

Community Engagement and Long-Term Maintenance in Heritage Sites: Lessons from Petra

Maria Elena Ronza

Sela for Training and Protection of Heritage



Project objectives



The **overarching objective** is **increasing employment of Jordanian jobseekers in the CRM sector** through the establishment of a scalable model that combines capacity development, job creation, project implementation, community activities, and awareness raising by introducing a multidisciplinary training approach to form teams able to implement CRM projects from inception to completion.

- Transform cultural resource management into an industry.
- Bridge the gap between technical heritage work and social initiatives.
- Engage local communities directly in preserving their heritage.
- Build capacity so that heritage can generate lasting income and employment.



Project components



- Building capacity
- Job creation and implementation of conservation projects
- Dissemination and awareness raising campaign

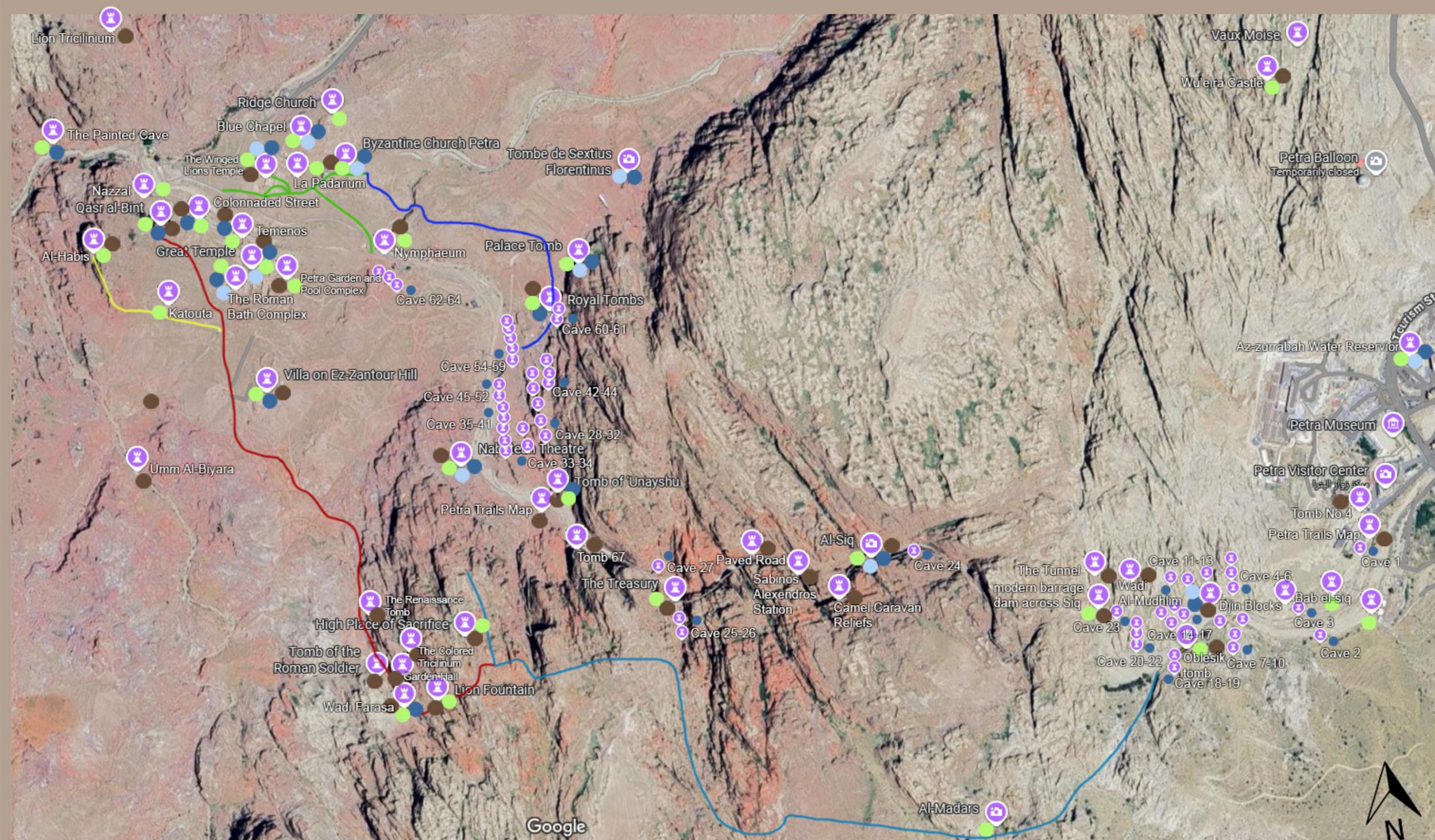
Hard skills

Soft skills





Job creation



Trails

- Al-Madras ———
- Wadi Farasa ———
- Al-Habis ———
- Urn Tomb ———
- Temple of the Winged Lions ———



- Documentation
- Restoration
- Landscape
- Signage

Project activities



230+ community members trained on the job and employed

230+ individuals from the host communities engaged in 25+ different training programs. 85% of those trained were employed for a minimum of 6 months. PDTRA supported the salaries of 194 participants.

- 28% of the trainees were university and school students,
- 18% of the trainees were fresh graduates or young professionals
- 43% of the trainees were school dropouts

45+ monuments in Petra

Over 45 monuments were documented and maintained.

The work involved:

- digital documentation
- cleaning and setting the trails, installing signage, cleaning and landscaping the areas around the monuments to improve accessibility.
- emergency conservation, including salts removal and mortar repair.

50+ community events with 1K+ participants

50+ community events were organized to raise awareness within the communities of the Petra Region, including:

- 4 heritage-themed summer camps with over 200 participants
- 3 community mapping rounds
- 21 lectures
- 6 open days
- 17 heritage-themed school activities at several schools from the region.
- 1 university workshop



25+ training programs

Sela designed and implemented several training programs in collaboration with national and international partners to build the local capacity for a more sustainable future for our heritage. Remarkably, as part of the collaboration with PDTRA, the first ten conservation operators on rope were certified in Jordan, including 5 women.



Project Impact



Individual

Skills Development for the Participants

Participants gain valuable skills through hands-on training initiatives, career guidance, and job opportunities.

Community of Practice

Engaging Host Communities in Heritage Preservation Efforts

Community members take active roles in managing cultural resources.

Civil Society

Preserving Heritage for Future Generations

The advocacy and raising awareness campaign fosters a sense of identity and belonging.



Driving Positive Change



Creation of formal jobs and economic growth

- **91.3%** of the project beneficiaries support their families and provide for them.
- **39.4%** of the project beneficiaries are the sole breadwinners of their families.
- **85.6%** of the interviewees indicated that the job provided by the project is their only source of income.
- **71.2%** of the interviewees have monthly commitments, such as loans and rentals.

Positive change in the perception of heritage

Working with Sela has transformed how heritage is perceived by many in the community, shifting the focus from viewing it solely as an economic source tied to tourism to appreciating it as a valuable cultural resource. Through specialized training and active involvement in preservation efforts, individuals have come to understand the deeper significance of Petra's antiquities. They now see these sites not only as assets for generating income but also as symbols of history, identity, and pride.

Longterm wellbeing and social cohesion

This project has enhanced long-term wellbeing by providing sustainable livelihoods and fostering social cohesion through collaborative efforts across diverse Petra communities.

- **61.5%** of the interviewees reported that their relationships with family and friends changed positively following their employment in the project.
- **99%** of the interviewees were able to build new relationships with people from communities other than their own.





REBUILD PROJECT

With the REBUILD Project, we expand our training offer by introducing two new courses, both new to Jordan. The project will launch specialized training for operators in rope access techniques, alongside a new course on composite materials, strengthening local technical skills and opening new professional opportunities in the fields of construction and heritage conservation.





Contact Information

For inquiries about the JASI initiative and Sela's work.



Phone:

00962795863312

Email:

eronza@selajo.org





SELA

www.selajo.org

THANK YOU