

# Al Walaja Village Profile



Prepared by



**The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem**

Funded by



**Spanish Cooperation**



**Azahar Program**

**2010**

## *Acknowledgments*

*ARIJ hereby expresses its deep gratitude to the Spanish agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) for their funding of this project through the Azahar Program.*

*ARIJ is grateful to the Palestinian officials in the ministries, municipalities, joint services councils, village committees and councils, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) for their assistance and cooperation with the project team members during the data collection process.*

*ARIJ also thanks all the staff who worked throughout the past couple of years towards the accomplishment of this work.*

## Background

This booklet is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in Bethlehem Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Bethlehem 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 Azahar Needs Assessment;" the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) and the Azahar Program.

The "Village Profiles and Azahar 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 Bethlehem Governorate with particular focus on the Azahar program objectives and activities concerning water, environment, and agriculture.

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 Bethlehem 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://proxy.arij.org/vprofile>.

## Table of Content

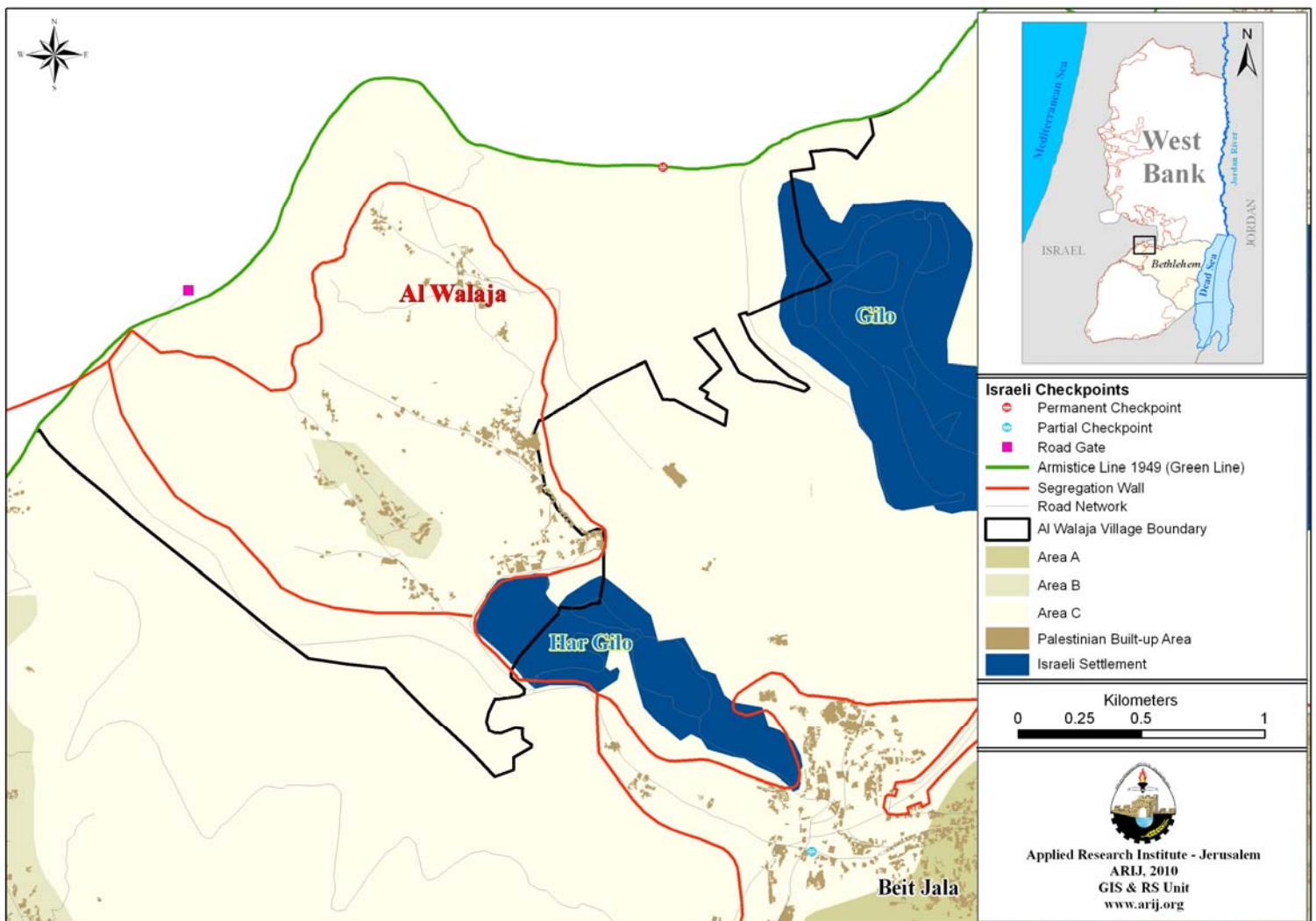
<i>Location and Physical Characteristics</i> _____	4
<i>History</i> _____	5
<i>Religious and Archaeological Sites</i> _____	6
<i>Population</i> _____	7
<i>Education</i> _____	7
<i>Health Status</i> _____	8
<i>Economic Activities</i> _____	8
<i>Agricultural Sector</i> _____	10
<i>Institutions and Services</i> _____	12
<i>Infrastructure and Natural Resources</i> _____	12
<i>Environmental Conditions:</i> _____	14
<i>Impact of the Israeli Occupation</i> _____	16
<i>Development Plans and Projects</i> _____	18
<i>Proposed Projects</i> _____	19
<i>Locality Development Priorities and Needs</i> _____	20
<i>References:</i> _____	21

# Al Walaja Village Profile

## Location and Physical Characteristics

Al Walaja is a Palestinian village in Bethlehem Governorate located 5km (horizontal distance) west of Bethlehem City. Al Walaja is bordered by Beit Jala town to the east, the 1949 Armistice Line (the Green Line) to the north and west, and Battir and Husan villages to the south (See map 1).

Map 1: Al Walaja location and borders



Al Walaja is located at an altitude of 756m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 601mm. The average annual temperature is 16°C, and the average annual humidity is about 61 percent (ARIJ GIS, 2009).

Since 1996, Al Walaja has been governed by a village council, which is currently administrated by nine members appointed by the Palestinian Authority. There are also 3 employees working in the council. The village council owns a permanent

headquarters, a vehicle to collect solid waste, a tractor, and some special equipment for the maintenance of the electricity network.

It is the responsibility of the village council to provide a number of services to the residents of Al Walaja, including:

1. Infrastructure services such as water and electricity.
2. Solid waste collection, road construction and restoration, street cleaning, and social development services.

## History

Al Walaja means a place that passes into or through something, often by overcoming resistance. It also means a cave that protects inhabitants from rain (Al Walaja Village Council, 2009).

Al Walaja history dates to after 1948, when Israeli forces occupied most of the village's lands and its inhabitants were displaced to the rest of the village's lands. The residents originate from Al Walaja refugees of 1948.

**Photo of Al Walaja**

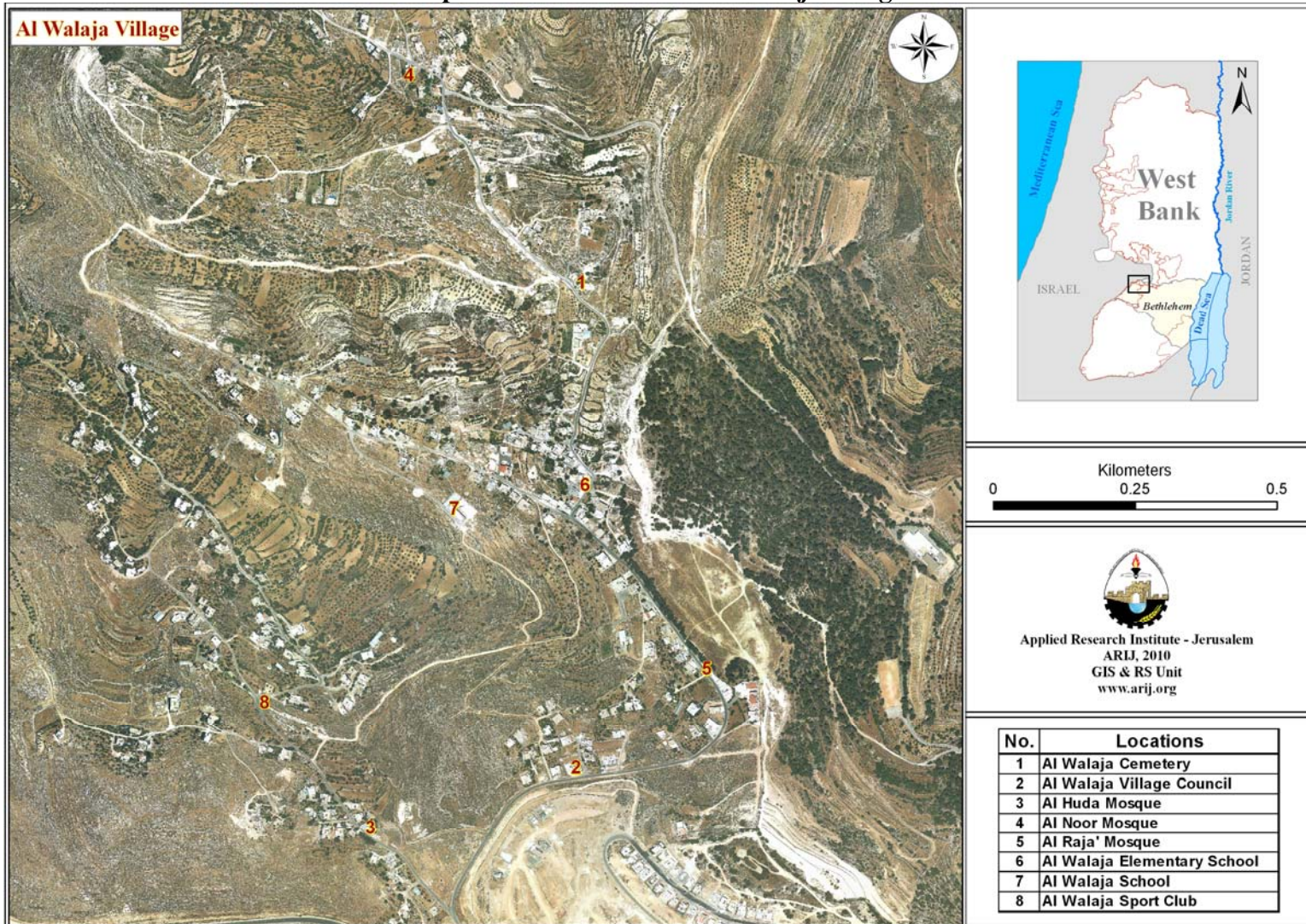


## Religious and Archaeological Sites

In terms of religious establishments, there are three mosques in Al Walaja: Al Huda Mosque, An Noor Mosque, and Ar Raja' Mosques.

In the village there is one archaeological site: Al Badawi olive tree which is considered the oldest olive tree in the world as it's older than 5000 years (See map 2).

**Map 2: Main locations in Al Walaja village**



## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Al Walaja in 2007 was 2,041; of whom 1,041 are males and 1,000 are females. There are 390 households living within 388 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 Al Walaja was as follows: 31.6 percent are less than 15 years, 46.2 percent are between 15 - 64 years, and 3.3 percent are 65 years and older. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the village is 104.1:100, meaning that males constitute 51 percent of the population, and females constitute 49 percent.

### Families

The inhabitants of Al Walaja village are composed of several families, mainly: Al 'Araj, Al Hagagla, Abed Rabbo and Al Wahadna.

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Al Walaja population is about 5.1 percent, of whom 78.3 percent are females. Of the literate population, 10.2 percent can read and write, 22.3 percent had elementary education, 31.7 percent had preparatory education, 17.7 percent had secondary education, and 12.2 percent completed higher education. Table 1, shows the educational level in the village of Al Walaja, by sex, and educational attainment in 2007.

Sex	Illiterate	Can read & write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Total
M	13	88	210	152	63	30	39	1	7	-	<b>609</b>
F	47	121	164	111	57	36	30	-	1	-	<b>569</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,178</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results

In regards to the basic and secondary education institutions and schools in Al Walaja in the academic year 2008/2009, there is only one school in the village called Al Walaja School run by the UNRWA.

There is total number of 276 students, 13 teachers, and 10 classes. It should be noted here that the average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 21, while



the average number of students per class is approximately 28 (Directorate of Education in Bethlehem, 2009).

Furthermore there is one kindergarten in Al Walaja called Zuhoor Al Walaja kindergarten run by a charitable society and it provides pre-school education services to 50 children in the village (Al Walaja Village Council, 2009).

## Health Status

Al Walaja lacks health facilities, as there is no governmental or private health center. In emergency cases, residents of Al Walaja use Bethlehem hospitals and health centers, such as: Al Hussein Hospital, which is about 6km from the village, the Rehabilitation Arab Society in Beit Jala, which is about 4km from the village, and the UNRWA clinic, which is about 6km from the village.

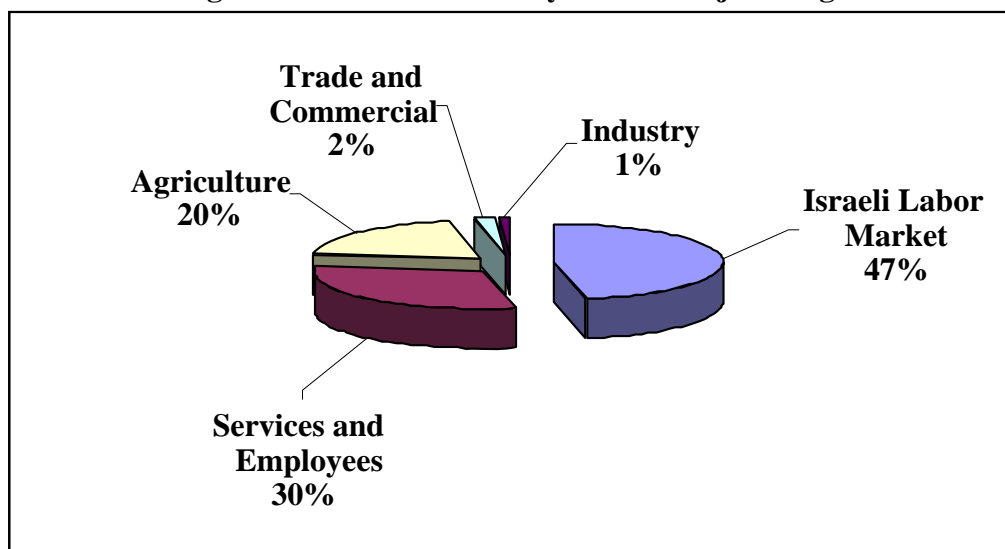
## Economic Activities

The economy in Al Walaja is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly: the Israeli labor market, which absorbs 47 percent of the village workforce (See Figure 1).

The results of a field survey for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Al Walaja are the following:

- Israeli Labor Market (47%)
- Services and Government or Private Employees Sector (30%)
- Agriculture Sector (20%)
- Trade Sector (2%)
- Industry (1%)

**Figure 1: Economic Activity in Al Walaja Village**



There are several economic and industrial activities in Al Walaja, mainly manufacturers of water tanks and solar heaters, a metal workshop, a carpentry workshop, and 9 grocery stores.

As a result of the Israeli occupation and restrictions, the economic status of the population has severely declined, as many citizens have lost their jobs and have become unemployed, thus forcing many to return to agriculture activities and cultivating their lands, as a last resort for obtaining a minimum income.

The unemployment rate in Al Walaja has reached about 40 percent, and the economical groups most affected by the Israeli restrictions during the Second Intifada were:

1. Workers in the agricultural sector
2. Workers in industry.
3. Workers in trade sector.
4. Workers in the service sector.

**Labor Force**

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 36.1 percent of Al Walaja labor force was economically active, of whom 72.2 percent were employed, 63.2 percent were not economically active, 49.5 percent were students, and 38.3 percent were housekeepers (See table 2).

SEX	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (Never worked)	Total	Students	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & Not looking for work	Other	Total	
M	262	73	186	<b>363</b>	186	1	36	2	13	<b>238</b>	<b>609</b>
F	45	8	182	<b>62</b>	182	284	30	-	10	<b>506</b>	<b>569</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1,178</b>

Source: PCBS, March 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results

## Agricultural Sector

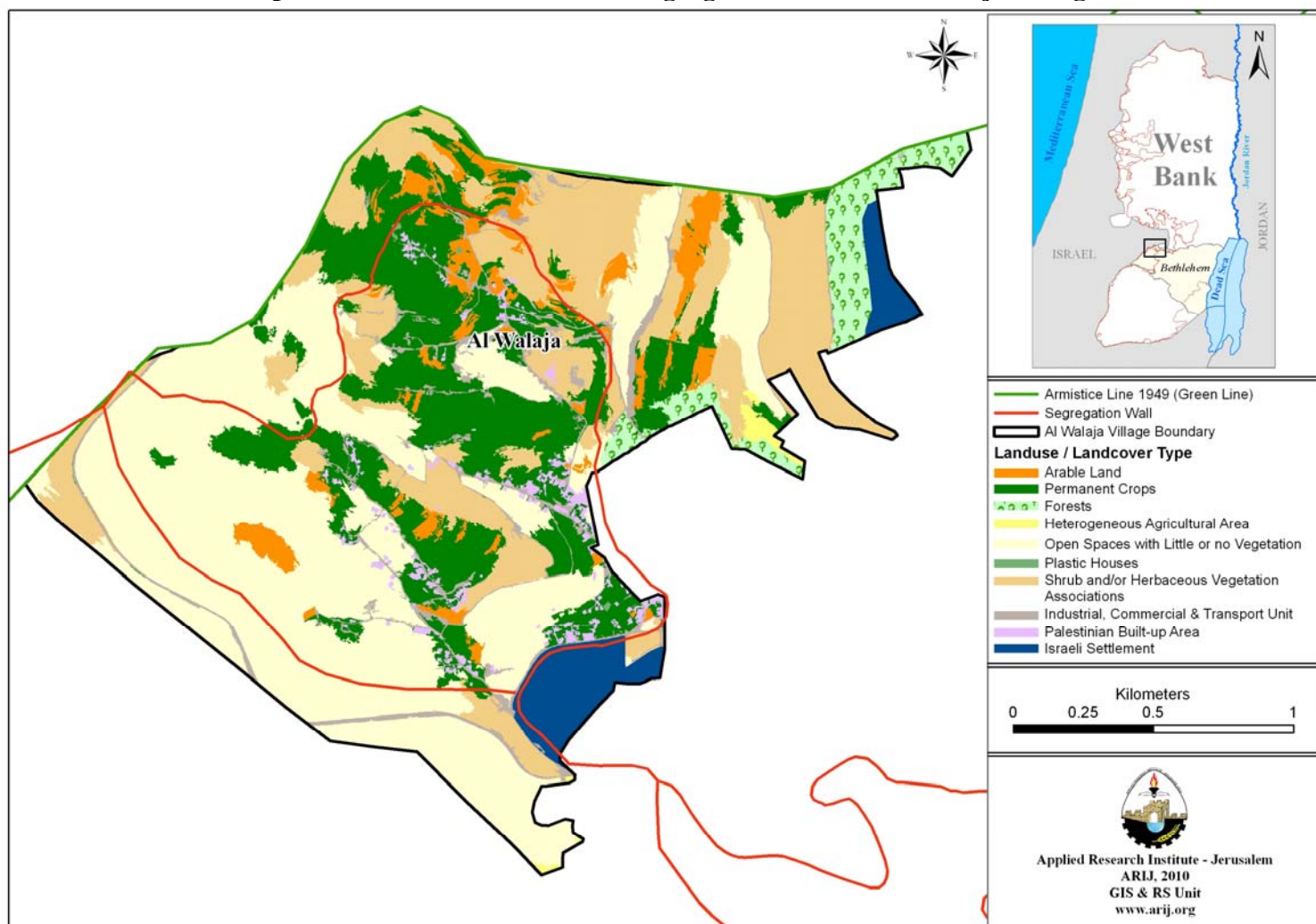
Al Walaja lies on a total area of about 4,328 dunums of which 3,910 dunums are considered arable land, and 73 dunums are residential land (See table 3 and map 3).

**Table 3: Land Use in Al Walaja village (dunum)**

Total Area	Built up Area	Arable Land (3,910)					Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements and Military Bases
		Seasonal Crops	Permanent Crops	Greenhouses	Forests	Open Spaces and Rangelands		
4,328	73	225	904	2	184	2,595	179	166

Source: GIS unit – ARIJ, 2008

**Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Al Walaja Village**



Agriculture production in Al Walaja depends on rainwater, and irrigation. As for irrigated fields, they depend on water springs and domestic harvesting cisterns.

Table 4 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Al Walaja. The most common fruit cultivated within this area is tomato.

**Table 4: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Al Walaja 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.
11	15.5	0	6.5	0	2.5	0	2	0	5	11	31.5

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

Also, there are about 2 dunums on which there are greenhouses planted with different types of vegetables, most importantly cucumber.

There are two types of aromatic medical plants in the village, thyme and mint, with a total area of 2.5 dunums irrigated from the public water network.

Table 5 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area.

**Table 5: Total area of fruit and olive trees in Al Walaja 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.
722	0	0	0	17	0	24	0	655	0	135	0	1,553	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

As for the field crops and forage in Al Walaja, cereals, in particular wheat and barley are the most cultivated crops covering an area of about 75 dunums, while dry legumes such as lentil and chickpeas are the second most cultivated crops (See table 6).

**Table 6: Total area of field crops in Al Walajah 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
75	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	111	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

The field survey shows that most of the residents in Al Walaja are rearing and keeping domestic animals such as sheep, goats, broiler chickens, and bees (See Table 7).

**Table 7: Livestock in Al Walajah village**

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
0	187	295	0	5	13	5	9,500	0	400

\*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

There are about 6 kilometers of agricultural road in the village suitable for tractors and agricultural machinery.

## Institutions and Services

Al Walaja has a number of local institutions dealing with social matters in the village, they are: (Al Walaja Village Council, 2009)

- **Al Walaja Sport Club:** Founded in 1995 by the Palestinian Ministry of Youth and Sports in order to develop sports activities Al Walaja.
- **Women's club:** Founded in 2000, its interests are women's affairs in all fields in addition to providing educational and technical courses for Al Walaja women.
- **Ansar Center:** Founded in 2000 and is interested in all youth activities in Al Walaja.
- **Agricultural Charitable Society:** Founded in 2005 by the Ministry of Interior in order to assist and serve the farmers in Al Walaja and provide them with the agricultural consulting as well as coordination with donors in the field of agriculture.

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

### Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Al Walaja is connected to a public electricity network; served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the village. Approximately 98.7 percent of the housing units in the village are connected to the network, 1.1 percent are dependent on private generators for electricity, and 0.3 percent have no source of electricity (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Furthermore, Al Walaja is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 50 percent of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines.

### Transportation Services:

Buses are the main mean of transportation in Al Walaja. As for the road network in the village; there are a total of 6km of paved roads (Al Walaja village council, 2009). However, part of the road network, about 2km, is in need of rehabilitation, while about 3km of roads are unpaved and need paving.

**Water Resources:**

Al Walaja is provided with water by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), through the public water network, and about 99.7 percent of the housing units are connected to the water network, while the remaining units (0.3%) are dependent on water springs. Based on the PWA estimations, the rate of water supply per capita in the communities provided with water is about 100 liters per day, but this rate varies from one community to another. The quantity of water supplied to Al Walaja in 2008 was about 0.053 million cubic meters/year therefore the estimated rate of water supply per capita is about 134 liters/day (Palestinian Water Authority, 2008).

Here it should be noted that many Al Walaja citizens do not in fact consume this amount of water due to water losses, which are about 39 percent. The losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, distribution network, and at the household level (PWA, 2008), thus the rate of water consumption per capita in Al Walaja is 94 liters per day. This is a low rate compared with the minimum quantity proposed by the World Health Organization, which is 100 liters per capita per day.

Also, located in Al Walaja are two water springs: Al Hadfa spring and Al Juwayza spring.

**Sanitation:**

Al Walaja lacks a public sewage network; most of the population uses cesspits as means for wastewater disposal. According to the results of Community Survey conducted by the PCBS in 2007 and the data provided from PWA, the majority of Al Walaja housing units (97.6%) use the cesspits as a major means for wastewater disposal, and 1.6 percent of the housing units have no mean for wastewater disposal, while it is unknown for the remaining units (0.8%).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day, is approximately 148 cubic meters, or 54 thousand cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the village, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 75 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits, are discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys without any regard for the environment. Here it should be noted that there is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites which poses a threat to the environment and the public health.

**Solid Waste Management:**

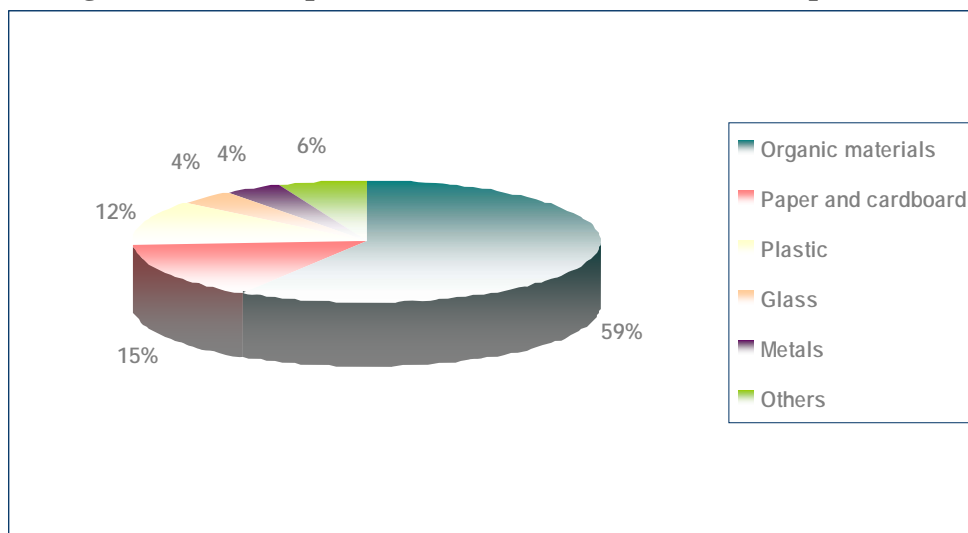
Al Walaja Village Council is considered the official body responsible for managing solid waste, i.e. solid waste collection and disposal, generated from the citizens and establishments in the village, which is currently represented by solid waste collection and disposal. Due to the fact that the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee has been charged on the population serviced by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services which is about 18 NIS/month.

Most of the population in Al Walaja benefit from the solid waste services, where waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic

bags and then transferred to 30 containers, with a capacity of 1 cubic meter each, spread throughout the neighborhoods. The village council collects the solid waste from the containers two days a week and transports it to Dar Salah dumping site in Bethlehem governorate, 35km from Al Walaja. The common method for solid waste treatment in Dar Salah dumping site is setting waste on fire. It should be mentioned here that household waste, industrial, and medical solid waste are collected together and dumped into the same landfill, with the absence of any special system for separation and/or collection. The largest volume of solid waste is household waste which makes up around 45-50 percent of total capacity of solid waste.

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Al Walaja is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Al Walaja residents is nearly 1.4 tons, or 511 tons per year. About 59 percent of the total volume of household solid waste is composed of organic materials, followed by paper and cardboard (15%), then plastic as shown in the figure.

**Figure 2: The components of the household solid waste produced**



## Environmental Conditions:

Al Walaja experiences, like other villages in the governorate, several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved, these problems can be identified as follow:

### Water Crisis:

Water is cut off for long periods of time in summer and winter in several neighborhoods of the village for several reasons:

- 1) Israeli domination of Palestinian water resources; which makes PWA dependent largely on water purchase from the Israeli company Mecerot to supply the Palestinian cities and villages, representing an obstacle in the organization of water pumping and distribution among populations. PWA distributes water to various areas at an interval-basis because the amount of water available is not sufficient for everyone at the same time.
- 2) High rate of water losses although PWA rehabilitated and renovated part of the network, built new reservoirs, and upgraded the water meters. However, the practices of citizens like creating illegal connections, water theft, and damaging water meters increase the proportion of water losses.

### **Wastewater Management:**

The absence of a public sewage network, thus, the use of cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and the discharge of wastewater in the streets, especially in winter, because the citizens can not afford the high cost of sewage tankers. All of this causes environmental damages, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the village. The use of cesspits pollutes the groundwater and water collected in domestic cisterns (rainwater harvesting cisterns) as the wastewater mixes with water and contaminates it and thus makes it inappropriate for human consumption. This is due to the fact that most cesspits are built without lining, which allows wastewater to enter into the ground and avoids the need to use sewage tankers from time to time. Moreover, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without taking into account the damage it causes to the environment and the residents' health.

The use of these cesspits has already caused pollution of water springs in the village, according to the results of biological tests analysis, carried out on a regular basis, by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, shows that the water of these springs is contaminated with fecal Coliform bacteria as a result of water mixing with sewage leaking from cesspits into the groundwater basin, making it unfit for domestic use.

Taking a stand, the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ) targeted Al Walaja to build small scale wastewater treatment units at the household level in order to replace the cesspits. In 2008, 10 wastewater treatment units were established to serve 10 households in the village, within the activities of "Establishment of small scale wastewater treatment plants in the rural areas of Bethlehem and Hebron governorates" project, funded by the Mennonite Central Committee, which targets 18 villages including Al Walaja. This project will contribute to the reduction of pollution ensuing from the use of cesspits, provide a source of water that can be used in irrigation, and provide better health and environmental conditions.

### **Solid Waste Management:**

The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Al Walaja and the other communities in the governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions, like granting licenses to establish such a landfill, because the appropriate land is within Area C, under the Israeli control. In addition, the implementation of such projects depends on funding from donor countries. Thus, the lack of a sanitary landfill creates bad odors, distorts the landscape, is a hazard risk



for the health, and a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste. It should be noted here that a sanitary landfill is currently under construction in Al Maniya area, south of Bethlehem governorate, to serve Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.

There is an absence of a system in the village and the governorate in general that separates hazardous waste from non-hazardous waste, consequently hazardous solid waste is collected with non-hazardous waste and transported to Dar Salah landfill for disposal by burning.

#### Other problems:

- Lack of a hygienic and licensed slaughterhouse in the village.
- The limited role of the village council, like other councils and municipalities, in providing only certain services, without considering other various aspects for development.

## Impact of the Israeli Occupation

According to Oslo Interim Agreement, signed in September 1995, between the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli government, Al Walaja lands were classified into areas B and C; 113 dunums (2.6 percent of the total area of the village) of which were classified as area B, in which public order falls under the Palestinian National Authority's responsibility, where Israeli has full control over security matters. As for the remaining part of Al Walaja lands, 4215 dunums, (97.4%), were classified as area C, an area that is under full control of the Israeli government. Since Israeli has control of this land, Palestinians are prevented from construction or benefiting from this land in any way possible, unless they get permission, which is extremely difficult, from the Israeli civilian administration in Bethlehem. It is worth mentioning here that area C includes agricultural lands, open spaces and small parts of urban areas (Table 8).

Land Classification	Area (dunums)	% of the Total Area
Area A	0	0
Area B	113	2.6
Area C	4215	97.4
	0	0
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>4328</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: GIS unit –ARIJ 2009

Al Walaja is bordered by two Israeli settlements from the east; Gilo, and Har Gilo, the Israeli settlement of Har Gilo from the south, and the Green Line from the north. After the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, successive

Israeli governments pursued an aggressive policy of land confiscation for the construction of Israeli settlements, military bases, and bypass roads to link the settlements to each other. Al Walaja, like other Palestinian villages and towns, lost part of its lands, around 137 dunums (3.2 percent of the total area of the village) for the construction of the Israeli settlements of Gilo, and Har Gilo (Table 9).

Settlement	Year of establishment	Settlers (2008)	Area of settlement within the village boundaries (dunum)	Total Area of the Settlement (dunum)
<b>Gilo</b>	1970	27173	45	2737
<b>Har Gilo</b>	1971	462	92	414
<b>Total area</b>	-	<b>27635</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>3151</b>

Source: GIS & Urbanization units –ARIJ 2009

### **Bypass roads in Al Walaja**

The bypass road number 436 extends for 2.5km on Al Walaja southern part; isolating 713 dunums of Area A.

### **The Segregation Wall**

The Israeli racist discrimination plan, represented mainly by the construction of the Segregation Wall, has a negative and destructive impact on Al Walaja. According to the updated Segregation Wall plan published on the web page of the Israeli Ministry of Defense in April 2007; the Segregation Wall will extend for 6.3km on Al Walaja lands; thus isolating and confiscating 4209 dunums of the village territory (97 percent of the total area of the village). The majority of this land is agricultural land, forests, and open areas (See table 10). This is in addition to the annexation of the Israeli settlements, Gilo and Har Gilo, to Israel.

Moreover, the Racist Segregation Wall will surround Al Walaja village from its east, west, and north sides. As for its southern side, there is a fortified road, controlled by the Israeli army, alongside bypass road number 436, which is considered the only outlet available for the village residents who are heading towards the services center in Bethlehem city. Also, the southern part of Al Walaja will be surrounded by 2.4km wall, along the bypass road number 436, which will be protected from both sides with ditches and barbed wires (ranging between 80 and 100 meters wide). In general, the wall will isolate the village from other Palestinian villages in the rural west and the major cities in Bethlehem governorate.

Item	Total Area (dunums)	Total area isolated by the Wall (dunum)
<b>Arable land</b>	1629	2000
<b>Open spaces &amp; Forests</b>	2389	1821
<b>Artificial Surfaces</b>	66	178
<b>Palestinian Built-up area</b>	196	73
<b>Israeli settlements</b>	123	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>4403</b>	<b>4209</b>

Source: ARIJ database- GIS, 2008

### **Al Walaja Crossing**

In February 9, 2006, the Israeli Occupation Army issued a new military order # (06/25/T) to confiscate 39.8 dunums from Al Walaja village and Beit Jala city. The order identified the reason for the confiscation as “military purposes,” which was later defined for the construction of a new crossing in the area, (Har Gilo Crossing). The crossing aims to control movement of Al Walaja residents between their village and services in Bethlehem Governorate and beyond. The military order comes in parallel with the Israeli Segregation Wall plan, which is set to encircle Al Walaja. Residents of the village will only have this crossing to move in and out of their village, which will be under the Israeli Army’s control, virtually making the residents prisoners in their own village.

### **Construction of a New Settlement on Al Walaja Territory – Giva’t Yael Settlement**

In June 2004, the Israeli authorities announced the construction of a new settlement (Giva’t Yael) in Al Walaja village. The plan is to build this settlement on an area of 2000 dunums of the Palestinian land in Bethlehem governorate that will include more than 13,200 residential units and will accommodate 55,000 Israeli settlers. The construction of this settlement will complete the cycle of Israeli settlements, which separates the city of Jerusalem from other Palestinian cities and surrounds Bethlehem Governorate with Israeli settlements from all sides; starting from Har Homa in the north-east, till Gilo and Har Gilo in the north, towards Giva’t Yael settlement, which is planned to be constructed in the north-west, and ending with Gosh Etzion settlements, south of the governorate.

## **Development Plans and Projects**

Al Walaja village council has not implemented any development projects since 2002, due to the lack of needed fund.

## Proposed Projects

Al Walaja village council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the village and the village residents, looks forward to the implementation of several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the PRA workshop that was conducted by ARIJ staff in the village. The projects are as follows, in order of priority, from the viewpoint of the participants in the workshop:

1. Establishment of a sewage network.
2. Restoration of the public water network in the village.
3. Construction of agricultural roads and reclamation of agricultural land.
4. Construction of rainwater harvesting cisterns.
5. Rehabilitation of springs in the village.
6. Construction of Water Reservoirs.
7. Construction and pavement of inner roads.
8. Establishment of a health center.
9. Establishment of a secondary school.

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

According to Al Walaja village council, the village suffers from a shortage of health, education and agricultural services, as well as other significant infrastructure needs. Table 11 shows the development priorities and needs in the village from the village council point of view: (Al Walaja Village Council, 2009)

<b>Table 11: Development Priorities and Needs in Al Walaja</b>					
No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
<b>Infrastructural Needs</b>					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*			6km *
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks		*		2km
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	*			
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs	*			
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network	*			
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network			*	
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection	*			
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste	*			
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill	*			
<b>Health Needs</b>					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres	*			
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres			*	
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools			*	
<b>Educational Needs</b>					
1	Building of New Schools	*			secondary
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools			*	
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools	*			
<b>Agriculture Needs</b>					
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands	*			2000 dunums
2	Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns	*			50 cisterns
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock	*			10 barracks
4	Veterinary Services		*		
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals	*			
6	Construction of New Greenhouses	*			
7	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses		*		
8	Field Crops Seeds	*			
9	Plants And Agricultural Supplies	*			

\*2km is a main road, 1km internal road and 3km agricultural road

## References:

- *Al Walaja Village Council*. 2009.
- *Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ)*. (2008 - 2009). Bethlehem, Palestine: Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing unit Database, 2009.
- *Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ)*. 2009. Bethlehem, Palestine: Urbanization Unit Database, 2009.
- *Directorate of Education - Bethlehem*. 2008/2009. Bethlehem, Palestine: A database of schools.
- *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics*. 2009. Ramallah, Palestine: General Census of Population and Housing Censuses, 2007.
- *Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)*. 2007/2008. Bethlehem, Palestine: Directorate of Agriculture data.
- *Palestinian Water Authority*. 2009. Ramallah, Palestine: Quantities of Water Supply in the West Bank Governorates, 2008.