



Abraham Path

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Dear Friend of the Path,

After almost fifty years of work in the field of international conflict, I am often asked whether I am an optimist or a pessimist. I like to reply that I am a possibilist. I believe in human possibility because I have seen it happen with my own eyes — in conflicts from the smallest to the largest. Even in an exceptionally painful year for many in the Middle East, I see opportunities opening and signs of hope.

Across the region, our Fellows and local partners continue to do remarkable work. Their dedication, creativity, and commitment to the mission of the Abraham Path Initiative have not only advanced the Path itself, but also the stories and communities it connects. I've been inspired by their projects — each one a living thread in the greater tapestry of our shared narrative.

As we reflect on 2024, I am reminded of our founding vision: a walking path that, in retracing the mythic story of Abraham's journey, reminds us that, no matter what may divide us, there is something far greater that unites us: our shared humanity.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being a part of this remarkable journey. Your support has made all the difference.

With deep gratitude,

William Ury
Founder and Chair Emeritus



Dear Friends,

Thank you for welcoming me to the API family this past year. As I reflect back on 2024, I find my greatest joy is having met so many of you and been able to hear your stories of what the Path means to you.

It is because of you that we've been able to accomplish such amazing work. Our partnership with the Kurdistan Trails Organization remains strong and our new fellowship programs have proved successful, with our fellows working in seven countries and their stories reaching tens of thousands of viewers.

I look forward to the future and so thankful you chose to take the steps with us that help make a difference on the ground!

Christopher McLaurin
Executive Director



2024 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- JUNIOR AND SENIOR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED, WITH FELLOWS CREATING PATH BUILDING, VIDEO, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECTS, AND WORKS OF LITERATURE
- API INVESTED IN PROJECTS IN SEVEN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ALONG THE PATH
- API'S NEW \$400,000 RESERVE FUND CREATED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO SPUR CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH
- API'S CAPACITY GRANT TO THE KURDISTAN TRAILS ORGANIZATION RESULTED IN \$25,000 OF ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE FUNDING
- INDIVIDUAL GIVING MORE THAN DOUBLED OVER 2023



API IN THE NEWS



Retracing the lost tracks of the famed Hejaz Railway

by Leon McCarron

The Hejaz landscape is dramatic, with low, gnawed hills and wide, dimpled wadis. Everything comes to life in the margins of the day, bathed in golden light, and vivid greens in the riverbeds pop against crimson sandstone. But in the middle of the day it is torturous to be out and even the few camel herders I meet, usually Egyptian or Sudanese, seek shade under Acacia trees. I think often of the workers who laid the rails, and the desperate conditions they must have faced.



Walk this way: How Walking the Abraham Path Changes Hearts and Minds

by Dr. Joshua Weiss

The Abraham Path is a creative and innovative project, but it won't change things on a grand scale on its own. However, as one Turkish government official stated to me, "I like this project. It is an important drop in the bucket of mutual understanding. We need more and more of these if we are to succeed and to see a different future."



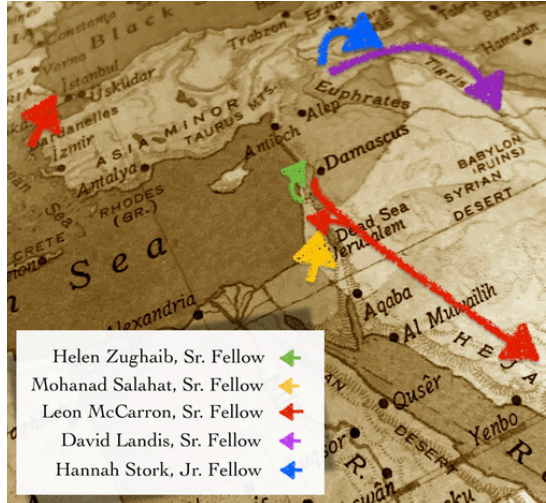
Why you can – and should travel to southeast Türkiye

by Jennifer Hattam

"It's a very welcoming community. The culture of hospitality in that area can't be fully understood unless you're there," says executive director Christopher McLaurin. "It's been a long road, but watching these communities recover from the trauma of the earthquake and contributing to that makes me feel really positive about the future."

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

2024 welcomed our inaugural group of Fellows. The fellows selected demonstrated a commitment to API's vision of the Path as a global destination for world class walking trails, hospitality, and connection across cultures. Their projects have been critical to both uplifting communities and telling the stories that will inspire visitors to walk the Path from all corners of the world.



SYRIAC ON SITE: CONNECTING GLOBAL STUDENTS OF SYRIAC WITH THE COMMUNITIES OF TUR ABDIN

Hannah Stork, API's 2024 John Anthony Farkas Jr. Junior Fellow, led 16 scholars on Syriac on Site, a travel class in Tur Abdin, Turkey. The course blended historical study with living traditions, fostering direct engagement with texts, landscapes, and local communities. Scholars returned with deeper appreciation for Tur Abdin's enduring cultural and linguistic heritage.

KURDISTAN TRAILS ORGANIZATION

API proudly supported the **Kurdistan Trails Organization (KTO)** in preserving and expanding the Zagros Mountain Trail (ZMT) in 2024. Our grant fueled critical efforts—from administrative support and international outreach to hands-on training and digital storytelling. By connecting communities, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing global visibility, this initiative ensures a thriving future for the ZMT.

FROM DAMASCUS TO MEDINA

API's **2024 Ibn Battuta Senior Fellow Leon McCarron** journeyed from Damascus to Medina, tracing the historic Hejaz Railway through Turkey, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Built in 1908 for pilgrims and the Ottoman Empire, the railway fell into disrepair after WWI. Leon explored its legacy, meeting communities along the route and reflecting on pilgrimage, hospitality, and the future of this storied path.

LAND OF THE THREE RIVERS: A JOURNEY FROM URFA TO ERBIL

David Landis, API's 2024 Ibn Jubayr Senior Fellow, cycled from Urfa to Erbil, tracing the northern watersheds of the Euphrates, Tigris, and Zab. His journey explored the spaces between past and present, connecting communities and personal experiences from two decades in Turkey and Iraq. Follow his route through an interactive story map of reunions, new friendships, and heartfelt encounters.

STORIES FROM THE TRAIL: LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL

API Senior Fellow Helen Zughaib will journey along the 600 km Lebanon Mountain Trail, exploring its landscapes, history, and stories with the help of local experts. From ancient Cedars to the Mediterranean, she'll uncover the region's beauty and share insights from each stage of her journey. *This project was postponed from 2024 to 2025.*

FROM THE EYES OF THE SAMARITANS

API Senior Fellow Mohanad Salahat and five Samaritan filmmakers will document their history and culture from their own perspective. This documentary will offer an intimate glimpse into the Samaritan community, one of the region's oldest communities with less than 1,000 members, amplifying the voices of its youth and preserving their rich legacy.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SUPPORTERS

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¹Mark Biddle
²Deidre Combs
³Janny Hardeman
⁴Hyman Holtz
⁵David Landis
⁶Anisa Mehdi
⁷Lionel Sauvage
⁸William Ury

In Memory Of
⁹John Anthony Farkas Jr.
¹⁰Nico Gotlieb & Henny Dormits
¹¹Rev. Dr. Dwight L. Kintner & Eloise B. Kintner
¹²Judy, Loren, & Anne Rosenberg

*denotes a monthly donor
^{superscript} denotes a gift was given in honor or memory

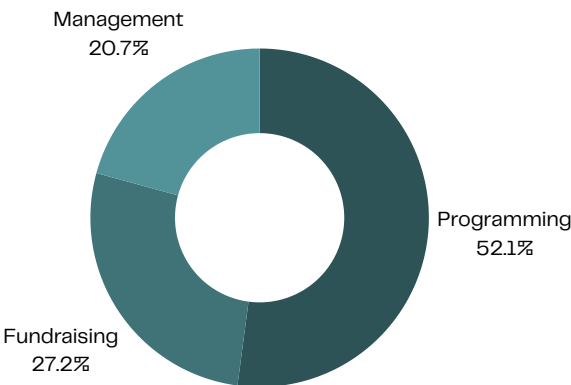
FINANCIAL POSITION

We end 2024 in a strong financial position. Thanks to all of you who had answered the call to join William Ury and Lionel Sauvage’s generous double match at the end of the year, individual giving has spurred to unprecedented levels.

Additionally, API’s Board of Directors has generously donated a \$400,000 gift to create a new capacity building reserve fund, allowing API to embark on a path of long-term, sustainable growth.

In 2024, API awarded over \$100,000 in grants and fellowships, directly making a difference throughout all of the communities within our network. We will continue to increase program funding per our 2024–2026 strategic plan.

EXPENSES: \$399,676



REVENUE: \$780,473



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



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