



THE GERMAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO (GUC)

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Zusammenfassung: Die Deutsche Universität in Kairo (GUC)

Diese Geschichte erzählt von den Vorbereitungen zur Gründungsphase, der Eröffnung und dem Betrieb der Deutschen Universität in Kairo (German University in Cairo, GUC), einem privaten Unternehmen, das auf eine rund zwanzigjährige Erfolgsgeschichte zurückblickt. Anfang 2001 fiel die Entscheidung, die GUC unter der Schirmherrschaft der beiden deutschen staatlichen Universitäten Stuttgart und Ulm zu gründen, mit voller Unterstützung des Ministeriums für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst (MWK), Baden-Württemberg, Deutschland. Die GUC wurde am 5. Oktober 2003 für die ersten 900 Studierenden mit einem Ägyptisch-Deutschen Staatsakt feierlich eröffnet, durch den ägyptischen Staatspräsidenten Hosni Mubarak und den deutschen Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder. Fünf Jahre nach ihrer Gründung wurde die GUC bereits die führende Privatiniversität in Ägypten. Derzeit sind ca. 13.000 Studierende eingeschrieben und mehr als 25.000 Absolventen (Bachelor, Master und PhD) wurden bisher an der GUC ausgebildet und haben hier hervorragende Positionen in Ägypten und anderen Ländern erhalten – zur Freude von ihnen selbst, ihren Familien und letztlich der GUC. Die GUC ist das größte und erfolgreichste transnationale Bildungsprojekt (TNB) des Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes (DAAD) – in 2015 waren 42% aller Studierenden in TNB Angeboten an der GUC eingeschrieben.

Abstract

This story tells the preparations for the foundation phase, the opening, and operation of the German University in Cairo (GUC), a private enterprise looking back on a success story of about twenty years. Early 2001 the decision was made to establish the GUC under the patronage of the two German public universities Stuttgart and Ulm, with full support of the Ministry of Higher Education and Arts (MWK), BadenWurttemberg, Germany. GUC was opened on 5. October 2003 for the first 900 students, through an EgyptianGerman state inauguration ceremony, by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt Hosni Mubarak, and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Five years after the opening GUC became already the leading private university in Egypt. Actually, about 13,000 students are enrolled and more than 25,000 graduates (Bachelors, Masters and PhDs) have been educated by GUC and got excellent positions in Egypt and other countries – for the pleasure of themselves, their families and finally GUC. The GUC is the biggest and most successful project of transnational education of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) – in 2015 about 42% of all students in German Transnational Education Projects were enrolled in GUC.

Keywords

German University, Public Universities, Transnational Education

Introduction

Why are German universities involved abroad? Why Egypt in particular? Was Bologna not enough of a challenge? Similar questions have to be answered again and again. Especially today, in the global competition for the best brains, German universities are particularly challenged. The example of the founding of the German University in Cairo (GUC) shows that courage, team spirit and trust even in difficult times are particularly rewarded.

But how did it all begin? It all began in November 2000 with a telephone call from my thenrector colleague at the University of Ulm, Hans Wolff, who announced that a young Egyptian polymer physicist, who had completed his doctorate and habilitation in Ulm, would be visiting me the next day: Dr. Ashraf Mansour. Hans Wolff told me that Ashraf Mansour would like to establish a German University in Cairo and therefore needed reliable

partners, besides the University of Ulm another big university like Stuttgart or Karlsruhe - I should just listen to him. Ashraf Mansour demonstrated to me through a ppt presentation his idea to build up a private university in Cairo according to the Humboldtian principle, with initially mainly technical subjects. He not only inspired me as a person, but also fascinated me with his idea, but it was also clear to me that an enthusiastic rector cannot enter into such a project so easily. A rector first needs the approval of the rectorate, the senate and the university Board of Trustees (BoT) (supervisory board), and then the willingness of some colleagues to support him in this mission. However, this was not quite so easy at the University of Stuttgart! The Rector had only been in office for a few weeks, the BoT had not yet had its constituent meeting, and there was a thoroughly critical response from some of his professorial colleagues.

I got an invitation to accompany the BadenWuerttemberg Minister of Science and Arts, Klaus von Trotha to Cairo in December 2000- unfortunately I was unable to attend for official reasons. At this meeting, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Embassy in Cairo, in addition to the state government of BW, assured their interests for the GUC endeavor. In Stuttgart, I tried to make clear the reasons for such a mission, with which I could also convince the committees of the University of Stuttgart: There were: (1) export of some Stuttgart curricula to Cairo, (2) admission of the best GUC bachelors to the English language master's programs in Stuttgart, (3) admission of PhD students in Stuttgart, trained at GUC, (4) intercultural programs, in the form of lectures and projects, (5) possible joint bachelor's and master's programs (double degree programs), and (6) close cooperation in research and development through personnel exchanges (secondments).

After many discussions within the University of Stuttgart and clear votes, a first Letter of Intent (LoI)¹ could be signed on February 5, 2001, with the following content: "The University of Stuttgart is willing to establish the German University in Cairo together with the University of Ulm, with five faculties: Information Technology, Media Science and Technology, Management, Pharmacy and Biotechnology, and Materials Science and Technology. The cooperation will take place: (1) in equal sponsorship of the two Universities of Ulm and Stuttgart, (2) the GUC is financed by the Egyptian side, (3) the language of instruction is English, with German as a foreign language to be offered every semester at the GUC, (4) the curricula are reviewed by both sides for compliance with international standards and with regard to the requirements of German and Egyptian academic degrees, (5) joint programs (double degree programs) can be carried out, with certificates from both universities involved, (6) the Universities of Ulm and Stuttgart help to build up technical knowhow as well as teaching staff, according to available free capacities, (7) the Universities of Ulm and Stuttgart help to ensure the quality of teaching at the GUC, and (8) the Egyptian side ensures the quality of the students to be trained." This LoI was accompanied by a great leap of faith, not only for the Rector, but for the whole project, which at that time was completely uncertain.

My first trip to Cairo took place in March 2001 in order to meet other members of the founding Mansour family and to observe the local conditions. During the conversations I was able to learn about the motives of other founders (industrialists, public figures), who all emphasized the importance of a German university for their country and the young generations. After this trip, the GUC Academic Founding Committee (GUC AFC) was established to jointly take all the steps regarding the establishment of the new university: these were the three scientists Ashraf Mansour, Hans Wolff and Dieter Fritsch.

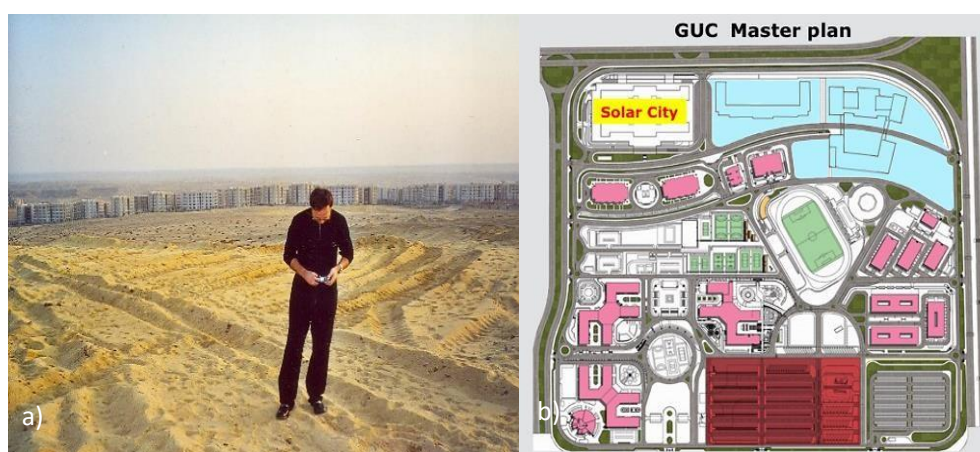


Figure 1: The GUC building site inspected by D. Fritsch (October 2001) (a) and the GUC Master Plan (2015) (b).

This committee exists until these days, as well as the trust and respect among the members! At that time, the location in New Cairo had not yet been finally selected; a site of more than 60 hectares was being sought. In the summer of 2001, the time had come and we were able to visit the building site in southeastern New Cairo a piece of desert on the edge of the settlements (Fig. 1a), but 630,000 square meters (63 ha) in size, fully developed and

¹ Letter of Intent University of Stuttgart, of February 5, 2001

offered for a preferential price by the Egyptian state. From then on, a GUC Master Plan could be prepared, which had to be adapted again and again to the respective development situation. However, we still had a long way to go to reach the expansion stage in 2015 (Fig. 1b).

The Foundation Phase

In order to establish the GUC, many documents had to be prepared. These included a convincing concept of GermanEgyptian relations in the field of science, a business plan, as well as the exact names and contents of the bodies, faculties and courses of study to be established. In addition, there were descriptions of the necessary infrastructures needed, such as laboratories, Internet connection, language training and much more. Since we wanted to found a German university, German university structures, such as Rectorate, Senate (University Council), Board of Trustees (Supervisory Council) were the guideline, just as the Humboldtian principle of unity of research and teaching was to be realized in the study programs. In Germany at that time only a few universities had followed the Bologna recommendation, i.e. we had to convert the contents of the German diploma programs into Bachelor and Master programs for the establishment of the GUC, which was not an easy task. The first GUC employees were hired and the basement of the Mansour family home in Nasr City, Cairo, was converted for office space. In the summer of 2001, the GUC AFC was able to hand over all documents in a package of about at least one linear meter of A4 folders to the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Science in Cairo this was a first important milestone in the foundation phase. In September 2001 we already received a preliminary commitment from the Egyptian Ministry of High Ed and Science to pursue the foundation of the GUC a first success.

At this point, I would like to remind you of the terrorist attacks of the AlQaeda network on September 11, 2001. I was on a business trip and holding cooperation talks with Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, when I saw the destruction of the World Trade Center, New York City, USA, on television. At that moment, GUC became even more important to me as a kind of "intercultural bridge of research and teaching" to the Islamic world in Egypt. During the first discussions about the foundation of the GUC, two important points were already in the foreground: no prioritization of a religion and political neutrality. After my return to Stuttgart, further doubters could be convinced of the importance of the foundation of the GUC.

In the fall of 2001, the following colleagues from the University of Stuttgart were available to assist me in establishing the GUC: Jens Weitkamp (Chemistry and willing to run for German Founding Rector/Vice President GUC), Paul Kuehn (Electrical Engineering, potential Founding Dean Faculty of Information Sciences), Erich Zahn (Business Administration and potential Founding Dean Faculty of Management), Eberhard Roos (Material Sciences and potential Founding Dean Faculty of Material Sciences and Technologies) and HansDieter Görtz (Biology and potential Coordinator and Advisor Faculty of Pharmacy and Biotechnology). In addition, we were able to hire Bettina Braeuninger, who was financed by the DAAD and was responsible in the future for communications with Cairo, in the "International Affairs (IA)" office at the University of Stuttgart altogether another important milestone in the founding phase of the GUC.

On October 21, 2001, the laying of the foundation stone of the GUC was celebrated on the building site in New Cairo (Fig. 2).



Figure 2: The day before the GUC groundbreaking ceremony on the construction site. From left to right: Ashraf Mansour, GUC Prime Founder, Reinhold Luecker, IA Uni Ulm, David Phillips, IA Uni Stuttgart, Bettina Braeuninger, IA Uni Stuttgart, Hans Wolff, Uni Ulm, and Abdel Fattah Mansour, Civil Engineer, Planner and Builder of the GUC (a). Cutting of the GUC foundation stone cake by professors Hans Wolff, Dieter Fritsch and Ashraf Mansour (from left to right), on October 21, 2001 (b).

There was already a preliminary planning for the first construction phase of the GUC, which was presented by the Stuttgart office HWP Planungsgesellschaft mbH. In the end, however, this planning was replaced and realized by the plans of civil engineer Abdel Fattah Mansour the brother of Ashraf Mansour and Co-founder of the GUC. Abdel Fattah Mansour had worked for many years in Saudi Arabia and implemented public buildings in a leading position. He was now highly motivated to plan and build the various sections of the GUC. This was also a stroke of luck for the implementation of the GUC concept. It remains to be mentioned that even today twenty years later he is thankfully still available for the final expansion of the GUC. At the beginning of February 2002, the Egyptian cabinet gave the green light for the realization of the GUC. A short time later, on February 11, 2002, the Presidential Decree 27/2002² for the establishment of the GUC was issued, which contained many details regarding the establishment of the committees and faculties and is still valid today even though in the meantime the political spring of 2011 has changed many things in Egypt.

This political decision cleared the way for the construction and establishment of the German University in Cairo everyone involved was very pleased. Now the building permit for the construction of the first section of the GUC could be submitted. Decree 27/2002 stipulated that of 21 seats on the Supervisory Board, a maximum of 7 should be occupied by the German side. In addition, the vicechairman was to be a German personality of science, also there was to be a German founding rector who was to be appointed as vicepresident of the GUC. In the constituent meeting of the German members of the GUC Board of Trustees (BoT) in Mannheim, Germany, on May 17, 2002, the Chairman of the BoT, Ashraf Mansour, was confirmed and the GUC President, Mahmoud Abdel Kader, was elected as well as Jens Weitkamp, Univ. Stuttgart, was appointed as Vice President for Academic Affairs and as German Founding Rector these elections were promptly confirmed by the Egyptian members of the GUC BoT. The newly elected GUC President took office on September 1, 2002, and the BoT held its first meeting with all members in Cairo on October 3, 2002.

In December 2002, the building permit for the first construction phase was issued and the new building could begin (Fig. 3). For a quick implementation, a steel skeleton construction was chosen, which had to be wellfounded due to the building mass. The final planning and implementation was in the capable hands of engineer Abdel Fattah Mansour, who, thanks to his decades of experience, tackled this first construction phase with the engineers and construction workers entrusted to him.

In the meantime, an agreement was reached with the Egyptian President's State Office to open the GUC with a ceremonial EgyptianGerman act of state at the beginning of October 2003, with the participation of the Egyptian President and the German Chancellor i.e. there was a deadline. The auditorium complex A and the entire block B (about 25,000 square meters of floor space) were completed in only ten months (Fig. 4) this was close to a miracle.



Figure 3: Construction drawing of building complexes A and B in the south west (a)
Foundation of building complex A (b)
Steel skeleton construction building complex B (c)

² Presidential Decree 27/2002, issued on February 11, 2002

When buildings are constructed at universities in Germany, it usually takes about two years from "breaking the ground" to moving in! For the German University in Cairo, a piece of desert was transformed into a thriving scientific landscape. For all involved it was an experience to see how every day the dream to complete the GUC could be realized more and more. At the end of September 2003, the time had come

the two building complexes A and B had been completed, and at least from the outside everything looked quite professional, even if there were still small things to be done on the inside. The official inauguration was now scheduled for October 5, 2003. Three days before the inauguration, security precautions required the construction of a

helipad right next to Building Complex B, so that the Egyptian president and the German chancellor could fly in by helicopter for the opening. This was also provided without further ado.



Figure 4: Auditorium complex A (foreground) and building complex B (behind) - completion end of September 2003

The GUC Opening Ceremony

On October 5, 2003, the time had finally come: The GUC was officially opened by an act of state, in the presence of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. The Prime Minister of BadenWuerttemberg, Erwin Teufel, and the Federal Minister of Higher Education and Science, Edelgard Bulmahn, were also present. About 900 students were enrolled for all of us this was a huge vote of confidence from the families, coupled of course with a great sense of expectation. Extreme security precautions had to be taken for the opening ceremony, in coordination with the Egyptian State Security Service. For this reason, the auditorium in building complex B was equipped with seating, under the guidance of security personnel, and a bullet-proof lectern was set up. In the adjacent room, there was seating for the politicians to greet each other and exchange a few words. A full day program had been prepared for the opening ceremony, with highranking speakers from politics, science and industry.



Figure 5: The opening of the GUC: Helipad (a); Parking (b); Banners Unis Ulm, Stuttgart and GUC (c); Glas facade Block B (d)

On the morning of October 5, 2003, the entire German delegation was picked up by two buses from the JW Marriott Hotel, New Cairo, to bring us to the GUC on time. In the confusion of the many streets in New Cairo, both drivers had lost their way and none of the German delegation was able to help, as everyone had to leave their cell phones at the hotel for security reasons. Suddenly the two buses were standing on a garbage dump and the drivers did not know where to go. By chance, a local came by and was able to navigate the bus drivers accordingly. We arrived just in time for the opening ceremony (Fig. 5).

Most of the invited members of the Universities of Stuttgart and Ulm as well as the BW Ministry of Science had only ever heard reports from the two rectors Hans Wolff and Dieter Fritsch now the GUC could also be



Figure 6: The opening ceremony of the GUC - Invited guests (a) and (b)

experienced physically (Fig. 6). Everyone was enthusiastic and the two rectors were congratulated from all sides no one had expected anything like this.

The ceremony began with the two national anthems. After the welcome by Ashraf Mansour, the speeches of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder followed. Afterwards the BW Prime Minister Erwin Teufel spoke. The Federal Republic of Germany saw in the GUC a connecting cultural element between Germany and Egypt, and Egypt wished a

very close cooperation in science and research with Germany. Unfortunately, the gift from the FRG to the GUC was somewhat meager: only five scholarships for a stay of GUC students in Germany were announced by the Chancellor. On the other hand, MP Erwin Teufel was able to hand over a check with Euro 200.000, mainly to build up the GUC library. But the meager gift from the FRG was later made up for long ago by the longstanding commitment of the DAAD!

At the end of the ceremony, the new GUC President Mahmoud Abdel Kader was presented with the chain of office by Hans Wolff and me. As we stood on the podium, Ashraf Mansour and we received an invitation from the Egyptian president to attend the state banquet in the presidential palace. Afterwards, everything happened very quickly: the politicians said goodbye and got into a motorcade of about 60 vehicles, we were also able to get into one of the last vehicles of the Egyptian state security. At a fast pace we went to the presidential palace all streets were closed and snipers were positioned along the streets on the roofs.

In the anteroom of the presidential palace, we were served a cocktail and were able to talk in a relaxed manner with MP Erwin Teufel and Minister Edelgard Bulmahn after all, the most important things were behind us. Afterwards, we were invited to the banquet room and seated accordingly. Table speeches by the two highranking politicians followed and everyone was happy about the successful opening of the GUC. After the banquet was

closed, the three of us from the GUC AFC were asked to go outside. There was no car to be seen far and wide. Since we also had to hand in our cell phones in the morning, we went in search of a cab through the streets of Heliopolis and took it back to the GUC in the late afternoon.

The originally planned allday opening program was reduced to a minimum by our absence, since no one knew where the three main actors were. The main thing, however, was that the GUC had now been ceremoniously opened and the study program could begin! Hans Wolff and I were overjoyed and relaxed in the two armchairs previously occupied by the Egyptian President and the German Chancellor (Fig. 7).



Figure 7: Hans Wolff and Dieter Fritsch in the chairs of the Egyptian President and the German Chancellor

The Further Expansion of the GUC

With the opening on October 5, 2003, the most important milestone in the history of the GUC was completed. From now on, the university's everyday life in science and research and in academic teaching began. We had the great fortune to be able to reorganize everything from the very beginning: Admission procedures and enrollments, language training in Arabic (for the German teachers), in German (for the students and GUC staff) and English (for GUC students and GUC staff), the curricula with their quality assurance measures (accreditations), laboratories, IT infrastructure, the library, and much more. DaF (German as a Foreign Language) has been a major concern from the beginning, also to enable GUC students to get a feeling of living German culture and to study abroad in Germany. Therefore, the GUC German Center was established, where today more than 5,500 students can learn or deepen the German language at the same time (Fig. 8). The German Center currently employs about 40 language teachers and is the largest German language center in the world. Levels A1 and A2 are mandatory for all students and their language competencies must be demonstrated by each GUC student for graduation. The B1 and B2 qualifications are taken by about 30% of the students and C1 and C2 can also be taken if required. The DAAD in particular has attached great importance to the mastery of the German language from the very beginning and helped to establish this center. I still remember very well the sometimes heated discussions between Dr. Christian Bode (former DAAD Secretary General) and Ashraf Mansour each of them ultimately wanted the best for the GUC. In summary, GUC students graduate with three

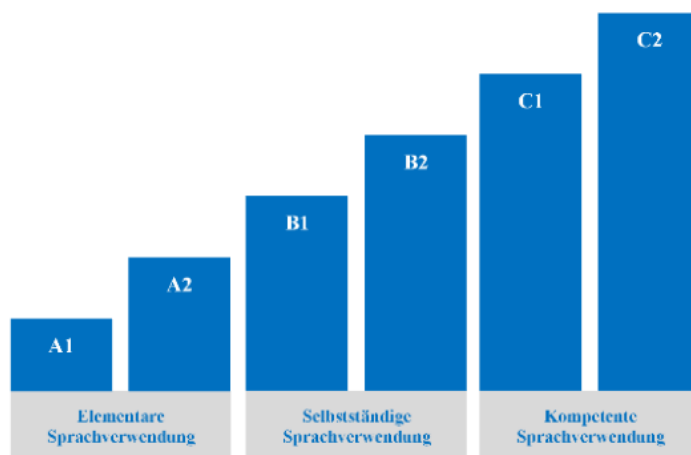


Figure 8: The GUC German Center

language skills: Arabic (native language), English (GUC language of instruction), and German (compulsory A1 and A2; many are also proficient in B1 and B2).

Another important measure was the digitization of applications, aptitude tests and selection procedures right from the start. In this way, the GUC created a structure that one would have liked to see at a state university in Germany at that time. To this end, it was first necessary to set up completely shielded IT equipment (intranet) (Fig. 9), consisting of a wired and wireless infrastructure. This IT equipment allowed online applications, the digitization of aptitude tests (language, language skills, etc.), and the creation of a new test system (language skills, general knowledge)

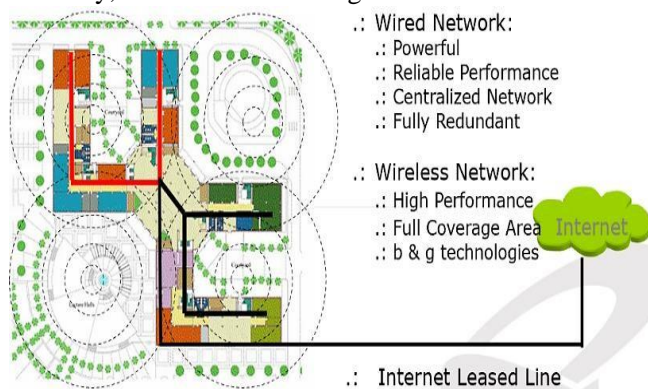


Figure 9: GUC-Intranet für die beiden

and integration into the GUC financial system over the years it has been constantly updated and brought up to the latest technical standards. Right at the beginning, word had spread that there was excellent research and teaching as well as infrastructure at the GUC for this reason, the best high school graduates applied and still apply. The three German schools (Gymnasium with Abitur) in 2003 have now become ten. The Egyptian Thanawyya Amma degree is roughly comparable to the German Abitur. For this reason, GUC can select the best students to be admitted from a large pool (out of 9 or 10 applicants, only one is admitted). This selection process is divided into: Application Prescreening Aptitude Tests Admission Notice.

The GUC is a private university and therefore has to finance itself through its income. Tuition fees are far below other private universities in Egypt, such as the American University in Cairo (AUC), which was founded



Figure 10: Distribution of GUC Scholarships in Egypt

back in 1926. In just five years, GUC has already surpassed AUC: more students and a higher ranking in Egypt. To enable top students from low-income families to study at GUC, scholarships have been offered since its opening, and can be claimed on a sliding scale depending on academic performance. An overview of the 100% scholarships is provided in Figure 10. This picture also demonstrates the popularity of the students, who come from all over Egypt.

In addition, there are many 75%, 50% and 25% scholarships. In total, slightly more than 50% of all students currently receive scholarships or other financial support from the GUC.

In this way, the GUC also fulfills its social and societal obligation to guarantee and enable excellent university education for all.

Since most of the students come from the greater Cairo area Cairo now has a population of more than 22 million a pickup and return service was provided from the outset. For this purpose, German Mercedes buses were procured, all of which are on the road in the greater Cairo area with large GUC logo lettering (Fig. 11). Student dormitories have been set up for students who do not live in Cairo. At fixed times in the morning and afternoon, students as well as GUC staff are picked up and dropped off at bus stops distributed throughout the greater Cairo area. This provides a safe transport service in a country where public transport is scarce and private transport has taken on striking characteristics.

In March 2005, I invited the then Chairman of the Stuttgart University BoT, Professor Berthold Leibinger, Chairman of the Board of Trumpf GmbH & Co. KG, Ditzingen, Germany, to accompany me on a trip to the GUC. He was equally enthusiastic about the developments on site and thought of this as a platform to make Trumpf better known in the Arab world as well.

I have invited and accompanied many delegations from Germany to Cairo. A must-see was always the visit to the pyramids of Giza (Fig. 12). In my more than 120 trips to Egypt for the GUC, I must have been to this beautiful vantage point more than 20 times!

During the discussions with Berthold Leibinger, it then turned out that GUC was willing to cooperate with Trumpf and to provide suitable premises for equipping with Trumpf machines and tools (Fig. 13). A short time later,



Figure 11: GUC feeder buses (a) and bus parking



Figure 12: The Pyramids of Giza



Figure 13: Discussions with Professor Berthold Leibinger about equipping the GUC with Trumpf machines and tools. Foreground left: Prof. Berthold Leibinger and GUC President Mahmoud Abdel Kader, Foreground right: Essam Hamouda (GUC Managing Director), Prof. Ashraf Mansour and Dr. Ihab Ahmed

we therefore came up with the idea of setting up an industrial park on the GUC campus. This park was to be equipped with the most modern machines not only from Trumpf, but also from DMG (Deckel Maho Gildemeister, now DMG Mori), and Felder Holzmaschinen, which had also expressed an interest in a stronger presence in Egypt.

The mechatronics manufacturer FESTO had already set up a mechatronics laboratory at the GUC this was available to GUC students as well as for training potential FESTO users from Egypt and neighboring countries as early as 2005.



Figure 14: Laying of the foundation stone of the GUC Industrial Park on June 6, 2006

On June 6, 2006, the foundation stone of the GUC Industrial Park (Fig. 14) was laid by the then Federal Minister of Higher Education and Science, Annette Schavan. This meant that another important infrastructure could be implemented on the GUC campus.

Completion took place just seven months later, and when we organized a special visit program for Mr. and Mrs. Leibinger in April 2007, the Trumpf hall (No. 2 in Fig. 14 right) was already equipped with machines. The GUC Industrial Park was not only set up 15 years ago with the machines that were



Figure 15: Equipment of the GUC Industrial Park. Hall 2 (Trumpf) (a), Hall 3 (DMG) (b), Hall 4 (Felder) (c) and the FESTO Mechatronic Lab (d)

current at the time, but is still one of the most modern industrial parks in Egypt today. The guiding idea at the time was not only to implement the Humboldtian principle in teaching and research, but also to provide state-of-the-art industrial facilities to prepare students for practical work – a novelty in university education, not only in Egypt.

This industrial park has not only persuaded other German companies to cooperate with the GUC, such as ZEISS, Walter, IHA Hydraulik, but also chambers of industry and commerce, such as the Stuttgart Region Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Arab Organization for Industrialization (Fig. 15).

Currently, 72 degree programs (Bachelor and Master) are offered at the German University in Cairo. At the opening in October 2003, there were just 25 Bachelor programs. From the beginning, the GUC was also granted the right to award doctorates and can therefore train its own young academics. In 2006, the Applied Sciences & Arts department was opened, with courses in product design, media design and graphic design,

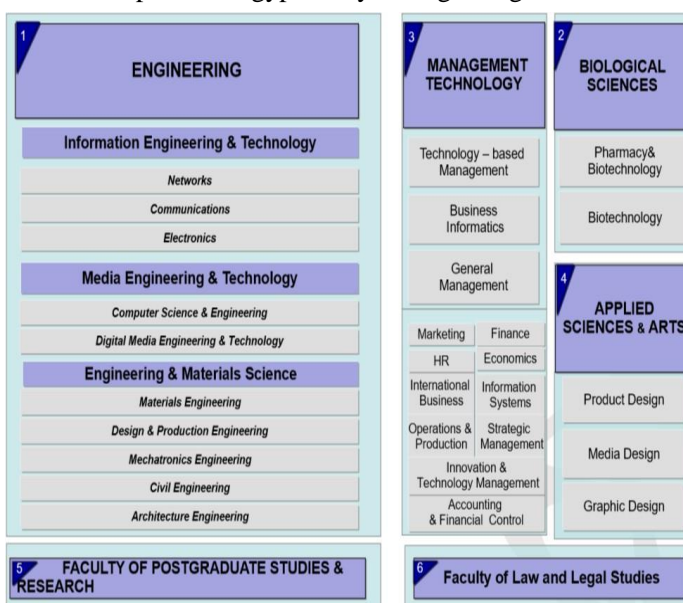


Figure 16: Study programs of the GUC

followed by civil engineering in 2009 and architecture and urban planning in 2010. Since 2016, there has also been a bachelor's program in law (Fig. 16). All bachelor and master programs are accredited by the German accreditation agency ACQUIN (Accreditation, Certification and Quality Insurance Institute) only the law program is still in the quality assurance waiting loop.

For about ten years, more than 2000 new students have enrolled at GUC each year and a similar number successfully completed their studies. Therefore, the GUC has a very low dropoute rate compared to German state universities. This is due to the extensive support in the form of lectures, tutorials, exercises and internships.

This very high demand for studying at the GUC has also required a further expansion of the existing premises. In 2006, building complex C with about 30,000 square meters of floor space was completed and in 2014 building complex D with about 36,000 square meters of floor space. In addition, the sports areas have been available since 2005 to enable students to engage in extracurricular activities on campus. Fig. 17 provides an overview of the structural development of the current campus.

Since 2013, I have been regularly giving lectures in my field of geodesy and geo information science (GIS) to students of architecture and civil engineering, and I am pleased to see how the structural infrastructure is accepted by the students (Fig. 18).



Figure 17: Top: Building complex B and C left, part of complex D right; Center: Building complex B (left) and C (right, in the foreground Outdoor Lounges); Below: Building complex D



Figure 18: The GUC Campus since 2014 – during daytime (a) and at night below block D (b)

The first generation of founding deans and cooperation partners from the patron universities of Stuttgart and Ulm could gratefully and successfully be replaced by a new generation. From the University of Stuttgart, the following professors are currently available as cooperation partners: Helmut Bott (Architecture and Urban Planning), Balthasar Novak (Civil Engineering), Michael Joerg Oesterle (Management), Kurt Rothermel (Information Sciences) and Siegfried Schmauder (Materials Sciences).

At this point, we would like to remind you of an important document³ that was countersigned on December 8, 2010 by the then Minister of Science and Arts of BadenWuerttemberg, Prof. Peter Frankenberg, and Prof. Ashraf Mansour, and which guarantees mutual understanding for the safeguarding and further development of the GUC. Since the political spring of 2011 in the Arab world, which did not stop at Egypt and caused political instability for at least three years, the GUC had to justify itself again and again to new political decision makers. Here, too, political decisions

had to be questioned again and again with attentiveness and great skill and not accepted without further ado.

³ Gemeinsame Erklärung des Ministeriums für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst Baden-Württemberg und der German University in Cairo (GUC), of December 8, 2010

There are now about 13,000 students enrolled at GUC, and more than 25,000 have graduated. This is a great result: for the students, who can prepare for their professional life in an academic institution with excellent facilities, for the graduates and their families, for whom the GUC certificate provides access to attractive jobs in Egypt and abroad, as well as for the GUC itself, which has thus become a top university in Egypt. For the DAAD, enrolled GUC students represent more than 40% of German transnational educational opportunities supported by funding from Germany. By a stroke of luck, the GUC was able to acquire a large part and premises of the Borsigwerke in the west of Berlin (Reinickendorf) in 2011 and set up a branch there (GUC Campus Berlin), which was ceremoniously opened on January 28, 2013 by the then Federal Minister of Higher Education and Science Annette Schavan and other political decision makers (Fig. 19)



Figure 19: Official opening of the GUC Campus Berlin on January 28, 2013

Thus, the GUC had a campus in Germany and once again demonstrated how important its relationship with the FRG is. This campus has been constantly expanded and offers GUC students in Cairo the opportunity to apply for a "Berlin Semester". In the 2018/19 winter semester, more than 700 GUC students stayed there and were trained in their fields by GUC professors, GUC technical assistants (TAs) and German university professors. One cannot imagine what such a stay does for the students: All of them receive a Schengen visa from the German Embassy and can therefore travel freely through Europe (before and after the Corona pandemic). The students, many of whom live at home in Cairo, experience a new independence and a new, positive world view, which leads to new motivations and careers.

The GUC Berlin campus is also home to a newly founded German International University (GIU), which applied to the Berlin Senate in 2018 and was able to accept its first students in 2019. Hopefully, GIU will develop as a new and strong partner in Germany for GUC and will have a similar success story as GUC in a few years.

Conclusion

The facts and stories gathered here about the founding of the German University in Cairo (GUC) prove that courage, mutual trust, respect and willingness to take risks have been rewarded to a high degree. The initially very abstract project of founding a new university, privately financed and oriented towards the German university education system with the Humboldtian educational ideal, was successfully implemented. It was a miracle that could only be realized through the trusting teamwork of all those involved. The many little stories on the sidelines, which often make you smile, have been collected by an eyewitness who was involved in all activities from the very beginning. The GUC has become an important scientific and socio-political hub for the Federal Republic of Germany in the Arab world and North Africa, which must be particularly protected by political framework conditions!

Today - after more than twenty years - I am still enthusiastic about the GUC project and I am happy to continue to contribute: as Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees as well as a member of the Academic Founding Committee, as a member of the Academic Promotion Committee and as a professor to teach modern methods in Geodesy and GeoInformation Science. In my past work as a university professor, I have carried out more than one hundred projects, large and small. The GUC is the best and most sustainable project, also in terms of sociopolitical relevance, that I have had the privilege to work on and for which I am very grateful.

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