch, 23, Germany

Student, Bachelor's Degree in Islamic Studies & Political Science at Martin Luther University

I experienced the conference as a sheltered space in which the guiding thought “Unfolding Individual Potential” could very much evolve because of the variety of contributions, of intercultural encounters, & the exhibit of different initiatives from all over the world. To relate with people who are striving in different ways for healing impulses for the world made me trust in every little step I make towards an individual contribution to the world. In gratitude, I wish to carry that strength – that I can be an inspiration to others, as how the conference was an inspiration for me, with all its colors.

Koudai Niwa, 19, Japan
Graduate, Hokkaido Steiner School

There are many adults in this world who are striving towards their dreams, goals, & various tasks. They are very cool! They look like they are shining to me. I want to shine like them, too. In order for me to be like them, I need to find goals that I can work on with passion. Due to the language barrier, I have trouble talking to other youth members. Nevertheless, they actively spoke to me & gave me a job. I felt like I could communicate with them despite the language barrier. I think we were a great team! I once again realized that English was essential to developing myself. What I was conscious of when planning the Forum was how to make effective use of the beautiful space at Heliopolis University. I created the space with the other youth volunteers so that participants could fully enjoy the beautiful landscape of the university & enjoy the Forum. I was honored to be part of the organizing team!





Inés Lauber, 36, Germany
Owner & Founder, Studio Inés Lauber

The first day of the conference was not very structured. Workshops were canceled, locations changed (due to the heavy storm, it was not possible to host outdoors), materials not prepared. Guests were late or not able to attend the workshop they planned to attend. Throughout the four days of the forum, guests & volunteers, as well as responsible organizers, got more acquainted with the location & needs. On the third & fourth day of the Forum, things seemed to run smoothly. The overall impression of the guests was positive. They were inspired by new insights through the exchange with like-minded people. The alternative & sometimes spontaneous, but very authentic input & contributing work by the youth volunteers were received very positively. The locations SEKEM & Cairo, & therefore the exchange with the Arabic culture, were for many guests interesting & enriching.

Eslam Othman Ahmed, 36, Egypt
Founder of Foreign Trade Solutions Constancy Agency for Export & Import



South Korea, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Argentina, Austria, Australia, India, Romania, & Uruguay – this was our “Dream Team” in organizing the Forum. Reflecting on what is unfolding in me after being there, I strongly believe we all have the same good side. We just need some good company, as well as a supportive/healthy environment that makes once strangers work in harmony. A team has one goal & wants to achieve it on time. We were very dynamic, cooperative, supportive & deeply understanding of the cultural diversity among us. I was focused on the logistics during the Forum. I was also giving suitable & friendly spaces where anyone can unfold his/her potential. After the Forum, I want to read more about biodynamic agriculture, social education & SEKEM’s Economy of Love. In the future, I want to use my industrial experience in the community, as I believe that import & export is another side of intercultural dialogue.



Hibiki Kawamura, 19, Japan
Graduate, Hokkaido Steiner School

Almost every day, we young volunteers had meetings in which we shared not only what we were working on at that time but also what feelings, experiences & thoughts were living in our hearts. Every person shared whatever he/she wanted to say in earnest. In the circle, everyone is in. Emotions, sensations, current state, discovery, feelings, awareness – anything is fine. It is not that everyone has to say something. If you don’t want to, it is also fine. How nice it is to be able to have like this time together. We can create that space, be together with others even we all had different backgrounds, views. I think that it is really an effective way to open our hearts to each other, to make us calm. I’m sure this is what every single person actually needs right at this moment all over the world. We are starving for peace & the most important thing nowadays in our society is to look into ourselves & also the world, the people around us. Have many chances to converse, communicate, understand one another. The space in which people can open their minds to others, to create that space.

Through that, I think people can transform themselves & the world.

Financial Overview

EXPENSES	CHF
Fee (meals + accommodation) for the organising team and the invited contributors of the SIF network.	8'692
Flight tickets for the organising team	3'450
Support for the Monte Azul Team (Flight tickets)	2'832
Support to the young team of volunteers (Accommodation + meals)	882
TOTAL	15'856
INCOME	
Eliant	1'000
Iona Stichting	5'547
World Goetheanum Association	5'000
Live Crowdfunding at the World Goetheanum Association Forum	2'818
TOTAL	14'365
TOTAL	- 1'491

*Monte Azul including accommodation & meals

SEKEM and the Social Initiative Forum agreed that both teams would sponsor the flight tickets of their respective teams (if applicable), and the meals and accommodation of invited contributors. The Monte Azul Team agreed to raise funds for their team and the contributors they brought in as well.

Due to the lack of manpower on-site, SEKEM's Nana Woo decided to form a group of youth volunteers to help out in the logistics and operations before, during, and after the Forum. Some of the volunteers asked for financial aid (ie. accommodation fees). Hence, the Social Initiative Forum carried this financial assistance to the volunteers, even if it was not in the budget, as a sign of gratitude to the enormous support they have given that made the Forum the success that it was.

The Social Initiative Forum incurred a deficit of Fr.1,491.00. Though it was not agreed upon in the beginning, the team also took care of the flight tickets, accommodation for extra nights, and meals of the Monte Azul Team and the flights and conference tickets of the contributors they recommended because they were not able to raise the funds needed. Accommodation fees and flights of additional youth volunteers were also shouldered by the organization.

It was agreed upon by SEKEM and the Social Initiative Forum that the deficit will be carried by both teams equally.

Multicultural

250 participants from 26 countries

Egypt, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Israel, Switzerland, Germany, UK, Austria, The Netherlands, France, Bulgaria, US, Argentina, Brazil, China, Japan, Philippines, India, Bhutan, Vietnam, South Korea

SEKEM & Heliopolis
University aligning
Educational Practice with
UN SDGs

Omar Ramzy, Ph.D.,
Mohammed Anwar, MA, and
Moamen Ghanem on
Children's University Project &
EduCamp

Diverse Pedagogical Frameworks

Florian Osswald on
Waldorf Pedagogy |
Margret Rasfeld on School
Diversity in Schule im
Aufbruch | James Sleight &
Aonghus Gordon MEd on
Inclusive Nonformal
Education through
Curative Education

Volunteerism & Youth Impulse

almost 20 young
participants helped
with the Forum
organization and
program

Intergenerational

oldest participant: 92 y/o (The Netherlands)

youngest participant: 19 y/o (Japan)

Education & Sustainability

Ha Vin Tho, Ph.D on Social
Threefolding & Gross National
Happiness | Simone Helmle,
Ph.D on Biodynamic Farming
& Research | Helmy Abouleish
on SEKEM's support to
Unfolding Individual Potential



Integrating Arts & Movement

Ute Craemer on Social
Arts | Nathaniel Williams
on Puppetry | Aonghus
Gordon Med on Clay
Modeling | Mona
Abouleish & Nashwa
Ahmed on Eurythmy

Inspiring New Initiatives

Daisuke Onuki &
Atsuhiko Yoshido led
Waldorf-UNESCO
Affiliated Schools |
Camphill West Village
- South Africa partners
with DEMETER
Academy | Nana Woo
plans Egypt mini-
Forum to be organized
by Egyptians

What aspects of the Forum (ie. keynote lectures, workshops, conversations) were most effective in helping you understand the theme of the Forum? How did it help you deepen your understanding of the theme “Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future”?

“The keynote lectures were the most powerful, as they were so diversified but all spoke from the heart with a genuine desire to see change in the world. They were all very inspiring.” - Egyptian participant, 50 years old, Egypt

“Some of the Presentations, the practical workshops and the great discussions with many people around. The possibility to mix and share experience in various sessions and contexts. Also the insight into myself during the artistic Workshop ... unfolded kind of potential.” - International participant, 56 years old, Germany

“Both keynote lectures and workshops were useful because in my opinion they all dealt with the hidden abilities that human beings possess. Both helped reveal the capacities one has deep inside oneself and the potential power that arises when people work together out of a comprehension of the spiritual worlds.” - International participant, 34 years old, Denmark

What could we improve for the next forums?

“Having more breathing space- longer breaks, more time for individual harvesting.” - Young volunteer, 30 years old, Romania

“The program was very intense and there were many possibilities to take at the daytime. Maybe organize less Workshops and the timeslot eg. for the Artistic workshops a little longer? But actually I was stricken by the very good organization. I’m very happy for having had that possibility to join the forum. Thanks a lot all of you!” - International participant, 56 years old, Germany

“In my opinion this event was planned more to be a Conference than a Forum. I think it should be more stimulated the exchange between the participants. The time inside a room was too long and a lot of value was lost in this way. Another point is that I didn’t see almost any grassroots initiative from Egypt. I met some people but they weren’t doing workshops neither had their time to present their organizations. Anyway, this is just to improve since the event in general was a big success in my opinion!!!” - Contributor, 38 years old, Brazil

Have any initiatives or collaborations emerged for you from the forum, or are you planning to start any as a result of inspiration/connections from the forum? In which country will this happen, and which social need will this address?

“Install Eurythmy in the Goethe Institute in Cairo for teachers and students, if possible. Me being a student as well. I will stay in contact with Nashwa. Implementing knowledge of the value of teaching with the pedagogic background of Anthroposophy more among my Goethe Institutes colleagues. This will be in Cairo/ Egypt.” - International participant, 60 years old, Germany

“I hope to start collaborations in South Africa and England. The social need for artful listening as an act of peace and to reconnect with ones own biography to increase the capability to wonder and create wonder is my focus so far.” - Contributor, 40 years old, Switzerland

“Yes, I am in touch with several. Margret Rasfeld has sent me details about her school on the move concept and I will be in touch with her to find ways to adapt those concepts to the Indian situation. I am also in touch with Ute Craemer to exchange ideas on how to work at the grassroots level and what would be required. Ute is an example for me of a person who has given her all to do good.” - International participant, 64, India

Lessons Learned

Bringing the Forum to the MENA region and collaborating with SEKEM to make it possible had been a pivotal undertaking for the Social Initiative Forum this year. The theme **Unfolding Individual Potential** is a relevant topic nowadays, especially because if seen as a necessary step in co-creating a sustainable future. Having an international group of experts in the field of Education and Sustainability lead the keynote lectures helped showcase diversity of practice with a global, multicultural perspective. However, majority of the keynote lecturers come from Europe, hence there was a lack of connection to the local context. Moreover, there was not an equal representation of gender, as the keynote lecturers and workshop facilitators were predominantly male. We therefore recommend highlighting local speakers in the host country and equal gender representation in keynote lectures & workshops will be observed in the next Forums.

In terms of fundraising, the team utilized various ways of asking support like Crowdfunding, donations through QR codes, & a “Pass the Hat” for SIF Nairobi 2020 as a gesture of “paying it forward” for the next event.

This Forum also made us conscious of asking the participants, contributors, and organizers to evaluate the whole program after the event. An online evaluation form was drafted and sent out to the Forum participants for feedback. Interviews with the youth participants and volunteers were also collated as part of the evaluation process. SEKEM, Heliopolis University, and the Social Initiative Forum also had a debriefing session after the Forum to outline the successes and the points for improvement of the Forum. The Social Initiative Forum & SEKEM PR Teams also worked closely together in covering the Forum and getting different as many perspectives as possible of the whole event. Post-Forum articles were also written by a Forum contributor and Info3, which were posted on the website, ensuring a balanced view on the outcomes of the Forum.

Holding a space of exchange among 250 people from different cultural backgrounds and age groups was also a big feat for the organizing teams. How can we create open spaces where a true multicultural exchange can come about? What is an effective frame where Anthroposophy can be in dialogue with the local culture where the Forum is being held (in this case, Islamic culture in Egypt)? And how can the organizations work efficiently despite time differences, varying work cultures, leveling expectations with what is feasible? A learning that came out of the Forum is co-creating agreements and keeping consistent open communication among organizations that will ensure a solid foundation upon which the Forum can be shaped.

Conclusion

Despite the areas of improvement mentioned, the Social Initiative Forum & partner organizations SEKEM & Heliopolis University still concluded that **SIF Egypt 2019: Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future** was a resounding success. The Forum brought an international network of social entrepreneurs, practitioners, and academic researchers to Egypt for 4 days of explorative conversation and exercises around the broad theme of learning. Formal, informal, & non formal education were highlighted along with pedagogical frameworks like the Waldorf curriculum, experience-based schooling, and skills learning aligning to the UN Sustainable Goals - empowering all learners to be autonomous & humane contributors to society.

The Forum itself showcased the possibility of inter-generational, multicultural, and international collaboration in which upholding human dignity enables us to recognize our own potential through that of the other. Through anecdotes from experts, artistic explorations in the workshops & conversations among peers during the breaks, we affirmed that there are no limits to learning and unfolding individual potential. The Forum was repeatedly reported as life-changing and transformational, giving hope that change is possible together and inspiring individual will to do so.

We hope to continue to grow such a Forum on a worldwide scale - keeping the conversation going as we find ways of dealing with the social questions of our time in various context through empowering the human being in freedom, responsibility, and otherness.



Steadfast in the Changes : SIF Ethical Individualism 2019 in Review

by Nicole Asis [PH] | photo: Massa Ando [JP] | published on January 7, 2020 at socialinitiativeforum.org

Last October 18-20, 2019, youth volunteers from [Freunde's Freiwilligendienste](#) program gathered at the Goetheanum for **SIF Ethical Individualism 2019**. Now in its 2nd year, the 3-day Forum was one of the Engagementkollegs or after-service seminars offered by [Freunde Ehemaligenarbeit](#). Though attending Engagementkollegs is a requirement after their voluntary service, the Freunde alumni have a

choice which seminars they would want to attend based on their interests & the questions they carry after their volunteer year abroad. Freunde Ehemaligenarbeit coordinator Georg Wiedemer partnered with the Social Initiative Forum to organize this Forum as a way of processing the changes the volunteers experienced through the lens of Ethical Individualism developed by Rudolf Steiner. The Forum organized at the Goetheanum is also a chance for the alumni to get to know the place & have an insight into Anthroposophy. [Full article here](#).



Ethical Individualism: Transforming Self & Society 2019

by Andrea dela Cruz [ES] | photo: Social Initiative Forum | published on November 20, 2018 at socialinitiativeforum.org

Ethical Individualism: Transforming Self and Society was the title of the latest Social Initiative Forum event organised by the Section for Social Sciences at the Goetheanum in collaboration with the Friends of Waldorf Education. It brought together more than 100 participants from all over the world seeking to explore the power of individual responsibility and activity in the resolution of present social

challenges. Through workshops, open discussions and artistic experiences, participants were introduced to Anthroposophical approaches to inner development and in service of social transformation. [Full article here](#).



From Empathy to a Just & Fraternal Society: WSIF Japan 2018 in Review

by Daisuke Onuki [JP] | Photo: Ren Tamura [JP] | published on December 27, 2019 at socialinitiativeforum.org

The **World Social Initiative Forum** was held in Japan in the spring of 2018. This 5-day event took place in the temple complex of a Buddhist sect's headquarters & a publicly run youth center in the outskirts of snow-covered Mt. Fuji. Blessed by one of the most gorgeous cherry blossoms in recent years, it was attended by over 450 people coming from 15 countries & all different backgrounds:

young & old; East & West; South & North; anthroposophically-oriented & those not at all; those with immigrant backgrounds & those even unaware of the multiculturalism in Japan; students; educators; social workers; artists; Capoeirists; & many others. [Full article here](#).

SIF Nairobi 2020: Inuka Sasa 13th-17th April, 2020 | Nairobi, KE

by Natasha Weddepohl [ZA] | edited: Joan Sleight & Nicole Asis | poster: Nyendo Lernen

Organized by the [Social Initiative Forum](#), [Nyendo Lernen](#) & [Sunbridge International Collaborative](#), **SIF Nairobi 2020: Inuka Sasa Summit** is an international Forum on Entrepreneurship & Innovation where we find ways of creating economically sustainable community work through facilitating partnerships and innovative entrepreneurial practices. We will also tackle the relationship between Self-Development and Societal Transformation and how one can unfold his/her individual potential in service of the community.

The Social Initiative Forum aims to connect, strengthen & promote grassroots initiatives, to alleviate poverty, inequality, & marginalization through increased resilience & sustainable development. This is facilitated through sharing of experience & co-learning among members of the SIF network. Nyendo Lernen helps young people realize their own projects & generate profit by offering courses in social entrepreneurship. They aim to build at least 100 partnerships between schools in developed & developing countries — supporting student-led solutions to problems caused by migration & poverty.

Taking place in 2 slums in Nairobi (Kangemi & Kawangware) housing 200,000 residents, the Forum will work with 100 community “Self-Help Initiative” NGO schools that provide education to 80,000 children. Our 5-day Forum facilitates connectivity, practical learning, & conversation in the field. We aim to support participants & local stakeholders who are already working on creative entrepreneurship initiatives & ideas. Through the Forum, the local community can benefit from facilitated shared learning; strengthening of core relationships with existing NGO’s, community organizations & grassroots initiatives; & brainstorming new project possibilities.

The Forum endeavors to bring the conversation, exchange & experience building to underprivileged areas in Nairobi. The key purpose is to increase community philanthropy via economically sustainable community work through self-development training, partnerships, & entrepreneurial practices. This shall be done through working alongside local partners to showcase & promote the education & social community projects that have arisen out of the communities, thereby increasing collaboration & networking opportunities between local & global partners.



Acknowledgments

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