Chapter 27

SESAME Synchrotron Light Source, Why in the Middle East?

Gihan Kamel

Take care of small things if you want to obtain the greatest results

Federico Cesi (Founder of the Accademia dei Lincei in 1603)

I am here to deliver a message about SESAME where I currently work in Jordan, why do we need it in our region and how it is succeeding so far, based on a personal, as well as, a professional experience. I don't intend to deliver a completely positive or pink picture because we still have difficulties and challenges those we face every day, nevertheless, some wonderful things are earnest to be declared.

I got my Master Degree in Physics in Egypt, then I moved afterwards to Italy where I obtained a Ph.D. in Biophysics from the University of Rome, La Sapienza. After returning back to Egypt, I worked at my university as a Physics Lecturer for 2 years before realizing that I need to go back to Europe to pursue an advanced scientific career in a synchrotron facility as I was dreaming. After a few trials, I was selected for a researcher position at the *Laboratori Nazionale di Frascati*, LNF-INFN, Italy. When SESAME opened an Infrared Beamline Scientist position, I applied—thanks to the experience I gained at the LNF-INFN. I was selected for the position. With this, SESAME brought me back close to my home country, Egypt. It brought me back to the region I belong to: the Middle East. The region that is painted with blood and tears.

Speaking about the Middle East, no one is certain of what is going on there. As an Egyptian, I am expected to know a lot about the region. Sometimes I get my friends and colleagues asking me if it is safe to visit Egypt, and the question became “is it safe to visit Jordan?” Well, I also do ask the same questions now “is it safe to visit Italy or France or Germany, or any place in the world?” The recent events of terrorism and violence leave so many people in doubt and fear of what could

G. Kamel (✉)

Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt

e-mail: gihan.kamel@sesame.org.jo

© The Author(s) 2018

L. Maiani et al. (eds.), *International Cooperation for Enhancing Nuclear Safety, Security, Safeguards and Non-proliferation—60 Years of IAEA and EURATOM*, Springer Proceedings in Physics 206, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-57366-2_27

187

happen if they are planning a visit to the region. But for us living in the Middle East, the situation is so much different. We are *always* in doubt, fear, and bitterness.

If anyone tries to understand what's going on there, one may get an image of a huge number of complicated and conflicted geo-political networks—which is just one of so many. Through various channels, I noticed that nearly everyone wants to know what is going *wrong* with the Middle East, but very few want to know what is going *right*. I am here to say that SESAME is our brilliant model of those things going right. It opens many doors wide, not only doors for science, not only for reversing the brain-drain dispute where so many Mediterranean scientists keep searching for a better future—exactly as I did some years ago—flowing to the west, but also for the mutual and human understanding and unity among very different nations.

My journey with SESAME dates back to 2005. I witnessed that place when it was merely a desert. Now after 12 years, I see an oasis. An oasis of advanced science and technology, of understanding, neutrality, and fairness. An oasis of peace; a certain kind of peace that calls no diplomatic deals. Just science. The very pure logic of science. I don't think that the governments of SESAME Members or Observers are wasting their time or money for nothing. There are politicians, policymakers, diplomats, administrators, but the key players are scientists, engineers, and technicians. The end product is scientific results, not agreements, regulations or measures. The end product of SESAME is scientific publications, and this is the only feedback that our council relies on. It is we are working on and it is our "*safety measure*" that we are keen to follow.

With even our similarities and common standards, we are still different. Globally, it is difficult to see that. One needs to focus on the right tool to create a status of peace and harmony, one needs to speak the right language that *must* be neutral and the *must* be well understood and accepted by *all*. This is why the SESAME people chose to speak "Science".

Compared to other regions and similar facilities all over the world, things at our side are developing slowly, and the reasons are quite clear, but as long as they do develop in the right direction, we'll not stop. We can't deny or ignore what is happening around us every day, we can't ignore the destruction and the threats, but somehow we decided to be the "Love in the Time of Cholera", instead of leaving or dying, at least we are trying. A nice proverb that I got to know more than a year ago says "If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together". And this is exactly how I see us: the SESAME people. As individuals, we represent different motives, perspectives, and intentions, but at the end of the day we create our own future in this age of devastation and sadness.

Since you are discussing the safety issue in this conference, I want to share with you the same concern and to tell you that similar to you and as all the people on this planet, we also strive to feel safe and to live in peace. I want to take this opportunity to deeply thank you all for your hard efforts towards a safer world and harmless undertakings. As I did learn in these few days of this accomplished conference that you certainly pay attention to the very small details, I want to convey to you my message that is we, at SESAME are also doing the same. Together, step by step,

with our growing community, are proud of what we did so far, and definitely we'll be pushing for more.

I believe that changing the negative perspectives is a success, finding the middle ground between the traditional restrictions of different societies with the ambitions and motivations of the young generations is a success, and I believe that converting hate to trust and despair to hope is a *huge* success.

Lastly, as you cannot fully guarantee safety and security, nevertheless, you are still hoping for and toughly, as well as, progressively working on with patience and persistence, we also are doing our best with you. And as long as others insist to fight for war, we will also insist to fight for peace.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.