

Bil'in Village Profile



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Background

This report is part of a series of booklets which contain compiled demographic information and a needs assessment of the populations of each city, town, and village in the Ramallah Governorate. These publications come as a result of the comprehensive study of all localities in the Governorate and aim to depict the overall living conditions there, whilst also presenting plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the Jerusalem population. This was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment;" a project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

The "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions of the Ramallah region, along with reporting the programs and activities needed to mitigate the impact of the current insecure political, economic and social conditions there.

The project's objectives are to survey, analyze, and document the available natural, human, socioeconomic and environmental resources, and their existing limitations. Based on these findings, the project further aims to conduct a needs assessment for the development of the rural and marginalized areas in the Ramallah Governorate. In addition, the project aims at preparing strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability, with a focus on the *agricultural sector*.

All locality profiles in Arabic and English are available online at <http://vprofile.arij.org>.

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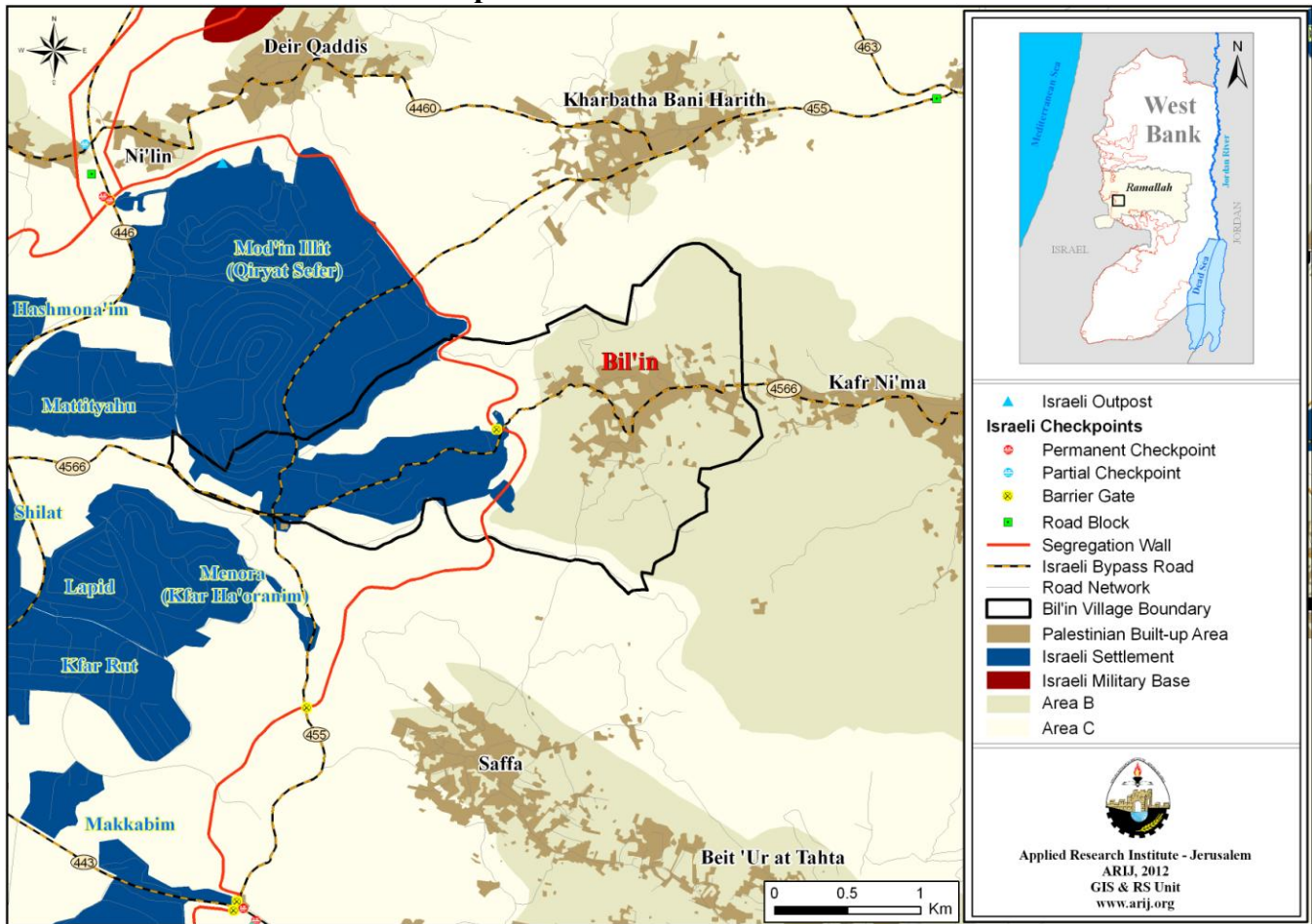
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Bil'in Village Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Bil'in is a Palestinian village in the Ramallah Governorate located 12.6km west of Ramallah City. Bil'in is bordered by Kafr Ni'ma village to the east, Kharbatha Bani Harith village and Deir Qaddis lands to the north, Ni'lin lands to the west, and Saffa village to the south (ARIJ GIS, 2012) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Bil'in location and borders



Source: ARIJ GIS, 2012

Bil'in is located at an altitude of 350m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 567.4mm. The average annual temperature is 18 °C and the average annual humidity is approximately 61% (ARIJ GIS, 2012).

Since 1996, Bil'in has been governed by a village council, which is currently administrated by 9 members appointed by the Palestinian Authority, with an additional paid employee working in the

council. The village council owns a permanent headquarters and a vehicle to collect solid waste (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

It is the responsibility of the village council to provide a number of services to the residents of Bil'in, including (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

1. Infrastructure services such as water and electricity provision and management.
2. Solid waste collection, road construction and restoration, street cleaning, and social development services.
3. Implementation of projects and studies for the village.
4. Protection of archeological and historical areas in the village.

History

Bil'in village was named after Bil Yin, a Roman leader (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

The original residents of Bil'in village came from Yemen and are of Canaanite Islamic origin (Bil'in Village Council, 2010) (See photo below for Bil'in village).

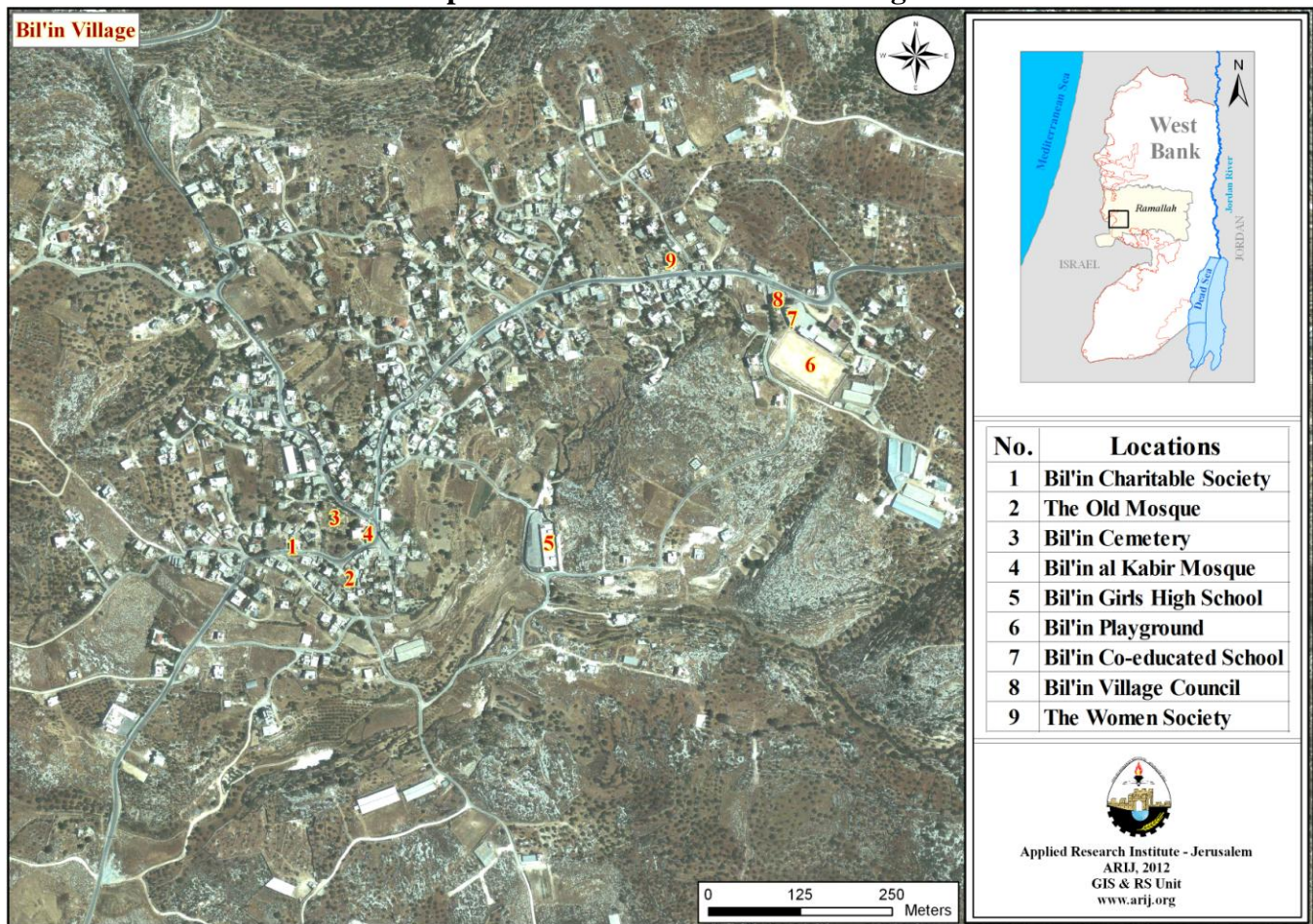
Photos of Bil'in



Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are two mosques in the village: Al ‘Arba’een Mosque and Bil’in New Mosque. The village has several sites of archaeological interest, including the Al ‘Omari Mosque (built during the ‘Omar ben al Khattab era), Ash Sheikh Yasin shrine, Ash Sheikh Abu Laymoon shrine, and some Roman remains (Bil’in Village Council, 2010).

Map 2: Main locations in Bil’in Village



Source: ARIJ GIS, 2012

Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Bil’in in 2007 was 1,599, of whom 836 were male and 763 female. There were 307 households living in 350 housing units.

Age Groups and Gender

The General Census of Population and Housing carried out by PCBS in 2007 showed the distribution of age groups in Bil’in was as follows: 38.8% were less than 15 years of age, 56.7% were between 15 and

64 years of age, and 3.4% fell into the 65 years of age and older category. Data additionally showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the village is 109.6:100, meaning that males and females constitute 52.3% and 47.7% of the population respectively.

Families

Bil'in residents are from several families, primarily the Abu Rahma, Al Khatib, Yasin, Bernat and Ghanim families (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Bil'in population was approximately 8.5%, of whom 79% were female. Of the literate population, 13.5% could only read and write with no formal educational qualifications, 27.8% had elementary education, 29.4% had preparatory education, 13.1% had secondary education, and 7.4% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of Bil'in by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

Table 1: Bil'in population (10 years old and above) by sex and educational attainment

| Sex | Illiterate | Can read & write | Elementary | Preparatory | Secondary | Associate Diploma | Bachelor | Higher Diploma | Master | PhD | Unknown | Total |
|----------|------------|------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| M | 21 | 72 | 196 | 179 | 85 | 14 | 28 | 2 | 7 | - | 1 | 605 |
| F | 79 | 86 | 129 | 165 | 68 | 16 | 19 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 565 |
| T | 100 | 158 | 325 | 344 | 153 | 30 | 47 | 2 | 8 | - | 3 | 1,170 |

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are two public schools in the village run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (MoEHE) (Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Schools in Bil'in by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority

| School Name | Supervising Authority | Sex |
|---|-----------------------|---------|
| Bil'in Co-educated Secondary School | Government | Mixed |
| Bil'in Girls Secondary School | Government | Females |
| Source: Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011 | | |

In 2011, the village had 447 students, 34 teachers, and 23 classes (Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011). The average number of students per teacher in the school was nearly 13, whilst the average number of students per class was approximately 19.

There is one kindergarten in Bil'in, run by the Bil'in Club, and 90 children in total are hosted by this organization.

The educational sector in Bil'in village faces some obstacles, mainly (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

- The co-educational nature of available schools in the elementary stages and a cultural need for single-sex learning.
- The increasing number of students.
- The lack of scientific education in schools.
- Israeli policies and procedures, including occupation forces entering the village during national events and shooting and throwing gas at students.

Health Status

There are very few health facilities available in Bil'in village. There is a public physician's clinic, which operates three days a week, and a private dental clinic. In case of emergencies or in the absence of required facilities, residents of Bil'in use Kafr Ni'ma health center (2km from the village) (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

The health sector in the village faces some obstacles and problems, including (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

- The absence of a motherhood and childhood center in the village.
- The lack of an X-ray center, a medical laboratory and a pharmacy in the village.
- The physician's clinic is open only three days a week.
- The absence of an ambulance in the village.
- The absence of an emergency clinic.

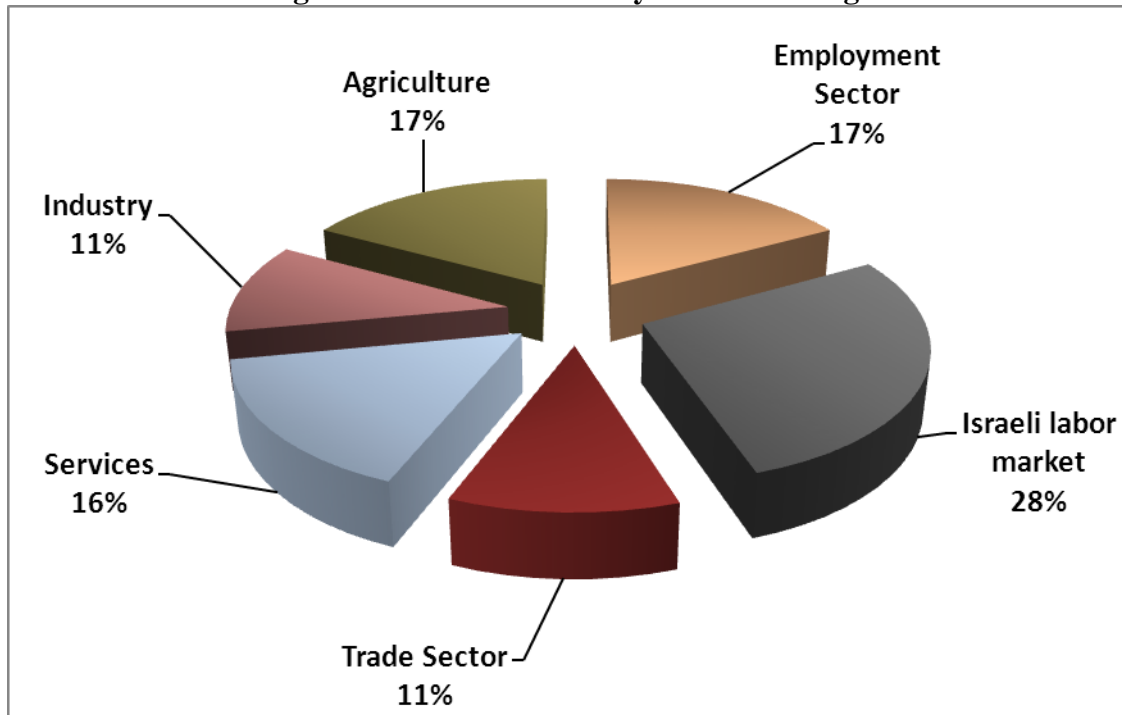
Economic Activities

The economy in Bil'in is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly the Israeli labor market, which absorbs 28% of the village workforce (Bil'in Village Council, 2010) (See Figure1).

The results of a field survey conducted by the ARIJ team in 2010 for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Bil'in are as follows (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

- Israeli Labor Market (28%).
- Government or Private Employees Sector (17%).
- Agriculture Sector (17%).
- Services Sector (16%).
- Industry (11%).
- Trade Sector (11%).

Figure 1: Economic Activity in Bil'in Village



Source: Bil'in Village Council, 2010

Bil'in village has some fabric and sewing factories, a food-packing factory, 6 grocery stores, one bakery, one butcher, one vegetable and fruit shop, three different services stores and three different workshops (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

The unemployment rate in Bil'in reached around 10% in 2010, and the economic groups most affected by the Israeli restrictions have been (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

- Former workers in Israel.
- Workers in service institutions.
- Governmental employees.
- Workers in agriculture.
- Workers in the commercial sector.
- Workers in industry.

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 32% of the Bil'in labor force was economically active, of whom 86.4% were employed, and 68% were not economically active, 56% were students, and 33% were housekeepers (See Table 3).

Table 3: Bil'in population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status-2007

| SEX | Economically Active | | | | Not Economically Active | | | | | | Un-known | Total |
|-----|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------|------------|----------|--------------|
| | Employed | Currently Unemployed | Unemployed (Never worked) | Total | Students | House-keeping | Unable to work | Not working & Not looking for work | Other | Total | | |
| M | 287 | 36 | 9 | 332 | 227 | - | 27 | 3 | 15 | 272 | 1 | 605 |
| F | 36 | 1 | 5 | 42 | 218 | 259 | 44 | - | 1 | 522 | 1 | 565 |
| T | 323 | 37 | 14 | 374 | 445 | 259 | 71 | 3 | 16 | 794 | 2 | 1,170 |

Source: PCBS, 2009.

Agricultural Sector

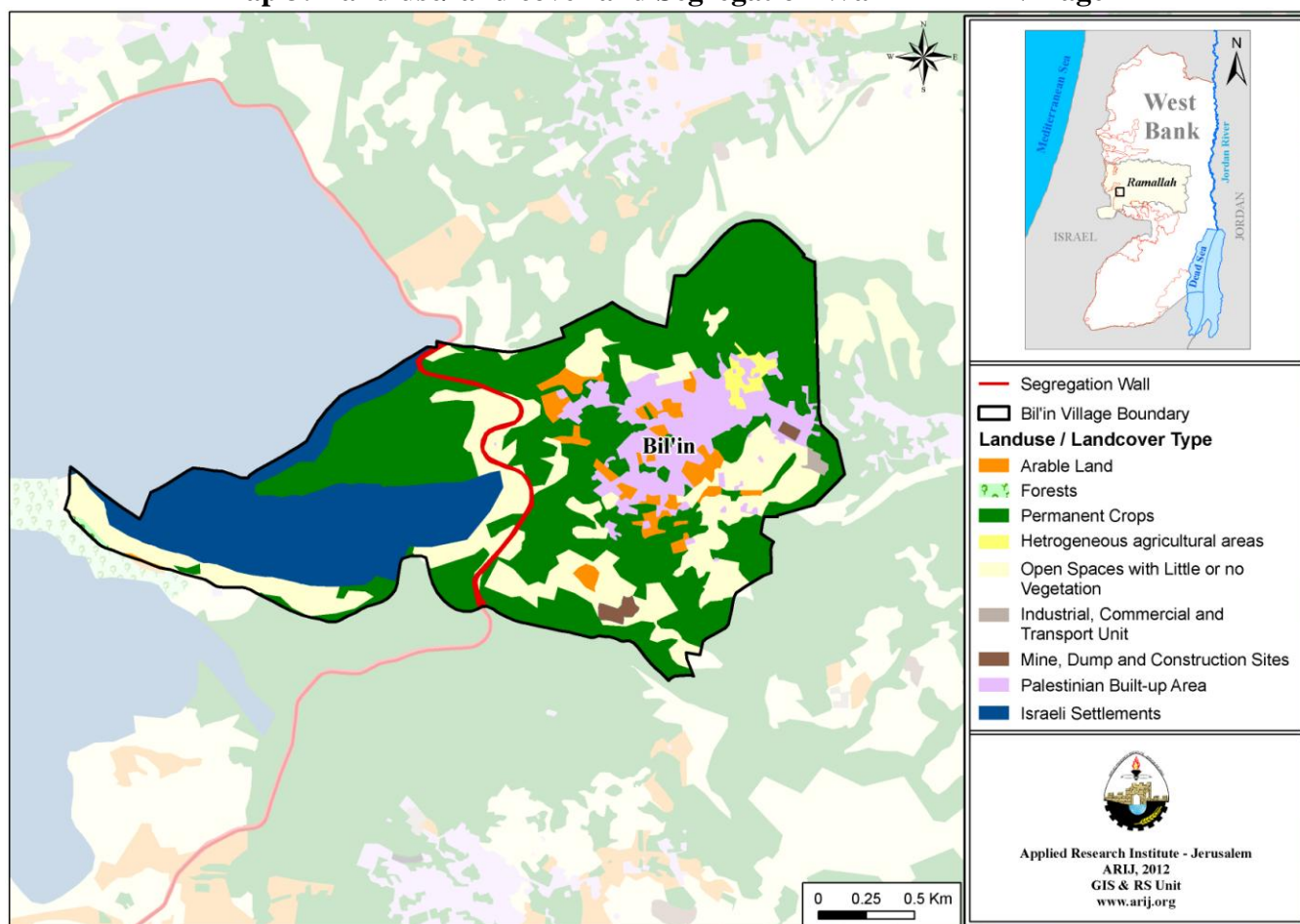
Bil'in lies on an area of 4,659 dunums, of which 2,351 dunums are arable land and 390 dunums are dedicated to residential services (see Table 4 and Map 3).

Table 4: Land use and land cover in Bil'in village in 2010 (area in dunum)

| Total Area | Built up Area | Agricultural area (2,351) | | | | Inland water | Forests | Open Spaces | Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit | Area of Settlement, Military Bases & Wall Zone |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------|-------------|---|--|
| | | Permanent Crops | Green-houses | Range-lands | Arable lands | | | | | |
| 4,659 | 390 | 2,196 | 0 | 0 | 155 | 0 | 8 | 932 | 33 | 945 |

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Bil'in Village



Source: ARIJ GIS, 2012

Table 5 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Bil'in. The most commonly-cultivated crop in this area is squash.

Table 5: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Bil'in village (dunum)

| Fruity vegetables | | Leafy vegetable | | Green legumes | | Bulbs | | Other vegetables | | Total area | |
|-------------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|------------------|------|------------|------|
| RF | Irr. | RF | Irr. | RF | Irr. | RF | Irr. | RF | Irr. | RF | Irr. |
| 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 0 |

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

Table 6 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Bil'in is famous for olive cultivation; there are a total of 953 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the village.

Table 6: Total area of fruit and olive trees in Bil'in Village(dunum)

| Olives | | Citrus | | Stone-fruits | | Pome fruits | | Nuts | | Other fruits | | Total area | |
|--------|------|--------|------|--------------|------|-------------|------|------|------|--------------|------|------------|------|
| Rf | Irr. | Rf | Irr. | Rf | Irr. | Rf | Irr. | Rf | Irr. | Rf | Irr. | Rf | Irr. |
| 953 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 0 | 65 | 0 | 1,058 | 0 |

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

In terms of field crops and forage in Bil'in, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated and cover an area of about 60 dunums (See Table 7).

Table 7: Total area of field crops in Bil'in village(dunum)

| Cereals | | Bulbs | | Dry legumes | | Oil crops | | Forage crops | | Stimulating crops | | Other crops | | Total area | |
|---------|-----|-------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|-------------------|-----|-------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr | Rf | Irr |
| 60 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 139 | 0 |

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and by ARIJ's GIS Unit in sizes of agricultural areas is explained by the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010) conducted a survey which used a definition of agricultural areas based on land ownership. Therefore, the areas included in the survey were those of actual holdings of agricultural areas instead of seasonal ones. The survey did not consider fragmented and small seasonal cultivated areas in residential and agricultural areas. ARIJ's survey, however, indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, thus accounting for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey shows that 15% of the residents in Bil'in rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep and goats (See Table 8).

Table 8: Livestock in Bil'in village

| Cows* | Sheep | Goats | Camels | Horses | Donkeys | Mules | Broilers | Layers | Bee Hives |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|
| 2 | 139 | 371 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 64,000 | 55,200 | 14 |

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

There are around 8 kilometers of agricultural roads in the village, divided as follows (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

Table 9: Agricultural Roads in Bil'in Village and their Lengths

| Suitability of Agricultural Roads | Length (km) |
|--|-------------|
| For vehicles | - |
| For tractors and agricultural machinery only | 4 |
| For animals only | 4 |
| Unsuitable | - |

Source: Bil'in Village Council, 2010

The agricultural sector in Bil'in suffers from many problems, including:

- Lack of sufficient water for irrigation.
- Lack of capital.
- Lack of safe access to agricultural lands due to their location near Israeli settlements.
- Lack of necessary agricultural equipment.
- Lack of agricultural lands sufficient for pastures.
- Lack of commitment by citizens to agricultural work due to the many other obligations they have.

Institutions and Services

Bil'in has a post office division in addition to a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

- **Bil'in Village Council:** Founded in 1996 by the Ministry of Local Government with the goal of taking care of issues in the village and providing various services to its population.
- **Bil'in Sport Club:** Founded in 1994 by the village's youth and currently registered in the Ministry of Youth & Sports, interested in youth activities in the village.
- **Bil'in Feminine Charitable Society for Credit:** An educational society founded in 2000 by the Ministry of Interior to support women.
- **The Justice & Freedom Society:** Founded in 2009 by the Ministry of Interior in order to assist and serve farmers and provide job opportunities.
- **Bil'in Charitable Society:** Founded in 2004 by the Ministry of Interior. It provides different services to the village residents and adopts and assists orphans.
- **Al Hadaf Cultural Center:** Founded in 2004 by the Ministry of Interior. It provides educational courses and helps to develop the abilities of students in schools and universities. It also conducts summer camps.

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Bil'in has been connected to a public electricity network since 1982. It is served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the village. Approximately 90% of the housing units in the village are connected to the network. However, the village residents face some problems concerning electricity, including (Bil'in Village Council, 2010):

- The high price of electricity.
- The electricity network's need for rehabilitation and expansion in order to reach the village outskirts.

- The electricity poles are not well-secured, posing a risk to the population.
- The lack of credibility by the electricity company in providing services.

Bil'in is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 50% of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

Transportation Services:

Public buses, illegal/unlicensed cars and taxis are the main means of transportation in Bil'in village. In addition to the lack of vehicles in the village, residents seeking to travel out of the village suffer due to the Segregation Wall and military checkpoints (Bil'in Village Council, 2010). There are 2km of main roads and 5.5km of secondary roads in the village (See Table 10) (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

Table 10: Roads in Bil'in village

| Status of Internal Roads | Road Length (km) | |
|---|------------------|------------|
| | Main | Sub |
| 1. Paved & in good condition | 2 | 2 |
| 2. Paved but in poor condition | - | 1.5 |
| 3. Unpaved | - | 2 |

Source: Bil'in Village Council, 2010

Water Resources:

Bil'in is provided with water by the West Bank Water Department through the public network established in 1986. Approximately 97.7% of the housing units are connected to this network (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

The quantity of water supplied to Bil'in in 2010 was approximately 30,000 cubic meters (Bil'in Village Council, 2010). The estimated rate of water supply per capita is about 48 liters/ per day. However, no Bil'in resident consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are estimated at around 35%. These losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, in the distribution network, and at the household level; therefore the average rate of water consumption per capita in Bil'in is 31 liters per day (Bil'in Village Council, 2010). This is a low rate compared with the minimum quantity of 100 liters per capita per day proposed by the World Health Organization.

150 rainwater harvesting cisterns are located in the village and form an alternative source of water to the public network; however, these cisterns are not sufficient to meet the residents' needs during periods of water cut-offs. The price of one cubic meter of water from the public water network is 5 NIS (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

Sanitation:

Bil'in lacks a public sewerage network with most of the village residents using cesspits as a major means for the disposal of wastewater (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day is approximately 43 cubic meters, or 15,600 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the village, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 22 liters per day. The wastewater collected in cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys without concern for the environment. There is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to the environment and to public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

Solid Waste Management:

The Joint Services Council/ Group VI for Waste is responsible for managing the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by citizens and establishments in the village. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee of about 15 NIS is charged to the population serviced by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However, the collected fees are not considered sufficient for good management of solid waste; only 60% of these fees are collected from the citizens (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

Most of the population in Bil'in benefit from the solid waste services, where waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to 10 containers with a capacity of 200 liters spread throughout the village. The Joint Council collects the solid waste from the containers once a week and transports it using a waste vehicle to Deir Ibzi' dumping site, 3km from the village, where it is buried or burnt (Bil'in Village Council, 2010).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Bil'in is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day by Bil'in residents is nearly 1.2 tons, or 435 tons per year (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

Environmental Conditions

Like other villages and towns in the governorate, Bil'in experiences several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved. These problems can be identified as follows:

Water Crisis

- Water is cut off by the Jerusalem Water Authority for long periods of time during summer in several neighborhoods of the village for several reasons:
 - (1) Israeli control over Palestinian water resources.
 - (2) High rate of water losses, because the water network is old and in need of rehabilitation and renovation.

Wastewater Management

- The absence of a public sewage network means that in Bil'in residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and/or to discharge wastewater in the streets. This is particularly common in winter, as citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers

during this period. These methods facilitate environmental damage, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the village. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater and water collected in household cisterns (rainwater harvesting cisterns) because most cesspits are built without lining, allowing wastewater to enter into the ground and avoiding the need to use sewage tankers. Moreover, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without concern for the damage it causes to the environment and to residents' health.

Solid Waste Management

- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve in Bil'in and the other neighboring communities in the governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill, because the appropriate land is within Area C and under Israeli control. Additionally, the implementation of such projects depends on funding from donor countries. The lack of a sanitary landfill is a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste, and produces bad odors and distortion of the landscape.

Impact of the Israeli Occupation

Geopolitical status in Bil'in

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28th September 1995, Bil'in village was divided into politically classified areas "B" and "C". Approximately 2,396 dunums (51.4% of the total village area) were assigned to area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has complete control over civil matters and Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. Area B constitutes most of the inhabited Palestinian areas, including municipalities, villages and some refugee camps. It is noted that all of the village's population resides in area B. The rest of the village's area, comprising of 2,264 dunums (48.6% of the total area), is classified as area C, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory (table 11). In area C Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through a consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within area C are agricultural areas and open spaces in addition to land confiscated for settlement construction and expansion purposes, which have become isolated behind the Segregation Wall.

Table 11: The Geopolitical Divisions of Bil'in– Ramallah Governorate

| Area | Area in dunums | Percent of Total village area |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Area A | 0 | 0 |
| Area B | 2396 | 51.4 |
| Area C | 2264 | 48.6 |
| Nature Reserve | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 4,660 | 100 |

Source: Source:ARIJ-GIS, 2011

Bil'in Village and the Israeli Occupation Practices

Thousands of dunums of land have been confiscated from Bil'in by Israeli forces for different purposes, including the building of Israeli settlements on the village's lands and the construction of the Segregation Wall. Below are details relating to land confiscations in Bil'in.

During Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli government has confiscated a total of 891 dunums (19%) of land from Bil'in village to establish Mod'in Illit settlement to the west of the village. The settlement was established in 1991 and is currently inhabited by 46,000 Israeli settlers. It should be noted that part of this settlement is established on land of Bil'in while the rest of it is established on lands of the following neighboring villages; Deir Qaddis, Ni'lin and Kharbatha Bani Harith. It is further noted that Modi'in Illit settlement is one of the 8 Israeli settlements, which together comprises the Israeli settlement bloc of Modi'in Illit, which Israeli seeks to annex to its borders through the construction of the Segregation Wall in the West Bank. The Israeli Government announced a project in 2005 which aims include incorporating the major settlement blocs in the West Bank within Israel inside the Wall, including Ma'ale Adummim settlement bloc, Ariel bloc, Givat Ze'ev bloc, Gush Etzion bloc and Mod'in Illit bloc. Israel considers these settlements as an essential part of the State of Israel. This is shown in the following statement made by former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to former American President George Bush on the 11th of April 2005, "[the plan] contributes to security, political standing, the economy and the demographics of the Jewish people in the land of Israel." Upon the completion of the construction of the Segregation Wall scheme which is planned for completion in 2014, Israel will be able to annex the major settlement blocs in addition to other settlements located to the west of the Wall. This will increase the total settlements to be annexed to Israel through the construction of the Wall to 107.

The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan in Bil'in Village

The Israeli segregation wall plan has had and will continue to have a negative and destructive impact on Bil'in village. According to the latest revised route of the Israeli segregation wall plan published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense's website on 30th April 2007, the wall constructed west of the village confiscates 1,781 dunums (38% of the total area of village) for Israeli settlement purposes. The majority of the isolated lands are taken for Israeli settlements construction on the village lands in addition to open spaces, forests and agricultural areas (table 12).

Table 12: Land Classification of the Isolated lands in Bil'in village – Ramallah Governorate

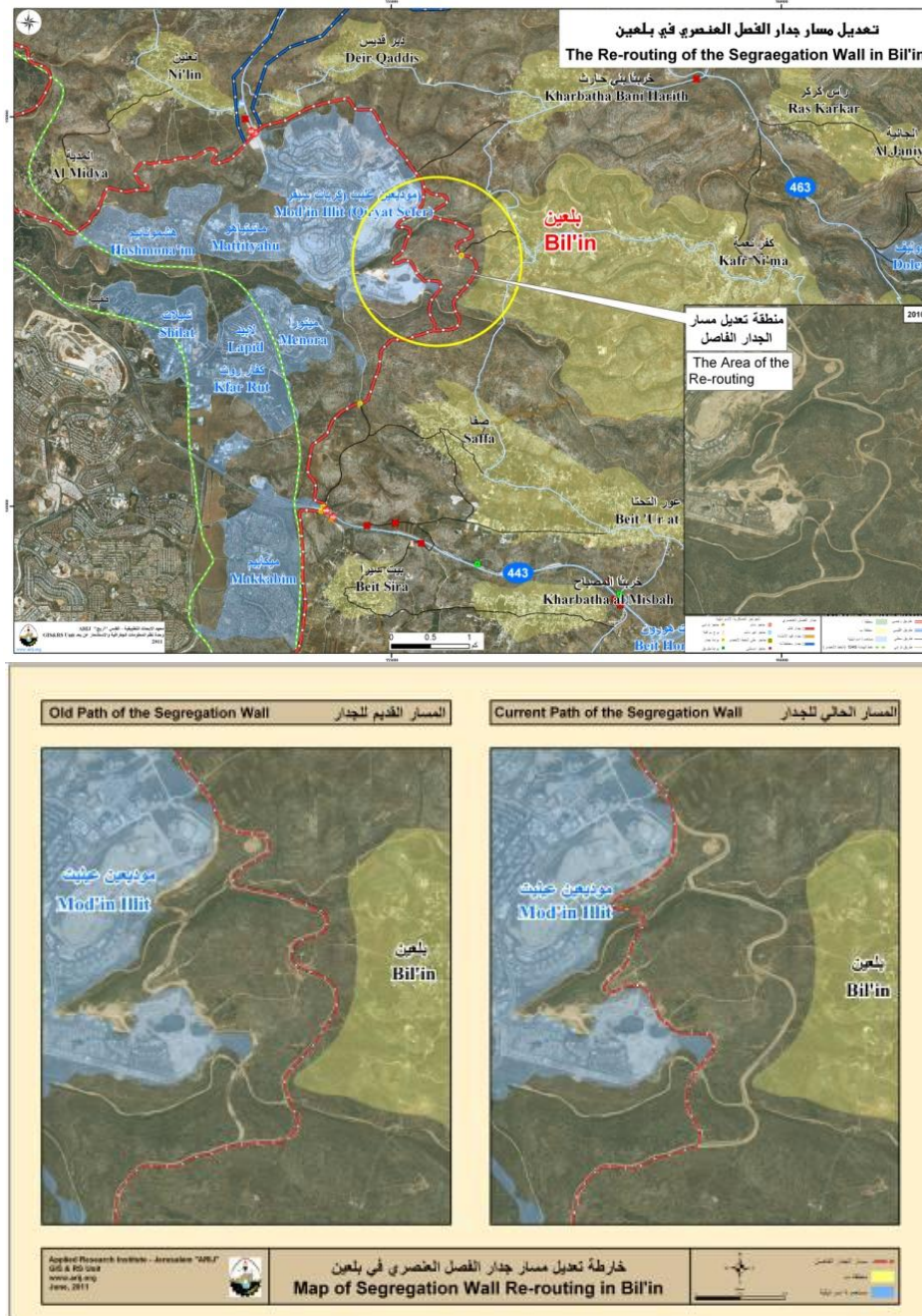
| Land Classification | Area (in dunums) |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Israeli Settlements | 891 |
| Agricultural Lands | 514 |
| Open Spaces | 330 |
| Wall Zone | 38 |
| Forests | 8 |
| Total | 1781 |

Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2011

Changing the Route of the Segregation Wall in Bil'in Village

On the 4th September 2007, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the re-routing of 1.7 km in length of the racial segregation Wall route in Bil'in village west of Ramallah, which had been held at the expense of the Palestinian territories in the village, 500 meters from the village urban area, to become closer to the Green Line (the armistice line of 1949). The court's decision came after a wave of petitions submitted to the court by Palestinian landowners who had suffered from the difficult living conditions caused by the existing wall, as they demanded for either its revocation, or in the worst of cases, to be built on the armistice line (Green Line). Even a year after the issuance of the Israeli Justice Supreme Court decision to dismantle a section of the Wall in Bil'in village, nothing was implemented on ground; even an alternative path to the existing section was not identified. In August 2008, the President of the Israeli Supreme Court, Dorit Beinisch, and judges Eliezer Rivlin and Eiley Barakah, sharply criticized the Israeli army because it ignored the decision of the Israeli Justice Court which also included the Israeli army providing a planned alternative route for the wall in a maximum period of 45 days starting from the date of issuing the decision (before 10.5 months). After months of inaction in applying the court's decision, Israeli occupation authorities submitted a new plan for the route of the wall in Bil'in village. On the 24th April 2008, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Shlomo Dror, a spokesman for the Israeli Defense Ministry, who justified the delay in implementing the court order to 'budgetary constraints'. However, there have been no budgetary constraints when it comes to building new housing units in Israeli settlements, as the preceding few months, had witnessed a massive building campaign in the Israeli settlements. On the other hand, Israel National News stated that the budget for the construction of the wall in 2008 was 250 million NIS; of which 70 million were allocated to changing the Segregation Wall path in the West Bank.

On 21st June 2011, after popular, formal, legal and international pressures, and after years of weekly marches organized by the 'Popular Committees Against the Wall' in different villages affected by the Segregation Wall in the occupied West Bank, of which Bil'in and Ni'lin held the most important, the Israeli occupation forces rerouted the Racial Segregation Wall route west of the village, four years after the Israeli Justice Supreme Court's decision issued in September of 2007 to amend a 1.7 km section of the Wall. The area of land restored by the village is approximately 1,200 dunums. An analysis of modern aerial photographs conducted by the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), shows that the area of land which has been retrieved after adjusting the Wall route is equal to 905 dunums; most of which is agricultural land. The total length of the new section of the wall is 2.8 km. Most of the recovered area belongs to Bil'in village land with two small parts of it belonging to Saffa and Kharbatha Bani Harith villages (See maps below).



It is noted that the weekly peaceful marches, lasting for five years, are still addressed being addressed in a forceful manner by Israeli occupation forces, including actions involving, the shooting of live fire, wounding, injuring and arresting villagers in addition to frequent home raids and closures and restrictions on the village and its inhabitants.

Israel is living in settlements illegally established on Bil'in lands have had significant impact on residents life styles and their properties. Settler's attacks supported by the Israeli Occupation forces have contributed to the loss of Palestinian lands adjacent to settlements as landowners are prevented

from accessing their lands, which have been fenced in with barbed wire and planted with trees. Israeli settlers have also carried out a series of attacks against Palestinian landowners in an attempt to intimidate and deter them from returning to their lands adjacent to the aforementioned settlements. For example, during the evening of June 16th 2011, a group of settlers living in 'Navat Yahu Mizrahi' outpost built on the western side of the village territory burned more than 75 dunums planted with olive trees, resulting in the destruction of more than 1,00 fruitful olive trees in the village area west of the Segregation Wall. Moreover, the fire led to the burning of approximately 120 dunums of fallow land in the area located in the southern side of the village known as “Al Mizrab” and “Sha’b Abu Awad” regions, where the presence of dry hay and the speed of wind resulted in the fire spreading speedily.

It is further noted that the occupation forces hindered the arrival of the civil defense to that confined area west of the wall, under the pretext of lack of coordination for the passage of the civil defense vehicles, which led to the rapid spread of flames and slowing the efforts to put out the fire. The fabrication of fire by settlers came in coincidence with the occupation forces starting to amend the route of the wall in Bil'in village upon the Israeli Supreme Court decision issued in September 2007, to amend part of the Segregation Wall route in Bil'in village so that part of the territory isolated by the wall will become to the east of the wall.

Some Issued Military Orders in Bil'in Village

The Israeli occupation Army has issued many military orders to confiscate lands in Bil'in village, following are the orders issued:

- The Israeli Military Order No. (40/04/T): Issued on the 15th of April 2004. It confiscates 384.2 dunums of land from Bil'in and Saffa for security purposes and the construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall.
- Israeli Military Order No. (16/01/T): Issued on the 2nd of May 2001. It confiscates a total area of 8.585 dunums of the lands of Bil'in and Deir Qaddis for security purposes.
- Israeli Military Order No. (300432): Issued on the 5th of January 2006 to demolish a house in Bil'in village.
- The Israeli Military Order No. (21/91): Issued on the 30th of July 1992 and it confiscates lands from Bil'in under the pretext of being state lands.
- The Israeli Military Order No. (20/82): Issued on the 22nd of October 1982. It confiscates lands in Bil'in for the purpose of establishing a military checkpoint.

Israeli Demolitions in Bil'in Village

On the 27th November 2011, Israeli occupation forces in conjunction with the Israel Protection of Nature Authority, demolished an agricultural non-roofed room in Abu Limon reserved area located within land that had been recovered from the wall in Bil'in village. This destruction took place under the pretext of building without obtaining the necessary licenses from the Israeli occupation authorities, due to the location of the construction in area C which is subjected to full Israeli control. Residents of Bil'in village built this agricultural storehouse 8 years previously in an attempt to resist against ongoing settlement

expansion from Mattityahu settlement, which at the time of construction was notably expanding through the increased construction of a number of houses in the settlement.

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented Projects

Bil'in village council has implemented several development projects in Bil'in during the past five years, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Bil'in during the Past Five Years

| Name of the Project | Type | Year | Donor |
|--|-----------------|------|--------------------------|
| Pavement of internal roads | Infrastructure | 2008 | Islamic Bank "Arab Fund" |
| Construction of Bil'in girls school | Educational | 2009 | Islamic Bank "Arab Fund" |
| Establishment of a major water network | Infrastructure | 2008 | Islamic Bank "Arab Fund" |
| Rehabilitation of electricity poles for the network | Infrastructure | 2009 | Islamic Bank "Arab Fund" |
| Reclamation of agricultural lands | Agricultural | 2007 | The Hydrology Group |
| Construction of agricultural roads and establishment of home gardens | Agricultural | 2007 | The Hydrology Group |
| Establishment of 10 car parks | Public Services | 2010 | CHF |
| Establishment of main gates for the clinic and school | Public Services | 2010 | CHF |
| Source: Bil'in Village Council, 2010 | | | |

Proposed Projects

Bil'in Village Council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the village and the village residents, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the PRA workshop conducted by ARIJ staff in the village. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the perspectives of the participants in the workshop:

1. Supporting infrastructure projects, such as the expansion of the water and electricity networks, maintenance of roads and bridges, sanitation, agricultural roads, schools and kindergartens, reclamation of agricultural lands and construction of agricultural cisterns.
2. Implementing income-generating projects for young people along with creating job opportunities.
3. Holding awareness sessions to expand the participation of women in issues such as gynecological diseases, home gardens, childbirth and pregnancy, and food processing.
4. Establishing a fully equipped medical center.
5. Establishing public recreational parks.
6. Holding informative awareness courses on the administration of small business projects, the disposal of solid waste and the uses of modern technology.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Bil'in suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 14 shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the village council's perspective.

Table 14: Development Priorities and Needs in Bil'in

| No. | Sector | Strongly Needed | Needed | Not a Priority | Notes |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------|--------|----------------|---|
| Infrastructural Needs | | | | | |
| 1 | Opening and Pavement of Roads | * | | | 2km* |
| 2 | Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks | * | | | 2km |
| 3 | Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas | * | | | 2km |
| 4 | Construction of New Water Networks | | | * | |
| 5 | Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs | | | * | |
| 6 | Construction of Water Reservoirs | * | | | 300 cubic meters |
| 7 | Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network | | * | | 6km |
| 8 | Construction of a New Electricity Network | | | * | |
| 9 | Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection | * | | | 30 containers |
| 10 | Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste | | | * | |
| 11 | Providing a Sanitary Landfill | * | | | |
| Health Needs | | | | | |
| 1 | Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres | * | | | 1 health center |
| 2 | Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres | | * | | 1 health center |
| 3 | Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools | | | * | |
| Educational Needs | | | | | |
| 1 | Building of New Schools | * | | | a floor in the girls school and 3 classrooms in the mixed school elementary level |
| 2 | Rehabilitation of Old Schools | * | | | |
| 3 | Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools | * | | | |
| Agriculture Needs | | | | | |
| 1 | Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands | * | | | 500 dunums |
| 2 | Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns | * | | | 50 cisterns |
| 3 | Construction of Barracks for Livestock | | * | | 20 barracks |
| 4 | Veterinary Services | | * | | |
| 5 | Seeds and Hay for Animals | | * | | 150 tons per year |
| 6 | Construction of New Greenhouses | | * | | 20 greenhouses |
| 7 | Rehabilitation of Greenhouses | | | * | |
| 8 | Field Crops Seeds | | * | | |
| 9 | Plants and Agricultural Supplies | | * | | |

* 2km are agricultural roads

Source: Bil'in Village Council, 2010

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