



BETHLEHEM
UNIVERSITY

جامعة بيت لحم

Partnership solicitation

In June 2014, the **Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability (PIBS)** at **Bethlehem University** was initiated by a generous donation from Prof. and Mrs. Mazin Qumsiyeh, other local donors, and via mostly volunteer efforts. **Our Motto is Respect** – first for ourselves, then for others, then for the environment. **Vision:** Sustainable human and natural communities. **Mission:** Research, educate about, and conserve our natural world, culture and heritage and promote responsible human interactions with our environment. **Goals:** 1) Research and knowledge dissemination on the fauna, flora, and human ethnography of the region (Western Asia and North Africa). 2) bridge science-policy-practice gaps to promote sustainable communities, focusing on marginalized communities.

The Institute developed quickly and now includes a Museum of Natural History (PMNH), an Ethnography Exhibit (cultural heritage), a Botanical and eco-Garden, a Community Garden, Animal Rehabilitation Center, a Biodiversity Center, a Herbarium, Molecular and Cytogenetic Laboratories, Biodiversity Library, Mobile Educational Unit, and more. Learn more about us by visiting our website (palestinenature.org). Visit our YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@PIBS-BU-2017>). Here are a couple of videos <https://youtu.be/E8h2xCe2mK0> and <https://youtu.be/AZOoOzXU7tQ>

This year (2024) we celebrate our 10th anniversary. The achievements were remarkable. Please take seven minutes to see this video <https://youtu.be/qt8OTGoS198> and this booklet that beautifully illustrates what we do <https://www.palestinenature.org/annual-reports/10-Years-PIBS-Final.pdf>



In brief, PIBS (with volunteer and donor support)

- Published **128 research papers** in **peer reviewed journals** in many areas: fauna, flora, conservation measures, environmental injustice, sustainable agriculture, climate change, protected areas, and human rights.
- Published **220 other articles** of a more lay person nature in magazines, journals, and key information websites
- **Enhanced awareness** of tens of thousands of visitors through visits to our **Natural History and Ethnography Exhibits** and the **Botanical Garden**.
- Produced various educational modules such as **interactive games** tailored to the Palestinian community, **brochures and posters** on environmental topics to distribute to schools, and **animated videos**.
- Established 20 **environmental clubs** at various schools
- Held over 1100 **workshops** half of them local and half from over 40 countries. Also launched a **Mobile Educational Unit (MEU)**, which is the first mobile exhibit of its kind in Palestine. It visited 46 schools, benefitting 6011 students in **marginalized communities** who are unable to visit us.
- Led the efforts for the new **Protected Area Network** and **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)**.



- Played a major role in development of the Environmental Studies master's program at Birzeit University and a **new Bachelor program** in Technology for Environmental Sustainability at Bethlehem University.. PIBS team also supervised many bachelor and master **thesis projects** both locally and even internationally (especially interns from Germany) in diverse subjects.
- Provided leadership and acted as a **model for national, regional, and global actors** in areas like **environmental justice** and **challenging settler colonialism** vis a vis the environment
- Set up a successful **animal rehabilitation unit**.
- Engaged in **community service activities** that benefited >650 families.

Going Forward:

These achievements and dozens of others found on our website allow us to dream bigger. We will accelerate our research activities, conduct important consultancies to shape national and global actions for conservation, expand our exhibit space from the current 100 sq meters to 1100 square meters with the new building (see <https://youtu.be/ZuNwdk5-6N0>) and fit the space with the most modern interactive exhibits on everything from ethnography to natural history to Palestinian history). We will also expand our conservation and community service projects to benefit nature and people. This includes restoration and rehabilitation of habitats, tree planting, and service to marginalized communities (women, children, Bedouins, those in area C, farmers).



Specific needs

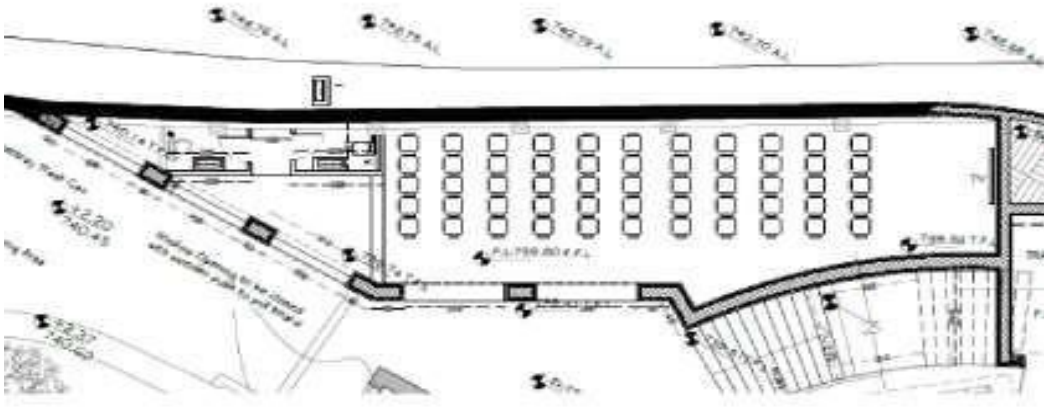
Our amazing achievements were done with very limited funds. We raised \$4.1 million in both unrestricted and restricted funds (grants including from Prof. and Mrs. Qumsiyeh and funders like the EU, National Geographic Society, Darwin Initiative, British Council, Royal Society, etc.). Half of these funds were for infrastructure development (buildings, exhibits, gardens, vehicles, etc.). The rest was for activities and projects (restricted). Our operational budget fluctuated from \$50-72,000 annually. That is why we depend in half our productivity on volunteers (including founders Prof. and Mrs. Qumsiyeh). The remarkable achievements listed above were thus achieved with minimal costs. We now seek your partnerships to advance our work that is critical to advancing sustainability for both humans and natural communities in Palestine and beyond. **Below is a list of 16 projects of varied scopes which funders can select from to help us as we expand our services.**

PROJECT 1: Developing a seedbank for Palestine of both wild species (especially threatened or endangered plants) and domestic species (especially heirloom seeds that are culturally relevant). This helps in conservation efforts (wild plants facing threats) and in food sovereignty (domestic local varieties of trees and vegetables). This involves renovation of space, buying supplies and equipment such as freezers and storage areas. Budget proposed: \$55,000.

PROJECT 2: Animal rehabilitation unit for injured animals and animals confiscated from smugglers and illegal hunting. This involves developing holding pens and treatment facility. Veterinary medicines, tools for handling and more. Budget proposed: \$41,000.

PROJECT 3: Rainwater harvesting system is needed to address acute water shortage in the institute and its gardens. This includes building a cistern 100 cubic meters and aqueduct system to harvest the rainfall during winter. Budget proposed: \$56,000.

PROJECT 4: We now have under the bus parking lot an empty space that is yet to be completed and furnished that would become a visitor lecture room. Below is the design. Budget proposed: \$40,000.



PROJECT 5: Elevator: The elevator shaft was constructed as were the openings to the different levels. The elevator is complicated because as you see from the picture it needs to open at half levels because of the original structure of the building with staggered levels (see figure below, white is new construction). It is estimated to cost \$55,000.



PROJECT 6: Handicap lift between reception area and cafeteria level. This lift is needed per architectural plans and to be compliant with handicap access. \$18,500



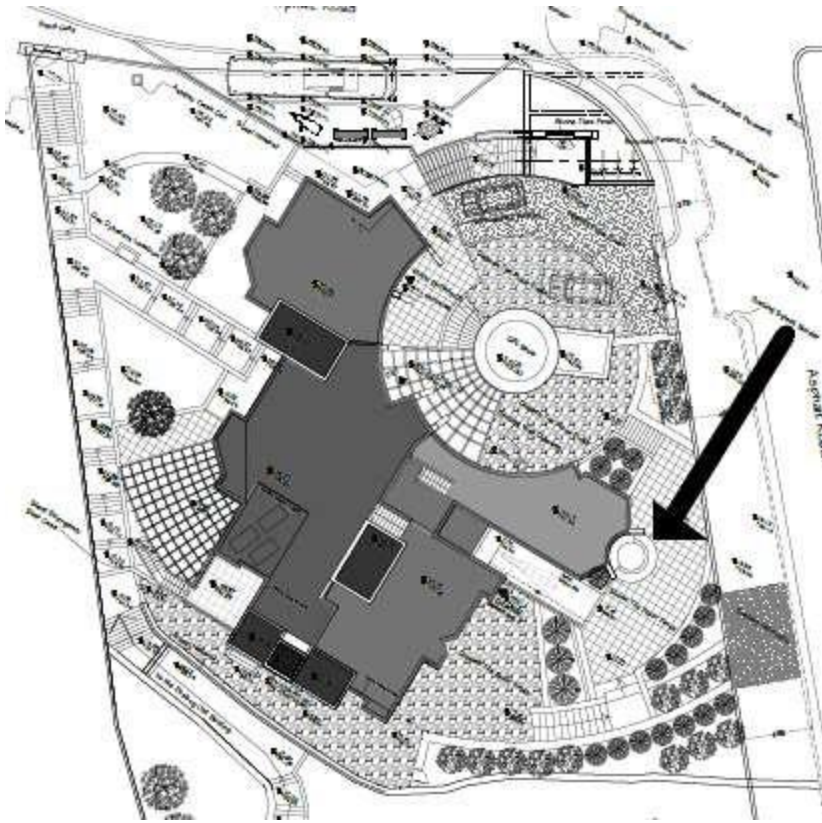
PROJECT 7: Outdoor children play area (just outside the children room - see Project 5). This includes slides, swings, seesaw. Ground cover also needed to ensure safety. Some will be from recycled material like tires. Est. \$4,000

PROJECT 8: Designing and Furnishing children room: See the architectural design for this room below which will be completed structurally in February/March 2025. But we can start purchasing furniture and projectors to put in the room. We estimate \$12,000 cost (including large screen TVs, design, etc.).



PROJECT 9: Exhibit development in new museum. While the building is slated to be completed in February 2025, the interior exhibits have been designed now and include exhibit rooms on geology/paleontology, vertebrate biodiversity, invertebrate biodiversity, conservation (including protected areas), ethnography (including cultural heritage), history of Palestine over the past 5,000 years and more. There are eight exhibit areas and the estimated total cost including display cases, interactive digital exhibits, lighting and sound fixtures etc. is \$240,000.

PROJECT 10: Furnishing Landscape stone and benches (see figure below) will cost some \$9,000. Landscaping and making the fountain (shown by arrow in architect design below) and the surrounding yard of the fountain will cost \$18,000.



PROJECT 11: Two statues (Ibex and Hyrax) made and installed at the street entrance of the Natural History Museum. \$6,500



PROJECT 12: Solar energy photovoltaic system including batteries: \$28,500

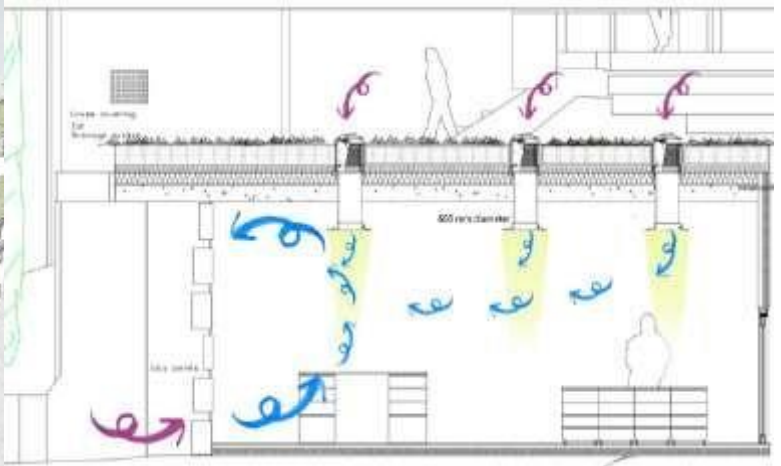
PROJECT 13: (Required by civil defense): Free Pump (UR listed) and Stand-By Electric Generator. Total \$76,000

PROJECT 14: Cafeteria furnishings including kitchen. \$40,000 (architect design with tables below)



PROJECT 15: To ensure sustainability, we will need to create an endowment fund. The Qumsiyeh's already pledge to match donations towards that up to \$250,000

PROJECT 16: This project slated for 2026-2029 will allow us to expand our services to receive tens of thousands more visitors in a new green building system. The design is shown in this link done by a London-based architectural firm https://www.palestinenature.org/donations/Revised-NHM-Palestine_Brochure.pdf. Cost estimate \$2.4 million



Donate: <http://palestinenature.org/donations>

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