

Project Update: August 2009

The project activities are progressing well and more participation from the local community was recorded. The following achievements can be outlined:

- 1) The months of summer (June – September) are usually hot and dry and most of the wild plants disappear (i.e. the annuals) leaving naked nature as attractive with green challenging plants like *Sarcopoterium spinosum* and *Thymelaea gussonei* which are adapted to drought.
- 2) Palestinian-made glass pots were introduced to the natural museum to conserve and exhibit dried wild plants from the biodiversity garden and Bani Naim wild.
- 3) The competition on biodiversity was concluded. Local schools, staff of institutions and individuals were involved. The staff of Life sciences at Al-Quds University were the jury to announce the results. Four prizes were offered to winners. The participation and collaboration of the local community was evaluated as active and directed towards increasing environmental awareness and conservation of nature. This competition was the first of its kind in the area.
- 4) Plant specimens were collected and introduced to the museum and herbarium with focus on dried seeds for conservation, exhibition and/or propagation. Among the seeds collected were: thyme, Persian thyme, sage, *Salvia* and *Atriplex*. Participation of members of the public was recorded for the first time in Bani Naim.
- 5) Irrigation system was introduced to the biodiversity garden to meet the challenge of drought, while the water source is to be secured through wells or tap water.
- 6) Visits by public, engineers and staff of local and national institutions were made to the biodiversity garden and natural museum.



