

Bustan Qaraaqa Annual Report, July 2009

Basic information:

Name of Organisation: Bustan Qaraaqa

Physical Address: Wadi Hanna Sa'ad, Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, West Bank, Palestinian Territories

Postal Address: P.O. Box 448, Jerusalem 91002, Israel

UK Headquarters Address: The Old School, Lydfords Lane, Gillingham, Dorset, UK

Website: www.bustanqaraaqa.org

Email: info@bustanqaraaqa.org

Phone: +972 2 274 8994

Registration: Branch of the Permaculture Association (UK), Charity no. 1116699

Bank details: Bustan Qaraaqa, Lloyds TSB, Gillingham, Dorset, Account no: 0052001, Sort-code: 30-93-45

Current Project Staff:

Rania Al Qass-Collings - Community liaison and eco-handicrafts expert (part time)

Steven Collings - Site development coordinator (organic gardening and companion planting systems) and volunteer coordinator (part time)

Lyra Eisen-Proctor - Guesthouse coordinator

Thomas Fernley-Pearson - Site development coordinator (agroforestry and livestock) and volunteer coordinator

Alice Gray - Community projects coordinator, project administrator, web developer and fundraiser

Roman Gawel - Site development coordinator (structural development), community projects assistant, and fundraiser

CVs of project staff are available upon request.

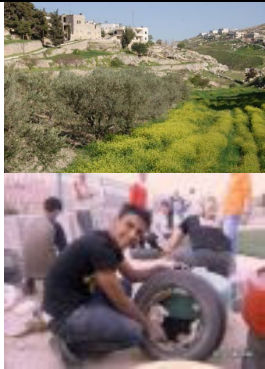


In addition, we are usually hosting between 4 and 8 international volunteers who are resident on the site, and have a pool of approximately 10-20 local volunteers who come to our events.







Brief history of Bustan Qaraaqa






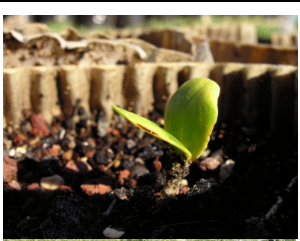

Bustan Qaraaqa was founded in April 2008 by four British environmentalists: Steven Collings, Thomas Fernley-Pearson, Alice Gray and Nicholas Marcroft. The aims of the project are:

- To establish an experimental permaculture farm to explore ways that individuals and communities can take action to address the challenges of food insecurity, water shortage and environmental degradation
- To raise awareness of environmental issues in the local community
- To support community action to address these problems
- To raise awareness of Palestinian environmental issues in the international community
- To provide a base for international volunteers to come to Palestine and learn about the political and environmental situation, whilst also doing practical work both at Bustan Qaraaqa and with local partners to address some of the problems they would learn about.
- To further the ideals of ecological sustainability and peace

Chronology of events and activities:

Month		Activities
April 2008		- Bustan Qaraaqa site found and 5 year lease secured at the rate of 3000 NIS per month for the rent of the farm house and 12 dunums (1.2 hectares) of land. Renovation work on the house started. - Environmental workshops held for 6 local youth groups in cooperation with Paidia International Development (www.pidev.org)
May 2008		- Renovation of farmhouse completed
June 2008		- Guesthouse opened and work on the land started - Greywater system built - Compost toilet set up - Weekly volunteer events started

July 2008		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on swales started - Compost bays built - Group of 50 students from Birzeit University Summer Camp hosted
August 2008	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water workshop with Alternative Information Centre womens' group (www.alternativenews.org) - Helped organise and lead a water advocacy tour to the Negev in cooperation with Bustan (www.bustan.org) and LifeSource (www.lifesource.org) - Started digging work on rainwater cistern for irrigation - Started field visits to Palestinian farmers.
September 2008	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seed collection missions to the Negev, the Judean Desert and the Golan - Participated in tree planting workshop with Bedouin communities in the Siyag, in cooperation with Bustan. - Work on cistern and swales continues - Field visits continue
October 2008		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Olive harvest at Bustan Qaraaqa - Swales completed - Olive Tree Circus Group hosted - Environmental awareness workshop with Alternative Information Centre (www.alternativenews.org) womens' group

<p>November 2008</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compost scheme at SOS Childrens' village started (www.sos-palestine.org) - UK speaking tour completed (7 lectures at universities, peace groups and permaculture groups) - Work on native tree nursery started - Nicholas Marcroft departs team - Roman Gawel joins team
<p>December 2008</p>	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership with Abed Rabbo in Al Wallaja established - Tree planting workshops in Bedouin schools in the Negev, in cooperation with Bustan (www.bustan.org) - Hosted International Palestinians Youth League (www.ipyl.org) group for voluntary work (45 people for 6 days) - Hosted Birzeit University student group (7 people for 3 days)
<p>January 2009</p>	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building work on rainwater cistern started - Work on design and implementation of companion planting systems for vegetable crops started - Work on website development started - Tree planting events in Al Wallaja organised
<p>February 2009</p>	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building work on rainwater cistern continues - Work on tree nursery continues - Work on companion planting systems continues - Fruit trees purchased and planted at Bustan Qaraaqa - Rainwater catchment systems built at Bustan Qaraaqa - Participation in YMCA Olive Tree Campaign planting program

March 2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compost scheme at SOS childrens' village completed and put into action - Building work on rainwater cistern completed
April 2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New website launched - Compost toilet building project in Al Wallaja started - Partnership with Artas farmers started

Current status of the project:

In the course of its first year, Bustan Qaraaqa has evolved from being simply an idea in the minds of its founders into a successful and active project. We are well on the road to meeting the objectives that we set out to achieve:

- From a dilapidated farmhouse on long-neglected land, we have created the foundation of a working guesthouse and permaculture farm. The farm is now a demonstration site for permaculture techniques that we believe could have a beneficial impact on peoples' lives and on the environment. These include:
 - Rainwater catchment: We have built a 90 m³ rainwater cistern to harvest run-off from 2 roads that border the site, as well as renovating the rooftop rainwater catchment system of the farmhouse to fill a 12m³ rooftop cistern and adding 5 water tanks (1.5m³ each) to capture run-off from roof-tops and the car-park and provide water storage to irrigate the tree nursery and vegetable beds. In total we have added approximately 110m³ of water storage capacity to the site.
 - Greywater recycling: We have built a greywater filtration system that cleans used water from the shower and sinks in the house and feeds into a system of subterranean perforated pipes irrigating a patch of vegetables and herbs.
 - Composting toilet: We have renovated the old composting toilet that was part of the farmhouse and set up a humanure composting system, saving approximately 30 litres of water per person per day, decreasing pollution of water resources and soil, and providing a source of soil nutrients for the site.
 - Soil management: We are demonstrating alternatives to ploughing that we believe may better maintain the integrity of soil structure and micro-organism communities, and hence promote a healthier and more robust ecosystem. These methods include mulching and succession planting. We are also demonstrating techniques to control soil erosion such as swales and tree planting.
 - Composting of organic household wastes

- Green building techniques: We have been experimenting with cob-building as well as using waste materials such as glass bottles and tyres to make structurally sound and attractive buildings.
- Companion planting/ organic gardening: We are working on demonstrating a number of alternatives to monoculture of crops and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, trying to create low input, high yield systems that produce a diversity of useful products whilst not exhausting the land.
- Propagation and cultivation of trees (tree nursery and agroforestry systems): We have collected and propagated a wide array of genetic material for trees, and are now in a position to start some unique experiments in agroforestry and ecosystem restoration. To our knowledge, we are the only native tree nursery in the Palestinian Territories at this time, with the capacity to produce and distribute 2000 trees per year.
- We have built a strong network of local partners, both NGOs and individuals, to help us in our work of raising environmental awareness and implementing practical initiatives to address environmental problems.
 - We have built a strong partnership with Abed Rabbo (www.abedland.com), a Palestinian farmer who is resisting land confiscation using permaculture techniques.
 - We are working with our partners at the Siraj Centre to build a 'responsible tourism' network to facilitate tourists in contributing constructively to Palestinian communities.
 - We are working with our partners at Bustan (www.bustan.org) to help establish another native tree nursery in the Negev in Israel, which will be run and owned by the Bedouin community there.
 - We are currently in the process of selecting community partners for this year's tree planting season (November to March) when we will plant the 2000 trees we have produced this year.
- We hope to help strengthen this network in the future, facilitating connections between organisations and individuals with similar goals to create a coherent movement for environmental protection and environmental justice in Palestine.
- We have attracted the attention of numerous journalists who have written stories about the Palestinian environmental crisis and Bustan Qaraaqa in prominent national newspapers in the UK, US, and Canada (see articles at <http://www.bustanqaraaqa.org/al2/web/page/display/id/16.html>). Bustan Qaraaqa staff have been interviewed on the radio in the US and UK and featured in video documentaries about the Palestinian environment and non-violent resistance.
- We have built an informative and easy-to-use website (www.bustanqaraaqa.org) featuring information about the Bustan Qaraaqa project, the Palestinian environmental crisis and permaculture techniques.
- We have hosted over 200 international guests/ volunteers, and helped to educate them about the environmental and political situation in the

Palestinian Territories as well as helping them to engage in practical work to aid the Palestinian community. We are already receiving enquiries and bookings about joining us in 2010, and expect this component of the project to continue to grow.

- We have built relationships with Israeli organisations and individuals who share our ideals, and have facilitated Israeli activists in coming to the West Bank to learn more about the situation and to connect with Palestinians.

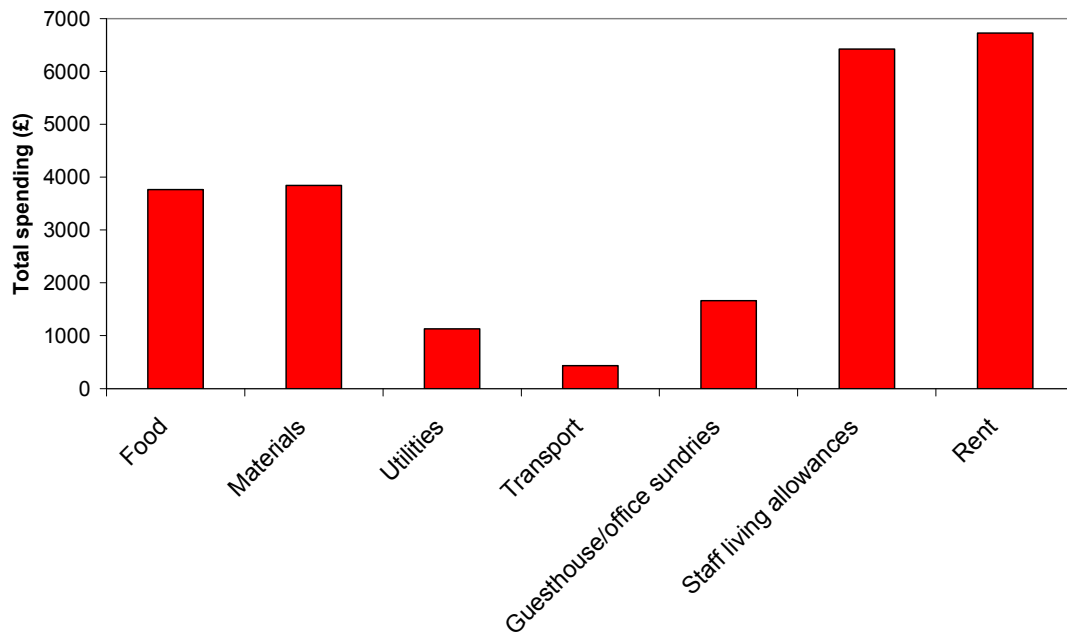
Challenges:

The major challenges we still face if we are to continue our work include:

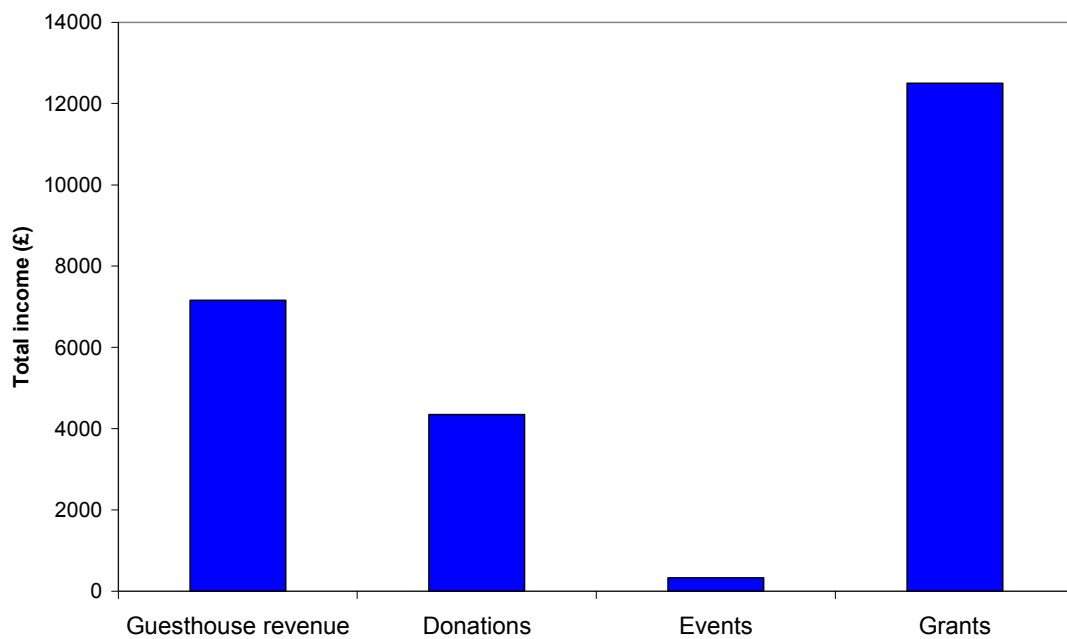
Challenge:	Proposed action:
Overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers to expand practical and educational activities in the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arabic classes for existing staff. - Expand Palestinian volunteer base, particularly university students taking environmentally oriented courses. - Take on 2 Palestinian staff to fulfil the roles of Community Project Coordinator and Environmental Education Coordinator.
Securing a stable funding base for the project, including money to cover the site rent and to ensure the salaries of project staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek long-term funding commitment from existing sponsors (both individuals and granting bodies). - Find new sponsors (grant writing and grassroots fundraising). - Sell advertising space on website to ethical companies. - Market Bustan Qaraaqa merchandise including T-Shirts, Christmas cards and mugs etc.
Securing long-term visas for project staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek part-time work at Al Quds University teaching Environmental Studies at the English Language School and accompanying work visa. - Seek help from the Arava Institute for environmental studies (possible teaching post/ research or student mentor relationship), and accompanying visa - Apply for volunteer permits for the West Bank in cooperation with the Centre for Rapprochement between People. - In the meantime, keep extending tourist visas.

Financial Summary:

Total project spending from 01/05/2008 to 30/04/2009 was approximately £24,000. Below is a summary of project spending; for more detailed information, please see attached financial report (Excel spreadsheet, attached).



Total project income from 01/05/2008 to 20/04/2009 was approximately £24,350. Below is a summary of project income:



We feel that we did a remarkable amount of work with very little money in our first year. Luckily, the guesthouse/volunteer project turned out to be a success, raising over £7000 in revenue. Approximately half of this money was then spent feeding staff and volunteers, and the other half on rent and materials.

We were very lucky to receive a generous grant of £12,500 from the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, which secured the rent on the site until the end of June 2009, as well as covering staff living allowances for 6 months and buying most of the materials to build the rainwater cistern.

Generous donations from individual supporters helped get the project through the first difficult months while the guesthouse was still finding its feet, and helped provide a materials budget for major projects (such as the tree nursery and rainwater cistern).

Material contributions such as computers, trees and livestock have also been most helpful – their exact value has not been calculated or included in this summary. In addition, the time put into the project by numerous volunteers (thousands of man hours) has not been included.

The main corner that was cut in expenditure was in staff living allowances, with all project staff (5 people by November 2008) working for a combined income of less than £6500. This would be the main area of increase for the coming year, as we would like to not only pay the existing staff properly, but also to take on new staff.

Projected budget for July 2009 to June 2010:

Projected budget for July 2009 to June 2010					
Item	Cost (NIS)	Unit	Number	Total (NIS)	Total (£)*
Site rent	3000	per month	12	36000	5714.29
Electricity	180	per month	12	2160	342.86
Phone/internet	180	per month	12	2160	342.86
Gas	100	per month	12	1200	190.48
Water	500	per month	12	6000	952.38
Food (staff and volunteers)	2500	per month	12	30000	4761.90
Staff (full time)	4000	per month	5x12=60	240000	38095.24
Staff (part time)	2000	per month	2x10=20	40000	6349.21
Transport	500	per month	12	6000	952.38
Materials	30000	total	1	30000	4761.90
Sundries (office and guesthouse)	5000	total	1	5000	793.65
Sub-total				398520	63257.14
Contingency (5%)				19926	3162.86
Grand total				418446	66420

*based on exchange rate of 6.3 NIS to the GBP (July 2009)

Staff salaries are based on the idea of employing all current staff all year and in addition taking on two new part-time staff in September. Both the materials budget and the staff salaries are flexible – if we don't have the money for them then they can be cut down and the project will still continue.

Secured income for July 2009 to June 2010:

Item	Amount (NIS)	Amount (£)**
Grant from British Shalom Salam Trust	31500	5000
Guesthouse revenue (projected)*	51650	8200
Donations (projected)*	14500	2300
Total	97650	15500

*based on average of previous 6 months

**based on exchange rate of 6.3 NIS/£ (July 2009)

The fundraising target for the coming year is approximately £50,000.

Planned Activities for July 2009 to June 2010:

In addition to the continuation of current projects, there are several major events that we are planning for the coming year:

Dates	Activity
August 2009 – September 2009	Green building: we will be working with local and international volunteers to create an eco-building at Bustan Qaraaqa, constructed almost entirely from recycled materials, with rooftop rainwater catchment, greywater recycling, greenhouse space, showers, laundry and cooking area.
October 2009	Olive harvest: we will host a group of international volunteers at Bustan Qaraaqa who will work with us to bring in our olive harvest and that of our partners. They will also participate in a number of cultural events and educational trips that we will arrange.
November 2009 – March 2010	Tree planting season: we will be working at Bustan Qaraaqa and with local partners to plant out the 2000 trees we have grown in our nursery this year, using the opportunity as a tool for environmental education, ecosystem protection and restoration, and support for the environmental rights of Palestinian farmers.