

Teaching food production to families in Egypt

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched a regional competition for an "Aquaponics design". The competition aims to raise awareness on the use of new and innovative technologies for food production that would increase families' income in Egypt and the region.



Source: FAO

The [competition](#) is in collaboration with the Arab Women Investors Union (AWIU) and the industrial investors Guild Suez line channel. At the launch, Nabil Gangi, FAO deputy regional representative for the Near East and North Africa, said: "We have been cooperating with the Arab Women Investors Union for more than four years and today we are taking this partnership to a next level through the launch of the "Aquaponics design" competition that aims to make a real change at the lifestyle and nutrition system of thousands of families in the NENA region."

"The competition allows innovative youngsters to design environmentally friendly "Aquaponics" at low cost, and I take this opportunity to encourage creative youth to participate in the competition. We are looking for designs that consider aesthetic, practical and environmental aspects," Gangi added.

"We have a huge responsibility towards the community and towards the poor families inside and outside Egypt, that's why we will always look for joint projects with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility, we decided to financially support the "Aquaponics design" competition to encourage youth from around the region to participate", Hoda Galal Yassa, president of the AWIU and head of the Industrial Investors Society Guild Suez line channel declared.

One of the benefits of this competition lies in giving the youth from the Near East and North Africa region the opportunity to contribute to the beautification of their cities and villages and create aquaponics that could provide healthy and balanced food to the rural families.

The Jury will later announce the competition terms and conditions, in addition to the steps for application to the competition

and submission of the designs. The competition will end by February 2017.

Aquaponics is a symbiotic integration of two mature food production disciplines: aquaculture - the practice of fish farming; and hydroponics - the cultivation of plants in water without soil; are combined within a closed recirculating system.

Soil-less agriculture is also important because of its higher water- and fertiliser-use efficiency, which makes hydroponics the most suitable farming technique in arid regions or wherever nutrient dispersal is an issue for both environmental and economic reasons.

The aquaculture-fish systems are cheap source of animal protein and vitamins, which greatly improves the nutrition and health of families, especially those with low levels of income.

FAO has supported 550 rooftop gardens and in the backyard in the Gaza Strip since 2011, and it is also applied in many areas around the region. FAO has recently issued Arabic guide that would answer the participants' questions on the practical side of aquaponics. The guide is available in English as well.

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