



Masterclass: Inspiring Social Entrepreneurship in the MENA-region



A unique opportunity to engage with three successful entrepreneurs from the Middle East and North Africa

SPEAKERS

Helmy Abouleish, CEO of SEKEM, Egypt

Joslin Kehdy, CEO of Recycle Beirut and Regenerative Hub, Lebanon

Bashar Humeid, CEO of Meezan and Yanboot organic city food, Jordan

Wednesday, August 31st

9.30 – 18.00

**Bronland 10, 6708 WH Wageningen
(Wageningen StartHub)**

For more information or questions, contact us via info@hetgrotemiddenoostenplatform.nl



INTRODUCTION

This Masterclass aims to inspire potential entrepreneurs who consider starting a business in the MENA region. The Masterclass offers a presentation by the three entrepreneurs about the triggers to start their business, their lessons learned, ups and downs, challenges and the opportunities they see in the market.

Breakout sessions will allow for an interactive Q & A with the speakers. Participants will benefit from the speaker's personal recommendations and advice. They will get insights into how to prepare themselves for social entrepreneurship in the region.

- The Masterclass is a full-day event with a limited capacity of 50 (potential) entrepreneurs.
- The organisers reserve the right to select participants as to achieve a most diverse and focussed group.
- Participants are requested to contribute € 50 to the costs of the Masterclass, Students can participate free of charge.
- The majority of the costs of this Masterclass are covered by the organisers with the financial support of the Iona Foundation.

This Masterclass is a joint initiative of StartHub Wageningen, Het Grote Midden Oosten Platform and Vriendenkring SEKEM.

PROGRAM, TAKEAWAYS and SPEAKERS

Objective

To inspire and motivate (potential) entrepreneurs, including people with a background in the Middle East or North Africa, to develop a business in the MENA region. To share lessons learned, exchange experiences, and connect the potential entrepreneurs with networks in the region.

The preliminary programme for the day:

Session 1, Plenary, three presentations

- Short personal introduction by each speaker, history, the inspiration, what made the speaker decide, and what was *the* trigger to start.

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- Development of the company, ups and downs, lessons learned over the years, where the company stands today, and challenges for the coming years.
- Opportunities in the market, what type of (new) businesses are needed and welcome, and what examples of new start-ups does the speaker see in her/his area.

Sessions 2 and 3 (2 times in 3 break out groups, rotating such that each participant meets with two speakers).

- Questions from participants are collected beforehand (when they register for the masterclass).
- The sessions will be moderated to ascertain that sufficient time is spent on the recommendations and advice. Discussions are interactive with ample room for the participants to ask questions and discuss aspects.
- What would the speaker recommend to potential entrepreneurs, what advice, what preparations are needed and what pitfalls to be prepared for.

What do participants take away from the masterclass?

Potential entrepreneurs meet actual entrepreneurs who know the context on the ground and will address various aspects.

- ⇒ Inspiration & encouragement
- ⇒ Practical information on what it means to run/start a start-up or business in MENA contexts, do's and don'ts
- ⇒ Personal feedback on potential business ideas
- ⇒ Network opportunity

Programme Masterclasses

9.30	Doors open, registration,
10.00	Welcome and short introduction speakers
10.15-12.15	Session 1: Plenary, each speaker has 30 minutes to present business/initiative, how it came into being, what it strives to be. Also speaks about opportunities in the market, what type of businesses are needed and welcome, and what examples of new start-ups the speaker see in her/his area. Time for questions
12.15-13.30	Lunch and open space/networking
13.30-15.00	Session 2 (3 break out groups)
15.00-15.30	Open space
15.30-17.00	Session 3 (3 break out groups)
17.00-18.00	Plenary closure, networking, open space and drinks

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Speakers:

[Helmy Abouleish](#) – CEO SEKEM

SEKEM Initiative was founded in 1977 by Helmy's father, Dr Ibrahim Abouleish, with the vision of sustainable development and giving back to the community. Using Biodynamic agricultural methods, desert land was and is revitalized and a striving agricultural business with branded food, phytopharmaceutical and textile products developed. Over the years, SEKEM became the umbrella of a multifaceted agro-industrial group of companies and NGOs, including different educational institutions and a Medical Center. Today, SEKEM is regarded as a leading social business worldwide. SEKEM started Heliopolis University in 2012, the region's first university with holistic sustainable development as its main purpose.

[Joslin Kehdy](#)

Joslin Faith Kehdy is the Founder of and Director at [Recycle Lebanon](#), catalysing a system change to re-psyc'le our linear mindset towards circular action. The four programmes of this Lebanese NGO include [Regenerate Hub](#), EcoSouk, TerraPods and Dive Into Action. Joslin currently lives off-grid in the rural village of Baskinta, Lebanon, where she stewards the land developing the TerraPods regenerative agriculture, art residency and eco-design maker-spac.

[Bashar Humeid](#)

Bashar Humeid is a Consultant, Trainer and Speaker, who specialized in Urban/Organic Farming and decentralized political solutions based on green and decentralized technologies. He is also the founder of Meezan.cc and the co-founder of Yanboot.com. [Meezan](#) is a nonprofit enterprise that develops low-tech methods for building, farming and energy-/water saving for Jordan and Arabia. [Yanboot](#) is the leading brand in organic agriculture and food production in Jordan. Bashar was born and raised in Amman, Jordan and is currently pursuing a PhD in Political Science at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany.

The Organisers of this Masterclass:

StartHub Wageningen is the startup incubator and educator for students, PhD's and recent graduates of *Wageningen University & Research*. Our core focus is the development of entrepreneurial competencies of students and student entrepreneurs. To stimulate and help students with the development of entrepreneurial competencies, we offer a diverse program in which you can develop your entrepreneurial skills.

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The association *Vriendenkring SEKEM* strives to make the work of SEKEM from Egypt known in the Netherlands (www.sekem.com). The association intends to share the inspiration of SEKEM's CEO Helmy Abouleish among (potential) entrepreneurs, in particular those with a migration background in the Middle East, who are considering starting a business in the Middle East or North Africa.

This idea connects with the Green MENA Network project that is being developed by *het Grote Midden Oosten Platform* (GMOP), which maps constructive forces in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This project aims to motivate people and organisations in the Netherlands to establish partnerships in the Middle East that are based on sustainability and on caring for the environment and society.

StartHub Wageningen, *Vriendenkring SEKEM* and *het Grote Midden Oosten Platform* also want to share the holistic business philosophy of Helmy Abouleish and other social entrepreneurs from the Middle East with Dutch audiences. This will be done through [a public side event](#).

For *StartHub Wageningen*: Rabih Hamid (06-634410984)

For *het Grote Midden Oosten Platform*: Sylva van Rosse (06-18241405)

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