Habiba Community

A Story of Transformation
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INTRODUCTION

Habiba community is composed of an organic farm, a beach lodge, and a learning centre. All complementing each other with one purpose: creating balance in the Bedouin life in Sinai. This happens through creating an alternative method to relying completely on the traditional tourism-based activities, and providing the community with means for financial stability. An interdisciplinary approach to raise the community’s social awareness toward the necessity of applying the basic principles of Permaculture, Responsible Tourism, and Knowledge Transfer.
3 CONTEXT

3.1 SINAI PENINSULA, EGYPT
Sinai is a triangular peninsula lying east of Egypt and considered as the linkage point between Africa and Asia. The peninsula is divided into two governorates; north and south Sinai.¹

3.2 SOUTH SINAI
South Sinai is the least populated governorate in Egypt. According to population estimates from 2015 of an estimated 167,426 people residing in the governorate; most residents live in urban areas, with an urbanization rate of 51.1%.²

3.3 NUWEIBA, SOUTH SINAI
Nuweiba lies on the coast of Al-Aqaba Gulf in the eastern part of south Sinai. Since 1934 and till now, Nuweiba has been inhabited by two Bedouin tribes called Tarabin and Muzeina.

Nuweiba lies on a large flood plain between the mountains and Al-Aqaba Gulf. It is located about 150 km north of Sharm el Sheikh, 465 km southeast from Cairo and 70 km from Egypt’s border separating Taba and Eilat.

Nuweiba Port was built on the Gulf of Aqaba, and serves as a ferry port as well, which allows for easy travel between Jordan and Egypt. Between the town and the port are a strip of modern hotels, in addition to several Bedouin-style camps.

3.4 HABIBA COMMUNITY, NUWEIBA, SOUTH SINAI
Habiba Community lies in Nuweiba, South Sinai in a territory called Wastwhichis inhabited by the Bedouin tribe of Arab Himdan. 3 Kilometers away from Tarabin and kilometers away from Muzeina.

Habiba’s location made it a strong linkage point between 3 Bedouin tribes of different believes and traditions.

In addition to being located on the coast of Gulf Al-Aqaba and only few kilometers away from Taba’s international airport and the bus station.

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Habiba was initiated in 1994, like any Egyptian young man at that time, Maged (Habiba’s founder and owner) travelled to Nuweiba to start a tourism company. And since tourism was the largest source of income in Egypt at that time, it seemed to be the most reasonable choice. So, to support his family with a sufficient income, Habiba Beach Lodge was initiated. Which, back then, was mainly about the simplest concept of tourism where tourists were invited to enjoy the huts, camps, mountain hikes, red sea’s warm breeze of fresh air and experience the life of an Egyptian desert dweller.

The Beach lodge grew larger day by day, the extra money flow earned from the tourism services was used to improve the camp’s overall status, works of renovation and construction at all times. It might have started with shady huts and public bathrooms, but along time new elements were added. The restaurant, the well-constructed rooms, restrooms, the mosque and halls with distinctive features. It was a constant process of improvement over time. And even though the lodge’s space was quite limited, there were new added variety of components, each made with love, along its journey.

In 2000, However, many political changes and events occurred in Egypt and on the borders of Sinai, which caused a lasting instability in the tourism sector. In 2000, was the Second Palestinian Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada was the second

Palestinian uprising against Israel – a period of intensified Israeli–Palestinian violence. It started in September, when Ariel Sharon made a visit to the Temple Mount, seen by Palestinians as highly provocative; and Palestinian demonstrators, throwing stones at the police, were dispersed by the Israeli army, using tear gas and rubber bullets.³

In 2004, Taba bombings, that killed at least 34 people and wounded more than 150, in two tourist resorts in the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula near the border with Israel on the ninth of October.⁴

In 2005, Sharm el-Sheikh attacks, a series of simultaneous terrorist attacks on July 23, 2005. The Egyptian resort was targeted in the south of Sinai Peninsula. Eighty-eight people, mostly Egyptians died that day, more than 200 people were wounded in the blast.⁵

This series of events made it almost impossible for the tourism sector to be secure in Sinai, on the short and the long term. The people working in this field, are then almost always under the mercy of those attacks and under the pressure of losing their only source of income, a worst-case scenario that cannot be afforded by any family provider at that time, nor at any other.

After many financial setbacks and struggles, Maged had the responsibility of providing for his family’s at least basic needs of food, shelter and education, no matter what the obstacles were. It was then essential, to find another source of income, that is sustainable on the long term, aside from the money earned through touristic activities.

The main priority was to provide food, independent from the market, and by being in a coastal city that overlooks the red sea, fishing was the most reasonable choice. The fish daily product can then be divided,
partially, for regular food consumption, and the surplus can be used in exchange for rice, bread or any other daily needs. As time passed by, Maged started thinking of providing himself and his family with the basic needs of vegetables and fruit, this was the main starting and turning point for Habiba. And going back to Nuweiba’s history in the 80’s, there was an actual farm that grew cantaloupe and exported it to other countries. So, the possibility of having a farm in Habiba was based on a solid ground that Nuweiba’s land was suitable for farming, one way or another. But there was still the problem of having water sufficient and suitable for agriculture.

Year 2007, was the initiation of the Habiba’s organic Farm, planting through a drilled well was the only possibility back then and still the main source now, but new techniques of watering plants were introduced over time.

However, many problems appeared along the initiation phase. One was the problem of Bedouins’ sheep eating the crops of the farm when they went through their regular path. Instead of thinking of it as a problem, Maged found it as an opportunity to bond with the neighbouring Bedouins and to gain their trust. He made a pact to devote 3entire carats from the farm, to feed their sheep, in exchange of converting the sheep’s regular path away from the farm. This way, not only the other crops were secured, but also the Bedouins felt as they were a part of the farm and sort of entitled to protect and support it. After a while, the bonds between Maged’s family and the Bedouins grew stronger. Each time the farm produced new crops, he would share some of the vegetables and fruits with his neighbors.

Despite of all these changes occurring in Habiba, its main source of income was still dependent on tourism. After a while, Maged grew familiar with the concept of Agritourism and believed that there can be a very promising outcome of it, if applied. Not only would it be a possible turnover in Habiba’s overall structure, but can also add a lot to the tourism sector in Sinai. As time has proven, indeed it did.

In 2009, the idea of agritourism was introduced to Habiba’s regular visiting tourists, as a method of crowdsourcing and as a trial to estimate how successfully the idea would be, if implemented. Only then that one of the tourists informed Maged about the WWOOF, an organization that have their members spread over 64 countries. As a volunteer (or WWOOFer) you live alongside your host helping with daily tasks and experiencing life as a farmer. As a host farm you open your home to receive visitors from your own country or abroad who want to connect with the land and support the organic movement. Maged checked the WWOOF website, and instantly registered with Habiba’s organic farm. Later, people would contact Habiba, from all over the world, targeting the farm. As opposed to the last 15 years farm business in Habiba’s beach lodge. The WWOOF participation was an extreme turning point in Habiba’s history. the farm started growing rapidly and widely with The help of the volunteers who arrived in batches of ten (give or take), not only the farm received a boost up, but the gathering of volunteers from all over the world, enriched the intellectual state of Habiba’s family. Aside from the help offered at the farm, the volunteers introduced Habiba to dozens of ideas and studies that if implemented can create a tremendous change. Many of them were visiting Habiba for the learning experience, as it can enrich their knowledge and experience in their respective

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6 The Bedouin is a grouping of nomadic Arab people who have historically inhabited the desert regions in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and the Levant.

7 Agritourism or agrotourism, as it is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch

8 WWOOF is a worldwide movement linking volunteers with organic farmers and growers to promote cultural and educational experiences based on trust and non-monetary exchange, thereby helping to build a sustainable, global community.

9 http://wwoof.net/
fields of study, the varied between marine biology, geology, organic farming, and many others. They didn’t only bring their knowledge to the farm but also introduced a different way of thinking. In addition, in one way or another the volunteers were also serving as a source of tourism attraction through spreading the word in their communities.

Dreams for Habiba started growing wider, the farm grew bigger. Involving the community in the farm and in related lifestyle was one of Habiba’s main goals since its very beginning. However, the community was still in hesitance to accept new changes in their way of living. Maged had a strong belief back then, and still do, that to keep Nuweiba alive, all its community must stick together, side by side: tourism agencies, government, camps, Bedouins...etc.

In 2011, when the Egyptian revolution took place, Nuweiba’s community started acknowledging the importance of food security to sustain their living, despite the influence of any intruding events to the tourism sector in one way or another.

In addition, the farm was accredited; certified as an organic farm with specialists and scientists support. After contacting the Egyptian organization for organic farming (SEKEM) 10, the farm was officially certified. Habiba held the first seminar on organic farming, and invited SEKEM specialists to raise awareness among the community. The seminar was attended by tourists, volunteers, and members from neighbouring communities of Dahab, Taba and St. Catherine.

After the seminar, the community became more engaged with the idea of change, they were more welcoming to the idea of the organic farming and to tourists/volunteers as well. They considered them to be a part of the community, contrary to what they have always been considered as: a walking income source.

The volunteers also made an effort to engage with the community, they didn’t seclude their working at the farm from the neighbouring environment, instead they had a great role in educating children from the community.

In 2013, Habiba Organic Farm signed a 5-year cooperation protocol with the Desert Research Center 11. The centre sends monthly academics to supervise Habiba’s innovative ways of agriculture and its newly introduced seeds to the desert. Which was another turning point to Nuweiba’s community, the number of farms in the area started increasing with the experts’ constant supervision, follow ups and monitoring. After the community started believing in the idea of providing their own food through organic farming, Habiba started working on revitalizing the urban heritage of the Bedouin community that was lost through years of touristic activities. Changes occurred through generations from 1994 till now. The indigenous desert culture was fading away over time, younger generations were completely distracted by the new urban life and technologies.

Therefore, the idea of responsible tourism was introduced to Habiba: agriculture, educational and volunteering tourism. The kind of tourisms that will positively affect, revive and serve Nuweiba. Habiba became the responsible linking point between its inside and the outside.

Since 2015, through years of knowledge transfer to our circle, which became known as Habiba’s community, composed of over 63 traditional farms and 7 organic farms in Nuweiba with a cooperation of three Bedouin tribes; Mzena, Tarabeen and Gablya, all in a range of no

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10 SEKEM Initiative was founded with the vision of sustainable development and giving back to the community. It aims to develop individual, society and environment through a holistic process which integrates ecology, economy, societal and cultural life.

11 The Desert Research Center is almost the oldest scientific research center in Egypt. Conducting research to explore the natural resources in the Egyptian deserts to be utilized at sustainable manner in Agriculture and improving livelihood of local communities.
more than 100 km away from Habiba, all working together to complete each other’s needs.

5 Facilities

5.1 Beach Lodge

Habiba’s beach lodge theme looks like a part of a fairy-tale, each building has its own distinctive style and features, not two rooms are ever the same, yet all are matching somehow. The space in front of each room is made in a different style, colourful paintings, signs and plants on the two sides of the main path. Creative recycled materials are spotted almost everywhere, reused in a colourful creation.

5.1.1 Gates

Habiba’s gate to the beach lodge is very distinctive, its structure is made from concrete and stands two floors high, the ground floor contain spaces for rooms and the second floor is simply a roof.

5.1.2 Rooms

10 rentable rooms, each room in Habiba has different style and building structure than the other, one room may contain authentic oriental furniture,

Another would contain locally grown palm tree leaves, known as Jereed. The creativity and fresh variety between the rooms is quite remarkable. Each also has a different type of decoration, one with recycled materials, another with traditional felted carpets, another with a drawing of a Mandala, each room with a different mood. Rooms are divided into

singular, double and triple bed rooms with bathrooms.
5.1.3 Huts and Sanitary Facility
Huts for volunteers and staff, mainly contains a bed, and a wardrobe. All huts share a sanitary and washing facility amongst them. One of the huts is used as a gallery for handmade products made by Bedouin women.

Public Spaces
1. Spaces on the main path

2. Beach Lodge

3. Beach Tables & Arabian Setting
4. Restaurants
   - Open air restaurant
   - Beach restaurant
   - Indoor restaurant

5. Swings

6. Cafeteria Building & Al-Arqam Bazaar
5.2 Organic Farm

As you walk through Habiba’s farm, it is as if you have passed through a gate from the desert to the countryside. In contrast to the surroundings outside, inside, there are large and small palm trees, olive trees, different types of planted leaves, flowery plants and many other kinds of vegetables and fruits. In addition to a beehive for a 100% fresh and natural honey. The farm layout is defined by some paths and shady pergolas to enjoy an Arabian-made cup of tea or a cooked meal made in traditional ovens built from clay. The farm is divided into two plots: one is the family’s farm to be inherited by Habiba’s family, and the second is made to be in the community’s services.

An interesting feature is the green houses with innovative ways of agriculture and sets of food aligned together in a way that each plant would serve the other, for example a plant that attract certain insects would be planted beside one that repels them, the plants are located according to a studied plan to create an integration between the different species.
5.2.1 Guest House and Old Learning Centre

As you take your first steps into Habiba’s farm, you are overwhelmed with children’s happy voices. The learning centre is the first constructed building in Habiba, it was earlier used as only dorms for the volunteers who came to work at the farm, the idea behind it was to give the community a model for agritourism, where volunteers stay in the house in return of working at the farm. Others would rent the guest house in exchange for staying in the farm, the model represented a sustainable example for agritourism since guests stay for at least 2-3 months paying for their accommodation and travel expenses.

But as time passed by, it was divided into two sections, one is still a guest house for volunteers and the other is a school for children where they can learn about different subjects and have workshops and activities, in addition to learning a craft or knowing the principles of organic farming. The school is now being upgraded, where a new building is about to be inaugurated with an innovative addition to become not only a school, but more of an educational centre.
5.3 EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

5.3.1 Learning Centre
The learning centre is being transferred from the room in the guest house to a larger building. The building was built over several sessions (workshops) using sustainable building techniques and local, amazingly sustainable & green building material.

5.3.2 Palm Tree Land
The land surrounding the learning centre building is dedicated to the Sinai Palm Foundation, which is bringing new means of sustainable income to the local community by encouraging the local population to invest in Medjool date palm trees. Habiba shall continue to organize and coordinate the planting and care of an organic, fruit-producing tree that can provide a steady stream of income for the Habiba Learning Centre years into the future.
6 ACTIVITIES

6.1 FOOD PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURE

During the very first years of Habiba’s farm, food production was mainly about planting the local seeds consumed in Egypt e.g. tomato, cucumber, onions...etc. and the only source of irrigation was drilled wells. The food production in Nuweiba was based on integration between farms rather than competition. Accordingly, farm owners raised the principle of fair trade among each other, where they take turns in planting seeds depending on the agriculture cycle and plan that they set together at the beginning of each year.

Keeping a dynamic flow in the agriculture farming, continuous education and updated knowledge was a necessity to maintain an ongoing progress. Habiba community became an outdoor lab for local and international PhD students and scientists, to experiment new seeds and to introduce new methods of agriculture and irrigation. Some of which have spread widely and others that have proven to be incompatible with Nuweiba’s land.

After a while, the food production sector in Habiba witnessed many recognizable improvements, as it became a source of income rather than just being a method for food security.

6.1.1 Process
New seeds were being planted in Nuweiba’s desert, after going through few trials in Habiba’s farm, the trials are composed of the following;

▪ Trying the seed in several cultivation basins and in different seasons.
▪ Monitoring its characteristics and needs.
▪ Improving and Disseminating

After passing through the trial phase, the seeds are then being introduced to other farms with their best practice farming instructions, where they go through a cycle of planting, monitoring and supervision. Each seed is supported by the following information:

▪ Time of planting
▪ Technical needs
▪ Fertilization plans and tables
▪ Follow up schedules
▪ Harvesting and marketing procedures
6.1.2 New seeds

Below are listed some of Habiba’s newly introduced seeds, that hold in it both health benefits and economic value.

6.1.2.1 Moringa

Moringa, native to parts of Africa and Asia, is the sole genus in the flowering plant family Moringaceae. The name is derived from Murunga, the Tamil word for drumstick. It contains 13 species for tropical and subtropical climates that range in size from tiny herbs to massive trees. Moringa Peregrina is the type of Moringa found in Southern Sinai, Egypt. It was known as the miracle tree in ancient Egypt for its ability to grow under such hard conditions in the desert as it can withstand high salinity rates, and holds many nutritional benefits. Introducing new species of moringa to Habiba was in cooperation with and support of the national research centre in Egypt.

6.1.2.2 Quinoa

A flowering plant, it is grown for its closely related to the edible such as spinach. After harvest, the seeds are processed to remove outer coating that contains bitter-tasting saponins. They are gluten-free. Generally, the seeds are cooked the same way as rice and can be used in a wide range of dishes. The leaves are eaten as a leaf vegetable, much like spinach. When cooked, the nutrient composition is somewhat similar to common cereals like wheat and rice because quinoa supplies a moderate amount of dietary fiber and minerals.

6.1.2.3 Chard

A leafy green vegetable often used in Mediterranean cooking. Chard has highly nutritious leaves making it a popular addition to healthful diets. Fresh young chard can be used raw in salads. Mature chard leaves and stalks are typically cooked sautéed; the bitterness fades with cooking, leaving a refined flavor which is more delicate than that of cooked spinach. Planting chard requires minimum effort and in return a rewarding economical and health values.

6.1.2.4 Kale

Some varieties can reach a height of six or seven feet, while others are compact, symmetrical and of good quality for eating. Many, however, are coarse and indigestible. Most kales are annuals or biennials. Kale seeds resemble those of cabbage in size, form, and color.

6.1.2.5 Mushrooms

Edible mushrooms are the fleshy and edible fruit bodies of several species. They can appear either below ground or above ground where they may be picked by hand. Edibility may be defined by criteria that include absence of poisonous effects on humans and desirable taste and aroma. Edible mushrooms are consumed for their nutritional value and they are occasionally consumed for their supposed medicinal value.

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12 Tamil is a language predominantly spoken by the Tamil people of India and Sri Lanka.
15 The National Research Centre is an Egyptian research body with multiple disciplines including agriculture, chemistry, biology, and genetics.
6.1.3 Manpower

Working on, and managing the farm is a 25-year-old inspiring young man, Ibrahim, one of the Bedouin community is working full time to manage the farm. After years of learning, studying and experimenting, he now holds sessions and assigns tasks to the fellow volunteers arriving at different times of the year. Creating a strong bond of trust and reliability between the community, the farm, and the tourists.

Aside from the farm management, the volunteers are usually studying in the field they are volunteering in. Hence, they are offering as much knowledge as they are gaining from Habiba. Their expertise is being invested in one way or another to bring new ideas and development to Habiba.
6.2 POST-HARVESTING AND MARKETING

6.2.1 Post-Harvesting

The produced food wasn’t only used in cooking or in regular daily uses, but was used in the making of many products, it is considered as both healthy and economically beneficial. For example, tomato was made into sauce, dates were made into pressed dates, and Jam, olive oil was extracted from the olive trees and other vegetables were made into pickles.

Now, the post-harvesting takes place in Habiba’s beach lodge, with the crews and the volunteers help, and facilities are provided. New products are always under development, with the aim of creating products as well as to innovate in the field of post-harvesting. However, after the number of products increased and the number of farms also increased, the need for a post harvesting unit and machinery became essential.

6.2.1.1 Steps

- Market analysis
  Producing new products is always under the effect of the market trials, the trials in Habiba’s case, usually takes place in the lodge or in the surrounding neighbourhoods, and the products that have proven their efficiency are later distributed on a wider scale.

- Packaging
  The packaging takes place at the lodge also, eco-friendly paper bags are used in the packaging, with Habiba’s logo printed on them.

- Transportation
  Transportation is one of the challenges facing Habiba, the food and products are transported using regular vans and there are no vans with refrigerators to keep the food during transportation.
6.2.2 Marketing
Marketing the food in Habiba started with Dahab’s Friday market, it was more of a promotion to the agriculture sector in Nuweiba rather than for selling the food. As a result, now, there are 4 organic farms in Dahab.

Another way for promotion was to distribute the product on Habiba’s neighbours, the first tomato produced from the land were all given away to people living in the neighbourhood. That way they can see and taste the difference between the organic food and the GMO/chemical agriculture food normally found in markets.

Even though the produced quantities from an organic farm is much less than that produced from the traditional farming but on the bright side the organic food for example can stay without refrigeration for days without spoiling, it has more health benefits and tastes much better.

After Dahab, Habiba started spreading and promoting products Sharm El-Sheikh’s and in the capital’s markets.

Some products were being promoted in the Habiba’s beach lodge, which encouraged many of the surrounding camps about seven or eight camps are now buying their food from Habiba’s organic farm.
6.3 WOMAD

Women empowerment in Habiba is mainly through enabling women to sustain their living without resorting to any outside help, and raise economical awareness among Bedouin women, to be able to maintain a life through developing a project or a career.

Womad was created to gain a wider audience for local Bedouin handcraft such as accessories, bags, clothes and much more. The project aims to find an outlet for locally acquired artistry to further empower the community and promote more cross-community and cross-culture interaction.

The objective behind this project is not only to enable Bedouin women to provide for themselves, but also to help provide a sustainable source of funds to allow their children to gain access to education opportunity.

6.3.1 Social Media Page

Habiba created a social media page to promote the products of Womad across a wider region than that of Nuweiba, they now deliver these products across all of Egypt’s 27 governorates. The page is to introduce the Bedouin women to different possible technologies that can help them better promote their products without stepping a foot out of Nuweiba, and so maintain the essence of their culture but with keeping up with the services of modern technology. Habiba also create photo sessions displaying the products using simple elements from Sinai’s captivating environment.

6.3.2 Catalogue

Habiba also created a hardcover printed photo album using the Womad products and a professional photo session to publicize the Womad handcrafted materials in outside exhibits or meetings.
6.3.3 Gallery
Habiba created a gallery, show room at Habiba’s beach lodge, to promote the products with reasonable prices, to be available at all times to all of Habiba’s visitors, tourists and volunteers. The show room lies across the restaurant in one of the palm leaves roofed huts, with authentic decorations, and captive signage. Displaying variety of products that range between handcrafted necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, purses, bags, coasters, keychains, sandals and many others. The gallery was essentially created to promote products for women who can’t leave their houses for medical or age barriers. On the other hand, Habiba also allows the Bedouin women to sell their products on a certain spot on the beach that is customized for them to serve as small community market.
6.4 **Sinai Palm Foundation**

Established and operated by Habiba, the Sinai Palm Foundation is bringing new means of sustainable income to the local community. With a pilot project already underway, the future focus of expanding palm date agriculture in the city of Nuweiba promises to be an exciting development in the years to come. By encouraging the local population to invest in Medjool date palm trees, Habiba will organize and coordinate the planting and care of an organic, fruit-producing tree that can provide a steady stream of income for the Habiba Learning Center years into the future.

Through the project’s unique focus, the Sinai Palm Foundation is connecting a wide network of people from varying cultures in the pursuit of organic, sustainable agriculture, as well as promoting education for the Nuweiba community. People from around the world can sponsor a palm tree, helping the local community while encouraging cultural enrichment and the collaboration of ideas in the process.
7 Knowledge Transfer

7.1 Educational Tourism
Habiba uses the beach lodge in providing education related services such as:

▪ Yoga Camps
▪ Healing through art of cooking
▪ Healing through meditation
▪ Leadership Camps
▪ Sustainable building Workshops

▪ Renewable Energy workshops

In addition to hosting delegates and serving as an open research environment for students and experts.
7.2 **Educational Farming**

To keep a dynamic flow in the agriculture farming, continuous education and updated knowledge was a necessity to maintain an on-going progress. Habiba community became an outdoor lab for local and international PhD students and scientists, to experiment new plant strains and to introduce new methods of agriculture and irrigation, some of which have spread widely, and others that have proven to be incompatible with Nuweiba’s land and ecosystem.

After a while, the food production sector in Habiba witnessed many significant improvements, as it became a source of income rather than just being a method for food security.

7.2.1 **Courses and Workshops**

Habiba made sure to equip farmers with all needed information and facilitation to cultivate their land. Thus, essential learning activities activities: workshops, lectures and training courses covering many topics such as: *(Brief Description)*

- Organic farming principles
- Advanced Organic Farming
- Agriculture Water needs and irrigation technologies
- Useful and harmful pests and pest control
- Responsible management of biological control
- Water management and Water sustainability
- Ecological balance
- Regeneration principles

7.2.2 **Partnering Entities**

Topics were always under the subject of renewal and new ideas that are raised in discussions and debates. The topics were brought up by professionals in their fields from specialized entities, some of which are the following;

- National Research Center in Egypt
- Department of Agriculture, Ain Shams University in Suez Canal University
- Desert Research center
- Agriculture Research Center

Constant research and studies have helped Habiba in introducing new plant species to Nuweiba’s land in addition to many improvements in irrigation technologies, and development in the original traditional concept of agriculture. Agritourism became one of the community’s main goals after the tremendous effort made by Habiba for more than 10 years.
7.3 **Children Education**

The community children are invited to get involved in the farm and to be taught the importance of producing healthy food. In virtue of this, many of the activities that the school run, involve subjects that raise children’s awareness of social Responsibility and caring for one’s environment.

The idea behind the Centre is to provide children with a place in which they can be free to interact with one another and express and pursue their interests. And learn about the importance to have a positive and practical environment in which they can explore the world, learn and develop their skills. The school is also keen on teaching children how to manage resources efficiently and how to reduce waste. It is essential for children to understand that the world they live in, is not only for them, but for the generations to come as well.

The Children Community Learning Centre was initiated in 2011, a room inside the guest house in Habiba’s organic farm was customized in a way to teach the community’s Children the principles of farming. So that they would get familiar with it as they grow older, and accordingly transfer the acquired knowledge to the community.

After a while, children started meeting tourists who came as volunteers from all over the world, and so came the idea of teaching the children more than farming, several classes of math, English, sciences...etc. The school is devoted to the concept of Applicable Education. Geometry is taught through Lego and Meccano, Biology through observing plants and animals, math through functionally applied methods (using recycled materials).

The learning centre is now considered as an after-school program for children, as if they’re going to a club but with rules, art and fun games used for education. The learning centre is managed by Lorena, Maged’s wife, who kept the place full of life and joy for more than 7 years and still counting. When the number of children increased, Lorena created a daily schedule in which children were grouped in different days, based on their age, 2 groups, one aged from 5-8 and another from 8-12, each attend 3 days per week.

The learning centre resources are being supplied using Habiba’s beach lodge and through an international initiative called Pack for a Purpose\(^{18}\), an initiative that allows travellers to make a lasting impact on the community at their travel destinations. Travelers can help through saving just a few kilos of space in their

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suitcases and take supplies for area schools or medical clinics in need.

7.3.1 Workshops
Besides regular classes, the learning centre mainly focuses on discovering children’s talents through art, and then develop each child’s character based on it. In addition, there are several workshops that are art based but depends on the experience brought by the volunteers on the farms, they usually come up with activities that they are familiar with in their hometowns or based on their fields of experience. For example, recycling workshops using available materials; plastic bottles, beach stones, wood, brick...etc.

7.3.2 Methods
The learning centre curriculum is constantly under updates based on the changing knowledge acquired in this area. Several techniques were being tried to develop education among them were:

- Inter-Sensory Learning
- Montessori
- Applied learning projects
- Transformational teaching projects and group work.

7.4 Women Education
Habiba doesn’t only participate in the education of young Bedouin girls in the learning centre, but also makes sure to help in educating them about their own traditional craftmanship. The women in Nuweiba are known for their oriental women accessories and weaved carpets. Habiba helps the young girls in knowing about new felting, weaving and sewing techniques, in addition to enlightening them with new design ideas that match the current trends.

Habiba also supports the women whenever possible with the required tools and materials needed for their work but with prices that are much more than what they can originally afford, such as sewing machines.
Initiation
Tourism Oriented Model

1. Tourism Oriented
   - Environment
   - Community

Current
All tourism activities Oriented toward serving the community

2. All tourism activities
   - Economic support through Womad
   - Women
   - Knowledge Sewing Classes
   - Beach Lodge activities
   - Men
   - Economics support
   - Through Farming

Facilities

Knowledge Children
   - School
   - Building Character through Art

Volunteers

Environment

Community
9 Recommendations for Follow up

This report mainly focuses on the general structure of Habiba’s community regardless of any SWOT analysis. It is based on Maged’s storytelling, online coverage and a short visit we had to Habiba. More detailed information regarding Habiba’s current situation and activities is missing. The following are a compilation of the missing data and what they can be used for.

1) Context
   - Environment: Collective data regarding the natural aspects of Nuweiba environment in terms of land, temperature, main features...etc.
   - Market Analysis: on the surrounding tourism activities and facilities in Nuweiba.

2) History
   - Built Environment: the most given information and focus was on the history related part. However, Buildings’ evolution with pictures and techniques if elaborated can be of great addition to the history of Habiba. All rooms in the beach lodge were built on different phases but with a carefully studied plan. However, it was no ordinary construction, each of Habiba’s buildings were designed and built by different groups of working innovators in the field of sustainable development of the built environment. Walls and ceilings were made with wood, clay, straw and many other materials, Habiba’s beach lodge was and still considered as a raw studying environment for architectural innovation over time.

3) Facilities
   - Beach Lodge: The previously made study on Habiba’s Urban status should be added and further developed to the level of SWOT analysis and detailed plan for the possible means of intervention and timeline.
   - Organic Farm: a similar urban study should be made on the guest house, pottery buildings and the many unused spaces in the farm.

4) Activities
   - Farming: A story telling of a day at the farm volunteers and workers point of view.
   - listing other farms in Nuweiba using descriptive writing and photos.
   - Scientific description of the agriculture process inside the farm supported with pictures.
   - Profiles of working volunteers their country of residence, fields of studies and their PhD’s or masters’ topics if available.
   - Post harvesting: doing a research on the needs and applications of a post harvesting unit. Determining needed spaces, divisions, action and budget.
   - Women Empowerment: developing a model with a clear vision that integrates all women approaching activities from childhood, youth to supporting wives and widows. In both the community and in general.

5) Education
   - Course catalogue detailed description of courses and teaching methods can be collected in a Catalogue based on the target group (Men, Women, Children, Youth) and age range.
   - Services should be defined between community educating services, general youth education and Edu tourism activities

6) Tourism
   - The touristic activities seem to be scattered all over the community serving activities at the beach lodge, the farm and the educational centre. In Habiba’s business model, tourism can be more adjusted.