

EMPLOYMENT THROUGH HERITAGE FOSTERING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN THE JORDANIAN CRM JOB MARKET

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Introduction

This article aims at presenting the outcomes of the first year and half of Sela's Employment through Heritage Project (EHP).

Founded in 2015, Sela for Training and Protection of Cultural Heritage is a Jordanian not for profit company operating in the Cultural Resources Management sector with the aim of protecting cultural heritage and building local capacities within communities to enable sustainable preservation of cultural heritage by promoting the active involvement of the host communities in its protection. Since its foundation, Sela implemented numerous training programs in collaboration with Jordanian and international institutions.

With the launch of EHP in 2018, Sela is attempting to create an enabling environment to the sustainability of cultural heritage by actively engaging communities in its protection.

By engaging host communities with the heritage in their courtyard, new collective memories are created and the bonding potential that heritage could play within the communities is enhanced. The shared sense of ownership towards the past and the heritage is the form of social capital that needs to be cultivated, because it has the potential to become a great vehicle for raising awareness and for the sustainable protection of heritage sites. Heritage sites are meaningful as tangible representations of the past and, as such, they are meaningful to communities if they are lively places that carry symbolic values. Communities need to be

central in the management of heritage, but also heritage needs to be central in the daily life of the communities.

Employment through Heritage Project (EHP)

In 2018, Sela launched EHP-Employment through Heritage Project in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. EHP is a 4-years project supported by the DROSOS Foundation (<https://drosos.org/en/>).

The project's main aim is the formalization of the CRM job market in Jordan. Nevertheless, EHP has the potentials to play a major role in giving back centrality to heritage in the daily life of communities.

The Context

At present, knowledge-based academic study is prioritize within Jordan's formal training programs in archaeology and broader CRM fields. Such curricula typically offer limited opportunities for hands-on, applied field training. Moreover, the focus on a university degree as the essential prerequisite for a future career in the heritage sector has excluded entire segments of Jordan's population (particularly less affluent rural communities) from access to available and much needed employment opportunities within the sector.

The lack of formal vocational training programs within the sector has determined a *status quo* in which many "unskilled workers" have acquired an enormous baggage of skills

and field experience, but are not framed in a system that allow them to capitalize on their expertise.

EHP Objectives and Implementation Strategy

The project's overall goal is to engage skilled Jordanians within a formalized CRM employment sector. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary first to transform the previously informal and undefined archaeology/CRM employment sector into a formalized sector with agreed-upon professional and technical standards and certifications. To achieve this goal Sela is pursuing three key objectives:

1. Develop a formalized CRM employment sector.
2. Create a corps of formally trained and certified Jordanian CRM jobseekers.
3. Facilitate the employment of certified CRM personnel by Sela and Community of Practice.

Objective 1: Develop a Formalized CRM Employment Sector

The first needed step towards the formalization of the sector was the creation of a legal framework to operate in.

In 2018 and 2019, Sela has worked with DoA's appointed technical committee on drafting the new regulations for conservation and management of heritage sites in Jordan and on defining categories and classifications for formal vocationally based training and employment in CRM. The classifications aim at meeting the practical needs of site preservation and management while also opening the sector to non-university graduates, especially trained members of local communities. Within the regulations 15 new professional and technical profiles have been defined.

The Regulations for conservation and management of heritage sites in Jordan are currently in the process of being approved by the relevant Jordanian authorities.

In order to assure the enforcement of the regulations, Sela and DoA designed a training program for DoA junior employees aiming at providing the needed knowledge in CRM for the proper enforcement of the regulations. The

program consisted of several courses held by experts and professionals in different fields of CRM.

Every year of the four years of EHP, Sela trains 6-20 DoA junior employees, of those 13 will be selected for advanced training.

The first cycle of training was concluded in June 2019. The training included courses in site assessment, water management, pottery reading, archaeological documentation, emergency



1. Training in emergency treatment of archaeological objects - Trainer: Fatma Marii from University of Jordan. Photo credit: Mohammad AlBdoul.



2. Training in use of total station - Trainer: Ehab Jariry from DOA. Photo credit: Mohammad AlBdoul.



3. Training on water management - Trainer: Giuseppe Delmonaco (ISPRA, Italy). Photo credit: Mohammad AlBdoul.

treatment of archaeological objects on site, mosaic and plaster conservation (Figs. 1-3).

Objective 2: Create a Corps of Formally Trained and Certified Jordanian CRM Jobseekers

The second step is to create formally trained and certified Jordanians to enter the job market.

Training of Trainers (ToT)

Starting in 2018, Sela built its capacity by successfully training and certifying five trainers to run the vocational training program in CRM for technicians and the vocationally based practicum for university students. Trainers were selected on the basis of their prior experience and their potential to succeed given a nine-month course.

Since the candidates already possess the necessary theoretical knowledge and several years of field experience, the courses focused on conveying teaching methods by which to pass on their experience. The training program consisted of a series of workshops taught by expert consultants and senior professionals between July 2018 and April 2019. Each workshop included a project/assignment (Figs. 4-5). At the end of the nine months trainers were evaluated and certified by DoA.

ToT was implemented at the Petra Pool and Garden Complex (PGPC) under the scientific supervision of Penn State University-Behrend College. Training projects/assignments were designed to fit into PGPC conservation plan.

Certified Training Courses (CTC)

In the summer of 2019, Sela launched the first training programs for technicians in different communities in cooperation with DoA.

One year later at the end of the 2020 summer, Sela trained 10 members of two of the host communities of Petra (Umm Sayhūn and Wādī Mūsā), 11 members of the community of Maʿīn in Madaba region with the support of DoA and 9 community members from ʿAmmān (Fig. 6).

Several archaeological sites were selected with the DoA to host the training, such as. Māʿīn, ʿIrāq Al Amīr, Yājūz, ʿAbdūn, KHuraybat As Sūq, Rujm Al Malfūf, Udhruh.

The certified training programs are tailored to the categories and professional and technical profiles defined in collaboration with DoA during the first year of the project.

University Practicum

Within EHP, Sela proposes field training opportunities for national and international students. For Jordanian students, this is an opportunity to gain hands-on experience during their summer semester (Fig. 7).

Sela offers training opportunities within different projects and helps expanding the students' network by engaging them with different national and international projects, within a training framework that is designed to match their field of interest/study.



4. Training in onsite documentation - Trainer: Eman Abdassalam (Sela). Photo credit: Mohammad AlAtrash.



5. Communication skills improving (TOT) - Trainer: Fawzi Abu Dannah (Hussein Bin Talal University). Photo credit: Mohammad AlBdoul.



6. Training in documentation at PGPC - Trainer: Mohammad AlBdoul. Photo credit: Mohammad AlBdoul.

Objective 3: Certified CRM Personnel are Employed by Sela and Community of Practice

Sustainability is a key objective of EHP and Sela is addressing it at different levels by creating job opportunities for trained technicians, by outreaching to other projects, by facilitating the creation of microenterprises within the communities engaged with EHP, and by testing sustainable materials for conservation works.

Creation of Job Opportunities

Since its foundation in 2015, Sela has implemented several projects in which local community members were trained on the job within foreign projects in Jordan. Sela managed local staff and built local capacity in each site with the aim of creating a workforce to sustain each project in the years to come. A basic database of skilled/trained technicians was established in 2015 with the support of USAID/SCHEP.

With the EHP, Sela is expanding and improving the existing database in order to adapt it to the newly defined categories. The database will become an open platform available to the Community of Practice and trainees and trainees will be registered for enrollment in future projects.

Currently, Sela trains and then employs the trainees in projects that fit their acquired skills.

During the first year of the project, Sela has created 70 formal job opportunities, of which 15 are long term contracts; and has trained 12 certified trainers, 115 community members, of which 21 are within the certified training framework, 14 national students and 15 international students.

Between June 2018 and December 2019, over 150 persons (40% women and 60% men) were involved into the project in different capacities from 7 different communities in Jordan.

Sustainable Heritage Initiatives and Communities' Engagement

Within the framework of EHP, an outreach officer is appointed to work within communities and identify potential partners that might sustain the heritage preservation.

By engaging and sustaining partner organizations within host communities, such as microenterprises, Sela secures continuous

income for the preservation of the heritage in each community.

The first agreement for a sustainable income for heritage project was reached with the Productive Kitchen in Hīsbān, which is supporting heritage projects with every meal served.

Sela is reinvesting the income in heritage protection projects all over Jordan in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan by running short training programs in minor archaeological sites.

Testing Sustainable Materials (Contributor: Christina Danielli)

Calcium Caseinate is a traditional material which conservators have been using for the consolidation of wall plaster and paintings. The main ingredient of Calcium Caseinate is Casein, a protein based organic compound that when mixed with an alkaline solvent develops bonding properties. Different factors contribute to the bonding power of this material, thus it



7. Emergency conservation training at PGPC for national and international students - Trainer: Ghadeer AlBdoul. Photo credit: Sela archive.



8. Conservation technicians, Ahmad AlMousah and Ghadeer AlBdoul preparing samples for testing calcium caseinate as consolidant. Photo credit: Christina Danielli.

is necessary to test different types of calcium caseinate and different proportions with its alkaline solvent on selected samples in order to establish its consolidating ability.

During the Sela Training program in May 2019, it was decided to test a locally produced Casein for the consolidation of stone and plaster elements in order to develop a more sustainable solution for the maintenance of archaeological sites in the Petra area.

The testing involved the use of two Casein products, one bought commercially and another produced locally from goat milk. The two products were mixed with the same percentage of alkaline solvent and applied on two samples of the same stone (two limestone and two sandstone samples) and on lime plaster samples offsite.

The two different Casein products were also employed to create a grouting mixture and a denser gluing blend for detached plaster fragments. The students involved in the trial created a database to record and number the different samples and percentages of the mixture applied in different proportions for the testing. The database will be implemented when further testing in the laboratory will give more accurate results (**Fig. 8**).

A week after the application of the different Calcium Caseinate combinations the samples treated with the commercial Casein and the ones treated with the local Casein did not show visible differences after drying. The color of the stone did not undergo visible color alterations in either of the samples treated with commercial casein and the locally produced one. Additionally, the compactness of the

treated samples with both products was visibly improved, showing a great reduction in flaking and pulverization of the stone surface.

Further testing will be necessary to understand factors concerning the penetration of the product and the compressive strength of the stone after treatment, as well as the ageing and susceptibility to biological attack when applied to stone in an exterior environment.

If the testing proves successful it will be an important step forward for developing a sustainable conservation product that can be produced locally and contribute to the involvement of the local community.

Why is this Project Important?

Sela is still unique in the Jordanian CRM horizon, but it represents the type of genuinely local development which can accomplish huge steps towards sustainable preservation. Sela represents the voice of the resiliency of Jordanian host communities, and their connection with the heritage¹.

Thanks to the support of the Drosos Foundation, with EHP Sela has the opportunity of having an impact at the national level by giving voice to host communities and by grasping local contributions for a more sustainable management of the Jordanian heritage.

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1. On the concept of resiliency and engagement with places and landscapes, see Smith and Waterton (2009), *Heritage, Communities and Archaeology*, Bloomsbury.