

# *The Abraham Path*

## ANNUAL REPORT

*January 2010*



## 2009 Abraham Path Results Summary

### Overall Results

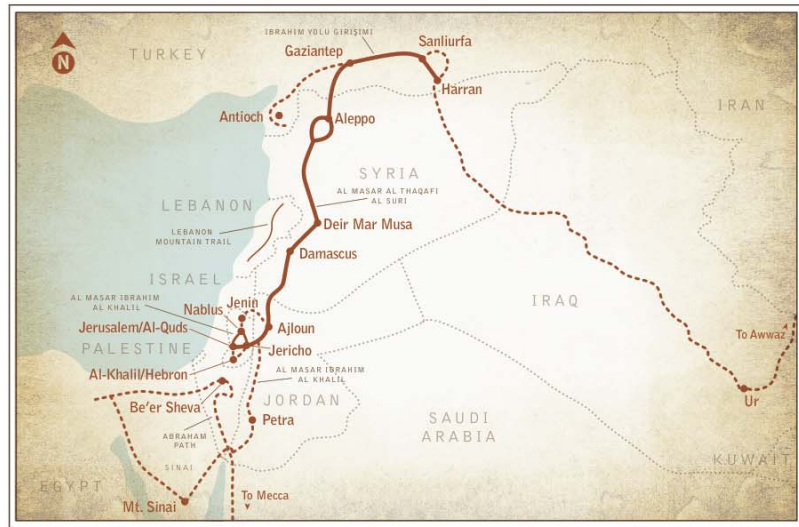
In 2009, we made significant progress toward our goal of inspiring the opening of the Masar across 10 countries in the Middle East.

The initiative has:

- Reached an audience of over 150 million worldwide through positive media stories about the Masar and the region.
- Been recognized three times as an outstanding tourism and educational project in the last few months by the Qatar Foundation, the British Guild of Travel Writers, and the Educational Tourism Community.
- Opened four pilot segments in four countries, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The path now totals 450 km of walkable sections.
- Facilitated over 3,000 people walking the pilot segments of the path.
- Brought economic benefit to rural communities and empowered women to run small businesses offering hospitality and other tourist services.
- Become a platform for youth entrepreneurship and leadership through service projects, education, and cultural exchange.

Specific objectives included advancing the Abraham Path Initiative's ability to engage youth from around the world, and to expand its communications capacity, including launching a new version of our website and utilizing social networking tools.

API made substantial progress in engaging international youth in the vision of the Abraham Path. This took different forms in each country. In Turkey, the API team was invited to join the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations youth network, which met in the spring of 2009. In Jordan, team members Ramez Habash and Suhair Ayyash have been organizing regular volunteer walks with both local and international students, who helped local communities to pick up trash, paint buildings, harvest olives and much more. The student groups included the American Boy Scouts, the International Academy-Amman, Yarmouk University and many others. Ms. Ayyash was recognized for her work in this area at the Qatar Foundation's WISE awards for pluralism in education. Finally, API has formed a new chapter in London. The chapter was greatly inspired by the enthusiasm of Katherine



*The Abraham Path*  
AL MASAR IBRAHIM AL KHALIL

— Route of 2006 Harvard Study Tour and 2008 Kellogg Fellows Tour  
- - - Future Cultural Routes and Trails

Wilson and Steve McArdle who walked the Abraham Path in 2008. The London chapter will allow API to organize and fund youth walks as well as supporting cross-cultural youth activities in the UK.

In terms of communication, API successfully launched a new website in 2009 and greatly increased its use of social media applications, including a successful campaign to become part of the Global Giving fundraising website. API also finalized plans for an interactive “Virtual Path”, which will be based on the GoogleEarth platform and include forums, blogs, photography, video, online stores, and many other interactive applications. API is partnering with the communications experts at See3 Media for this project, and will begin work on the project in 2010.

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## Turkey

Over the course of 2009, API completed the delineation of the 50 km demonstration segment of the path. The team is now working to develop the path, including investing in site restoration. Beginning in the fall of 2009, API is partnering with the **Cultural Restoration Tourism Project**, a unique US non-profit working to restore endangered archaeological sites around the world. The project will restore an ancient caravanserai called Han-El Ba'rür, which will serve as a way station for travelers walking the path.



The API team in Turkey also expanded its network of partnerships. API joined its partner, the **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations**, for their annual meeting in Istanbul. Most recently the team hosted **Jamil Mahuad**, the former president of Ecuador. The Turkey team is preparing for a fundraising trip made up of members of the **Synergos Global Philanthropists Circle**, who will walk the path in Turkey in February of 2010.

Looking to the future, the host committee in Sanliurfa has scheduled a strategic planning session with members of the API international team for January 2010, to determine the direction of the path's development for the next three years, and two days of guide training for local guides in Harran and Sanliurfa.

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## Jordan

To date, over 1,000 people have walked the Masar Ibrahim Al Khalil through Jordan's northern highlands. Thirty-five local families are now earning income from providing food and lodging to travelers, increasing their income by \$100-150 a month. The Jordan team has a solid foundation of partnerships and prioritized community outreach work in villages resulting in active local support and enthusiasm.



In January 2009, the Abraham Path in Jordan joined the **Green Alliance** to organize and promote a market for local producers to sell their goods and crafts. Local women sold bread and second-hand clothes, among other things, making over \$5,000 in seven hours. Later in the spring, the Jordan team held their first voluntourism activity with 80 university students from two different universities in Jordan. The students cleaned up trash and repainted a school along the path. Throughout 2009, the Jordan team has organized five more voluntourism trips for groups such as the **Boy Scouts**, the **American Women of Amman**, the **International Academy-Amman**, and others.

Throughout 2009, the Jordan team worked to further develop the path, mapping new sections north from Al Ayoun, and south to the Salt Mountains. The team is also developing resources for adventure tourism. Climbing experts Di Taylor and Tony Howard produced a guidebook for camping, trekking and climbing along the Masar in Ajloun. Local adventure tourism agencies, such as **Cycling Jordan** and **Terhal**, are now using the path for their activities.

The Jordan team is working with 20 young women to train them to develop and market small businesses to tourists. The team worked with a trainer to conduct a needs assessment to determine the skills the women wanted to learn. They are now planning four workshops that will teach these women to develop, package, and market their products.

The Jordan team's remarkable progress in 2009 was recognized by **The British Guild of Travel Writers**, which ranked the path in Jordan "highly commended" in the Best Overseas Tourism Project category. It was also recognized by the **Qatar Foundation**, which chose the project as one of 16 finalists out of over 100 applicants for the **WISE Award** for pluralism in education. The Qatar Foundation recognized Ms. Suhair Ayyash and the API Jordan team as a finalist in its World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) Awards for pluralism in education. Ms. Ayyash was invited to take part in the summit, which was hosted Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, Chair of the Qatar Foundation for Education. HH Sheikha Mozah said it would be her pleasure to walk the Masar route the next time she was in Jordan. The project in Jordan hopes to build on this success in 2010 and also will welcome the **Synergos Global Philanthropists Circle** in February, as well as hosting many other spring walk activities.



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## Palestine

In 2009, 10 different walks brought hundreds of people to walk the path in Palestine. In one walk, a group of French trekkers walked 70km of the trail, including a brand new segment to Jericho. This



group also pioneered new path activities, participating in cooking lessons and other newly developed cultural activities for travelers. Another walk included **Mrs. Rosalynn Carter**, wife of Jimmy Carter, former president of the United States.

In October, the Palestine team held a strategic planning session in Taybeh that included community members from five villages along the path, as well as many partner organizations. The attendees determined priorities for the Masar Ibrahim Al Khalil for the coming three years. In December, the team hosted its annual tourism seminar at **Bethlehem University attended by 150 people**. They showcased a new short film highlighting the benefits of the project to rural villages, as well as announcing a new segment from Bethle-

hem to Hebron/Al Khalil had been delineated.

In 2010, the Palestine team welcomed Cathrin Ulrich, a full-time expert from the **German Development Service (DED)** who will help the team with capacity building and advancing the women's engagement and outreach program. The DED has also approved the assignment of a part-time staff person who will directly support the project in finance and administration. In February, the team in Palestine will also host the entire API staff in Jericho for our annual international retreat, to further team-building and our collective planning efforts.

## Israel

The Abraham Path staff in Israel identified a 60 km segment through the Negev desert that connects archeological sites, including Tel Sheva and Tel Arad with Bedouin and Fellahin villages, including Rahat and Drijat. After spending the first half of

2009 laying the groundwork for the segment, the Israel team organized a three-day walk to celebrate the opening of a pilot section path in October. Over 30 walkers from 10 different countries gathered to walk in the Negev desert in October. The walkers visited with diverse communities, including a group of Ethiopian immigrants and a Bedouin family whose daughter Miriam Abu Roquayek has established a unique center for the preservation of Bedouin heritage, plant lore, deep ecology, and her own business selling organic cosmetics and soaps.



In 2010, the Israel team will complete a comprehensive needs assessment to determine local partners and ensure the Negev's diverse communities are integrated into the projects priorities.