

Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project

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Starting in 2014, ACOR has administered the USAID-funded initiative the Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project (SCHEP). SCHEP has directly and indirectly contributed to numerous archaeological initiatives and has developed and implemented programs to increase the heritage awareness of local youth with archaeology playing a large role in defining the historic context of structural remains and small objects. Community involvement of site improvement and cleaning of historic sites is also a method that reconnects locals to the heritage of the past while preserving archaeological features. Coupled with this, SCHEP has engaged in knowledge transfer and capacity-building, with a strong focus on methods of documentation and publication. This initiative introduced new technologies to Jordan including drone photography and augmented reality. To preserve the archaeological past, the experienced SCHEP team has put together impactful projects that have provided sustainable archaeological contributions.

Within the project objectives, SCHEP developed and implemented several theme-backed projects with multiple focal points. Of these, several supported and contributed to archaeological efforts. Despite the many obstacles brought about by COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, SCHEP initiated several programs that supported archaeology, including supporting the Department of Antiquities in its proposed revision of the Jordanian Antiquities Law. SCHEP aided the DoA in its efforts to update the law and, in turn, supported the progression of preserving archaeological sites and objects.

SCHEP also focused on programs associated with several awareness projects espousing archaeology and site preservation through volunteerism and workshops, with a focus on youth. Volunteers enhanced the Khirbet Salameh site by clearing it of debris and improving the site's accessibility with a focus on safety, work that is detailed elsewhere in this volume. The interest in preserving archaeological sites extends to the archaeology clubs for youth created by the Friends of Archaeology and Heritage (FoAH) group and supported by SCHEP. The archaeology club is introduced in primary schools to expose the younger generation to heritage, such as archaeological sites, and the intangible history linked to their cultural past. The focus on youth continued with SCHEP's engagement of two interns for the Bayt Ras Tomb Project, who worked alongside professionals, obtaining knowledge on the international standards of documentation and the utilization of architectural plans.

SCHEP published a manual for handling museum artifacts and conducted a workshop for hands-on applica-





Fig. 1. Pottery training workshop by the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP). (Photo by Dina Al Majali.)

tions. Furthermore, SCHEP instituted several projects of archaeology-related capacity-building initiatives. Among them was a pottery of Jordan workshop where trainees received an introduction to a chronology of ceramics in Jordan and focused on different time periods, including the Neolithic and Chalcolithic (Fig. 1). In conjunction with this workshop, SCHEP is developing a pottery of Jordan manual in partnership with the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP), scheduled for publication in 2022.

Finally, SCHEP has also brought newer technology to compliment the recording of archaeological sites. Drone photography can document, as well as monitor, a historic site and be part of a photogrammetry program. Augmented reality was trialed at Khirbet Salameh. With its data, virtual tours can be developed to further the understanding of a site's historical significance and to present visuals that can inspire an individual's connection to the site, thus encouraging preservation.

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