



Consensus Building
and
Collaborative Conservation

A PUBLICATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

Quebec-Labrador Foundation
Atlantic Center for the Environment
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*QLF exists to support the rural communities and
environment of eastern Canada
and New England
and
to create models for stewardship of
natural resources and cultural heritage
that can be applied worldwide.*





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Front Cover: Fellows of the Middle East Program who as their colleagues are advocates for consensus building and collaborative conservation. From left: Sami Backleh (Palestine) and Charles Curtin (U.S.), Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan, 2008. *Photograph by Elizabeth Alling*

Inside Front Cover: Caribou graze at the foot of the Long Range Mountains in western Newfoundland, one of QLF's first environmental program areas. *Photograph by Candace Cochrane*

Back Cover: After a rainstorm and approaching the Sheikh Hussein Border Crossing between the West Bank and northern Jordan, West Bank, Palestine. Fellowship to the Middle East, November 2007. Here, we found ourselves witness to the migration of many species of birds including White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*), Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*), and Common Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*). The sight of these birds flying unencumbered across international borders, as they have done for centuries, was a message of hope on our journey, and symbolic of QLF's Mission in the Middle East. *Photograph by Charles Jacobi*

Inside Back Cover: Petra is an archaeological site in the Arabah, Ma'an Governorate, Jordan, lying on the slope of Mount Hor in a basin among the mountains which form the eastern flank of Arabah (Wadi Araba), the large valley running from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. In 1985, UNESCO designated Petra a World Heritage Site. *Photograph by David Mention*

MESSAGE FROM QLF PRESIDENT

I want to congratulate each member of your team (comprised of talented individuals from both the Middle East and North America) for coming together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect to search for and share approaches to reducing points of community conflict in dealing with the many complex environmental issues confronting the nations of the Middle East. No doubt, what we learn using Middle East case studies can also improve conservation approaches here in North America. It is absolutely a global environment win-win!

In travel to the region your team made new friends, demonstrated a unique capacity *to listen*, and showed a determination to discover new ways to solve complicated conservation disputes. And your work ethic was reportedly the stuff of legends.

Along the way were good times mixed with long hours of internal as well as external consensus-building among your group and between your group and the many organizations with whom you interacted in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.

I am proud of the work you have done, thank you for your participation and congratulate you on “advancing the ball” in the important field of community-based conservation.

To readers of this report, I hope you find this report both informative and useful in your own professional experience.

Larry Morris
January 2009

CITIZEN EXCHANGES AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

This publication marks the culmination of a three-year grant with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State. The Program, *Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*, brought together conservation professionals from the Middle East and from North America. This four-phase program consists of a Fellowship for Middle East Conservation Leaders in New England (2006); a Fellowship for North American Conservation Leaders in the Middle East (2007); the *Consensus and Capacity Building Workshop* (2008); and the publication, *Consensus Building and Collaborative Conservation* (2009). In the publication you will read about case studies of Middle East and North American Fellows, which reflect the spirit of program participants to build consensus and work across borders—political boundaries, cultural frameworks, and socioeconomic borders.

For nearly three decades, QLF has directed International Programs, and for 18 years, QLF's *Middle East Program* has directed Exchanges for conservation professionals who are Arab and Jewish Israelis, Egyptians, Jordanians, Lebanese, and Palestinians. *Middle East Program* Alumni have since formed collaborative efforts and partnerships, working in the QLF tradition honoring QLF's traditional bioregional approach to address environmental issues. The magic of the program is in its simplicity whereby the environment serves as the common language that allows disparate people to work together toward a common conservation goal. The path to mutual understanding and trust begins with open dialogue on shared issues of environmental and social justice. The end result is consensus and collaborative conservation.

There are many who deserve recognition for their steadfast support in many ways for the *Middle East Program*, *Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*. I am deeply grateful to Thomas Johnston, Senior Exchange Specialist, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for his constant and unwavering support, and firm belief in the merits of citizen diplomacy and exchanges. I would like to acknowledge and recognize Officers in Public Affairs in the U.S. Embassy of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the

U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem for their continued commitment to this program. Each has opened doors to QLF's *Middle East Program* and have extended support in ways that have engaged Alumni to work on region-wide initiatives. I extend my gratitude to those Officers who served as our regional contact for the duration of this grant and to include: Haynes R. Mahoney and Helen O. Lovejoy of the United States Embassy to Egypt; Efraim A. Cohen, Elena Mischel, and Leslie Smith of the United States Embassy to Israel; Philip A. Frayne and Cynthia Harvey of the United States Embassy to Jordan; Alistair C. Baskey, Eric Geelan, Maureen V. Marroum, Dana I. Rassas, Raymond J. Saleh, Micaela A. Schweitzer-Bluhm of the U.S. Consulate General of Jerusalem.

And, there are consultants, staff, and Fellows who deserve recognition for their fine work on this program. I am deeply grateful to Alix Hopkins, QLF Alumna, Member of the QLF Corporation, writer and consultant, who served as the Program Facilitator with vision and thoughtful guidance. I'd like to acknowledge the skilled facilitators of the *Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop*—Karen Firehock, and QLF Alumnus Raed Nimri (Jordan)—who with Alix Hopkins and Fellows, Charles Curtin and Sami Backleh, designed the workshop. And a special thanks to QLF staff for an exceptional job in all your endeavors. Julia Judson-Rea served as the architect of this program and the Coordinator of the Fellowship to New England, and along with Shaima Al-Khalili, as the Assistant Coordinator, they made a formidable team. And with finesse, wise intelligence, and sensitivity to the region, Elizabeth Cabot managed and coordinated the most complex phases of the program: the Fellowship to the Middle East, the Workshop, and this publication. Finally, so much gratitude to the Fellows for their commitment to the program, and a special recognition to each for their deep and abiding commitment to leave the world a better place for generations to follow.

Beth Alling
Executive Vice President
Officer-in-Charge, *Middle East Program*

PARTICIPANTS

2006 FELLOWSHIP TO THE ATLANTIC REGION

Staff

Elizabeth Alling (Massachusetts): Executive Vice President, Quebec-Labrador Foundation, and Officer-in-Charge, *Middle East Program*

Julia Judson-Rea (Massachusetts): Coordinator, *Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*

Shaima Al-Khalili (Massachusetts): Assistant Coordinator, *Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*

Middle East Fellows

Sharón Benheim (Israel): Director, Arava Peace and Environmental Networks, Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, a leading environmental teaching and research program in the Middle East that prepares future Arab and Jewish leaders to cooperatively solve the region's environmental challenges.

Wiesam A. A. Essa (Gaza): Program Coordinator for the Greenpeace Association, an NGO established in 1996 by youth in Deir El Balah, with the aim of preserving the environment. The Association has branches in Gaza City and Khan Younis City.

** Replaced in latter phases by **Sami Backleb (Palestine):** Environmental Consultant working with the Palestine Wildlife Society and other regional and international conservation organizations.

Raed Rawhi Abu Hayyaneh (Jordan): Head of the Environmental Education and Awareness Department, Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan (RSCN) until 2006; currently the Program Director for the Community Mobilization for Family Health Project of the Jordan Communication Partnership for Family Health (CPFH), a five-year public health information and communication program. CPFH has partnered with Johns Hopkins University and Save the Children/Jordan, in coordination with the Jordan Ministry of Health and USAID. Raed continues to work in an advisory capacity for RSCN.

Khulood Hindiyeh (Jordan): Project Coordinator, Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (through 2006), a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of Jordan's marine environments through conservation programs, advocacy, education, outreach, and empowerment. Khulood is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Corporate Social Responsibility at the Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, U.K.

** Replaced in latter phases by **Fadi Sharaiba and Arwa Helou (Jordan):** Executive Director and Program Manager, respectively, of the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan.

Amr Ali Hasan Osman (Egypt): Managing Director, Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association, an NGO working on marine conservation initiatives in Hurghada, Red Sea, Egypt.

Uri Ramon (Israel): Head of the Landscape Survey and Evaluation Unit, Dehshe Institute, Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), Israel's oldest and largest environmental organization. SPNI promotes sustainable alternatives to development, and facilitates public involvement in this process through education, leadership development, and environmental advocacy.

Asaf Raz (Israel): Coordinator, Environmental Justice Project of the New Israel Fund's Empowerment and Training Center established to promote democracy, tolerance, and social justice in Israel.

Sara El Sayed (Egypt): Senior School Coordinator, through education and leadership development and environmental advocacy. Wadi Environmental Science Centre, a non-profit organization and training center dedicated to improving science education and technology transfer in Egypt, and with the goal of fostering environmentally sound economic growth.

Dina Adel Selim (Egypt): Projects Assistant for Community and Institutional Development, a consulting firm that designs and implements integrated programs and monitors the impact on the community, communications, and institutional development.

PARTICIPANTS

2007 FELLOWSHIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Staff

Elizabeth Alling (Massachusetts): Executive Vice President, Quebec-Labrador Foundation, and Officer-in-Charge, *Middle East Program*

Julia Judson-Rea (Massachusetts): Coordinator, *Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*

Facilitator

Alix W. Hopkins (U.S.): Independent Consultant and Founding Executive Director of Portland Trails, an urban land trust based in Portland, Maine, and Chair of the Mountain Division Alliance, promoting the vision for a fifty-five mile rail-with-trail across southern Maine.

North American Fellows

Jane K. Arbuckle (Maine): Director of Stewardship, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a statewide land trust that conserves and stewards Maine's coastal lands and islands for their renowned scenic beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, ecological diversity, and working landscapes.

Charles G. Curtin (Maine, Massachusetts): Director, New Mexico-based non-profit research institute Arid Lands Project; the Maine-based Ecological Policy Design; and Fellow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-United States Geological Society Science Impact Collaborative, where he teaches courses in collaborative conservation and adaptive management, landscape ecology, and ecological policy design.

Julia L. Doermann (Oregon): Independent Consultant and Professor, *Water Resources Program*, Oregon State University. The program is designed to increase the capacity of individuals and organizations to promote sustainable solutions for water resources and watersheds, and facilitate collaboration as an alternative to litigation and polarization.

Rev. Theodore G. Hoskins (Maine): Minister to Coastal Communities and Fisheries, Maine Sea Coast Mission, a non-profit organization rooted in a history of non-denominational service that provides spiritual, health, and youth development programs in coastal and island communities from mid-coast to Downeast Maine; also Co-Chair of the Downeast Groundfish Initiative, which is a coalition of individuals and organizations who all share the common vision of healthy coastal communities built on sustainable resources.

Charles D. Jacobi (Maine): Natural Resource Specialist, Acadia National Park, the first national park east of the Mississippi River and home to the tallest mountain along the United States Atlantic Coast. The park has a rich history that includes Native Americans, European settlers, artists, and conservationists.

David C. Mention (Maine): Trail Director, Maine Island Trail Association, a statewide NGO established to promote recreational access to Maine's wilderness islands and to educate visitors on the benefits of low impact use practices and stewardship.

Rebecca L. Scibek (Massachusetts): Volunteer Coordinator, Charles River Watershed Association, a non-profit organization with a Mission to use science, advocacy and the law to protect, preserve, and enhance conservation of the Charles River and its watershed.



Gulf of Aqaba, Jordan. Aqaba is the only port in the Kingdom with direct access to the Red Sea and strategically located at the intersection of Jordan, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia (2007).

Elizabeth Alling

PARTICIPANTS

2008 CAPACITY AND CONSENSUS BUILDING WORKSHOP

Staff

Elizabeth Alling (Massachusetts): Executive Vice President, Quebec-Labrador Foundation, and Officer-in-Charge, *Middle East Program*

Elizabeth Cabot (Massachusetts): Coordinator, *Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*

Facilitators

Alix W. Hopkins (U.S.): Program Facilitator

Karen E. Firehock (U.S.): Workshop Facilitator, Director and Co-Founder of the Green Infrastructure Center, a non-profit organization located in Charlottesville, Virginia, established in December 2006 to help communities develop strategies for protecting and conserving their ecological and cultural assets through environmentally-sensitive decisions, lifestyles, and planning. Ms. Firehock is also a lecturer on the adjunct faculty at the University of Virginia where she teaches graduate courses in green infrastructure planning, global health and watershed planning, stormwater management, and environmental regulation.

Raed Nimri (Jordan): Workshop Facilitator, Program Officer, Regional Center of Expertise, United Nations University-International Leadership Institute (UNU-ILI), Amman, Jordan. Mr. Nimri coordinates the initiatives of the UNU's Regional Center of Expertise, manages its

Water and Environmental Programs, and conducts training on Water Demand Management Coordination workshops and conferences. He is responsible for the Environmental and Water Awareness National Committee in Jordan.

Middle East Participants

Sami Backleh: Palestine

Sharón Benheim: Israel

Raed Rawhi Abu Hayyaneh: Jordan

Amr Ali Hasan Osman: Egypt

Uri Ramon: Israel

Asaf Raz: Israel

Sara El Sayed: Egypt

Fadi Sharaiha: Jordan

North American Participants

Jane K. Arbuckle: Maine

Charles G. Curtin: Maine, Massachusetts

Julia L. Doermann: Oregon

Rev. Theodore G. Hoskins: Maine

Charles D. Jacobi: Maine

David C. Mention: Maine

Rebecca L. Scibek: Massachusetts

Giftun Island, Red Sea, near Hurghada, Egypt (2007)

Elizabeth Alling



CONSENSUS BUILDING *New Perspectives*

Sharón Benheim, Israel

As an observant Jewish woman, I found myself marveling that many of the principles we learned in the QLF Middle East Program, *Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*, fit perfectly with the traditional teachings of Judaism. Many basic teachings emphasize listening to everyone, looking for the best solutions, considering all the points and not giving advantage to those with material wealth or status over those without. I also live on a kibbutz in Israel. My community is a model of direct democracy and although we do tend to vote and use majority rules for many decisions, we also have a strong inherent desire to reach consensus whenever possible. While I learned a lot about decision making and group processes from participating and living in this kind of community (for over 20 years), the workshops and training we received from QLF as part of our program organized the principles and skill sets in an incredibly useful way. In my mind, consensus building is simply resolving conflicts in groups and in communities, which are nothing but a group of groups.

In fact, I think that consensus building rests on a basic philosophical question of the relationship between values. When a difficult situation arises, which is all the time in real life between people in communities, it is often hard to see the best solution because of conflicting values. Our Fellowship to the Atlantic Region looked at environmental issues—which are by nature very personal, as each individual has needs of their local environment, as do the larger regional community. In the Middle East, there is a sense that consensus is hopelessly unattainable. But I am hopeful. I work at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (www.arava.org) where we work to transcend political borders, improve the environment, foster education, and create a culture of peace in the region. I have seen how the group of Fellows in our QLF program went from suspicious of each other to trusting, and how we bonded across our political realities and worked together to find the best practices for addressing environmental conflicts at the most human level—in communities.

Many people believe that consensus building is really compromise. But we know that compromising can be a lose-lose solution. The traditional story of two women living together, each with a baby, helps illustrate how this can happen. One of the babies tragically dies in the night. Each woman claims the living baby is hers, and both are brought before King Solomon, who served as judge in those times. King Solomon listens carefully and knows that only one of the women can be the true mother, but he declares the solution to be to cut the baby in half—a fair compromise. Solomon uses a trick to have the truth out, and the true mother immediately calls out to give the baby to the other woman. She would rather save her child's life than continue to demand her rights. In the end, Solomon passes judgment to restore the baby to the true mother.

Judaism teaches that Moses was a leader who held justice as the highest value. But if one holds justice above all other values, there can be a lot of “fallout.” In many cases, the stories teach that Moses was a strict judge and that the result of a win-lose case created bad feelings amongst the people. On the other hand, Aharon the high priest symbolized holding peace above justice. He was known as one who never accused or blamed anyone. He used kindness to inspire better behavior. A story is told of a thief who passed Aharon on the road, and the high priest greeted him “Shalom” although he knew for a fact the man had stolen from another. The next day the thief thought, “How can I steal? Then Aharon will greet me and I won't be able to look him in the eye.” He never assigned blame to anyone; rather, Aharon would look for a peaceful way to solve the conflict. Moses was quicker to judge strictly and order a solution, while Aharon looked for ways to influence through kindness. Neither was able to rule on his own; they had to work together to keep the peace amongst the people and to solve problems.

When studying Jewish tradition, it becomes clear that the laws and courts are the tools to preserve the peace and not necessarily to seek the truth. Often the courts will act instead as mediators, suggesting ways to work for the best of all the parties involved. Even the Lord alters the truth when he speaks to Abraham for the sake





of keeping peace in the family. He tells Abraham that Sarah laughed at the thought of having a child, “because I have aged.” When she is told she will have a child, she laughs and says, “My Lord is an old man.” The Creator puts peace between Abraham and Sarah above the truth.

If we acknowledge that all parties in a conflict have good intentions, at least for their own sake, we can take the time to assess their positions, needs, and interests. During our QLF program, we learned that people everywhere want their honor and their traditions—as well as their livelihood and security. Not necessarily in that order. We saw that often people intuitively seek sustainability for their own way of life.

By learning from each other, we could see that fisherman in Maine or Aqaba, ranchers in Africa or the American southwest, farmers on the Palestinian hillsides and in the Shikma Region of Israel, Bedouins in the Negev, and bikers and hikers in Maine, all want these same things—dignity and a future. They all have to cope with power struggles between local communities and government officials in charge of their area, as well as with conflicts over the values and needs within and between communities themselves. We learned how, as researchers, activists, and educators, we could empower communities by providing the tools to find the best solutions to their conflicts. And we learned that only by working with the people in the communities, with patience and an open mind to hear directly from the people, would we have a chance at building practical solutions. At the basic level—working in communities and with people—we saw that “slow and steady” really makes a difference in the environment and in the lives of people. I believe this can be true in the Middle East. If we can work together on environmental issues at the level of people with people, we can find consensus in this region.

Dome of the Rock, or in Arabic, Qubbat As-Sakhrah, an Islamic shrine and the oldest extant Islamic monument in Jerusalem (2007)

Photograph by Charles Jacobi

CONSENSUS BUILDING *New Perspectives*

Ted Hoskins, U.S.

Consensus building in the Middle East to most people seems a contradiction in terms, a dreamy apparition of the mind, a denial of obvious realities. And in the larger sense of international politics and policies, that often appears to be true. But recently, QLF has caused some of us to reassess that assumption by redefining the scale of focus. In so doing, we have gained some real hope for a larger scale process that just might, with great care and commitment, truly show a path to regional cooperation and peace.

Where did we start? Why, at the most local level: the community. Here, there was every ingredient and

opportunity for conflict...and also every ingredient and opportunity for resolution. At this small scale we found addressed not only the easy matters, but the hard ones: resources and relationships, property and peace, law and tradition.

Consensus is one of a variety of tools available for social and group progresses where diversity exists and unanimity of action is sought. Make no mistake—consensus doesn't just happen. Consensus begins with a vision undergirded by an uncommon commitment to reach a common goal; a commitment to hang in there when cherished ideas are challenged and bedrock values are pushed aside; a commitment to give the time required to open minds and explore new ways and change hearts. It is within the

The Israeli-West Bank Separation Wall, West Bank, Palestine. In the background is the Israeli settlement of Giva'at Zae'ev (2007).

Charles Jacobi



community that one can get close enough to really know the other person – their perspective, their point of view, along with the traditions and beliefs that lead to and support that point of view. Here in the community, personal relationships and even true friendships can develop where a growing trust eventually allows one to be close enough to deeply care about how the other person feels, close enough to even share how you feel. All this takes careful listening and challenging and evaluating, and then listening some more. It begs for time to ask back and forth “what would it take to get you to sign on to this idea?” “Do you see a way for your ideas to be a part of what we are talking about?” “Maybe we could state the problem in an entirely different way, so you can see our concerns, or maybe you could restate it in a way that would help us see your concerns, and then we can both work on what we come up with.” Only within a community, where an investment of time has led to the development of trust, can we expect to effectively address the difficult and often long-standing issues of the day.

The common tool is consensus; the common reality is that in difficult areas such as the Middle East, it doesn't always work; the common need is some spiritual dimension within us that allows it to work. What was seen in the QLF experiences, again and again, was a sense of spiritual strength that must have pushed individuals and communities toward reaching consensus. I am not suggesting this in any articulated or organized religious sense. There is a deeper, more personal spiritual reality within us that somehow opens closed doors, lets light shine into darkness, mixes in the leaven from which new hope rises. It is this spiritual dimen-

sion of our lives—this inner source of hope—that I believe can lead us beyond ourselves, beyond the immediate barriers to press ourselves and indeed to give ourselves permission to find the way toward resolution and action through agreement, partnership, and consensus.

So this “new perspective” is not at all new...but as old as life itself. The spirit within each and every one of us has the ability to dream dreams and envision life as it should be. It is this same spirit that can empower us to work together in community to achieve common goals. Isn't it odd? We have to move to the smallest scale possible to find a place where life can work, and yet the spirit looks at the scale of all humanity and all creation to bring its argument from within that life truly can work...together...for all of us.

The QLF *Middle East Program* experience, for me, was an invitation to strengthen my hope and belief in the ability of communities, and indeed of nations, to find and choose and support ways of stability and peace. If we can build consensus on every scale of that vision we'll be on our way.



Departing Jordan at the Arava border crossing between southern Jordan and southern Israel (2007)

PROGRAM NARRATIVES

The Fellowship to the Atlantic Region

Julia Judson-Rea

Phase One of *Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict* brought nine conservation professionals from Jordan, Israel, Egypt, and Gaza to New England to kick off the four-phased project sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The project hinges on a reverse exchange between professionals facing community-based conflict over natural resources, land use, pollution, and organizational management within environmental organizations. The three-week Fellowship in New England hinged on three major components: case study presentations by the Middle East Fellows, site visits to the case studies of the American Fellows, and workshops on three methods of conflict prevention and management.

Each of the nine Fellows presented their case studies to the group. The Fellows gave background on their respective cases, highlighted the major issues and conflicts, or potential for conflict, and discussed what steps they had already taken to address these conflicts. Discussions were lively and Fellows shared experiences and methods that could be applied to other communities. These were spread out throughout the three weeks, and were held anywhere from a cramped hotel room to a spacious conference room at the foot of Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. The subjects of the Middle East case studies varied as much as the location where they were presented, and all were equally as interesting.

The Fellows spent much of the three weeks on the road, traveling through New England, specifically coastal Maine to visit the case studies of Ted Hoskins and Charlie Jacobi, two of the seven United States Fellows participating in the program. Charlie Jacobi toured Fellows through Acadia

National Park to show the challenges of management for a dual mission: visitor experience and resource protection. Fellows met with various stakeholders involved in park management, and also enjoyed hikes and driving tours through the Mt. Desert Island. Ted Hoskins of the Maine Seacoast Mission and the Downeast Groundfish Initiative introduced the Middle East Fellows to the lobster industry in Maine by leading the group through tours of hatcheries and research stations, and providing a forum for conversations with community leaders, land use planners, industry leaders, lobstermen, and conservationists.

In Ipswich, Fellows attended four workshops in conflict prevention and mitigation

led by professional trainers and practitioners. Maggie Herzig of the Public Conversations Project introduced Fellows to dialogue and stakeholder preparation. Peter Cooke of Cooke Associates focused on conflict prevention via the creation of values and ethics statements for organizations and groups. The final two workshops focused on methods of negotiation, one led by Staci Nicole Smith of the Consensus Building



Photograph courtesy of Shaima Al-Khalili

Fellowship to the Atlantic Region, (2006). Shaima Al-Khalili, Assistant Coordinator, *Middle East Program* (left) and Julia Judson-Rea, Coordinator, *Middle East Program*



Chris Pendleton

Fellowship to the Atlantic Region (2006). Front row from left: Raed Hayyaneh (Jordan), Sharón Benheim (Israel), Khulood Hindiye (Jordan), and Dina Selim (Egypt). Back row from left: Asaf Raz (Israel), Sara El Sayed (Egypt), Uri Ramon (Israel), and Amr Ali (Egypt)



Institute, and the second led by Jim Tull, a private consultant on negotiations. Staci Smith provided a comprehensive and insightful introduction to the theories and general principles of negotiation and the following day Jim Tull built upon this foundation to teach more specific skills and to “practice” using negotiation.

The Fellowship in New England included site visits to several relevant nonprofits, environmental education programs, and an afternoon learning about community forestry and community-based resource management that is being applied in Gorham, New Hampshire. In addition to the numerous site visits and tours that comprised a well-rounded Fellowship on environmental conflict management, the Fellows had opportunities to enjoy the early summer in New England by hiking in some of the most famous lands in the region, by walking through Boston, Massachusetts and Portland, Maine, and by exploring Cranes Beach, just on QLF’s doorstep.

The first phase of the project introduced the Fellows to one another and to each other’s projects, it provided the group with a common experience from which they could build strong friendships and working relationships that have come to be even more cherished in the later stages of the project.



Middle East Fellows participating in an Outward Bound orientation course, Thompson Island, Massachusetts, during the Fellowship to the Atlantic Region (2006). From left: Uri Ramon (Israel), Amr Ali (Egypt), and Dina Selim (Egypt)

Fellowship to the Middle East

Elizabeth Cabot

When I joined QLF last summer as the Coordinator of the *Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*, my boss and mentor Beth Alling explained to me how the goal of Phase II, consisting of a Fellowship to the Middle East, was to foster citizen diplomacy and cross-border environmental collaboration as a bridge to greater understanding, dialogue, and cooperation. While at the time I understood what she meant intellectually, nothing could have prepared me for how this would manifest itself in real life, and how it would affect me on an emotional and visceral level. This Fellowship brought seven environmental and conservation professionals from the United



Fellowship to the Middle East (2007). From left: Elizabeth Cabot (U.S.), Coordinator, *Middle East Program*, and Becca Scibek (U.S.) at an Alumni Dinner, Beit Sahour, West Bank, Palestine

Elizabeth Alling

States to visit the case study sites and partner organizations of their counterparts in the Middle East, taking place over a two-week period in November of 2007.

Our group of ten from the U.S. (seven Fellows, two staff members, and one facilitator) covered a lot of ground in these two weeks, traveling through Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the West Bank to visit the nine Middle East Fellows. We were jetlagged, harried by long days and constant travel. Despite this, we realized that we were witnessing something incredible: a grassroots movement of environmental and social justice activists working against truly formidable odds to better the world around them. The courage and perseverance this takes—simply to do one’s job every day—inspired us and gave us a profound sense of perspective. We all agreed that in our own work, our daily strength has never been called upon to the same degree, our problems never so seemingly insurmountable. Yet cross-cultural similarities existed too, and critically, there was much to discuss. It was in these discussions that the magic of this exchange program emerged. We all have our own perspectives and sets of beliefs that affect how we engage the world. These are in no small part culturally embedded. However, through sustained dialogue around a shared concern—in this case the environment—there can emerge relationships of mutual respect and trust through which persons from



Elizabeth Alling

Fellows hiking in the Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan, on break during the *Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop* (2008). Dana is managed by the Jordanian Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.



Fellowship to the Middle East (2007). Alumni Dinner, Beit Sahour, West Bank, Palestine. From left: Ibrahim Odeh (Palestine, 2001), Alix Hopkins (U.S. 2007-2008), Haya Helal (Palestine, 2003), Imad Atrash (Palestine, 1996), and North American staff and Alumni (2007-2008) – Elizabeth Cabot, Julia Doermann, Charles Curtin, Becca Scibek, Jane Arbuckle, Charlie Jacobi, Dave Mention, and Beth Alling

diverse cultural contexts can begin the process of learning from one another.

News coverage of the violence and strife in the Middle East can make many of us living in other parts of the world feel overwhelmed and even inured to the humanity for whom these problems are real and often daily struggles. This Fellowship gave a small group of Americans the chance to travel to the Middle East, to witness the diversity, beauty, and cultural vibrancy of this region, and to gain an informed perspective on the various contexts in which environmental work takes place there. Some Fellows were meeting for the first time, while others were rekindling connections created during the Fellowship to the Atlantic Region. The *Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop* in January of 2008 was still to follow. This would bring both sets of Fellows together as a group for the first time; from the workshop would emerge collaboration beyond the immediate scope of the program.

I will never forget the time I spent coordinating the Program’s Fellowship to the Middle East. Simply put, it was a formative life experience. The people I met from both the Middle East and United States, the organizations they work for, and the environmental and social justice projects in which they are involved will continue to resonate with me as I move forward in my own professional life. I am grateful to QLF for providing me with this opportunity.

Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop

Elizabeth Cabot

In January 2008, participants in the *Middle East Program Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict* met at the Dana Nature Reserve in southern Jordan for Phase III, a four day *Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop*. This was an exciting event, as it brought both sets of Fellows (Middle East and North American) together as a group for the first time, joined by two QLF staff members (Beth Alling and myself), Program Facilitator Alix Hopkins, and two Workshop Facilitators, Karen E. Firehock (U.S.) and Raed Nimri (Middle East). Much was discussed in these few days together. The group began by reflecting on their experiences during the program's two Fellowships before delving into a host of topics, including: defining con-

flict, how one approaches it, and when it is necessary; how to increase the resiliency of individuals and organizations in a changing world; the challenges and opportunities of cross-cultural communication; and negotiating power imbalances when working across borders—be they cultural, economic, political, or otherwise. The Fellows also refined a list of key elements for effective collaboration and conservation, developed initially during the Fellowship to the Middle East. This *Checklist for Effective Environmental Conflict Resolution: Ten Core Principles for Successful Project Design* was derived from the diverse collection of case studies featured in the program, and can be found below this article. In summary, Fellows agreed that projects that are adaptive, cross boundary, and that promote social equity are more likely to achieve their intended outcomes.

Structurally, the workshop was a balance between formal activities and discussion, and informal exchanges that took place during workshop activities and also during

Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop (2008). Participants in a small group session, Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan

Elizabeth Alling



hikes in the reserve, over group meals, and after dinner while drinking locally grown tea. For me, listening to these conversations was both educational and inspirational. During one such exchange, the Middle East Fellows returned to the topic of their Fellowship to the Atlantic Region, explaining what a rare opportunity it was for a small group of individuals from across the Arab-Israeli divide to meet on neutral ground, to learn about conservation and environmental stewardship in the United States, and to meet with leaders in the fields of consensus building and conflict resolution. They continued by explaining how environmentally-based collaborations in the Middle East between Arabs and Israelis exist, but almost always take place in the realm of partial disclosure or even in total secrecy. It was similarly illuminating to hear of the ways in which Fellows have grown professionally since the program began in 2006 and of the role QLF has played in supporting their developments. These discussions underscored for me the critical importance of the QLF *Middle East Program*. QLF is nurturing leaders and making cross-border environmental collaboration happen in a region where it is most needed.

Checklist for Effective Environmental Conflict Resolution: Ten Core Principles for Successful Project Design

(Most case studies in this Exchange Program included many or all of these elements.)

1. **Adapts to change (global to local):** Projects are able to revisit initial goals and assess effectiveness, making changes as needed. Solutions are temporal, flexible and scalable. There are mutual recognitions of changes by all group members. The group or project can move from a single-issue focus to a more complex, nuanced understanding if needed.
2. **Encourages equity:** Project seeks to share power and work to shift the power differential so all have an equal chance to participate and influence the project. Process fairness is important.
3. **Integrates approaches:** Different approaches are needed for success (reactive, active, etc.). Group is able to choose the right solution(s) for the problem at hand.



Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop, Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan (2008). Front row from left: Dave Mention (U.S.), Jane Arbuckle (U.S.), Beth Alling (U.S.), Alix Hopkins (U.S.), Sharón Benheim (Israel), Sara El Sayed (Egypt) (kneeling), Raed Nimri (Jordan). Middle row from left: Raed Hayyaneh (Jordan), Asaf Raz (Israel), Charlie Jacobi (U.S.), Karen Firehock (U.S.), Uri Ramon (Israel), Becca Scibek (U.S.), Julia Doermann (U.S.), Ted Hoskins (U.S.), Elizabeth Cabot (U.S.), Fadi Sharaiha (Jordan), Amr Ali (Egypt). Top row from left: Sami Backleh (Palestine), Charles Curtin (U.S.) Photograph courtesy of David Mention

4. **Applies systems thinking:** Group can think strategically about a problem. For example, is it immediate or long term? Who is affected? What issues are connected and what are leverage points?
5. **Considers and integrates culture, community and science:** Process includes space and process for including different ways of knowing (as opposed to only one way). Social and cultural knowledge are included to broaden understanding.
6. **Works trans-boundary:** Project can look at multiple boundaries such as physical, ecological, cultural, social, and economic.
7. **Encompasses strong group processes, among which are:** communication, collaboration, exchange, stewardship, transparency, commonality, relationship building, trust, social responsibility, and leadership.
8. **Promotes sustainability:** Project considers ecology, economics and social issues, and crafts solutions that are resilient (able to withstand change without losing underlying functions).
9. **Remains flexible and open to innovation:** Develops creative ways of funding the group and seeks solutions that are supportable. Projects also can demonstrate economic benefits.
10. **Embodies and increases respect, empowerment, dignity, compassion, and acknowledgement.**

MIDDLE EAST FELLOWS



Consensus Building and Collaborative Conservation

Map by Stephen Engle

The map (at left) tracks the route taken on the November 2007 Fellowship to the Middle East, which brought seven North American Fellows, two QLF staff members, and one facilitator to visit the case study sites of nine Middle East participants, located across Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank. The following professional biographies, case study summaries, and narratives of the Middle East Fellows are organized according to the order in which their case studies were visited on this Fellowship. The location, marked Dana Reserve, indicates the site of the January 2008 Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop.

SARA EL SAYED

Senior School Coordinator, Wadi Environmental Science Center
Mobandeseen, Egypt

As Coordinator for Senior Grades at the Wadi Environmental Science Center (WESC), a registered non-profit organization dedicated to progressive outdoor environmental education, Sara is charged with a number of responsibilities. These include planning field trips and other educational activities for the senior school, and taking care of logistical efforts for these activities, such as coordinating teachers and preparing all necessary materials. Sara is also involved in WESC's *Water Awareness and Education Program*, which empowers Egyptian youth to become agents of change in solving the country's water shortage through education and awareness-building.

Empowering Egyptian Youth in Decision Making in Water Related Issues

Sara's case study draws on her involvement with WESC's *Water Awareness and Education Program*, initiated in July 2005 in response to the increasing threats on already limited clean water resources throughout Egypt. The program addresses Egypt's water issues with a group of students from different governorates across the country, with the belief that informed students can convincingly transfer knowledge to their communities and facilitate a shift towards greater conservation and management of Egypt's water resources. The main goal of the research component of the *Water Awareness and Education Program* is to introduce students to the various eco-regions of Egypt and to teach them how to scientifically assess different water problems in field



Sara el Sayed, Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan (2008)

David Mention

locations using inquiry-based methodologies. This enables students to gain an in-depth understanding of the water concerns facing a given area; it is important because in addition to a national water shortage, each locality faces unique issues that must be assessed separately. By giving these students the tools to understand the water problems within their respective governorates, they can become agents of change within in their communities.

Through the *Water Awareness and Education Program*, students have come to realize that Egypt's main problem is not a lack of water, but rather a mismanagement of water resources. When the students visited several water supply and sanitation facilities, they noticed glaring deficiencies. They also learned that local communities were resentful of the government ministries in charge of national water management, which they felt were unresponsive to their problems. When the students appealed to the ministries on behalf of their communities, however, most felt that they were not taken seriously. Despite this setback, those involved in the program feel that identifying what doesn't work can be helpful in generating strategies that are more effective in working within the framework of governmental hierarchy and bureaucracy.

NARRATIVE

QLF has opened many doors for me, for other Middle Easterners, and for North Americans. It has helped me understand in detail the dynamics that shape our world and how politics and policies may be influencing all of us even if we are halfway around the globe from each other. It was a great pleasure to visit some of the Fellows in the United States and to gain insight into the similarities and differences between United States environmental problems and solutions, and those present in the Middle East. I learned that there are in fact



Elizabeth Alling

Students at the Wadi Environmental Science Center learn about sand permeability, Mohandessine, Egypt (2007)

many similarities, especially in the area of community mobilization, but also important differences in the regions' financial situations that allow for things to move faster in the United States.

QLF's focus on community also confirmed for me that every environmental approach that is imported could work for us in the Middle East. Although this was a belief that I had long held, the program validated the idea that local know-how is of the utmost importance in the environmental field. The June 2006 Fellowship to the Atlantic Region, in particular, really emphasized this for me.

This program was particularly compelling on a human level. It was enriching to meet such interesting people, some of whom were from Israel. Though I do not share the same feelings about the situation in Israel as some Israelis, our Fellowship to the Atlantic Region gave me an opportunity to break some barriers. I will probably never work with an Israeli or travel to Israel, but learning about the Israeli perspective firsthand was truly informative. The North American Fellows' visit to Egypt in November of 2007 was also a real pleasure, because it showed me that we are really going down the right path and it reassured my colleagues and I that we must be doing something right.

However, I was disappointed with the Jordan workshop. Although the scenery and the people were great, I expected more. The presentations were not very useful. I felt like I needed better tools for facilitation. I have been taking hands-on training to learn about facilitation and mediation, and none of these tools appeared in this workshop. I don't know if it was because it was assumed that the

Fellows were expert enough in these fields, or if there were other reasons for this omission.

Thus, the impact of this program, for me, was more on the personal and human level than on a professional level. However, some of the North American Fellows' comments were very inspirational and useful professionally. For example, when they visited the Wadi Environmental Science Centre on their Fellowship to the Middle East, we discussed the horizontal structure of the organization's staff, and my colleagues and I discovered that we were facing a potential leadership problem once our boss delegated full management responsibility to her employees. Ted Hoskins, in particular, gave us some really good advice on how we should run our NGO when this shift occurs.

Going forward, I hope that QLF continues to expand its alumni network so that I can continue to benefit from connections with previous and future Fellows.

AMR ALI HASAN OSMAN (Amr Ali)

Managing Director

Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association
Hurghada, Egypt

As Managing Director for the Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association (HEPCA), Amr works in the challenging region of Egypt's Red Sea coast, where tourism development, conservation work, and the rights of local communities must strike a tenuous balance. Amr negotiates with a variety of stakeholders including landowners, developers, municipalities, development agencies, and international donors to create sustainable alternatives to fisheries and environmentally harmful diving practices. Amr was a linchpin in the fight against shark fishing in Egypt, facilitating collaboration between various interest groups and bringing their concerns to the negotiating table. Amr also launched an anti-fining campaign along the Red Sea coastline and was presented with the "Shark Guardians of the Year 2006" award by *Sharkproject* in Germany. As part of the expansion of Hurghada, a popular coastal resort location, Amr helped to create one of the largest recreational conservation diving schemes in the world. More recently,

he enlisted Greenpeace to bring its largest research ship in the region to Hurghata as part of its “Defending our Oceans” tour, which promotes long-term planning, conservation, and sustainable development to protect the world’s coastal and marine ecosystems.

Sustainable Mooring Practices in the Red Sea

Amr’s case study examines the implementation of an important conservation measure for Egypt’s Red Sea coastline, where environmentally irresponsible development poses a critical threat to fragile biodiversity. The tourism industry in Egypt has grown remarkably in the past decade, and this influx of approximately seven million visitors every year has put a heavy strain on the country’s environmental resources, particularly in hotspots along the Red Sea such as Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada. These areas are grappling with the nega-

tive effects of development on their natural habitats and indigenous populations. The urgency for protecting what remains of the coastline’s fragile coral reefs grows with the proliferation of private and commercial boats. Physical damage to the reefs from boat anchors is well documented, but mooring buoys, which eliminate the need for anchoring onto the reef, significantly reduces damage.



David Mention

Amr Ali, Managing Director, Hurghada Environmental and Protection Association, Giftun Island, Red Sea, near Hurghada, Egypt (2007)

Fellowship to the Middle East (2007). En route to the protected Giftun Island in the Red Sea, Hurghada, Egypt. The large motorboats are attached to moorings rather than anchored onto the reef, which would otherwise cause significant damage to the coral. HEPCA is a leader in promoting sustainable mooring practices in the Red Sea and worldwide. *Elizabeth Alling*





Elizabeth Alling

Members of the Hurghada Environmental and Protection Association and the Red Sea diving community demonstrate how mooring systems are installed in the ocean (2007).

This is where HEPCA comes in. Through private funding and other initiatives, HEPCA has provided and installed mooring buoys in a number of dive-sites. In cooperation with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), HEPCA has installed more than 850 moorings throughout the entire Red Sea, creating the most extensive mooring system in the world. HEPCA works hand in hand with the EEAA to ensure the correct use of the buoys and to implement EEAA regulations as part of a comprehensive resource protection management strategy. The organization's main commitment is to keep the moorings floating and functional, and to transfer the mooring technology to other regions that could benefit from it. However, working to implement this kind of conservation measure when up against a fast-growing tourism industry has proven challenging and has required a pragmatic, entrepreneurial approach.

NARRATIVE

The QLF program Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict has made a profound impact on me, both personally and professionally. The three weeks I

spent traveling across New England with the eight other Middle East Fellows opened my eyes to how environmental work is carried out in the United States, where there exists a far greater institutional base of support. Through the site visits we participated in, I saw a number of successful projects that I felt were transferable to the Egyptian context. This helped me to envision the direction in which Middle East conservation work can move, and gave me ideas for how to facilitate the process. In addition, the time spent as a group of Fellows from Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine gave all of us the chance to learn from each other. The opportunity is rare, and I am grateful for the relationships I developed with individuals that I otherwise would never have met.

The spirit of relationship building continued when the North American Fellows traveled to Hurghada this past November. It was a pleasure to reconnect with Ted Hoskins, Charlie Jacobi, and Beth Alling, and also to meet the new additions to our group. We discussed a lot in those few days. I learned about the projects my American colleagues were involved in, showed them examples of the work that HEPCA does in the Red Sea, and took them on a trip to protected Giftun Island for a day of relaxation in their hectic schedule. I could see the parallel to my own experience in New England: all of us Fellows learned firsthand how conservation work is approached in a vastly different context, with its own set of obstacles and considerations. This process of cross-cultural learning provided new and useful insights. When the North American Fellows departed Hurghada, I was grateful there would be another meeting in January, and looked forward to picking up where we had left off. I was also anxious to see the other Middle East Fellows again. Though we had done our best to keep in touch, a year and a half had gone by since our Fellowship to the Atlantic Region, and much had taken place in all of our lives and work. Moreover, there were new additions to the program that I wanted to get to know.

Thus, I arrived at the Dana Reserve with a great sense of expectation and excitement. I wasn't disappointed. The days we spent were discussion-packed, the setting was picturesque (although coming from Hurghada, I thought I would freeze), and the company was rewarding. At that point in my career, I felt frustrated by certain obstacles to my work in the Red Sea. The constantly uphill battle that HEPCA is fighting has made me a realist, and sometimes a cynic.

In January, I was leaning towards this latter of characteristics. Yet in the coming together of so many minds, attitudes, and perspectives at Dana, I believe all of us left having learned something — perhaps even a little bit transformed. And we had fun doing it.

Time will reveal the depth and breadth of what this program has achieved, but I am encouraged and made hopeful by what we already have. Thank you to QLF.

DINA ADEL SELIM

*Projects Assistant, Community and Institutional Development
Cairo, Egypt*

As Projects Assistant for Community and Institutional Development (CID), Dina is involved in a number of development initiatives. For example, she participated in the creation of a UNESCO document titled *Guidelines on Education for Sustainable Development*, which establishes UNESCO's 2004-2015 goals for sustainable development education and was distributed to the whole Arab region in March 2006. More recently, Dina has conducted research, provided logistical and administrative support, and has been responsible for the manage-



The Mokattam neighborhood of Cairo is home to the city's traditional garbage collectors and recyclers known as the Zabaleen (2007) *Photograph by David Mention*

ment and documentation of a report on “Business Solutions for Human Development,” funded by the UNDP, the Ministry of Investment, and private sector partners. This report is the first of its kind in the Middle East in its aim to improve understanding of the relationship between business and poverty reduction within the wider business community, government, civil

society organizations, and academia.

Dina has also provided logistical support to a consultancy firm that educates and trains civil society organizations on how to effectively implement the UNDP's Millennium Development Goals.

The Recycling Miracle of Cairo's Garbage Collectors

Dina's case study focuses on the Mokattam Plastic Recycling School for the children of the Zabaleen, who are Cairo's traditional garbage collectors and recyclers. Several generations ago, the Zabaleen settled in the Mokattam area, located near the desert cliffs west of the city. Over the years, this community has become a vital part of Cairo's informal economy. The Zabaleen collect over three thousand tons of household waste



Young female student, Mokattam Recycling School, Cairo, Egypt. Girls at the school participate in workshops that transform recycled materials into salable products such as photo albums, tapes-tries, handbags, and rugs (2007).

Elizabeth Alling

middle east fellows



Elizabeth Alling

Young male students at the Mokattam Recycling School, Cairo, Egypt. In addition to basic elementary education, boys at the school learn how to properly collect, sort, and granulate recyclable items, earning a small profit in the process. This alternative learning opportunity helps the students integrate into an increasingly privatized waste management system when they become adults (2007).

each day, which they recover, transport, and sort. They then recycle or trade eighty percent of this sorted waste through micro enterprises that generate jobs and incomes for some 40,000 people. The Zabaleen's expertise has saved the city from burning or dumping millions of tons of municipal waste into unmanaged sites, and all of this has been done with no payment from the city government and with personal risk to their health caused by handling contaminated and hazardous materials.

As Cairo has expanded, however, the amount of waste produced by the city's ever-growing population has become more than the traditional Zabaleen system can cope with. Multinational waste management companies have been hired by the Egyptian government to streamline garbage collection, and are only interested in the profits to be gained from dumping all garbage into huge landfills in the desert. Unable to compete with these multinationals, the Zabaleen have lost their main source of income; as a result, they are looking for new ways to gain access to recyclable items. Their hope is to continue working as garbage collectors and recyclers, and to make a positive impact on the environment. The Mokattam Plastic Recycling School targets the children of the Zabaleen, who lack access to a formal education system. The school provides these children with basic elemen-

tary education as well as practical tools and alternative learning opportunities designed to facilitate their integration into Cairo's increasingly privatized waste management system.

DISCLAIMER: After the Fellowship to the Middle East, Dina discontinued her participation in the program, deciding that she no longer supported cross-border work between Arabs and Israelis. Though disappointed, we respect Dina's decision. What QLF is trying to accomplish in the Middle East is no small feat; we are not idealistic, nor are we insensitive to the region's fraught history. We recognize there is so much beyond our control. But we believe in the power of individuals to affect change, and in programs like this one, which empower individuals through capacity building and exchange. We thank Dina for taking part in the program, and for giving us the opportunity to visit Mokattam and the recycling school there. It was an unforgettable experience. A reflection is below, written by Elizabeth Cabot, Coordinator, Middle East Program.

NARRATIVE

As part of November's Fellowship to the Middle East, our group of seven North American Fellows, one facilitator, and two QLF staff members visited the Mokattam neighborhood of Cairo, home to the city's traditional trash collectors and recyclers. Called the Zabaleen, this community has collected, sorted, and recycled approximately eighty percent of Cairo's waste since migrating from Upper Egypt in the 1940s. For a city of over fifteen million people, the percentage is staggering. And quite literally, the "garbage city" of Mokattam seemed practically built of the stuff: children played among it, donkeys carrying loads for sorting stumbled over still more, and great piles choked doorways and streets. Yet this chaotic scene belied a remarkable resiliency and entrepreneurial spirit. In spite of tremendous challenges, the Zabaleen have found an economic niche, sustained a material whose traditional utility has been exhausted. These micro-entrepreneurs have invested an estimated 2.1 million Egyptian pounds in trucks, plastic granulators, paper compactors, cloth grinders, aluminum smelters, and tin processors: all in a country without a formalized recycling infrastructure.

Although Dina didn't present her case study personally, she arranged for Ezzat Naem Guindi to take us on a tour of the Mokattam Plastic Recycling School, created for children of the Zabaleen, and

to discuss its role in the community. Ezzat is Chairman of the Board of the Spirit of Youth Foundation, which sponsors the school. He also grew up in Mokattam as a member of the Zabaleen, and cares deeply for the community's continued livelihood and well-being. After introducing us to some of the students, Ezzat explained that the Egyptian government has hired multinational contractors to streamline the collection of all urban waste, perceiving the Zabaleen system of small scale, family-owned door-to-door collection and recycling practices as "backward" or unhygienic, inefficient, and lacking in modern equipment. The recycling school is designed to help the next generation of Zabaleen adapt to this altered and inhospitable landscape.

Walking through the girls' school building, we visited a workshop where recycled paper was being transformed into marbled stationary and beautifully crafted photograph albums. At another workshop, girls were weaving recycled fabrics into vividly colored handbags and rugs. We were impressed by the girls' expertise and by the school's creative and entrepreneurial approach. The boys' school building spoke of a different kind of recycling project. We noticed bottles of Proctor & Gamble shampoo tacked on the walls next to collection and recycling forms filled out in a palette of marker and crayon. Ezzat explained how the school had negotiated an agreement with the corporate giant, who now pays the students a small fee to properly collect and granulate its shampoo bottles. This in turn protects Proctor & Gamble from the fraud caused when empty bottles are refilled with generic shampoo and sold as their brand name product. We learned how the income generated from the agreement also covers the salaries of teaching staff, thus helping to keep the school financially solvent.

It was a lesson in understanding cultural context: what might under different circumstances suggest exploitation was empowering in this case. With or without the school's oversight, the Zabaleen children will continue recycling and collecting trash. The school improves their situation by providing safety training and literacy, ensuring financial compensation, and teaching firsthand that new and creative approaches are needed to integrate their community's way of life into a privatized system. Regrettably, the Zabaleen example is also a testament to the fact that globalization can endanger culturally indigenous patterns of living in ways we might never hear about or imagine.

KHULOOD HINDIYEH, FADI SHARAIHA, AND ARWA HELOU

*Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan
Amman and Aqaba, Jordan*

Khulood HindiyeH was an original Program Fellow, but when graduate work precluded her continued participation, Fadi Sharaiha and Arwa Helou graciously became joint Fellows, replacing Khulood and assuming her case study. Fadi and Arwa are the Executive Director and Program Manager, respectively, of the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS), an NGO working to protect Jordan's coastline and to promote environmentally sustainable development alternatives. JREDS is the only civic entity in Jordan with the responsibility of guarding the country's unique marine ecosystem.

Khulood is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the Nottingham Business School. Prior to beginning her graduate work, she was the Project Coordinator for JREDS, where her main duties involved preparing concept papers for regional conferences on the marine environment, health care, and waste management, and overseeing the JREDS Youth Camp. She also coordinated a regional project titled, "I Don't Want to Get Thirsty," a



Fadi Sharaiha, Executive Director, Rpyal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan, notes the dynamic tension between marine conservation needs and tourism development plans here in the coastal city of Aqaba, Jordan (2007).

Elizabeth Alling

middle east fellows

youth initiative to raise water rights awareness and involving students of diverse ages and backgrounds.

As Executive Director of JREDS, Fadi Sharaiha is responsible for managing the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of all JREDS programs. He also supervises the organization's financial activities, including fundraising and new program development. Fadi has previously worked as Project Director for Creative Associates International, as Institutional Development Manager for Save the Children Jordan, as Agricultural Unit Leader for Care International, and as a researcher for the Agricultural Credit Corporation.

As Program Manager of JREDS, Arwa focuses on institutional development, capacity building, fundraising, and



Arwa Helou, Program Manager, Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan (2007)

Elizabeth Alling

outreach programs. Prior to working for JREDS, Arwa was the Project Assistant for a modernization initiative in the Department of Lands & Survey at the German Development Cooperation. She also worked for four years as a corporate manager for the tourism investment company, Orientals for Tourism & Investment.

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone: Conflict or Opportunity?

The JREDS case study examines the tensions between marine conservation and tourism development in the coastal city of Aqaba in southern Jordan. Aqaba is the only port in the Kingdom with direct access to the Red Sea, and is strategically located at the intersection of Jordan, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The city is extremely important to the Jordanian economy not only as a port but also as a coastal resort location. In January 2001, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) was



Charles Jacobi

The growing importance of Aqaba, Jordan, as a port city and coastal resort location has led to increased pollution that is threatening the coastline's fragile marine ecosystem (2007).

created as a liberalized, low tax, duty free, and multi-sector development area meant to attract foreign direct investment. The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), a local governmental authority with unprecedented jurisdictional powers, was also established to streamline regulation and to ensure partnerships between the public and private sectors. In an apparent conflict of interest, ASEZA is responsible for both the economic development and the environmental protection of the zone.

The rapid growth resulting from the creation of ASEZ has raised a number of environmental and social concerns. The coastline's fragile ecology is increasingly vulnerable to degradation by chemical and petroleum spills, biological contamination from sewage, sediment and phosphate pollution, and other hazards of reckless commercial development. Economic growth can also exclude the poorer sectors of society, especially when labor is heavily imported and the money generated is exported back out of the country; up to seventy percent foreign labor is allowed in ASEZ. Additionally, the possible depletion of fish stocks with increasing anthropogenic pressure would be disastrous for local fishermen who have no clear alternative sources of income. In response to these issues, JREDS is working with ASEZA to integrate conservation measures into development initiatives in the zone, and to foster corporate social responsibility around environmental and social causes.

NARRATIVE:

QLF is not an organization; it is a family. Being part of a family is so precious in our culture, as is the sense of belonging it cultivates. Participating in the QLF Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict, has broadened our horizons and made us feel part of a larger family—a family that cares, understands, and is there for you.

This experience has made a huge difference in our lives. On a professional basis, it made us think of the big picture, and the responsibility we all share for taking care of this planet. On a personal basis, it gave us back the zeal and the passion that we had at the beginning of our journey.

The skills we learned were great in their focus on technical, management, and program development, but most of all in teaching us how to look at things from a different perspective; how to solve global issues by thinking locally, and how to reach out for people in a creative, innovative, and native approach.

We believe that exchanging ideas is so important, and that it really saves you time and energy. This is exactly what happened to us. This exchange gave us a feeling that the environmental problems and issues facing Jordan are not only happening in our country but also elsewhere in the region and in the whole world.

Thank you QLF for this life changing experience.

SHARÓN BENHEIM

Director of Alumni Projects

Arava Institute for Environmental Studies

Hevel Eilat, Israel

As the Director of Alumni Projects for the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, Sharón works with young environmental activists across the Middle East, organizing seminars and conferences on environmental topics, advising for peace-building and environmental career development, and helping alumni to plan and fund their own initiatives. Sharón has helped create a network of alumni called the Arava Alumni Peace and Environmental Network (AAPEN), and she provides



Elizabeth Alling

Fellowship to the Middle East (2007). Sharón Benheim (Israel) talks with the North American Fellows about life on a kibbutz, Kibbutz Ketura, Arava Valley, southern Israel.



Iliana Meallern

Bedouins raising sheep, goats, and livestock, Um Batin village, near Beersheva, Negev Desert, southern Israel

financial and administrative assistance to a number of specific projects run by members of this network, including the project on which her case study is based. Other AAPEN projects include community garden initiatives; “Arrasid,” an initiative to help the Arab farming communities of the Al Batuf area develop holistic and sustainable practices; “Biofalcha,” an initiative to allow Jewish organic and permaculture farmers to share knowledge with Palestinian farmers; and “Ecocinema,” a program that brings foreign environmental films to the Middle East with subtitles, and showcases Middle Eastern environmental films at major festivals in Arab, Jewish, and other communities. Sharón currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Friends of Arava Institute and for Merkaz Hashachar. She is also a member of Kibbutz Ketura, where she has gained many years of experience in facilitation. At certified mediator,

Sharón has recently been awarded a Master’s Degree in Mediation and Conflict Resolution in the Evens Program, of Tel Aviv University.

Empowering Bedouin Women by Developing Biogas Recycling Systems to Improve Women’s and Children’s Health

Sharón’s case study focuses on a project developed by two members of AAPEN, designed to use biogas digester systems as a method of improving the public health of unrecognized Bedouin communities in Israel’s Negev Desert. The leaders of this biogas project received training in the construction and operation of small biogas digesters in Chengdu, China in the summer of 2007, and their goal is to create local sewage treatment facilities in unrecognized Bedouin communities that lack waste disposal infrastructure. The biogas digesters, pow-

ered by organic waste such as animal excrement and grass cuttings, could be hooked up to toilets and kitchens in Bedouin residences, thus creating benefits. These digesters would be particularly beneficial to women and children, who spend most of their time in the home and therefore suffer more respiratory problems as a result of burning indoor cooking fires. The women in these communities also suffer from high percentages of urinary tract and digestive problems that are caused by their avoidance of using communal latrine pits, which they see as compromising their modesty. The biogas digesters would also reduce contamination of the water table by composting the organic waste rather than allowing it to leach into the groundwater.

As part of her study, Sharón examines a number of the challenges to successfully implementing the biogas project. For one, it is considered illegal to build infrastructure in unrecognized villages, and the biogas technology itself is a foreign and potentially contentious concept amongst Bedouins, whose frame of reference are so different from that of their project partners. Economic constraints also complicate the initiative, as the biogas digesters are expensive and a more affordable model does not currently exist. Lastly, human waste cannot yet be used for farming purposes, which would require digesters connected to private toilets to have a separate composting system.

NARRATIVE

I work with the alumni of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, and one of my goals is to help them to continue the training they started with us and live their commitment to making the Middle East a better place to live in every way. Included in my mandate is developing internships, supporting the pursuit of continued academic studies, and encouraging and subsidizing participation in conferences or workshops in the Middle East or abroad. I have sent numerous alumni to QLF's wonderful programs on Environmental Stewardship and Environmental Education. For our graduates, the QLF Middle East Program is a comfortable continuation—they have already spent between one and four academic semesters studying with Jordanians, Israelis, Palestinians and other international students.



Elizabeth Allring

Fellowship to the Middle East, November 2007. North American Fellows listening to student panel at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, Kibbutz Ketura, Arava Valley, southern Israel. From left: Charlie Jacobi, Charles Curtin, and Dave Mention

In 2006, I heard a call for participants in the QLF Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict. Since I have been studying mediation and conflict resolution and transformation techniques, I was very interested in this program. I checked and discovered that I was eligible to apply. To my delight, I was accepted, and this gave me the opportunity to travel to parts of the world where I had never been before. Meeting the other Middle East Fellows at a pizza place in the flooded (literally) town of Ipswich, Massachusetts, that first night was a bit of a shock. The contrast of the lovely 200 to 300 year old town with the modern pub, like atmosphere of the pizza joint, was fierce. But the next morning, the jokes about nearly all the Fellows not eating the Bed & Breakfast owner's bacon for breakfast were terrific icebreakers. Some of us were vegetarian, some Muslim, and some Jewish—nearly all of us avoided the bacon together. That, together with hours of travel time in a van trying to find songs we could all sing along to, made us into a group that truly found common ground.

There is nothing more important than the people you are talking to when you are engaging in dialogue across a conflict. Even while we were not officially discussing the Middle East conflict, it was a constant subtext. We all came from countries that have an uneasy peace with the other and have lifestyles where the conflict is a constant daily background to our regular lives. Thus, did not matter that I have friends from Jordan or Palestine, or that I work with young students and researchers from those places all the time—I still had to meet



Ilana Meadlem

A Bedouin woman gathers wood (potentially contaminated) to use for cooking, Negev Desert, southern Israel.

and develop a certain trust with these particular individuals. In addition, this was my first chance to meet Egyptian environmentalists. The *Outward Bound* workshop on Thompson Island was an important force in breaking the ice and showing ourselves to each other as people. Our guides Kim and Matt were fantastic. They shepherded us through the physical and group challenges of the workshop, and facilitated shared meals—always an important feature of Middle Eastern relationships.

The learning we did in the framework of the program was amazing. We saw projects and became familiar with the conflicts and dilemmas that faced the wonderful people who hosted us in Maine—from Acadia National Park, the lobster hatchery on Beale Island, the Stonington Fisheries Alliance, the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance—and from the forests of Gorbam, New Hampshire. As an observant woman who keeps religiously kosher and vegetarian—I have to say that I now know more about lobsters than I should. Looking at the complex issues, and the way that U.S. governmental processes affect all environmental work was very educational. It gave us Fellows the chance to compare our own governments, countries, and the way things get done in our worlds.

We heard about each other's case studies. I was able to share with them the frustration of my work in Bedouin communities, and the amazing paradox of a "Third World" country existing within a country thought to be advanced and developed. I could explain the basic health and environmental needs of one tent or one "Hamullah" (an extended family or small group of tents) and everyone in my group knew what I meant. There are Bedouin communities in Jordan and Egypt as well as Israel. I felt supported, and reasonable questions opened new avenues in my thinking. We all commiserated about the difficulty of finding funding, gaining government approvals for our projects, and other Middle East dilemmas not always obvious to those from more Western communities.

Structured workshops encouraged all of us to try new techniques. QLF organized a number of different workshop programs—with Maggie Herzig of the Public Conversations Project, Staci Smith from the Consensus Building Institute, Jim Tull formerly of the Mercy Corps, and Consultant Peter Cooke of Cooke Associates—that allowed us to role-play as other people, and to practice expressing ourselves in these roles. We spent every moment of our so-called free time demanding the teachers tell us more about their work and asking if they had any experience with these kinds of techniques in the Middle East. Perhaps there was a tone of disbelief in that last question; we were thrilled and relieved when we learned that our teachers or their colleagues had in fact successfully worked on projects with these very techniques in the Middle East. It gave us hope in thinking forward to our eventual return home.

I felt that I left the first part of the program having received an incredible gift. I had made ten new friends in the Middle East and innumerable friends in New England. I had a load of new books, handbooks and techniques for working towards conflict resolution. I had seen some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world and seen more water each day than I generally see in a month at home. I had ideas for further cooperation on at least a dozen potential projects. I was looking forward to hosting the North American Fellows when they came over for their trip. The visit was long in coming as the political situation forced a delay in the program schedule. I spoke with my other Middle East Fellows by email and Facebook, sharing our fears that perhaps we would never meet again as a group. But QLF persevered and the group of North American Fellows arrived one morning at the Arava Institute and my own home, Kibbutz Ketura. I was delighted but overwhelmed by the number of interesting questions they asked and the discussions we began over the twenty out of

twenty four hours we must have had together—and was frustrated that it was all over so soon. I was jealous of the group, wanting to visit my fellows in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine with them.

Finally we met—the entire group of North American and Middle East Fellows came together in the Dana Nature Reserve in Jordan. We spent the most intense week reconnecting, realizing how much we really liked each other and sharing wonderful meals. We worked under the guidance of our facilitators Karen Firehock and Raed Nimri, the steady hands of Beth Alling and Elizabeth Cabot, and the coordinating expertise of Alix Hopkins and Charles Curtin.

We spent long hours in intense discussion that included acquiring more skills and techniques, and addressing many specific case studies from Fellows' home communities. We worked out a format for how we could share our experience with others. We also discovered that we could really speak frankly about some very difficult issues, including the obstacles that environmentalists face in the Middle East who wish to cooperate and try to solve environmental challenges together for the better of all. We had come to know and trust each other, and to know our limits as well as our potential.

I knew we all were very busy at our “day jobs,” but I also knew that we cared for each other and would do our best to take time out of our routines to help each other—whether inviting someone to present at an international conference, sharing resources and information, or sending someone from our organization to intern at another's organization. I think we all learned that QLF would work with us to make things happen. I look forward to future meetings with my fellow QLF Alumni, and to becoming part of the alumni network. What resonates most with me is that sense of belonging to a network of dedicated and determined individuals who will change the world to be a better place.

ASAF RAZ

Coordinator, New Israel Fund's Environmental Justice Project
Beer Sheva, Israel

As the Coordinator of the New Israel Fund's Environmental Justice Project (SHATIL) in southern Israel, Asaf works predominately in underprivileged communities where pollution from factories and their refuse dumps are a growing concern. These factories are primary sources of local employment, and thus commu-



On right: Asaf Raz (Israel) with a representative from the unrecognized Bedouin village of Wadi el Na'am located in the Negev, southern Israel, Fellowship to the Middle East, November 2007. The village lies in the shadow of the Ramat Hovav Industrial Park, which houses many of Israel's chemical and other heavy industries. Pollution from Ramat Hovav has led to a range of health problems for residents of Wadi el Na'am, including eye pain, severe shortness of breath in children, a high percentage of miscarriages, heart disease, and cancer.

nity members struggle between their need for work and the need to assert their right to a healthy living environment. Asaf works with community groups and grassroots organizations, empowering them to press for stricter regulation of factory pollution. In the public domain, he raises awareness of the issue by meeting with key policy-makers, conducting press conferences, writing press releases, organizing campaigns, and developing additional public relations strategies.

The Conflict of the Ramat Hovav Industrial Zone

Asaf's case study is centered on the conflict surrounding the Ramat Hovav Industrial Park, which was established in the mid-1970s to house many of Israel's chemical and other heavy industries. Factories from across the country defined as “heavy polluters” were relocated to the site, which extends for approximately 5,750 acres and is located twelve kilometers south of Beer-Sheva. In 1997, the site additionally became Israel's first and only storage area for dangerous refuse. Today, about twenty factories operate at Ramat Hovav, incorporated under a single municipal authority called the Ramat Hovav Industrial Council. Since its establishment, the park's emission of hazardous chemicals has posed a public health risk to some 280,000 people living nearby. Sadly, these health concerns have been amplified for two Bedouin villages



Elizabeth Alling

The unrecognized Bedouin village of Wadi el Na'am, located in the Negev, southern Israel. In the background, the Ramat Hovav Industrial Park looms over the village and is the source of many health complications for local residents (2007).

located within the “danger zone” of five kilometers from the site: Wadi el-Na'am, with 4,500 residents, and Wadi Almshash, with 850 residents. Importantly, both

villages are unrecognized, and residents lack legal recourse against Ramat Hovav for health complications that have arisen, and which have ranged from eye pain and severe shortness of breath in young children to high percentages of miscarriages, heart disease at a young age, and cancer.



Elizabeth Alling

Schoolchildren in Wadi el Na'am village, the Negev, southern Israel (2007)

In August 2007, a toxic chemical explosion occurred in Ramat Hovav that served as a glaring example of negligence both on the part of the Ramat Hovav Industrial Council and the Israeli government. The residents of Wadi el-Na'am and Wadi Almshash were given no warning about toxic emissions at the time of the incident, and in the aftermath, the Ministry of Health never organized proper medical examinations to determine the extent of residents' chemical exposure or to gauge the long-term effects it could have on their health. Additionally, the explosion took

place while the Israeli government was recommending the transfer of several Israeli Defence Force bases to a location directly adjacent to this dangerous facility. In response, SHATIL has established a coalition of local and international NGOs that are working in partnership with members of the academic community in Israel to promote policies that will hopefully put an end to the reckless pollution and health hazards caused by Ramat Hovav.

NARRATIVE

QLF's Middle East Program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict, was an important and inspiring experience for me on a personal and professional level. This was due to the program's structure, the contributions of participants from both the Middle East and the United States, and from the emphasis placed on concentrated workshops focusing on negotiation and collaboration, which provided me with applicable tools to help me in my work.

The Fellowship to the Atlantic Region allowed me to broaden my knowledge of how environmental policymaking is being carried out in the United States, and of the ways that NGOs are involved in these various processes. This was an extremely important experience for me, as it allowed me to look back on the how these same processes are carried out in Israel, compare them, and to develop new ideas for promoting change in my country. For example, we learned about Ted Hoskins' Downeast Groundfish Initiative, and how broadening the spectrum of interests and stakeholders allied around a shared cause can lead to increased power in the struggle for change. Moreover, the tour we had with Ted emphasized the strong connection between providing decent employment for periphery populations (the economic and social dimensions of sustainability) and environmentally sound solutions. The case study site visits, together with the workshops we had, gave me a glimpse of what exists in a different context and what can be accomplished by building proper capacities. In addition, the workshops gave us all the chance to meet and to learn from highly experienced professionals in the field of conflict resolution.

The Fellowship also affected my perception of how NGOs work in the Middle East and in the United States. My colleagues from the Middle East have shown me what it means to be an environmental activist where there are many and highly complicated obstructions to promoting change. My appreciation for them continues to grow. The

connections I developed with American individuals and NGOs, who are working in a very different political and social environment, have also been of high value, and their experiences demonstrated the many options one may have to advocate for a better society living in a healthy environment.



Elizabeth Alling

Uri Ramon addresses North American Fellows, Shikma Region, Israel (2007)

URI RAMON

*Head of the Landscape Survey and Evaluation Department,
Dehshe Institute
Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel
Tel Aviv, Israel*

As Head of the Landscape Survey and Evaluation Department at the Dehshe Institute of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), Uri conducts field surveys and performs the analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The main goal of these surveys is to prepare background environmental assessments for regional planning. Uri also conducts workshops and field seminars and raises funds for future initiatives. In a recent project, Uri conducted an environmental survey of Wadi Fukin. This land is located at an intersection of Israel and the West Bank, and passes between two communities where construction of the Israeli-West Bank barrier is scheduled. The survey was designed to help conserve the Wadi's open landscapes

and those of neighboring Zur Hadassa, which are critical to the income of local residents. Uri is currently working on a project in the open landscapes of the Shikma region, located on the outskirts of heavily populated central Israel. This project is the subject of his case study. Future initiatives at the Dehshe Institute include creating guidelines for open landscape planning at the national level, and conducting research on the effectiveness of indicators used in landscape analysis.

Conservation and Development in Israel's Shikma Region

Uri's case study examines the tensions between conservation and development in Israel's Shikma Region, which constitutes a mosaic of agricultural, natural, and forested areas. This region contains many large open spaces, which a limited resource in Israel, and includes a variety of ecological habitats including kurkar hills, sand dunes, and a streams network. National environmental agencies, in collaboration with the Central Planning Administration, prepared a "Master Plan" for this region's open landscapes that places restrictions on agricultural devel-

The Shikma Region in central Israel is a rare open space in heavily populated central Israel, where the tension between conservation and development is ever present. *Elizabeth Alling*



opment while simultaneously fostering certain opportunities for tourism development. One of the plan's central goals is to construct an unpaved road that would cross the region and allow greater accessibility for visitors. However, this road would pass through areas currently designated for agricultural use, which has concerned local farmers who could object to the Central Planning Administration's approval of the initiative. The farmers are concerned that an increasing number of private vehicles, especially SUVs, will spoil the local roads and damage agricultural infrastructure; that agricultural equipment and instruments will be stolen; and that an increase in trash will lead to unwanted animals like jackals and crows wreaking havoc on crops. Local environmental groups are also concerned about the plan, though for a different reason: increased tourism could potentially result in the degradation and pollution of Shikma's protected landscapes.

At the crux of this study lies the potential for conflict when stakeholders with diverse interests attempt to negotiate the shared usage of an open landscape. In recent months, the plan was approved unanimously by the Regional Planning Committee and will go for final discussion in the National Planning Council. The Central Planning Administration and participating environmental NGOs have been able to address a number of the farmers' concerns, and certain segments of the road are already under construction.

NARRATIVE

At the Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop in Jordan, participants in the program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict came together as a group of Arabs, Israelis, and Americans. Some of the questions that came to my mind during this experience were "Where are we as Israelis in this context?" "Where do we belong?" "With whom to we feel more comfortable and have more in common?"

Meeting and communicating with our Arab Fellows was easier from the start. Our impolite

manners, the fact that we know the region, its climate, its environmental and mental problems and a little bit about each other's cultures—all this made things a bit easier for us. It provided a common context that we did not share as much with the Americans, who are not our neighbors. It also gave me a chance to brush up on my Arabic and to learn more about different dialects and pronunciations.

With the Americans it was more difficult. They speak faster, and they are more cautious in presenting their ideas and themselves in general. Their culture of formal discussion and public debate was different and unfamiliar. But when I explored further, there was much to learn from the structured decision-making and consensus building processes that were presented. I realized that some of the environmental problems they face in the United States are quite similar to ours in the Middle East. This was instructive, demonstrating that there are things we can learn across cultures—approaches that are well tested in one context but novel in another—that can help us collectively address the environmental challenges we all face.

WIESAM ESSA AND SAMI BACKLEH

Wiesam Essa was an original Program Fellow from Gaza. Unfortunately, it was recommended that Wiesam discontinue his participation in the program due to heightened political unrest in Gaza, where he lives. Though saddened that Wiesam couldn't continue with us, Sami Backleh joined the program for its latter phases, representing Palestine's West Bank.



Fellowship to the Atlantic Region (2006). Wiesam Essa (Gaza) visits Maine fisheries.

Sharon Benheim

Wiesam is a Program Coordinator for the Greenpeace Association in Gaza, where he has worked on a number of environmental initiatives, including projects to clean up the Gaza Coast and Wadi Gaza, protect Gaza's sand dunes from erosion, and conserve the fragile marine biodiversity of the Gaza Sea. He has also been involved in land-use analysis of the "free lands" left vacant following the withdrawal of Israeli



Photograph courtesy of Sami Backleh

Sami Backleh (Palestine), holds a Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*).

settlements from Gaza. In addition to his work for the Greenpeace Association, Wiesam is a lecturer in the Geography Department of Al-Aqsa University, where he teaches courses in environmental resource management, urban development, and oceanography. Previously, he was a facilitator in the Public Health Awareness Program for the Raffah Municipality.

Wiesam is a graduate of the Islamic University of Gaza with a degree in Environmental and Earth Sciences, and he has a Master's Degree in Remote Sensing and GIS and a Professional Master's Degree in Land Degradation and Conservation, both from Ben Gurion University in Israel. Wiesam has also participated in environmental programs run by the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, the University of the Middle East Project, and Boston University.

QLF is pleased that Sami is QLF's Regional Consultant of the *Middle East Program* (February 2008). Sami will be an important point of contact for our Program Alumni, and he will provide assistance to QLF on a number of exciting projects. Sami is based in East Jerusalem, and in addition to his work for QLF, he will continue working as a freelance environmental consultant in collaboration with the Palestine Wildlife Society (PWLS) on wildlife conservation, and with other relevant national and international organizations in Palestine. Sami has a Master's Degree in Conservation Biology from the University of Kent in Canterbury, England. Prior to his graduate studies, he was the Biodiversity Field Researcher for PWLS, where he organized a number of environmental awareness campaigns on nature conservation that were launched throughout many Palestinian communities. Sami has also worked with other environmental organizations to develop natural-cultural heritage and ecotourism initiatives within the Palestinian territories. Sami's primary professional focus is endangered and threatened birds, which he monitors using wildlife surveys and the "birding ringing" (banding) technique. His bird monitoring projects have been sponsored by the European Commission through Birdlife International, USAID, and by American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) in East Jerusalem.

The Terraced Landscapes of Palestine: Values, Concepts, and Pitfalls

Sami's case study examines the direct and indirect causes of the degradation and abandonment of the West Bank's terraced landscapes. The most spectacular terraces in the West Bank are found in mountainous central highlands where the terrain demands an incredibly labor-intensive method of terrace construction. In response to the harsh environmental conditions for olive growing and mountain living in this region, strong cultural traditions have evolved that govern lifestyle and agricultural practices. These traditions are essential to maintaining the integrity of the terraces. However, the West Bank's central highlands have been subjected to drastic environmental and socioeconomic changes that have led to the partial and/or complete degradation and abandonment of large



Charles Jacobi

A visit with members of the Municipality of Ebwein, a rural village located in the central highlands of the West Bank, Palestine, Fellowship to the Middle East, 2007. Due to a number of institutional and social factors, many of the terraced landscapes of this region, traditionally used for agricultural practices such as olive growing, are becoming abandoned and degraded.



Terraced landscapes in the central highlands of the West Bank, Palestine. The lack of law enforcement within the Palestinian Authority makes it a challenge to protect these landscapes from activities such as illegal quarrying (2007).

Elizabeth Alling

terraced areas. In summary, these changes include a reduction in biodiversity, the loss of cultural cohesion and traditional knowledge in local communities, changing farming practices, emigration, and a number of institutional and economic factors. In addition, the land available for agricultural production has been significantly reduced by the continued expansion of Israeli settlements into the West Bank, and the construction of the separation wall between Israeli and Palestine. This has led to heightened conflict over agricultural land (including the terraces), which has become an increasingly limited resource.

The problem of the terraces' degradation has been compounded by the lack of legal infrastructure within the Palestinian Authority, which makes it harder to recognize and therefore to protect these landscapes. Stakeholders in the issue include the local communities whose lives and livelihoods are critically linked to the health of the terraces, local and non-local environmental NGOs,

governmental organizations (local planning councils, higher planning councils, the Environmental Authority, and the Natural Resource Authority) as well as international organizations such as UNESCO and UNFAO. Sami concludes that stakeholder collaboration is of vital importance for protecting the terraced landscapes.

NARRATIVE

"Thank you for visiting us and please come back again anytime," said Abu Tamer from the Municipality of Ebwein while waving his hand and drawing a big smile across his face as we arranged ourselves into the taxis to leave.

I can still remember the expressions of excitement on people's faces when the North American Fellows and I travelled to a village north-east of Ramallah in the West Bank this past November. The purpose of this visit was mainly to present my case study, which focuses on the terraced landscapes that characterize the central highlands of the West Bank, and which are being degraded as a result of environmental and socio-economic changes that are affecting the lives and



Rebecca Schibek

View of the terraced landscapes from the Municipality building window, Ebwein, West Bank, Palestine (2007)

agricultural practices of farmers in this region. Fortunately enough, we only encountered one “flying check point” on the way to Ebwein, where an unexpected group of Israeli soldiers stopped us. One of these soldiers tried to convince us to go to Shilo (a nearby Israeli settlement) instead of to Ebwein, which he claimed would provide nothing of interest to “tourists.”

When we arrived in the village, a number of people from the community were waiting to welcome us. They led us into a three-room house—what they call the municipality—which had a balcony overlooking a nice green valley surrounded by terraces on both sides that were planted mainly with olive trees. It was such a lovely panoramic view that it was adequate to show the U.S. Fellows how this community is using the environment in its daily life.

With a slightly sweetish tea boiled with leaves of thyme and mint—the way they prepare it in Ebwein—I introduced everyone, and provided the community members with some background on QLF, the Middle East Program generally, and the program, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict, with its basis in environmental conflict resolution and capacity building. The North American Fellows spoke

no Arabic, and the community members no English, and so I served as interpreter for the day.

As a conservation biologist, I consider maintaining environmental integrity and improving degraded landscapes as central tenets of sustainable development. However, the sacrosanct importance of certain natural resources to communities, when compounded by the political instability of this region, often creates conflict over the use of and access to these resources. Environmental conflicts can be variously defined, but they were taken in my case study to describe the fundamental differences in values and behaviours that emerge between interested parties as they relate to the environment. Such conflicts can be multi-layered, occur at different spatial and temporal scales,

and can be initiated by diverse interests and involve a range of stakeholders.

Prior to my involvement in this QLF program, I was always suspicious of integrating conflict resolution with the goals of environmentally based management. I had constantly tried to find new ways of reconciling what I saw as a tremendous practical improbability. Yet I came to learn that perhaps there is another way to invoke environmental concerns when discussing conflict resolution that would satisfy even sceptics like myself. Instead of trying to tease out the environmental causes of certain conflicts and thereby accentuating the necessity of conservation to varying levels of success, one can also look at how environmental issues can play a role in cooperation—regardless of whether these issues were part of the original conflict.

To me, the real success of this QLF program was in facilitating such understanding. Through the case study site visits and the workshop that was held in Jordan, I came to learn that cooperation and institutional collaboration are the main pillars for creating a greater understanding of what environmental conflict resolution really means. This was clearly shown through the exchange of thoughts and experiences between the Middle East and North American Fellows.

**RAED RAWHI ABU
HAYYANEH
(Raed Hayyaneh)**

*Program Director, Community
Mobilization for Family Health Project
of the Jordan Communication
Partnership for Family Health
Amman, Jordan*

As Program Director for the Community Mobilization for Family Health Project of the Jordan Communication Partnership for Family Health (CPFH), Raed is working at both the national and community level to create a health-competent Jordan whose citizens have the education and resources for



Raed Hayyaneh at the *Middle East Program Regional Meeting*, Kaş, Turkey (2008) Photograph by Elizabeth Alling

responding appropriately to public health issues as they arise. CPFH is partnered with Johns Hopkins University and Save the Children/Jordan, in coordination with the Jordan Ministry of Health and USAID. At the national level, CPFH operates through strategic multi-media communications interventions; at the community level, CPFH promotes local public health awareness and competency. Prior to his work for CPFH, Raed was the Head of Environmental Education and Awareness for the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), an NGO created in 1966 under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein. At RSCN, Raed



Photograph courtesy of the Ajloun Nature Reserve

The Ajloun Nature Reserve in northern Jordan, the site of new environmental education initiatives between the reserve management and the conservation clubs of local schools. The Ajloun Nature Reserve (established in 1988) is under the authority of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan. The reserve is located in the Ajloun Highlands in northern Jordan, around the village of Umm al-Yanabi' north of Ajloun. It is a area of rolling hills covered by dense woodlands of evergreen oak with nearby pistachio, carob, and wild strawberry trees. The trees are important for local communities not only for the use of the wood, but quite often the source of food and medicine.



Rebecca Schbek

Students at the Kufranfeh Girls' High School, Ajloun, Jordan. Many of these students are members of the school's conservation club, run by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan (2007).

integrated environmental concepts into the national curriculum, led national environmental campaigns, and organized training for environmental educational officers working in protected areas. Raed continues to work in an advisory capacity for RSCN.

Environmental Educational in Jordan: A Partnership between Conservation Clubs and Nature Reserves

Jordan is country with many natural treasures that are increasingly under threat. Wildlife is disappearing, pollution of the air and water is increasing, and unplanned and irresponsible development is spoiling many of the country's most beautiful areas. To ensure that future generations of Jordanians inherit a country whose beauty and bounty are preserved—a country that can provide a better quality of life for its people—we must encourage the children of today to love and care for their environment.

—Raed Hayyaneh

Raed's case study is focused on the partnership between Jordan's conservation clubs for school-aged children, created in 1986 by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan (RSCN), and a relatively new system of RSCN-managed nature reserves. Currently, there are over 1,000 conservation clubs in schools throughout

Jordan, and these clubs provide an entertaining way for students to learn about the environment and to develop the values and skills necessary for protecting it. Nature reserves are a ready laboratory for hands-on environmental learning, and the knowledge and appreciation that students gain can be transferred to their parents, to other students, and to their communities.

Raed uses the example of the Ajloun Reserve in northern Jordan as a place where this kind of environmental capacity development is occurring. The Ajloun Reserve is a protected evergreen forest that still supports life for many local animals, including herds of wild boar, as well as an on-site breeding enclosure for the locally endangered Roe Deer. The reserve enjoys a strong relationship with local conservation clubs like the one at nearby Kufranfeh Girls' High School, where students visit the reserve regularly to learn about local ecology through activities such as educational field trips and interactive environmental games. Through the programs it runs for the conservation clubs, RSCN has also been able to increase community engagement in reserve activities. Although initially resentful of certain land use restrictions presented by the reserve's establishment, community members now take pleasure and pride in the reserve and its activities, and have begun participating in reserve-run workshops on environmental topics such as responsible game hunting and sustainable farming practices.

NARRATIVE

During the last two years, QLF has provided me with the opportunity to learn many skills, gain relevant experience, and develop valuable relationships. Starting with my visit to New England, it was incredible to meet people who had such broad experience with many different environmental issues and to learn from their case studies. The field visits to each site also provided me with practical experience. We exchanged our ideas about how to solve the issues presented

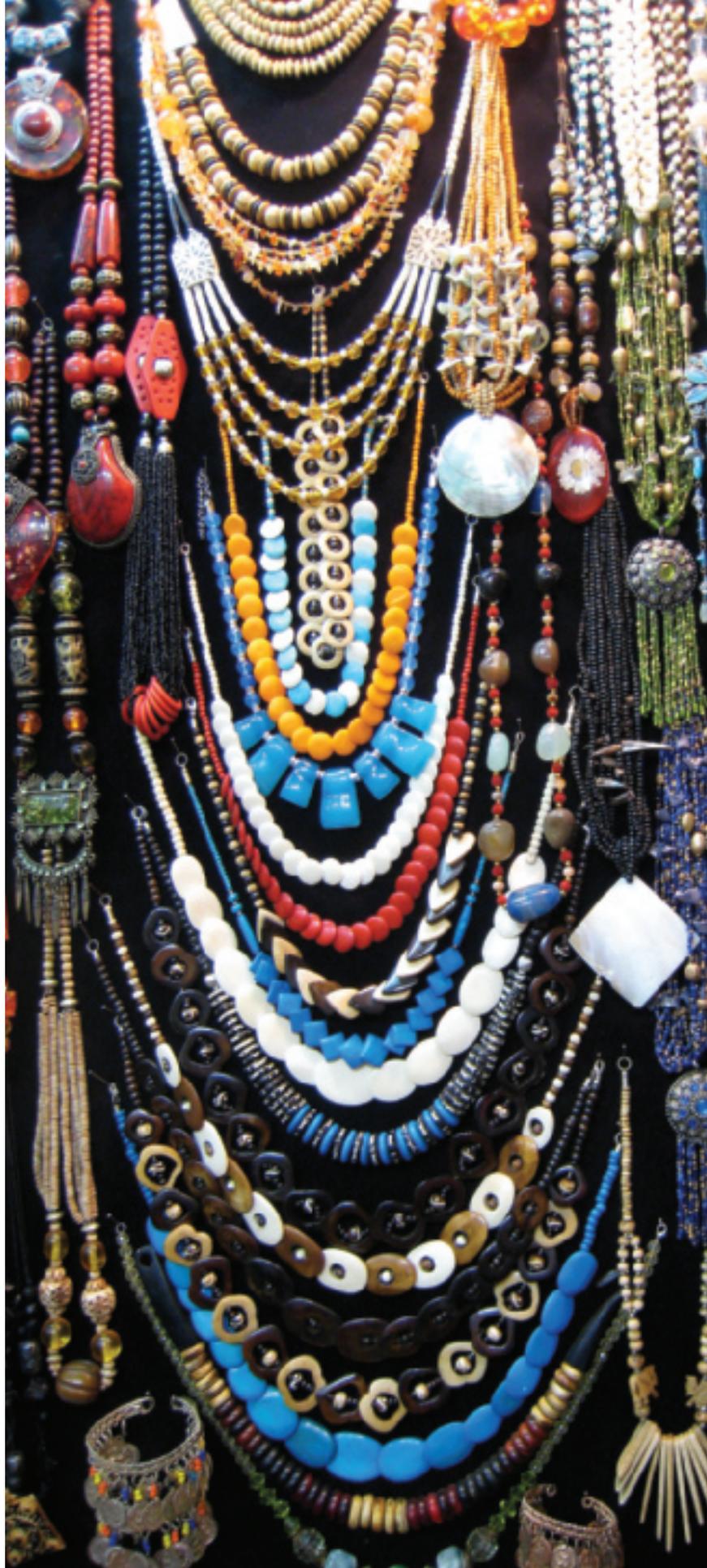
together. The workshop that was held at QLF's Ipswich office taught me conflict management tools to apply towards solving these issues.

The group of people who participated in the program was a great one. The participants had extensive knowledge in different fields, and the way they presented their case studies, and the feedback that came from them, made these exchanges valuable and productive. This kind of group builds a commitment to cooperation and to helping each other solve environmental issues collectively for the benefit of generations to come. I think it is a wonderful idea to have created this kind of working group for the region.

The program was also a good opportunity for an exchange of ideas between participants and communities. For example, the North American Fellows visited a local girls' high school with me to learn about environmental education clubs in Jordan. They discussed environmental issues with the students and shared with them new ideas about sustainability and conservation. I still remember fondly the great relationship that was built between the students and the North American Fellows as they talked about of the different ways to continue supporting the clubs and to connect them with students in the States.

I believe we can do a lot together. Since I first became connected with QLF in 1995, I have expanded my practical knowledge and have been given the support to use this knowledge in my own work experience. QLF gave all of us Fellows a lot of ideas through training and workshops that we now need to invest in the field. We need to work together from all regions to develop a work plan for collaboration and to keep learning from our case studies. I see this program as a milestone in the environmental development and sustainability of the Middle East.

I hope countries support each other for the benefit of all our lives and for our global environment.



Traditional jewelry on display, Khan el Khalily Souk, Cairo, Egypt
Photograph by Charles Jacobi



Wadi Rum, Jordan, an unspoiled desert and home of Bedouin tribes, is now the sight of an intensive conservation program for sustainable tourism.
Photograph by Elizabeth Alling

COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

AND THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION LEADERS

Sami Backleh and Charles Curtin

Collaborative approaches to environmental problem solving have blossomed in recent years as individuals and organizations try new and innovative approaches to resource management. These efforts are born in part out of a recognition that top-down “command and control” approaches are frequently too rigid and unresponsive to deal with the intrinsic complexities of human and natural systems. Engaging individuals and their communities is often not only more efficient by making use of local knowledge and other assets, but it also builds trust and respect that can carry over into other projects. Yet collaboration does not intrinsically lead to better decision making without thoughtful institutional designs and governance structures that are fair and equitable, while making effective use of human and financial resources. There is an increasing recognition that conservation and management approaches cannot be centered on either human or natural systems, but must achieve a synthesis of ecological and socio-economic factors if they are to be resilient through time.

As part of its mission, QLF has used its strengths in working with emerging communities and environmental leaders to advance bioregional thinking. QLF launched its *Middle East Program* in 1992, and this program has grown into a multi-faceted international exchange that focuses on natural resource conservation and stewardship, and on developing and maintaining a cooperative network of committed environmental leaders. Multinational cooperation on regional environmental issues has been apparent throughout all of QLF’s initiatives in the Middle East. This cooperation often takes place through academic workshops and field study visits used as mechanisms to facilitate cross-border dialogue and knowledge sharing, and thus to identify common commitments, goals, and concerns amongst diverse parties. QLF’s programs build on shared practical experiences to build consensus and to strengthen the capacities of individuals and their organizations to collaborate across borders.



Sami Backleh (left) and Charles Curtin at the *Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop*, Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan (2008)

Elizabeth Alling

In the Middle East, environmental work is affected by political instability. Working within this framework, QLF appreciates that cooperative leadership at the regional level is crucial to fostering understanding—a particularly important task in a region where misunderstanding can be deadly. This latest QLF *Middle East Program*, *Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*, has focused on environmental conflict resolution as a means to provide leaders from twenty-one environmental organizations in the United States and the Middle East the opportunity for exchange through case studies and site visits in both regions, open dialogue, and practical training workshops. This broad network of collaborators and the extensive “social capital” that QLF has fostered provide a rare opportunity to move collaborative approaches beyond purely the building of social networks to actually harnessing these networks to build more proactive and resilient approaches to environmental problem solving.

Toward Sustainable Problem Solving

Examples from around the world have shown that a successful approach to conflict resolution involves a combination of mutually reinforcing national, regional, and international initiatives that allow both top-down and grassroots approaches to fostering cross-border coopera-



Elizabeth Alling

Charles Curtin takes field notes on the ecology of the Dana Nature Reserve (2008).

tion. Regional and sub-regional efforts are also complemented by a number of cross-border initiatives that help create direct and sustained contact between individuals as a way to build mutual trust, and possibly even to resolve conflict. Environmental cooperation can also be a powerful tool for preventing conflict in the first place, by promoting transferable patterns of good neighbourly relations, cooperation, and collaboration. The primary goal of the *Middle East Program* is to facilitate this kind of cross border dialogue despite the limitations to regional identity and collaboration imposed by an unstable economic, social, and political environment.

One of the challenges of collaborative conservation is that it is not yet clear if the scale of the solution is really comparable to the scale of the problem. In the U.S., true collaborative approaches struggle to sustain themselves beyond a few years or decades, raising the question of whether collaboration is just a short-term fix to a much longer-term problem, or a truly sustainable approach to problem solving. Approaches must be sustained decades or centuries to be really effective. The core challenge ahead is to make collaboration effective and sustainable in the long-term, through fostering not just social networks, but also durable institutional designs and governance. In this regard, collaboration and “over the horizon” learning networks between North American

and Middle East conservationists can yield important insights for both regions.

Reciprocal Learning

The importance of an exchange is that it yields insights for multiple groups. For the Middle East Fellows, some of the valuable insights were the use of conservation easements and other legal processes to secure land tenure and create conservation outside of formal parks and reserves. Another insight was the role of social ideals in generating and sustaining conservation. In North America, conservationist Aldo Leopold’s “Land Ethic” and related approaches provide a conceptual and ethical framework for conservation that does not yet exist in many regions of the Middle East. The example derived from over one hundred years of conservation programs in North America can provide a framework for developing a land ethic and could speed development of a culture of stewardship in the Middle East. At the same time, efforts of “fortress conservation” undertaken by European powers (and including the U.S.), with their focus on parks and protected areas and regulatory approaches often displace or alienate local communities and cultures and seek to preserve natural systems in isolation from their human component. This approach can often pit wildlife against human communities and cultures, and generates protective approaches to conservation that are rigid and unresponsive to change. The successes and failures of the North American experience with formal conservation have much to teach other regions. The growing recognition that ecological and socio-economic systems are intrinsically dynamic means that parks and reserves will never be large enough to conserve viable functioning ecosystems by themselves. This means that concepts of stewardship and conservation design must extend beyond formal protected areas to include the diverse matrix of habitats occupied by humanity, and requires more effective collaborative approaches across social borders and political boundaries.

At the same time, the Middle East approach has much to teach the North Americans. The group of North American conservationists that visited the Middle East

in 2007 and 2008 were impressed with the courage and commitment of the Middle East conservationists. Perhaps most informative was the entrepreneurial approach undertaken by many groups. In North America, conservation is primarily undertaken through foundation support or government grants. While this approach has its benefits, there remains the open question of whether or not foundation-based approaches are really sustainable in the long run. Developing economically self-sustainable approaches to conservation and institutional self-reliance presents a more sustainable approach for the longer term. The linkages between conservation and local capacity building, as well as the need to think both internationally and regionally when undertaking collaborative conservation, are particularly valuable lessons for North American conservationists.

Towards Building Sustainability and Adaptive Capacity in Individuals and Institutions:

In the coming decade, the challenge facing QLF will be to build on its network of partners on multiple continents to develop the institutional capacity to respond to change. The building of this resilience is achieved through a synthesis of ecology, economics, and policy. This new synthesis can be achieved through considering individual collaborative projects as experiments in conservation and adaptive management, and through developing an even tighter network of projects in which the efforts of QLF become a learning network to inform and build on the experiences of diverse individuals and organizations. The QLF network could be a useful framework for developing local and regional resilience by assessing the institutional and governance structures that sustain or undermine effective conservation and management.

This synthesis of ecology, community, and culture must increasingly address economic constraints. Through building financial-based incentives for conservation, projects such as those of the Innovation in Conservation Group at Harvard University and the Levant Consulting Group in Amman, Jordan, are break-



Samir Backleh rescues Kestrel chicks (*Falco tinnunculus*) in the Judean Desert (2003).

Larry Morris

ing new ground. The current downturn in the U.S. economy and the intense pressures it is placing on many conservation NGOs illustrate the folly of relying on external sources of income to support conservation. Finding innovative ways to support conservation, such as the work of the Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association in Egypt, are important models of building resilience and sustainable conservation.

Trans-boundary learning and more proactive action are essential to conserving both ecology and culture in the face of ever-accelerating rates of change. The diverse network of friends and partners QLF has developed over nearly two decades provides the crucial foundation needed to form a dynamic, proactive approach to conservation. The challenge is harnessing the creativity and commitment of diverse individuals and organizations to develop more strategic approaches to conservation and management. The goal is to learn from what has and has not worked, and to form a learning network where conservation practices grow and evolve, and where new ideas can germinate, take root, and be rapidly and effectively communicated to a wide array of friends and partners across diverse landscapes, communities, and cultures.



Front from left: Sami Backleh (facing camera), Raed Nimri, and Amr Ali
Back from left: Raed Hayyaneh and Becca Scibek



Elizabeth Cabot and Sami Backleh



Jane Arbuckle



Uri Ramon



Our guides at the Pyramids in Giza, Egypt

MOMENTS OF LEVITY
WERE IMPORTANT TO US



Julia Doermann with new friend



Ted Hoskins with guide



Raed Hayyaneh



Raed Nimiri and Sami Backleh



Amr Ali

An aerial photograph showing the rugged, layered rock formations of the Jericho West Bank. The rocks exhibit distinct horizontal strata in various shades of brown, tan, and grey, with some areas appearing more eroded and jagged. The formations are set against a backdrop of a dry, rocky landscape with sparse vegetation. The text "NORTH AMERICAN FELLOWS" is overlaid in the upper left corner.

NORTH AMERICAN FELLOWS

Along the Dead Sea, Jericho, West Bank. QLF's partner organization, the Palestine Wildlife Society, has a bird banding station in Jericho, where several *Middle East Program* Alumni began their careers in wildlife conservation. *Photograph by Charles Jacobi*

JANE ARBUCKLE

Director of Stewardship
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Maine

As Director of Stewardship for the Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), a statewide land trust, Jane is responsible for the planning, budgeting, oversight, and completion of all stewardship activities, including the stewarding of 160 conservation easements, and within this purview, the management of over eighty land preserves. Jane plays an integral role in conducting natural resource inventories and research projects for better land management, developing site conservation plans with community members, creating and maintaining trail systems, managing overnight camping, and creating programs for the public by working with local stewards, town officials, schools, and other various stakeholders. Jane also works with land protection staff to develop new and to amend old easements, and to develop pre-acquisition conservation plans. Jane's additional responsibilities include working as part of MCHT's management team, coordinating a statewide land stewards group, serving on regional committees and MCHT's Stewardship Policy Committee, and developing workshops for MCHT's annual conference.



Photographs courtesy of Jane Arbuckle

House on Malaga Island, mid-19th century. The island, now uninhabited, was previously home to a mixed-race community that was evicted by the State of Maine, circa 1912. Right: former resident of Malaga Island



Photograph courtesy of Dave Mention

Dave Mention and Jane Arbuckle, *Capacity and Consensus Building Workshop*, Dana Reserve, Jordan (2008)

The Social and Environmental Implications of Malaga Island's History

Jane's case study examines the conflict surrounding an MCHT stewardship project in which she has been involved. In 2001, MCHT acquired Malaga Island, a forty-acre undeveloped island on the eastern side of Casco Bay, Maine. No one had lived on this island for almost 100 years, and local fishermen had been working and storing their lobster traps there for most of that time. During the process of acquiring Malaga, MCHT learned of its unhappy history: in 1912, a mixed-race community of people who had lived on the island for over forty years was evicted by the state for no sound reason, constituting a major class/race discrimination case. These individuals were forcibly removed, their houses destroyed, and their cemetery dug up.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in Malaga's story, primarily due to the research of an archeology professor at the University of Southern Maine, who identified the former inhabitants, where they lived on the island and for how long, and their destinations after expulsion. Interested parties or stakeholders in how this historically valuable land should be used has similarly grown, and now includes members of the NAACP and other groups interested in social diversity and fairness issues, those interested in Maine history, and the descendants of both the evictors and evictees. Additionally, the island has garnered the attention of filmmakers,



Malaga Island, Maine

Photograph courtesy of Jane Abuckle

(at least two documentaries are underway), public radio (an oral history project is currently being conducted), television, and literary media (a number of articles and a children's book about the island have been published). In the midst of this new attention, MCHT is trying to protect the island's ecology and history, work with the local community, and to educate interested parties about land conservation and the environmental impact of publicity, which could bring more tourists and other visitors (camera crews, artifacts hunters, etc.) than the island can accommodate.

NARRATIVE

When I learned that I might be participating in QLF's Middle East Fellowship on conflict resolution in communities, my first thought was, "How can any conflict that we have here in New England compare to the conflicts over there?" I thought of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the ongoing instability, and the perceived danger that everyone must feel. I was excited to travel to this place where I had never been and where conflict would seem so ever present that by going there, everything back home would seem easy.

What I experienced and what I learned was so much more than this. It was a context of incredible complexity and depth of time—of emotion, of ties to the land, to the words of the Bible, to millennia of customs and habits and patterns of use—so beyond the experience of most Americans. And yet living within this are very normal, very wonderful people who are knowledgeable, kind, intelligent, thoughtful, well educated (in many different ways) and living in different political systems with differing levels of freedoms and options. Their frames of reference are so different from the American culture, and yet they are very much kindred spirits. It's something we all know intellectually, but to experience it in such depth was truly profound.

I was struck by the difficulties that conservation workers face in Jordan, Egypt, Israel, and the West Bank. The level of national government control, so much greater in regard to land use determination than I am used to, changes everything in land conservation. Individual landowners, who are at the core of land conservation in the U.S., are almost non-existent on any large scale. So too is philanthropy by those other than royalty, except for that which comes from other countries. These are huge differences. The very real conflict over precious and declining quantities of water, overpopulation, and the

encouragement of settlements in the desert—all seem like insurmountable obstacles to effective conservation.

I am so impressed by the perseverance and creativity of our many Fellows and their co-workers who are pushing at the boundaries, trying to bring awareness and to change centuries of habits, working within these systems to protect incredibly special places. I understand that the political system is complex beyond my understanding, but it is especially difficult to see these wonderful people maintaining their dignity and sense of self-worth when they are not treated with respect by their own government. The Middle East Fellows are very brave people.

These days, as I read the paper or a magazine, as I hear the news or a conversation, I am acutely aware of any mention of Palestinians, Israelis, Jordanians, and Egyptians. It is not their governments that I think of, but rather these people we met: their families, their stories. How are they being affected? What can I do to help? How will they be able to continue their work and their lives? How can they have hope for a future shaped by their dreams and their work? I feel so fortunate that QLF has opened this door for me.

CHARLES CURTIN

Ecological Policy Design

*Massachusetts Institute of Technology — United States Geological Survey (MIT-USGS) Science Impact Collaborative
Maine and Massachusetts*

Charles Curtin is a biologist whose work links ecological and social systems. He holds a M.S. in Land Resources and a Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work focuses on the development of large-scale collaborative research programs and the adaptive management of complex systems. He developed community-based science programs for the rancher-led Malpai Borderlands Group in the Mexico/United States borderlands and developed collaborative projects between indigenous pastoral peoples in the Southwestern United States and East Africa in conjunction with the African Conservation Centre and UNESCO. His recent efforts have also focused on the conservation of inshore marine ecosystems. Charles directs the New Mexico non-profit research institute Arid Lands Project and the Maine-based Ecological



Elizabeth Alling

Charles Curtin, Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan (2008)

Policy Design. He is also a Fellow within the MIT-USGS Science Impact Collaborative at MIT where he directs graduate student studies and teaches courses in collaborative conservation and adaptive management, landscape ecology, and ecological policy design.

Reflections on a Decade of Collaborative Conservation in Mexico/US Borderlands: Lessons for Science and Policy Design

Charles' case study examines place-based collaborative conservation in desert grasslands in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands. The study site is a good contrast to the Middle East, as the regions are climatically very similar, while the core issues of linking conservationists and pastoralists are also comparable. The focus of the study is primarily on building science-based approaches to ecosystem management in collaboration with the rancher-led Malpai Borderlands Group. This approach highlights the process of linking local and science-based knowledge and illustrates the importance of science in providing both credibility and guidance for management and stewardship. The example of the Malpai Borderlands Group demonstrates how interactions between researchers and communities not only empower the communities but can also lead to more effective science and policy by allowing a scale of research and monitoring rarely attainable through traditional methods. These interactions have proven important for enhancing the resiliency of cultural institutions and ecological systems in the face of change.

NARRATIVE

In the early 1990s, a small group of ranchers met with environmentalists, Quaker mediator and philosopher Jim Corbett, and scientist Ray Turner at the Malpai Ranch in the San Bernardino Valley near Douglas, Arizona, to discuss the health of ecosystems and human communities in the Borderlands. The group called itself the Malpai Group after the ranch, whose name in turn derived from the volcanic boulder fields of the area, which are called “Malpais,” meaning “badland.” The ranchers were concerned about their ability to continue their traditional way of life in the face of deteriorating grassland condition, climate variability, and increasing public opposition to grazing on public lands. The environmentalists were

concerned about maintaining biodiversity and landscape values in the face of habitat fragmentation and shrub invasion.

As the group talked about their perceptions and concerns, a consensus emerged. The existing piecemeal land management structure was simply not compatible with ecological or economic realities. What was needed instead was a community-led private-public partnership to achieve collaborative, landscape-scale management. This consensus signaled a significant departure from past traditions of confrontation, regulation and litigation between groups with distinct goals and perspectives. It heralded a shift toward the “radical center,” where people with a diversity of perspectives work together to forge common goals

The Mexico-United States Borderlands. Spring flowers in the borderlands cover a volcanic cinder cone, with the Peloncillos Mountains beyond. This volcanic landscape contain the Malpais (Spanish for badlands) for which the group was named.

Warners Glenn



for land management and achieve consensus on how to achieve them. The Malpai Borderlands Group (MBG) adopted a concept similar to the “Land Ethic” that Aldo Leopold developed a half a century earlier, in part from his experiences in the Sierra Madre in Mexico just south of the Malpai area. This conservation ethic has been important to guiding conservation thought, and gave rise to a conservation movement across North America.

The MBG and its collaborators recognized that sound management had to be based on scientific understanding of the forces shaping the ecological, economic, and cultural systems of the Borderlands; also, that scientists trained broadly in landscape and systems ecology, rather than narrowly in natural resource management, could help them to achieve such an integrated understanding. The group accordingly established a Science Advisory Committee that contained eminent scientists and initiated a research program. The science, linked with local knowledge, has proved to be essential both in documenting the impacts of climate and land-use, but equally important as a community-building tool to bring together diverse individuals and organizations. It also provided credibility for all aspects of the MBG’s work through a solid grounding in experimental science.

From the scientists’ perspective, the new alliances have allowed a crucial rescaling of science to allow experimentation at scales directly relevant to conservation and management. This has resulted in arguably the largest replicated ecological experiment on the continent (and perhaps the globe). The McKinney Flats Project is breaking new ground by directly documenting the interaction of pastoralists with disturbances (such as fire) and climate. It also has demonstrated that conventional approaches to science at small scales can frequently provide a misleading picture of natural processes. An additional crucial insight is that collaborative approaches and rethinking of institutional designs not only engage and serve local communities, but they also fundamentally change the ability of science to detect and understand change. Equally clear is that the science used cannot be just monitoring, but also must have an experimental component to test underlying assumptions.

The MBG and collaborators realized that to have truly effective and adaptive approaches, they had to learn not only from their own activities but must also reach out and connect with other communities in what has come to be called “over the horizon learning.” Starting in 2002, exchanges between Maasai in East Africa and Borderlands ranchers provided insights into how to sustain rangeland



Charles Curtin

Interactions between Borderlands ranchers and members of the Maasai tribe in East Africa, facilitated by the Malpai Borderlands Group, have provided key insights into how to sustain rangeland ecology and culture.

ecology and culture. While Maasai are being pushed to subdivide their open landscapes to generate more economic efficiency and to protect land tenure, the Borderlands ranchers, after a century of subdivision, are trying to reassemble their rangelands into larger functional units. They believe this will make their ranching more economically viable and the ecosystem more ecologically viable, as current systems of land tenure are inconsistent with the realities of rainfall distribution. Other significant long-term exchanges include interactions with New England fishermen from the coast of Maine who are also seeking to build collaborative conservation programs. The MBG example has also contributed to the design and implementation of QLF projects to develop an inshore conservation strategy in Muscongus Bay in central Maine.

The QLF Middle East Exchanges, of which I have been a part, have brought this notion of “over the horizon” learning to another level. The experience of seeing other cultures within a very similar climatic context illustrates how political and social systems interact to structure semi-arid landscapes. As North American Fellows, we learned a great deal about how to make conservation more innovative and entrepreneurial, while the collaboration process, science-based approaches, and the role of a conservation ethic experienced in North America provided significant insights for Middle East Fellows. The experience has led to several long-term exchanges. Interactions with the Arava Institute in Israel are leading to additional exchanges between researchers in arid and semi-arid lands. QLF has also provided seed funding for studies on the ecological impact of the border wall between Israel and Palestine. These studies of the wall are in

turn being linked to a border fence being established between the U.S. and Mexico. Finally, the Global Climate Change Collaboration at MIT is assembling cross-continent partnerships to address the impacts of climate change. Interchanges between the Borderlands and Israel and Palestine are the direct outcome of friendships and trust developed during interchanges organized by QLF. In turn, the science-based interchanges can also serve to help refine and focus QLF programs by showing how concepts of ecological resilience and adaptive capacity can be used as organizing principles to promote greater understanding between diverse individuals and organizations and a greater focus on building the ability to adapt to change.

JULIA DOERMANN

Professor, Oregon State University, Water Resources Program
Independent Consultant
Oregon

Julia is an instructor at Oregon State University, teaching graduate and professional courses on Water Governance and Conflict Resolution. The goal of this curriculum is to develop students' abilities to understand and work with conflict at both the individual and collective level. Then, applying what they learn to water and natural resources issues, help them understand how to move organizations, public policy and/or communities from litigation and polarization to collaboratively developed solutions for restoring watersheds, species, and community health. Julia is also an independent consultant, providing policy advice, facilitation, and training on natural resources and water policy, sustainability, and conflict transformation. Prior to her current work, Julia served on a team of natural resource advisors to Governor Kitzhaber of Oregon to reframe, shape, and implement new public policies on salmon and watershed restoration, forest ecosystem health restoration, and sustainability. Julia's clients have included the National Policy Consensus Center, Western Governors' Association (WGA), Oregon Solutions, Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center partners

(i.e. agricultural growers, environmentalists, and government agencies), and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Lessons for Working with Conflict: Isle au Haut's Garbage and Recycling Problem

Julia's case study examines a persistent garbage and recycling collection problem on Isle au Haut, a remote island in the Gulf of Maine. It serves as an illustration of how reframing a conflict can help facilitate its resolution. Julia is the Chair of the Trash and Recycling Committee for the Point Lookout Association (PLA) Board on Isle au Haut. The population of this island approximately triples during the summer months when seasonal families return, many of which have had homes on the island for generations. The PLA hires a crew for these months to collect trash, care take homes, and maintain a water system, waterfront and recreation facilities, and the road system for approximately thirty families. For years, the PLA crew had hard feelings towards summer residents, whose lack of compliance with trash disposal and recycling guidelines threatened their safety on the job. This became a recurring issue before the Board, and threatened the crew's willingness to continue to work for the PLA.



Charlie Jacobi and Julia Doermann, Alumni Dinner, Fellowship to the Middle East, Beit Sahour, West Bank, Palestine (2007)



Julia Doemann

Harbour on Isle au Haut, a remote island in the Gulf of Maine

When Julia's committee started working on this problem four years ago, they could see that it was being viewed solely as a noncompliance issue; at this literal perception of the conflict, the Board's discussions centered on rules, penalties, and enforcement. However, Julia knew that there were other ways to approach the issue. Exploring everyone's motivations, interests, and needs offered the first shift in understanding. Starting with the Board and the crew, neither was interested in enforcing garbage rules or fines. They just wanted the problem to stop. Fines would not ensure this. Talking to homeowners and renters, it became clear that the underlying reason for their problematic waste disposal habits was the frustrating and incomplete guidelines for sorting and recycling and not laziness or malicious intent. Julia's committee started exploring how to improve communication, clarify the guidance, and create a better system in every household to support the Board's goals. New guidelines were drafted, circulated, and posted in every house. All agreed that guidance would be revised and improved as everyone continued to learn over time. In the end, the solution that met everyone's needs was relationship-centered and

engaged the community as a whole rather than perpetuating a perception of two communities. Stakeholders adopted shared responsibility for this community problem and committed to addressing it collaboratively.

NARRATIVE: REFLECTIONS ON OUR EXCHANGE

Our two trips to the Middle East offered unexpected depth, insight, and connection in a relatively short amount of time. We had a wonderful community of Fellows—American and Middle Eastern. Whether it was during our site visits in the fall or during our trip together in Jordan, I was pleased by all the ways we found time and different configurations of participants to get to know one another and each other's stories, experiences, and cultures. Interest seemed to only grow as we spent time together, whether it was over dinner, during breaks, on a walk, during a tour, riding together in a van, over tea, in the wee hours talking, or through training sessions.

I found a mutual respect grew from this that allowed us to have candid conversations that we might otherwise have been hesitant to venture into. Through our explorations of how we approached and thought about sustainability, conservation, community, we discovered far more. For example, we discovered cultural framings, theirs and

our own, that surprised me in refreshing ways. One of my favorite examples of this was hearing an American Fellow talking about Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic" as a description of the core values that motivate his work. He suggested that this might be true for others. In a later, unrelated conversation with one of the Middle East Fellows, I was trying to understand how he and his staff had gotten as sophisticated and comprehensive as they had in addressing conservation, community health, social justice, and economic needs through their work. I had also observed that they seemed to work from a very deep, sincere, loving place. He responded, "It's all God's creation." I tend to believe that different framings such as these two direct our work from a deep level. Understanding these framings offers important insights into understanding the paths through which we choose to work with conflict and how people get the results they do.

Another result of our trip was that I found myself beginning to understand a landscape and a cultural history that has been portrayed and described since my childhood in church, holiday stories, and movies. This trip offered context and a sense of relationships that gave me dramatically new insights into history, religion, and current events.

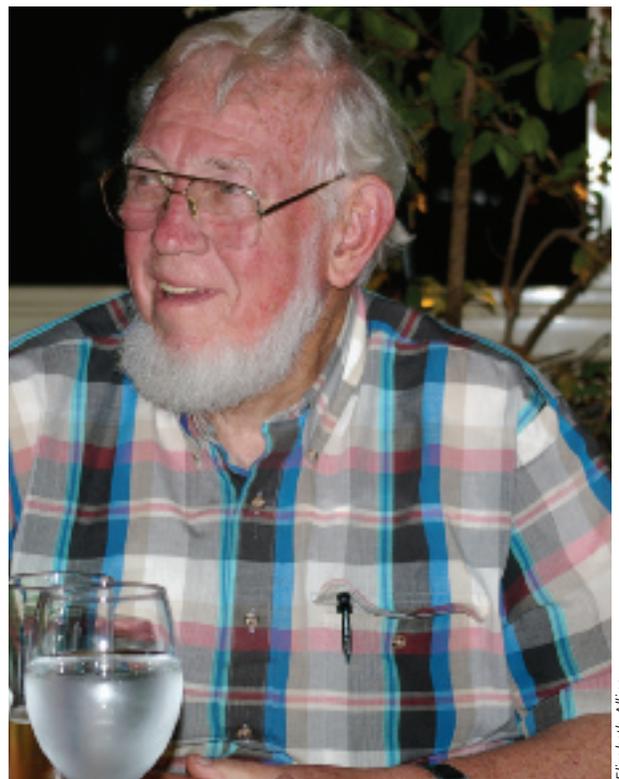
Finally, I found I had a tremendous respect for the challenges many of our Middle East Fellows face—challenges that I have never imagined in my own life. Humbling and even numbing, I could be both discouraged about humanity as well as brought to tears by the courage and strength of the human spirit that was so evident. Somehow I had not previously had such a level of connection to this awareness through U.S. news or secondary accounts. For me, it may have had to be experienced. By the end, it was so visceral that we are one world and we have to learn about and understand our part in finding wholeness and peace.

REV. THEODORE HOSKINS (TED)

Minister to Coastal Communities and Fisheries
 Maine Sea Coast Mission
 Co-Chair, Downeast Groundfish Initiative
 Maine

As pastor to the outer islands of Maine, Ted was exposed to the host of issues facing local fishermen and fisheries there, compelling him to shift his career from Boat Minister aboard the Sea Coast Mission's SUN-BEAM V to Minister to Coastal Communities and

Fisheries. In his current role, Ted offers his support to help preserve year-round resource-based communities along the coast. Seeing the critical link between healthy fishing communities and healthy fisheries, Ted has become convinced that the sustainability of both depends upon the creation of effective working relationships between stakeholders, including conservationists, scientists, fishery managers, and fishermen. Ted sees small community alliances working from an accepted set of ecological and organizational principles as key players; as the operational arms of regional Resource Centers and with the support of the cross-border Saltwater Network, these alliances could increase participation, conservation, stewardship, responsibility, and governance throughout the entire Gulf of Maine. Ted is also the Co-Chair of the Downeast Groundfish Initiative, which is a coalition of individuals and organizations including fishermen, local community members, government representatives, and natural and social scientists that all share the common vision of healthy coastal communities built on sustainable resources.



Ted Hoskins, Middle East Program Alumni dinner, Cairo, Egypt (2007)

Elizabeth Alling



Courtesy of Rev. Theodore Hoskins

The Gulf of Maine, the focal region for the Downeast Groundfish Initiative, of which Ted Hoskins Co-Chairs

The Downeast Initiative

Ted's case study draws on his role as Co-Chair of the Downeast Groundfish Initiative (also called the Downeast Initiative), and explores the potential for a pilot study of the initiative to be brought successfully through the New England Fisheries Management Council. This project advocates rebuilding and sustaining a productive groundfish fishery from the Penobscot Bay to the Canadian border. It seeks to achieve this by: (1) protecting Maine's coastal ecosystem, especially the groundfish spawning areas and nursery grounds, and by establishing strict parameters dictating how, when, and where fishing can be conducted; (2) creating healthy, resource-based communities by promoting a constructive dialogue between stakeholders including fishermen, community members, managers, and scientists; and (3) promoting a diversified coastal fishery based on equitable access to resources, principle-based governance, and sound science. The success of the initiative's goals

depends on the New England Fisheries Management Council's acceptance of Area Management as the basis of decision-making. Action on this has been postponed, in spite of a strong collaborative effort to push it through, but the campaign to support Area Management continues. The Downeast Initiative's Pilot Area Management Plan seeks to establish a permit bank so fishermen in coastal communities, cut out by earlier management decisions, will have access to fish. It sets itself against privatization of the ocean's resources and supports diversified sustainable fishing. Importantly, it will give fishermen a voice in local resource management, thereby developing stewardship from the bottom up. In every way, the future of fishing communities in Eastern Maine depends on the success of the Downeast Initiative.

NARRATIVE

It was an extraordinary experience, this coming together from East and West. QLF choreographed an exceptional opportunity for us all. We had met before in bits and pieces . . . visiting here and there . . . forging tentative friendships. . . gaining a glimpse of differing worlds. . . feeling the comfortable kinships and then often, with no warning, sensing the awesome divides.

Now, in these special days at the Dana Reserve, it all seemed to come together, to make sense, to unite in a symphony of meaning. We had talked of land and water, coral reefs and desert grasses. We had visited an unrecognized village and a city built on garbage, a wetland with no water and a country with only sand. And now. . . now we talked of how it all fits together, or more realistically, how it might all fit together.

Everything fit together for me because I finally was able to let everything go. Only then did I see what should have been obvious from the beginning — that the most precious natural resource is the human spirit. It was the triumph of hope in the human spirit that made all the difference in every single situation.



Elizabeth Alling

Ted Hoskins hikes in the central highlands of the West Bank, Palestine. Fellowship to the Middle East (2007)

We had been privileged to go to the places and meet the people and share in the communities where the spirit of hope was the predominant force. The tools and practices, methods and ideas, principles and codes which we saw and learned were the means by which that spirit of hope found a foothold on the local battlegrounds of reality.

There is little doubt that this QLF experience will follow me in the years to come. We live in a period of creation's history that desperately needs what the human spirit has to offer: hope.

CHARLES JACOBI (CHARLIE)

*Natural Resource Specialist
Acadia National Park
Maine*

Charlie Jacobi has worked for the National Park Service since 1982, with twenty-two years at Acadia National Park in Maine, and two years in the Great Smoky Mountains. His earlier positions with the National Park Service were in fee collection and visitor protection, including law enforcement and other traditional ranger activities. Since 1992, Charlie has been a Natural Resource Specialist at Acadia, focusing on visitor use planning and management. His primary conservation goal is to help protect park resources while still providing a high-quality recreation experience to park visitors. Charlie's main duties include coordinating visitor impact and social science research to inform park decisions and planning efforts; monitoring visitor use and impact levels; encouraging organizations, local residents, and park

visitors to engage in park management and gain a sense of stewardship, particularly through the Leave No Trace program; and maintaining an active role in park planning issues. Charlie is also President of the Friends of Baxter State Park, where he fosters good relationships with the Baxter State Park Authority and park managers, promotes the preservation, support, and enhancement of the park's wilderness, and organizes fundraising efforts.

Managing the Icon: Resources and Visitor Experiences on Cadillac Mountain, Acadia National Park

Charlie's case study explores the resource conditions and visitor experiences on Cadillac Mountain, the most popular destination for visitors to Acadia National Park. Cadillac Mountain has sensitive sub-alpine vegetation, thin soils, a severe climate, short growing season, and largely unregulated visitation. Much soil and vegetation have been lost due to intensive visitor use over the past 100 years. The park's goal is to determine how best to protect Cadillac's fragile ecosystem and resources and



Charlie Jacobi, Acadia National Park, Maine

David Meriton

still provide the high-quality experience visitors expect. The park is conducting research to inform a visitor capacity planning process that addresses resource and visitor experience issues. The main question relevant to this case study is: can the park invite five hundred thousand people a year to Cadillac Mountain without crowding or intrusive site management facilities and still



Cadillac Mountain, Acadia National Park

Charles Jacobi

north american fellows



Left: The Pyramids of Giza, Egypt. The challenge of properly managing tourism is shared across cultures and across continents.

Below: Cadillac Mountain, Acadia National Park, Maine. A tourist destination, Cadillac Mountain is facing a number of threats to its fragile ecosystem.

Photographs by Charles Jacobi



preserve both the mountain's fragile natural resources and a high-quality visitor experience that includes a degree of freedom to roam the summit area? And as a corollary, if limiting visitors is a necessary last resort, what will be the effect on park support from local community and park businesses (the gift shop, bus tours) that depend on large numbers of visitors?

NARRATIVE: LAUGHING ALL THE WAY

I expected the Middle East Fellowship to be intellectually stimulating and culturally enlightening in many ways. It was all of that and more. I did not expect the strong emotional impact, which continues to exert its Newtonian force from a considerable distance.

One of my colleagues from the U.S. said she was "brought to tears seven times" on our first Middle East visit. I wasn't counting, but I have no doubt she was right. We all experienced the same emotions. It came from learning about the never-ending obstacles thrown at the Zabaleen garbage recyclers in Cairo; from standing under electrical power lines in an unrecognized (and unelectrified) Bedouin community in Israel facing serious environmental health issues, and under-

standing that electrical power lines only follow political power lines; from Palestinians having the life squeezed from them by checkpoints, a wall, and a lack of land tenure laws; from Israelis living under daily threats of rocket attacks; and from the girls at the Kufranjeh High School, whose bubbly charm and enthusiasm for environmental learning was infectious. Hearing firsthand about environmental justice issues is emotional; I shouldn't be surprised by that. The unexpected charm of the high school girls however, allowed our first trip to end on a wonderful upbeat tick.

Everywhere we went, we met amazing people: Ezzat Naem Guindi of the Zabaleen, returning to his people after university and dedicating his life to their betterment; a Bedouin leader with the quiet determination to improve the health of his community; Mohammed, a young man who abandoned a career path in pharmacy after spending one summer in environmental education with children; and Talep, a gifted naturalist with the capability of inspiring everyone he teaches.

After a while, you begin to think amazing people are the rule and not the exception.

Our colleagues, the Middle East Fellows, were also an incredibly talented group of people. They had a knack for explaining not just their case studies and work, but their own perspective on Middle East life and issues. Perceptive, candid, personal, passionate, and so articulate; listening to them was an education in itself.

Most of all, the Fellowship was a humbling and inspiring experience for me. Humbling because of the character, caliber, and passion of the people I just described, but also because of the complex issues our Middle East friends face and the unbelievably difficult sociopolitical and economic environment in which they operate daily. Inspiring for the same reason.

When asked what they remembered most about their trip to the U.S., one of the Middle East Fellows responded, “I remember laughing a lot.” (They laughed and we cried.) Remembering the laughter first is remarkable considering how the group was thrown together for three weeks in a van, and knowing that some animated discussions took place. I envy their experience getting to know one another, and apparently, having more fun than we did! It was heartwarming to see friendships rekindled at the workshop in Jordan. They are still laughing a lot, and I expect they will laugh all the way to Turkey and beyond, leaving good works and good will in their wake.

DAVID MENTION

Trail Director

Maine Island Trail Association

Maine

Dave Mention brings a diversity and relevance of experience to his position as Trail Director at the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA), a statewide NGO providing recreational access to Maine’s wilderness islands and dedicated to educating visitors about low impact usage practices and stewardship. MITA manages recreational use on I30 public and privately owned islands. Dave’s background includes many years of running adventure travel businesses and acting as an adventure travel guide —experiences that have provided him with insight into the needs of tourism-related businesses on the Maine Coast. At MITA, Dave leads the effort to document



Elizabeth Alling

Dave Mention at the Wadi Environmental Science Center, Mohandeseen, Giza, Egypt (2007)

island ecological conditions and to understand visitor expectations and gauge visitor satisfaction. Dave works closely with NGOs that own island properties (usually land trusts) and with private owners. MITA owns no property, so its existence depends on productive working relationships with landowners and land users. In order to ensure visitors treat islands with respect, Dave promotes *Leave No Trace* training.

Managing Recreational Use on Maine Islands

Dave’s case study draws on his involvement in a project to manage the delicate, three-way balance between calls for increased tourism and recreational opportunities, long-standing traditional uses, and the ecological health of Maine’s islands. There are many examples of the challenges to striking this balance, including the predicted trend of increased island use by recreational groups, which has required negotiation on how best to continue preserving the islands’ environmental integrity when this occurs. Another example is the state’s promotion of tourism in a coastal region where local land trusts are concerned about the environmental impacts tourists can create. These land trusts are concerned that islands that do not have a tradition of recreational use will become vulnerable to erosion, wildlife disturbances, litter, and pollution. In addition, recreational groups in the area are worried that new visitors will not value traditional use patterns and may damage relationships they have built over time.



Kayakers represent a nontraditional use of Maine's coastline.

Changing usage patterns and the resultant tensions between new and traditional stakeholders are relevant not only to Maine's islands, but also to the coastline itself, as a growing tourism industry has come into conflict with the interests of fishermen and clambers, whose livelihoods represent a historic usage of Maine's coast. In response to these various conflicts, Dave has worked closely with kayak outfitters, summer camps, school groups, and island owners to promote equitable solutions. MITA meets regularly with camps and schools to discuss ecological concerns on fragile islands, makes sure island owners are given annual reports and periodic updates to guarantee that their islands are maintained in an ecologically-responsible condition, and holds regular stakeholder meetings to ensure that new user groups (such as kayakers) and traditional user groups (such as fishermen and clambers) both have a voice and are included in coastal management planning.

NARRATIVE

I have been associated with the Quebec-Labrador Foundation since 2005, first as part of an agency presenting to visiting Fellows from Latin America, and then recently as a Fellow on the Middle East Exchange in November of 2007. The thing that has been most impressive to me is the dedication that

QLF Fellows, no matter where they hail from, bring to solving the environmental challenges we all face. I have met Fellows devoted to social justice for disenfranchised communities, Fellows working on protecting sensitive reefs, and Fellows focused on protecting water rights in an equitable manner.

The Fellowship in which I directly participated, Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict, brought this dedication into sharp focus. Participants from the United States brought an approach that seemed to me to be based on working within an existing infrastructure. We all sought to bring affected parties to a common table and sort out differences within a framework of a common culture and set of laws. The dedication of the U.S.

Fellows was in trying to get to a consensus while recognizing a variety of points of view on the subject. By contrast, the Middle East Fellows seemed to be focused on creating an infrastructure that would recognize their struggle. In a set of cultures that did not place a high value on environmental efforts, these people had to build the infrastructure from scratch.

One example (of many) that stands out is the effort of the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS) to protect their 27 kilometers of coastline, which has faced tremendous development pressure on account of a growing tourism industry and the presence



An important job of the Maine Island Trail Association is to collect and properly dispose of any trash that accumulates on Maine's uninhabited islands due to recreational use.

of the country's sole deep water port facility. JREDS is working to protect the coastline's fragile coral reefs, in addition to a small but historic fishing community—all along a stretch of land the size of the New Hampshire coastline.

As daunting as this task is, we U.S. Fellows recognized many similarities to the issues we face at home. The harbor in Portland, Maine, for example, faces similar challenges to those of JREDS: increased tourism, an active shipping port with attendant spills and pollution problems, and quality of life concerns relating to economic development. The scope is different between Aqaba, Jordan and Portland, Maine, but we recognized the challenges. A significant difference is that in the United States, there exist laws and processes, which though sometimes limited, allow individuals and groups to seek legal protection for environmental causes. This didn't seem to be the case in Jordan.

In another example, we visited a small olive grove outside of Cairo where an NGO was developing an environmental education effort to teach children the importance of valuing the natural world around them. I was extremely impressed by the novel (to us) approach this NGO was taking of partnering directly with a commercial business—the olive oil company on whose grounds it was operating. As our bus departed, we became engrossed in deep conversation: wasn't it amazing to have a public/private partnership like this? What would a similar program look like at home? It seemed to us that in the United States, where we would get grants and then work more independently, this small school was getting direct commercial support. Thus, what might look like a conflict of interest in our home states was evidently quite successful in Egypt.

Now that I am home and busy with my own project, Managing Recreational Conflicts along the Maine Coast, I find myself thinking back to the time I spent with our Middle Eastern colleagues. I no longer take for granted the presence of an infrastructure that has a place for environmental values. At the same time, I am stimulated by the different approaches taken in the Middle East. I am extremely grateful that we don't face the same kind of security threats and regional conflicts that are present in Israel, Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt. When I think of conflicts we currently face in Maine and begin to feel that the positions are simply too far apart to discuss fairly, I think of my new friends in Jerusalem, in Aqaba, Cairo, Amman, and other places and think to myself, "We have to continue to try to work together. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and our environment."

REBECCA SCIBEK (BECCA)

Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator
Charles River Watershed Association
Massachusetts

As Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator at the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) in Weston, Massachusetts, Rebecca oversees volunteers for CRWA's monthly water quality monitoring program and annual Charles River Cleanup, manages CRWA's electronic and print newsletters, as well as other publications, and provides support for additional projects as needed. Through her job at CRWA, Rebecca has learned much about watershed science and the interaction of science, policy and advocacy. Prior to joining CRWA, Rebecca spent three years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ghana, West Africa, where she worked in the agriculture and forestry sectors to restore overused farmland and educate farmers in alternative crop support techniques. Rebecca also met with farmers and in-school clubs to discuss environmental and agricultural issues pertinent to the region, designed lesson topics and plans, raised awareness within the community about environmental degradation, and worked with local organizations to



Rebecca Scibek, Giftun Island, Red Sea, near Hurghada, Egypt (2007)

Photograph courtesy of Rebecca Scibek

north american fellows



Photograph courtesy of Rebecca Sabek

Charles River, Massachusetts. In recent years, the flow level of the river has notably decreased, due to uncontrolled and high-impact development, continued use of traditional water infrastructure, and increasing water withdrawals by growing towns along the watershed.

assist with publichealth and environmental education. Rebecca spent her third year in the Peace Corps coordinating volunteer support and providing office administration. Rebecca has also worked as a development intern for the Environmental Law Institute and as a groundwater protection intern at the Department of Environmental Protection in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Keeping the Water in the Charles River

The Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) works to protect and preserve the Charles River and its watershed, a 308 square mile area in eastern Massachusetts. In recent years, the flow level of the Charles River has notably decreased. Less water has been flowing through the river and streams because of uncontrolled and high-impact development, continued use of traditional water

infrastructure (piping water in and out), and increasing water withdrawals. Rebecca’s case study sites are in the upper area of the watershed in the suburban and rural towns of Franklin, Medfield, Bellingham, Millis, and Medway. These towns are dependent on well water from aquifers in the Charles River watershed that feed the river and provide water to hundreds of thousands of people. The towns recently had their Massachusetts Water Management Act permits reviewed and revised, a process that occurs every five years. The newly issued permits now require the towns to increase their water conservation measures by reducing nonessential outdoor water use and limiting residential water use to sixty five gallons per capita per day.

However, the growing towns of the upper watershed see these permit restrictions as unreasonable and have

appealed the permits in court. CRWA, along with other conservation organizations, is prepared to bring its technical and legal expertise to these appeals to ensure that the conservation-based water permits are upheld. In opposition to conservationist concerns, the towns feel their rights are being violated through water use limits. Encouraging this sentiment are the water suppliers, who argue that if more water is needed then it should be purchased rather than restricted. CRWA and the state feel that water use must be limited in order to protect the environmental integrity of the Charles River and to prevent it from going dry in summer months as some other local rivers do. CRWA's efforts to support limits on water use include providing legal counsel in court cases and educating citizens and municipal officials in concerned towns about the impacts of water overuse by demonstrating through scientific evidence the negative effects of low river flows and water shortages.

NARRATIVE

The QLF Middle East Fellowship allowed me to grow personally and professionally in my knowledge of conflict management and consensus building, my understanding of the worldwide environmental movement, and my motivation to continue working for environmental causes. Both trips I participated in gave me the opportunity to see environmental and peace building work in progress, in widely varied contexts, but always with the same goals of improving the current status both of the natural world and of people's lives.

Participating in the Fellowship gave me the opportunity to interact and share experiences with both U.S. and Middle East environmentalists who I otherwise would not have met. Making connections and finding common ground seemed very easy in the context of the QLF trips. Through many informal and formal conversations, I found myself absorbing and sharing ideas about a range of issues from politics to culture to food to environmentalism. The conversations often seemed to focus on ways that each of us could become more effective in our own work: how we could overcome problems and make progress toward our goals. While these goals were different for each person and organization, the positive attitudes and ideas that flowed during our times together were beneficial for everyone.

One of the things that struck me most during my time in the Middle East was the motivation and passion of those we visited: the Middle East Fellows from Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank. Even in the face of many hardships, these QLF Fellows were committed to making their visions a reality—whether to protect natural resources, help the underprivileged, or educate both children and adults. Their dedication greatly inspired me, as my own challenges were put into perspective. Often environmental work seems like an uphill battle, constantly going against the flow, and it was wonderful to become aware of the large group of intelligent, motivated people around the world who are working toward the same goals.

The conflict management focus of the workshop at the Dana Reserve in Jordan was something new for me—I had never been exposed to formal methods of dealing with, or even thinking about, ways to manage conflict. These concepts were a lot to absorb, alongside all of the other information we were being exposed to, but the processes and new ideas for approaching conflict intrigued me. Identifying common issues and making people realize that they are common through framing and reframing, were concepts that very much resonated with me. These and other ideas for dealing with conflict will be extremely useful to me in the professional realm, where elements of collaboration and compromise are often involved in negotiations with both collaborators and adversaries. I am looking forward to learning more about conflict management and consensus building in the future, and drawing on the knowledge base that I gained through the program.

I am incredibly thankful and grateful for the experience of being a QLF Fellow, and my only wish is that I had more time to spend in dialogue with the other participants, learning more about them and their work while exchanging ideas. The stories I heard, people I met, and things I saw will stay with me forever and inform the way that I see conflict resolution and environmental problem solving as I move forward in my own life and work.

THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATION



ALIX HOPKINS

*Independent Consultant
Founding Executive Director of Portland Trails
Chair, Mountain Division Alliance
Maine*

Alix Hopkins has more than twenty-five years of experience in communications, political organizing and community land conservation, beginning at the Natural Lands Trust, a regional organization headquartered near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She has served as staff, board member, volunteer and consultant for nonprofits of all sizes, and on several international exchanges, both in the U.S. and abroad. Alix is the Founding Executive Director of Portland Trails, an urban land trust based in Portland, Maine, and Chair of the Mountain Division Alliance, promoting the vision for a 55-mile rail-with-trail across southern Maine. Inspired by her experiences at Portland Trails, she wrote and raised funds for *Groundswell: Stories of Saving Places, Finding Community*, a book published in 2005 by the Trust for Public Land. Co-sponsors were the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy. *Groundswell* offers guidance and inspiration to community activists wanting to make a difference where they live. Presently, Alix acts as an advisor to non-profits, agencies, and communities, helping them to launch their good ideas into collaborative, multi-dimensional projects. She also has a number of start-up projects underway. Alix also serves on the boards of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Pownal Land Trust, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and on the advisory boards of QLF and several other community-oriented non-profit organizations.

The Power of Transformation: Reflections on our Middle East Exchanges

“We loved our time traveling together in New England, but we missed seeing sand! How can you live with all that green and humidity?” Those words came from a QLF Middle East Fellow sharing an amusing anecdote from her exchange trip with eight others to the U.S. in the summer of 2006. Amusing because more than one



From left: Program Facilitator Alix Hopkins and Beth Alling, Fellowship to the Middle East (2007)

Rebecca Scibek

of us from the U.S. remarked on the lack of green in the landscape of the Middle East when we visited in 2007 and 2008, but all the more helpful in understanding how people from different cultures respond in similar ways.

How does one describe the gift of insight, given by QLF and magnified by each Fellow we met along the way, by their colleagues, our drivers, guides, presenters, food servers and lodging staff? Everyone, to a person, gave us glimpses into a way of life so often misrepresented in both the U.S. and the Middle East. Imagine, then, the effect of more than two dozen light bulbs suddenly turning on, at the same time demystifying the confusion and illuminating the darkness of the unknown in our collective hearts and minds. That includes all of us...in all regions. And how meaningful was the State Department's grant to QLF, fostering fellowship and connection, bridging the wide chasm of misunderstanding through collaboration, consensus building and stewardship, and with a focus on innovation and social equity? The value of this experience is beyond measure. Moved to tears on several occasions, I glanced over to see others with me who were similarly touched.

Quite simply, hearing the real-life stories and meeting the people who figured in them transformed us. By that



Alix Hopkins explores the Pyramids of Giza, Egypt (2007).

antiquities in the very cradle of civilization, knowing that people come from all over the world to witness them!

We learned about the *plight of indigenous peoples* when visiting a school in the garbage—collecting and sorting district of Cairo, where several non-profits have combined resources to offer education (and dignity) to the Zabaleen, a people with unimaginable difficulties in life. In all four countries, we spent time in nomadic Bedouin villages where tribal members enjoy almost none of the basic rights of other citizens. Several of our colleagues and their organizations seek to improve the quality of life for the Bedouin people.

David Mention

I mean the experience expanded our horizons, and our cognitive and intuitive abilities to “get it” first-hand. By that I mean we will never return to the old ways of living, working and relating to our friends, families and communities. Most of us read about the tension and violence, and hear about the many historic sites around the Middle East, but still our perceptions are relatively dim.

For me, some of the most poignant insights included appreciating the long *history of turmoil* in the Middle East, and its growing significance for the U.S. today. I gained greater understanding and empathy for the complexities involved, and realized that trying to merely simplify them will not work.

In Israel we stayed in two kibbutzim. Both embraced multiculturalism despite the challenges and risks that such practices bring. In Jerusalem, I responded to the power of being in a place that sits at the *crossroads of the world’s great religions*. When we went to the Western Wall (formerly the Wailing Wall) and I placed a small prayer for peace in a crack between two stones.

In Egypt we visited the pyramids at Giza and the Sphinx. In Jordan we visited Petra. What an amazing experience, to be in the presence of such *world-renowned*

In the West Bank of Palestine we spoke with residents in a small village facing the *crumbling of their community structure*. Here, centuries-old farming terraces are in danger due to a number of factors, including Israel’s security wall. With it in place, villagers no longer move out to the fields each fall to harvest and celebrate together, an annual ritual that traditionally strengthened the bonds between residents for the rest of the year.

We learned that most of the issues exemplified in these places exist the world over, only at different levels of intensity depending upon location, topography, and culture. Right away we felt camaraderie through our common interests and passion for the land and its people. For most of us who have struggled to give life and form to the spark of our good ideas, we learned that we are not alone, regardless of our culture, and that help is available if we only know where and whom to ask. This is where QLF can play a pivotal role in the years ahead, as a source of information, expertise and connection mechanism—a crucible if you will. After all, well over 100 *Middle East Program* Alumni and other touched by the program speak with a common language, from spending time together learning, laughing, and sharing.

Ten years on, I can see the circle expanding to include neighboring Middle East countries such as Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. I can see more and more collaborations rippling outward, involving Fellows and new partners. I can see an ever-expanding network of knowledge, innovation, and connection. And I can see a time when Fellows who today cannot widely share their relationships with sworn enemies from other countries, but who one day might acknowledge the strength and value of those enduring connections.

. . .

My own experience with QLF began in 1972 as an intern on the coast of Labrador. The internship transformed my life by exposing me to people in cultures dependent on the environment for their livelihoods and their social and spiritual well-being. In the years since, I have been a Fellow in the Czech Republic, attended the QLF *Alumni Congress* in Budapest, and have served on the QLF Corporation since 1995. But *nothing* has moved me as have these two Exchanges in the Middle East. I am not yet sure how, but I know I have changed again. And I am searching for ways to translate this knowledge meaningfully. The stories we heard are universal. The challenges we encountered transcend national and international boundaries. And in the end, the more of us out there, the more we can convince others to find ways of working together.

AND ANOTHER THING...

As most of us know, any event or program takes a great deal of skill, time and energy to pull off well. In the case of the QLF Middle East Exchange, several people rose to the occasion with grace and hard work. Therefore, and with great affection, we'd like to acknowledge the tireless contributions of QLF staff Beth Alling, Elizabeth Cabot, Julia Judson-Rea, and Shaima Al-Khalili. Beth served as our fearless leader and den mother. Julia and Shaima took charge of the Middle East Fellows' visit to the U.S. in 2006. And Elizabeth mastered myriad details of the Fellowship to the Middle East in November 2007 and the Program Workshop in January 2008.

Without them, we would have been lost, and sometimes we still were a little lost! But we learned that flexibility, good humor and a can-do mentality are key ingredients to getting the most out of an extraordinary opportunity and experience. Fortunately, Beth, Elizabeth, Julia, and Shaima possess these qualities in spades. Thank you all!

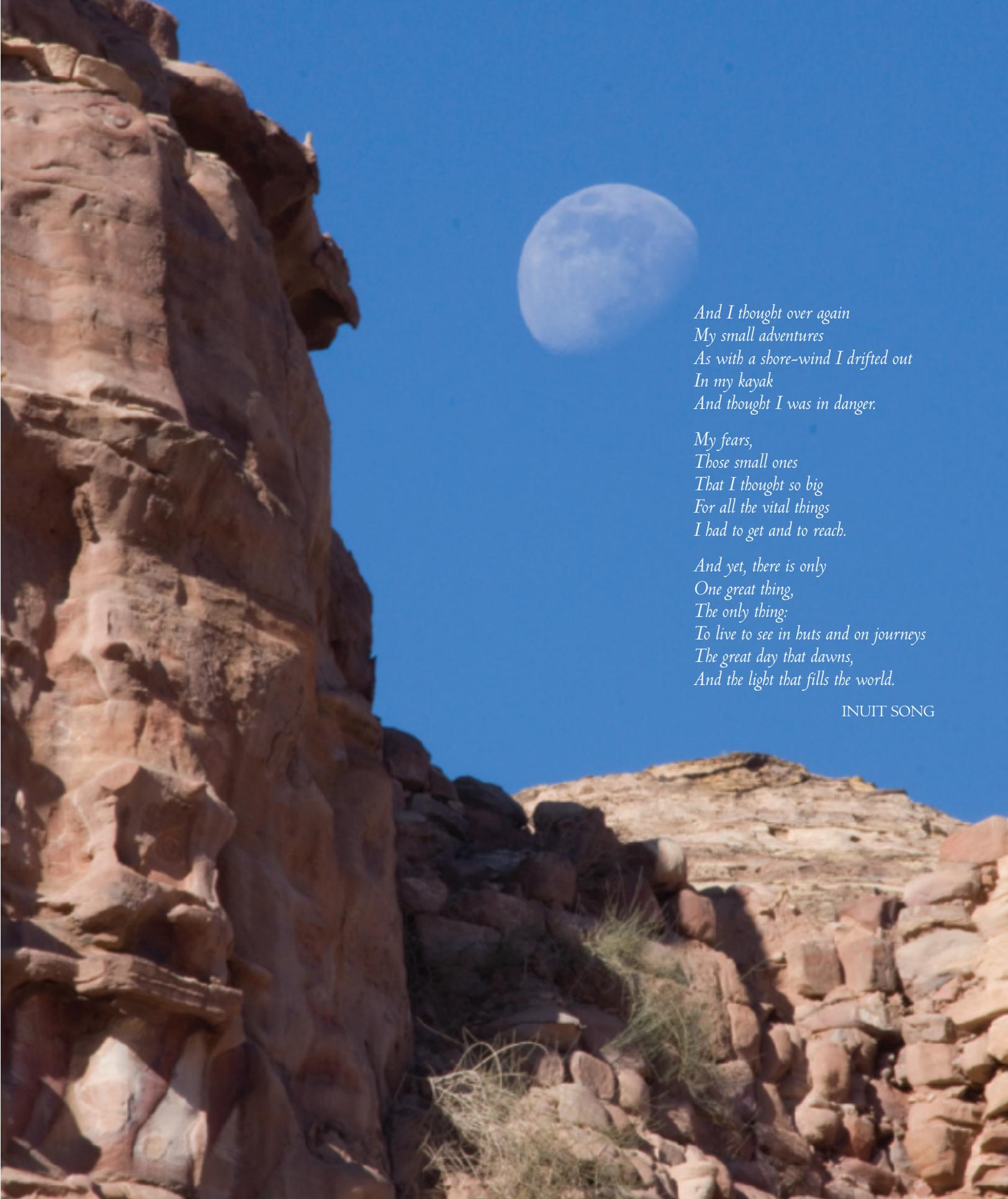
—Alix W. Hopkins

the power of transformation



Alix Hopkins

One last look, Petra, Jordan (2008)



*And I thought over again
My small adventures
As with a shore-wind I drifted out
In my kayak
And thought I was in danger.*

*My fears,
Those small ones
That I thought so big
For all the vital things
I had to get and to reach.*

*And yet, there is only
One great thing,
The only thing:
To live to see in butts and on journeys
The great day that dawns,
And the light that fills the world.*

INUIT SONG



MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

Quebec-Labrador Foundation
Atlantic Center for the Environment

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