

Bir Zeit Town Profile



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Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in the Ramallah Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Ramallah Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment," the 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 and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in Ramallah Governorate.

The project's objectives are to survey, analyze, and document the available natural, human, socioeconomic and environmental resources, and the existing limitations and needs assessment for the development of the rural and marginalized areas in 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 the focus on the agricultural sector.

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

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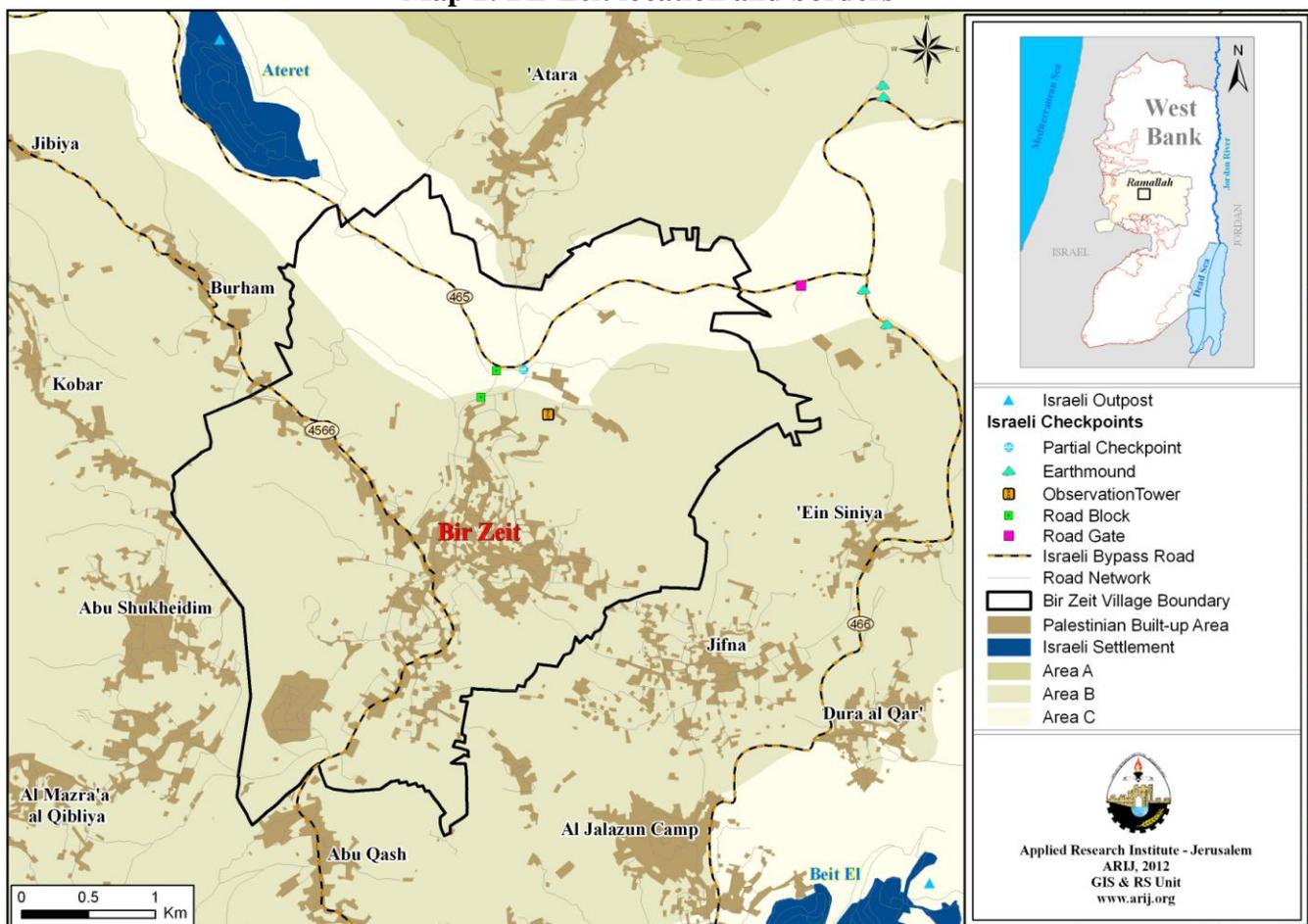
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Bir Zeit Town Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Bir Zeit is a Palestinian town in the Ramallah Governorate located 7.5 km north of Ramallah City. Bir Zeit is bordered by Jifna village and ‘Ein Siniya lands to the east, ‘Atara town to the north, Burham, Kobar and Al-Zaytouneh localities to the west, and Abu Qash village to the south (ARIJ-GIS, 2012) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Bir Zeit location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012.

Bir Zeit is located at an altitude of 788 m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 698 mm. The average annual temperature is 16 C° and the average annual humidity is about 61% (ARIJ-GIS, 2012).

Since 1963, Bir Zeit has been governed by a municipal council which is currently administrated by 7 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority. There are also 37 employees working in the

council, which owns a permanent headquarters and a vehicle for the collection of solid waste, 2 pickup cars, a hammer, and 6 water maintenance devices (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

It is the responsibility of the municipal council to provide a number of services to the residents of Bir Zeit, including (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012):

- Establishment and maintenance of the drinking water network.
- Solid waste collection, road construction and restoration, street cleaning and social development services.
- Organization of the construction and licensing processes.
- Implementation of projects and studies for the town.
- Provision of offices for governmental services.
- Protection of historical and archeological sites in the town.
- Provision of a firefighter vehicle.

History

Bir Zeit (literally ‘the well of oil’) was named for the olive oil stored in the harvesting cisterns, as there were many olive oil trees in the town. The town was established in 1600 (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

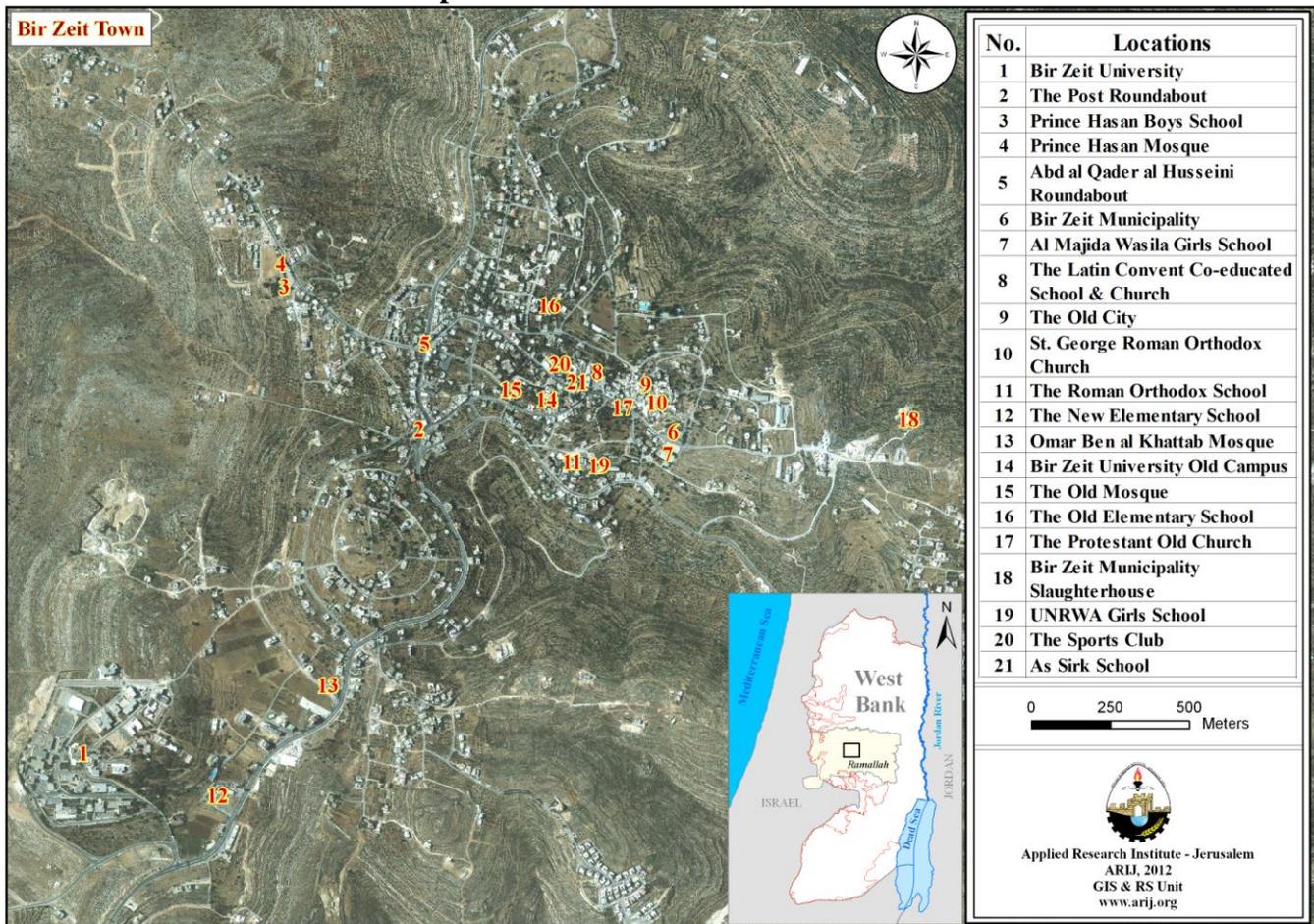
Photo of Bir Zeit



Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are four mosques in the town (Prince Hassan, Omar ben al Khattab, Bir Zeit and Al Marj Mosque) in addition to three churches (Church of the Latin Convent, Arab Evangelical Episcopal Church, and the Orthodox Church of St. George). The town has several sites of archaeological interest including: the old town, Al Khirba Mount and water springs (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012), Khirbet Bir Zeit which contains tombs carved in the rocks, Khirbet ar Ras, Khirbet Rajm al Rajman, and Khirbet Deir al ‘Aqban (Al Dabbagh, 1991) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Bir Zeit Town



Population Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012.

Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Bir Zeit in 2007 was 4,257, of whom 2,125 were male and 2,132 were female. There were 1,005 households living in 1,772 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 Bir Zeit is as follows: 32.1% were less than 15 years of age, 59.8% were between 15 and 64 years of age, and 5.3% were 65 years of age or older. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the town is 100:100, meaning that males and females each constitute 50% of the population.

Families

Bir Zeit residents are from several families, including the Abd Allah, Shaheen, Abu Awwad, and Al Washaha families (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Bir Zeit population is about 3.6%, of whom 78.4% are females. Of the literate population, 10.3% could only read and write, with no formal education, 17.5% had elementary education, 23.1% had preparatory education, 21.8% had secondary education, and 23.6% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the town of Bir Zeit by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

Table 1: Bir Zeit population (10 years and above) by sex and educational attainment

Sex	Illite- rate	Can read & write	Element- ary	Preparat- ory	Second- ary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Un- known	Total
M	25	173	317	381	321	96	192	3	43	23	2	1,576
F	91	155	242	359	376	121	220	1	43	11	2	1,621
T	116	328	559	740	697	217	412	4	86	34	4	3,197

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are three public schools in the town (all run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education) one private school, and one UNRWA school (Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Schools in Bir Zeit by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority (2010/2011)

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Al Majida Wasila Girls Secondary School	Government	Female
Prince Hassan Boys Secondary School	Government	Male
Bir Zeit Boys Elementary School	Government	Male
The Latin Patriarch/ Bir Zeit School	Private	Mixed
Bir Zeit Girls Elementary School	UNRWA	Female

Source: Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011

In the town there are 1,817 students, 110 teachers, and 64 classes. The average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 17, whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 28 (Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011).

There are three kindergartens in Bir Zeit town run by different bodies. 206 children in total attend these kindergartens (Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011) (See table 3 below).

Table 3: Kindergartens in Bir Zeit town by name and supervising authority

Name of Kindergarten	No. of Children	Supervising Authority
Beit al Rabee'	43	Private
The Latin Patriarch/ Bir Zeit	63	Christian Civil
Bara'em an Noor	100	Another Private
Source: Directorate of Education in Ramallah, 2011		

The educational sector in Bir Zeit town faces some obstacles, mainly (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012):

- The low salaries of teachers.
- The need to renovate playgrounds.
- The lack of interest in vocational education.
- The poor educational attainment of students.

Health Status

Bir Zeit has a governmental health center, 3 private physician's clinics, 3 private dental clinics, a private cardiology clinic, a private radiology center, a private medical laboratory, and 4 private pharmacies. The town also has an ambulance which is owned by the Red Crescent Society. In the absence of required health services or in emergencies, patients are transferred to the Governmental Hospital of Ramallah, 11 km from the town (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

The health sector in the town faces some obstacles and problems, principally the lack of specialized health centers and clinics (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

Economic Activities

Bir Zeit has 31 groceries, 7 vegetable and fruit stores, 8 bakeries, 10 butcheries, 93 service stores, 24 different professional workshops, and 6 stone cutters (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

and the groups most affected economically by the Israeli restrictions have been (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012):

- Workers in the Israeli labor market.
- Workers in the agriculture sector.
- Workers in industry.
- Workers in the trade sector.
- Workers in the services sector.

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 42.5% of Bir Zeit labor force was economically active, of whom 91.8% were employed, 57.2% were not economically active, 53.4% were students, and 29.9% were housekeepers (See Table 4).

Table 4: Bir Zeit population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status

Sex	Economically active				Non-economically active						Not stated	Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (never worked)	Total	Student	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & not looking for work	Others	Total		
M	831	53	26	910	485	-	113	38	23	659	7	1,576
F	416	16	17	449	492	547	107	18	5	1,169	3	1,621
T	1,247	69	43	1,359	977	547	220	56	28	1,828	10	3,197

M: Male; F: Female; T: Total.

Source: PCBS, 2009.

Agricultural Sector

Bir Zeit has a total area of around 13,081 dunums of which 8,013 are 'arable' land and 1,281 dunums are registered as 'residential' (See Table 5 and Map 3).

Table 5: Land use and land cover in Bir Zeit town in 2010 (area in dunum)

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (8,013)				Inland water	Forests	Open Spaces	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements, Military Bases & Wall Zone
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
13,081	1,281	6,894	1	5	1,113	0	0	3,456	331	0

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Bir Zeit Town

Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012.

Table 6 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Bir Zeit. The most commonly cultivated crop within this area is tomatoes.

Table 6: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Bir Zeit (area in dunums)

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetables		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
27	7	0	0	8	2	2	0	0	0	37	10

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Ramallah, 2009

Table 7 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Bir Zeit is famous for olive cultivation; there are 5,492 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the town.

Table 7: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Bir Zeit (area in dunums)

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.
5,492	0	0	0	18	0	2	0	39	0	118	0	5,669	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Ramallah, 2009

In terms of field crops and forage in Bir Zeit, cereals (particularly wheat and barley) are the most cultivated, covering an area of about 60 dunums (See Table 8).

Table 8: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Bir Zeit (area in dunums)

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	18	0	36	0	3	0	24	0	0	0	3	0	144	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Ramallah, 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 conducted by ARIJ team shows that 1% of the residents in Bir Zeit rears and keeps domestic animals such as sheep, goats and others (See Table 9).

Table 9: Livestock in Bir Zeit

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
3	299	422	0	0	0	0	10,000	40,000	0

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Ramallah, 2009

There around 13.5 kilometers of agricultural roads in the town, divided as follows (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012):

Table 10: Agricultural Roads in Bir Zeit Town and their Lengths

Suitability of Agricultural Roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	-
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	6
For animals only	1.5
Unsuitable	6

Source: Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012

The agricultural sector in the town faces some problems, including (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012):

- The lack of water sources.
- The economic infeasibility.
- The weak local production of the agricultural sector.
- The lack of capital.

Institutions and Services

Bir Zeit town has several governmental institutions: a post office, a fire station, a police station, a national security center, and Bir Zeit Sharia Court. It also has a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012):

- **Bir Zeit Municipality.**
- **The Agricultural Committee.**
- **Bir Zeit Women Association.**
- **Ar Rozana Association.**
- **Juhood Association.**
- **Bir Zeit Sports Club.**
- **Liqa' Institution.**
- **Bir Zeit Orthodox Scout.**

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Bir Zeit has been connected to a public electricity network since 1964. It is served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the town, and approximately 99% of the housing units in the town are connected to the network. The town residents face some problems concerning electricity, primarily the weak electrical network (which is particularly problematic in winter) (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

Bir Zeit is also connected to a telecommunication network. Approximately 99% of the housing units within the town boundaries are connected to phone lines (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

Transportation Services:

There are many public taxis and buses in Bir Zeit. However, residents suffer from the existence of earth mounds and/or military checkpoints on roads (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012). There are 12 km of main roads and 25 km of secondary roads in Bir Zeit (See Table 11) (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

Table 11: Roads in Bir Zeit town

Status of Internal Roads	Road Length (km)	
	Main	Sub
1. Paved & in good condition	10.2	15.8
2. Paved but in poor condition	1.8	9.2
3. Unpaved	-	-

Source: Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012

Water Resources:

Bir Zeit is provided with water by the Jerusalem Water Department through the public water network established in 1970. Approximately all of the housing units are connected to the water network (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012)

The quantity of water supplied to Bir Zeit town in 2010 was about 326,598 cubic meters (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012); therefore, the estimated rate of water supply per capita is about 210 liters/day. However, no Bir Zeit citizen consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are estimated at 26.5%. These losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, in the distribution network, and at the household level. Therefore, the rate of water consumption per capita in Bir Zeit is 154 liters per day (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012). Rainwater-harvesting cisterns form an alternative resource of water to the public network; however, these do not meet the residents' needs although almost 90% of Bir Zeit households have harvesting cisterns (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

The town has 3 springs for the irrigation of agricultural lands and the annual average rate of pumping from these springs is 16.5 cubic meters/ year. There is a public water reservoir in the town with a capacity of 300 cubic meters (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

To determine water costs, the water authority has adopted an upward rate where the price of water increases with increasing consumption. Table 12 shows the price of water by category of consumption.

Table 12: Water tariffs of Jerusalem Water Authority adopted since 01.01.2012

Consumption Category (m ³)	Domestic (NIS/m ³)	Industrial (NIS/m ³)	Tourist (NIS/m ³)	Commercial (NIS/m ³)	Public Institutions (NIS/m ³)
0 – 5	4.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.4
5.1 – 10	4.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	4.5
10.1 – 20	5.6	6.8	6.8	6.8	5.6
20.1 – 30	6.8	8.1	8.1	8.1	6.8
30.1+	9	9.9	10.8	9	9

Source: Jerusalem Water Authority, 2012

Sanitation:

Bir Zeit lacks a public sewerage network with most of the town residents using cesspits, endocrines and open channels for the disposal of wastewater (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day is approximately 526 cubic meters, or 192,000 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the town it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is 108 liters per day, depending on the consumption rate. The wastewater collected by cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys with no regard for the environment. There is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to both environmental and public health (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

Solid Waste Management:

Bir Zeit Municipality is responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by citizens and establishments in the town. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee amounting to 40 JD a year is charged to the population served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However, the collected fees are not sufficient for good management of solid waste; only 60% of these fees are collected from the citizens (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012)

Most of the population in Bir Zeit benefits from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags, and placed in 290 containers of 1 m³ capacity. The Municipal Council collects the solid waste 6 times a week and transports it using a waste vehicle to 'Atara random dumping site, 1 km from the town, where it is burnt (Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012)

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Bir Zeit is 1.05kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Bir Zeit residents is nearly 4.5 tons, or 1,632 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

Environmental Conditions

Like other towns and villages in the governorate, Bir Zeit 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 town for several reasons:
 - (1) Israeli control over Palestinian water resources. Consequently, the Jerusalem Water Authority purchases water from the Israeli company of Mekorot in order to satisfy residents' needs.
 - (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 Bir Zeit 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 town. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater 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 Bir Zeit 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 Bir Zeit

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed in 28th September 1995 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Bir Zeit was divided into areas “B” and “C”. Approximately 9,919 dunums (75.8% of the town’s total area) were assigned as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has a complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. Area B constitutes most of the inhabited Palestinian areas, including municipalities, villages and some camps. It is worth mentioning that all of the town’s population resides in area B. The rest of the town’s area, constituting 3,162 dunums (24.2% of the total area), is classified as area C, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory. In area C Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within the area C are agricultural areas and open spaces (table 13).

Table 13: The Geopolitical Divisions of Bir Zeit – Ramallah Governorate

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total town area
Area A	0	0
Area B	9,919	75.8
Area C	3,162	24.2
Nature Reserve	0	0
Total	13,081	100

Source: Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2011

There are no Israeli settlements on Bir Zeit lands, although the occupation authorities confiscated many of Bir Zeit lands for military and settlement purposes, including the establishment of military checkpoints in addition to bypass roads to link Israeli settlements. Israel confiscated more lands for the construction of bypass road no. 465 to connect Israeli settlements near the town from its eastern side to those from its northwest and western sides. The real threat of bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the IOF along these roads, which extends to approximately 75 m on each side of the road. These buffer zones dramatically increase the total area of land affected by the construction of the bypass roads.

Following the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000, the Israeli occupation authorities established many Israeli checkpoints on the lands of Bir Zeit. One of the main checkpoints was located to the north; the ‘Atara military checkpoint. This checkpoint forms a gate to the northern part of Ramallah city and separates it from the northern cities of the West Bank. It represents a significant obstacle to the movement of Palestinian civilians to and from Ramallah while causing daily suffering to Palestinians including arrests, shootings, traffic crises, and closures. Also, Israel established 2 concrete barriers near ‘Atara checkpoint and a watch tower. These checkpoints are designed to restrict movement and enhance control over Palestinians.

Despite the fact that there are no Israeli settlements in Bir Zeit the town is not without attacks by Israeli settlers. Bir Zeit is surrounded with settlements from its eastern, northwestern and western sides. In the early morning hours of 9th September 2011, a group of Israeli settlers broke into the Palestinian town of Bir Zeit, assaulted Al Hassan mosque, and wrote inflammatory and racist slogans on one of its gates calling for revenge against Islam and Muslims.

Furthermore, the Israeli occupation forces continuously assault Palestinian students and lecturers who attend Bir Zeit University in the form of violations and harassment; all in an attempt to scare and terrify in order to prevent them from continuing their education at the university.

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented Projects

Bir Zeit Municipal Council has implemented several development projects in Bir Zeit during the past five years (See Table 14).

Table 14: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Bir Zeit during the Last Five Years

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Paving internal roads and retaining walls	Infrastructure	2007	Arab Fund for Economic Development in Africa
Rehabilitating part of the water network	Infrastructure	2008	CHF/ USAID
Rehabilitating the other part of the water network	Infrastructure	2008	USAID/ANERA
Restoring the historical buildings in the old city	Public Services	2008	Swedish Agency for Development & International Cooperation (SIDA)
Rehabilitating and paving roads	Infrastructure	2008	International Bank through the Municipalities Development & Credit Fund
Rehabilitating the infrastructure of the old city	Infrastructure	2009	CHF/ USAID
Rehabilitating the hosting house	Public Services	2009	CHF/ USAID
Establishing the old city's garden	Public Services	2010	Swedish Agency for Development & International Cooperation (SIDA)
Rehabilitating the people's services center	Public Services	2010	CHF/ USAID

Source: Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012

Proposed Projects

Bir Zeit Municipal council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the town and the town 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 town. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the viewpoints of the participants in the workshop:

1. Renewing the organizational chart
2. Establishing a sewerage network (35 km) and providing a collection and transfer system for the management of solid waste.
3. Increasing water sources and developing the transmission and distribution network.
4. Developing the transportation network (rehabilitating structural roads of 15 km).
5. Promoting the effective participation of youth and women in development and strengthening and consolidating the culture and practices of voluntary work.
6. Restoring the old city, rehabilitating springs, and promoting investment in tourism.
7. Translating and applying the principles of equality and human rights.
8. Developing the agricultural sector and expanding green areas.
9. Strengthening security and safety in the town.
10. Developing and encouraging real estate investment in the town.
11. Intensifying and adopting the use of alternative energy.
12. Developing the service environment for the development of academic and vocational education.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Bir Zeit suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 15 shows the development priorities and needs in the town, according to the municipal council's point of view.

Table 15: Development Priorities and Needs in Bir Zeit

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*			20 km [^]
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks	*			12 km
3	Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas			*	
4	Construction of New Water Networks			*	
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs	*			3 springs
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs	*			1500 m ³
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network	*			22 km
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network			*	
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection			*	
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste	*			1
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill	*			
Health Needs					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres			*	
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			*	
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools			*	
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools			*	
Agriculture Needs					
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands		*		3000 dunums
2	Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns			*	
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock			*	
4	Veterinary Services			*	
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals			*	
6	Construction of New Greenhouses		*		10 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses			*	
8	Field Crops Seeds		*		
9	Plants and Agricultural Supplies		*		

[^] 9 km main roads, 6 km secondary roads and 5 km are agricultural roads

Source: Bir Zeit Municipality, 2012

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