

# Wady Gharba Community Development Project

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The Community Center

General Orientation Booklet

كاترين موجودة  
catherine exists project



# Introduction

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**Catherine Exists** is an independent non-profit community development initiative and co-op that aims to support and raise awareness of Saint Catherine's protectorate and empower its local Bedouins, a minority subject to discrimination. While creating a space for intercultural dialogue to promote peace and tolerance among communities.

**How we started** Catherine Exists started as social-art project in a form of photo-stories depicting the land from the breathtaking landscapes to the locals and their struggle for survival. Through online and in-person exhibitions, the area's rich culture was told while raising money and generating volunteer support to address local needs, while boosting the area's reputation as an eco-tourism destination.

**Our current focus** Catherine Exists has built a community center where local residents will be able to access medical services, take classes, and pursue income-generating activities. Catherine Exists plans to support locals in managing and sustaining the center while expanding the program impact. To contribute to its mission and sustainability, the center also provides facilities for travelers to learn about the local culture, attend classes conducted by locals; experts in agriculture & other fields and volunteer in the local community. The center's planned opening in 2018.

# Introduction

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**Our statement** The Sinai Bedouin community in Egypt has been struggling for their civil rights for decades; being unacknowledged by the government, deprived from their lands, lacking proper medical & educational facilities and being misrepresented in the media are some of the obstacles they face on daily basis. Tourism which is considered their main source of income have been heavily impacted; number of foreign & local tourists have dramatically dropped more than 60% since 2011 due to misleading safety rumors about the area & lack of security from the government's end.

**Our mission** Catherine Exists provides support & empowerment to St. Catherine's protectorate and its people, creates a space for intercultural dialogue and in doing so Catherine Exists is proving a development & sustainability model for replication. We are focusing on implementing & proving a model for social inclusion to then be replicated globally; developing & sustaining indigenous communities while preserving their culture, shed light on marginalized communities, advocate for eco-tourism, create intercultural dialogue & human connections between the public & indigenous communities and promote the use of art for social-change.

The community center depends solely on individual donations and is not associated with any governmental or private foundations.

# Behind the project

Catherine Exists is led by Rehab Eldalil; a documentary photographer based in Cairo and her husband Ahmad Elgammal; an engineer based in Cairo.

The community center construction is happening thanks to the collaboration between Catherine Exists, the local Bedouin community and [Hand Over](#); a social enterprise that utilizes sustainable construction for the sake of community development.

The management of the community center is happening that to the collaboration between Catherine Exists, the local Bedouin community and volunteers.



## Impact To date

- 500+ local community beneficiaries
- 100+ Volunteers & cause ambassadors
- 14 features in media channels
- 2 Major offline exhibitions
- 1 Successful crowdfunding campaign
- 2 International conference participation
- 1 National conference participation
- Laureate Global fellowship 2016
- International recognition & expansion

## Partners & Supporters

- Hand Over
- International Youth Foundation
- Swedish Institute
- Agora
- AlMaqarr
- Tennra



# Geographic Information

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**Saint Catherine protectorate** is a mountainous area in South Sinai Egypt, around 451KM from Cairo; a protected area due to its unique nature and climate, and home to the highest peaks of Egypt; Mount Katherina, Mount Oum Shomar & Mount Moses. Many religious groups visit the area for pilgrimage purposes, many nature fanatics visit the area for its amazing adventures. The main locals of Saint Catherine's are Bedouin tribes, who are the keepers of the land and the key reason for this project.

**ElSheikh Awad village** is 45 minutes away by car from the center of St. Catherine's at Firan valley off the main road from Eltarfa village; in the heart of the mountains at **Wady Gharba**. Lays close to the village is **Al Karm**; an eco lodge built by the people in collaboration with the EU fund in 2002. Al Karm is operated and managed by the people of ElSheikh Awad & Eltarfa villages as an economic support.

The community center is strategically located to serve all areas in St. Catherine.

# Geographic Information



# Geographic Information

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Overview from Google Earth

# The Community Center

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The community center is surrounded by four villages including ElSheikh Awad (closest village) and ElTarfa (biggest village). Those villages face the toughest struggles lacking electricity, basic facilities, network coverage, commercial opportunities and the easy access of clean water. The center provides support and services to the locals within those villages specially and open to all the Bedouin community in St. Catherine in general.

## The community center includes:

- 1- A medical clinic mainly for locals – First aid unit
- 2- Cultural museum exhibiting the rich Bedouin culture & natural history
- 3- Trekking information center and hiking services
- 4- Equipped class room for locals to learn & conduct classes
- 5- Equipped class room for rent for visitors to use for workshops, team building activities and/or lectures
- 6- A handcrafts market for female Bedouin artisans to showcase and sell their handcrafts
- 7- Cross-cultural programs such as:
  - Tutoring:** Visitors can volunteer to tutor locals in any subjects
  - Residency:** Global artists can develop their work in our spaces while connecting to the locals
  - Workshops:** Visitors can attend classes conducted by locals

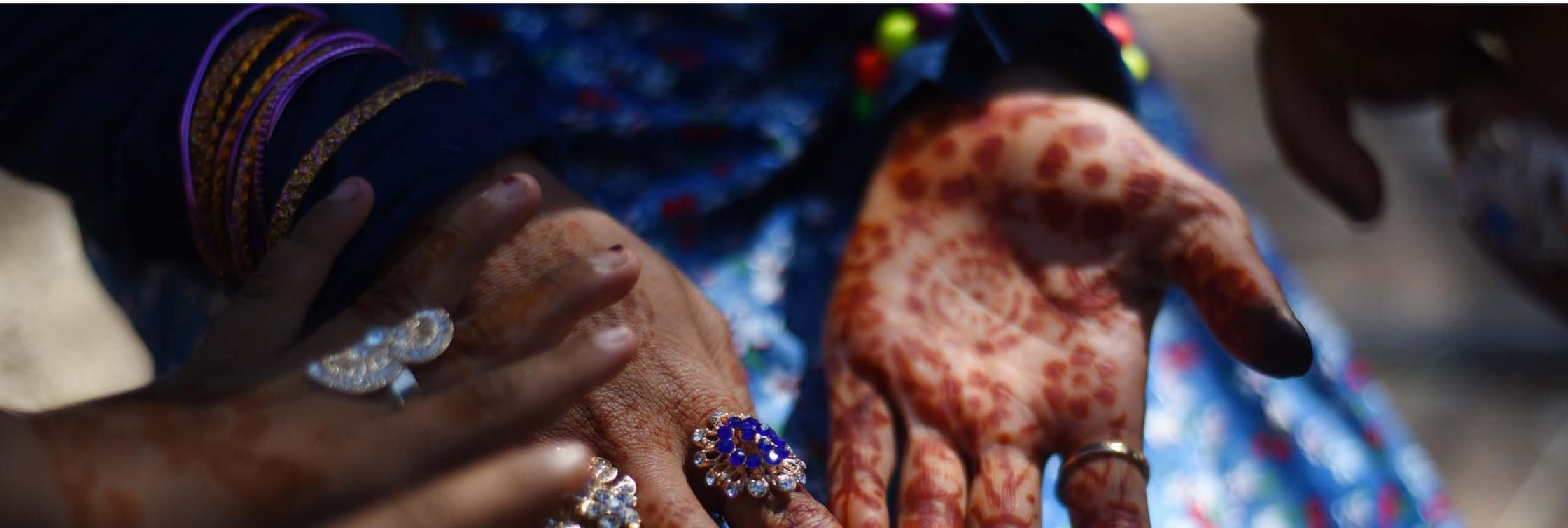
# Accommodation Services

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Travelers volunteering/visiting the center can stay at the nearest eco-lodge called AlKarm.

**Al Karm eco-lodge includes:**

- 1- Spaces for activities such as basic astronomy observatory, meditation & yoga areas.
- 2- Kitchen and dining areas both indoor and outdoor.
- 3- Rooms for accommodation; accommodates up-to 50 individuals in addition to camping areas.



# Overall Plan

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## 1- Construction

From September 2016 to January 2018; Hand Over & Catherine Exists worked on the design and construction of the community center along with the local community and volunteers.

## 2- Operations

The community center's opening the clinic in October 2018 then will focus on furnishing the museum and building the MPU (knowledge exchange unit). For the coming three years Catherine Exists plans to sustain the center with the locals.



# The Medical Clinic in the community center

Due to the lack of proper medical check ups and support from St. Catherine's public hospital, the local Bedouins face false diagnosis & relapse and are forced to travel to other cities later for treatment as their case deteriorate.

The clinic serves as:

- 1- Primary medical care services for the locals
- 2- Main first aid point for locals and travelers



# The Medical Clinic in the community center

## 1- Primary medical care services for the locals:

One of the main problems in the area that local patients are not able to find qualified doctors to diagnose their case or recommend them to other doctors.

The target of the clinic is to be the starting point for the locals' recovery journey. The idea is to bring volunteering doctors to perform medical check ups & diagnosis for 2-3 days every month. In addition to diagnosis; if the doctor is able to prescribe medicine for the patient right away or in complicated/severe cases the doctor would recommend a specific doctor or hospital for the patient to proceed treatment with.

We've recruited doctors in the fields of general medicine, dentistry and cardiac and currently searching for OB/GYN physician.

## 2- Main first aid point for locals and travelers:

The additional target of the clinic is to be the main first aid point for both locals and visitors. To provide a safety feature for more travelers to visit.

The clinic is free of charge for the locals and open for donations. Serving locals from any tribe and mainly from the four surrounding villages.

# The Medical Clinic in the community center

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## Equipment & Facilities

The clinic consists of two separate rooms and two separate waiting areas. The clinic is planned (with your help) to consist of basic tools and equipment to perform as a primary healthcare and first aid unit.

### Room 1: Dentistry

Due to the high need for dental care, we've specified a separate room for dental practice. Consisting of:

1. Dental Chair
2. Autoclave
3. X-ray

### Room 2: General

The second room equipped with the basic tools for various medical services.

Consisting of:

1. Medical bed
2. Basic tools such as needles..etc
3. Blood pressure measurement device
4. First aid kit

As the clinic grows and donations increase we'll be providing more equipment as needed.

# The Medical Clinic in the community center



## The Medical Clinic in the community center



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# The Medical Clinic in the community center

## To volunteer as a doctor:

Please send us a brief about your professional work to [catherineexists@gmail.com](mailto:catherineexists@gmail.com) to join our medical team.

## To volunteer:

Please join our Facebook community group "[Catherine Exists Volunteers](#)" to follow our open calls and join tasks suitable to you.

## To donate:

If you live in Cairo or St. Catherine we send out a volunteer in the location and time of your choice to pick up your contribution. If you live in another city/country we can then share a bank account to which you can send your contribution. In both cases, once you contribute you'll start receiving monthly newsletter to your email in order to follow the progress of the project and the impact of your donation.

# The Initiative

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Catherine Exists is one of the few initiatives in Egypt that focuses on empowering indigenous communities while respecting, preserving and sustaining its rich cultural and natural heritage. Along with its programs and activities to prove this mission, the community center itself is being built with traditional rock methods and rammed Earth and includes composting toilets and solar energy, making the center a sustainable environment friendly space to promote ecotourism & sustainable living.

Catherine Exists' catalyst is art, starting as a photo project to then evolve to be a community development initiative inviting all fields. The community center is based on a sustainability model that accommodates with the project's mission to empower the local community while preserving their culture.

Finally, Catherine Exists is a cooperative initiative; collaborating with the local community to create this center. Rather than imposing development methods the initiative engages the community within this process to assure a stronger impactful and more sustaining effect. Every supporter to the project becomes part of it, becomes project's ambassador, Catherine Exists embraces collaborations and candid human connections. The project is able to work with volunteers and create a learning experience for them while engaging them in a larger support family.

# Our Values

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Our values are: Love, understanding, empathy, compassion, respect, tolerance, positive Impact, transparency, and create human connections. To create a safe community open to learn from each other. To empower and collaborate.

A space to do good.



# Our Mission

Catherine Exists provides support and empowerment to St. Catherine's protectorate and its local Bedouin community in a co-op format, creates a space for intercultural and cross cultural dialogue to promote social inclusion while preserving the natural and cultural heritage of St. Catherine.

1. Advocate for social justice and inclusion.
2. Promote ecotourism and the use of art for social change.
3. Correct misconceptions & Shed light on a marginalized indigenous community.
4. Raise awareness about the region.
5. Create intercultural dialogue between Locals and Travelers "Human connections" to embrace peace, understanding and tolerance.
6. Preserve the natural & cultural heritage of the land.
7. Advocate for sustainable and environmental living.
8. Raise the quality of life in St. Catherine protectorate.
9. Create opportunities for income generation and education.
10. Support collaborations for the common good.

Know more about

Catherine Exists

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Mail](#)

Hand Over

[Website](#)

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