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Revitalisation of Birzeit Historic Centre

Birzeit, Palestine



Architect

Riwaq - Centre for Architectural Conservation

Client

Birzeit Municipality

Design

2007 - 2011

Completed

2009 - ongoing

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I. Introduction

The old town of Birzeit has experienced outmigration for decades, as residents emigrated abroad or built new houses outside the historic centre. This situation, which pertains in many towns and villages in Palestine, was exacerbated in the early 1980s when Birzeit University relocated to a site several kilometres to the south, draining life from the town. Streets and public spaces were neglected and buildings fell into disrepair, perpetuating a cycle of disinvestment.

In the mid 2000s Riwaq, a highly respected Palestinian NGO devoted to cultural heritage, worked with the municipal government and local stakeholders to develop a rehabilitation plan for the historic centre. Five years of work on the ground have yielded impressive results. Streets have been paved and infrastructure upgraded; facades along major streets have been conserved; public spaces have been created and rehabilitated; numerous buildings have been restored for a variety of uses (cultural institutions, NGO offices and private businesses). The old town is slowly becoming a destination for residents, university students, and local and foreign tourists.

Birzeit was conceived as the pilot project for Riwaq's "50 Villages" programme. This programme grew out of Riwaq's inventory of historic structures in Palestine, which found that about 50% of the surviving historic structures are located in villages. The vast majority of Palestinians live in these rural areas, under very difficult economic circumstances. By focusing on villages, Riwaq realised that it could save much of Palestine's remaining heritage, and at the same time have the greatest socio-economic impact. Conservation would create jobs, revitalise local workshops and, ultimately, spark interest and investment in historic village centres. Since 2008, Riwaq has been working in other communities across Palestine, applying and adapting experience gained at Birzeit.

The "50 Villages" programme is driven by the desire to save a threatened cultural heritage, but takes on added meaning and significance in the context of the Israeli occupation. A generation is coming of age that no longer remembers the geography of historical Palestine: they know only a fragmented landscape, where villages are cut off from their rural hinterland by political zones, checkpoints and barriers. The 50 Villages concept is, Riwaq believes, a way "to be political by being apolitical". By breathing life back into historic villages, restoring their value in the eyes of residents and reconnecting them through trails, the project recaptures the "in-between" spaces that constitute the geography of Palestine – both on the ground and in the imagination.

II. Contextual Information

A. *Brief historical background*

The town of Birzeit dates back at least to the Byzantine era. It appears to have been continuously inhabited (either on the present site or close to it) through the medieval period; after 1516 the town

came under Ottoman rule, part of the province of Palestine. Several archaeological sites, dating to the Byzantine and Roman eras, have been excavated around the perimeter of the town, and many strata exist below the historic centre. The name of the town reflects the historical importance of olive cultivation and pressing: *bir zeit* means “oil well”, referring to olive oil storage tanks dug into the ground, several of which are still in existence (but not in use).

Birzeit was profoundly affected by economic, political and demographic transformations of early- to mid-20th-century Palestine. Residents of Birzeit joined the great waves of Levantine emigration, a process accelerated by international and local events: the world wars, the creation of Israel in 1948 and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan River and East Jerusalem in 1967. Emigration, as well as migration to cities, led to the decline of rural areas. At the same time, remittances from emigrants led to the construction of new areas to the west of the historic centre. These new areas expanded in the 1950s: new “villas” were built of stone and concrete, with plans and amenities that houses in the old town lacked. The latter was not easily accessible to motorised vehicles, and lacked services like electricity, water, sewers (the former were provided in the late 1970s, but the old town still lacks a sewer system). After 1967 the Israeli occupation hastened the decline of agriculture in the Palestinian territories, due to competition from Israeli products and the inaccessibility of historic markets and ports.

The modern history of Birzeit is inseparable from the institution that bears its name, Birzeit University. The school was founded in 1924 as an elementary school for girls, at a time when schools were almost non-existent. This was a philanthropic project of the Nasir family, whose members have included politicians, intellectuals and (Anglican) ministers. In 1930 the school became a secondary school (for both girls and boys) and later, in the 1950s, a post-secondary institution. After the 1967 war, restrictions on travel meant that Palestinians could not easily travel abroad for higher education. In the early 1970s plans were made to transform the school into a four-year university, in a new campus that would be built on the outskirts of town. The majority of Palestinian leaders, both political and intellectual, were educated here. The university became the heart of political life and resistance to occupation; between 1979 and 1992 it was closed for extended periods by the Israeli authorities. But the relocation of the university to the new campus in the early 1980s had a detrimental effect on the old town – depriving it of a major source of life and activity. Churches and mosques continued to operate, but the old town deteriorated, with numerous buildings abandoned.

The Oslo Accords, ratified in 1993, have had profound impacts on Palestinian geography, society and economy, as well as on the built fabric. On the one hand, the creation of the Palestinian Authority gave an impetus to investment. On the other hand, because of the new political zoning, investment was channelled almost exclusively into cities – resulting in rapid and exceedingly dense urbanisation.

The division of land on the West Bank into areas A, B and C dramatically reduced the amount of land under Palestinian control. Most of area with A designation is urban, and under Palestinian civil and military authority. Most towns and villages, including Birzeit, are designated B: here, the PA (Palestinian Authority) is responsible for civil authority, but not military. Area C is controlled by Israel: it includes much of the rural/agricultural hinterland historically linked to villages, as well as

Israeli settlements and bypass roads to the settlements. C areas constitute around 60% of land in the West Bank; this is where the majority of vacant land is located. The vast majority of Palestinians live in areas A and B, but vacant land available for building is located on the edge of these communities, in C zones.

The demographic situation (the birth rate on the West Bank is 5.5) means that a rising population has to be housed, but available land is severely restricted. Palestinians rarely invest in area C, because of the uncertainty of the future of these areas, and the fact that Israeli authorities rarely grant building permits to Palestinians. This situation, along with a weak planning framework, has resulted in rapid urbanisation and sky-rocketing land prices – which, together, favour dense and higher development in urban areas. This is especially true in Ramallah, the seat of the PA and the largest city in Palestine, located 11 kilometres to the south of Birzeit.¹

With the Second Intifada, which began in 2000, new restrictions on travel were imposed, solidified by the construction of separation barriers. West Bank residents were not allowed to travel to Israel or to Jerusalem (since they do not have Jerusalem ID's and license plates). As a result, Palestinians could no longer work within Israel: unemployment increased dramatically, further accelerating emigration.² This led the EU (European Union) and foreign donors to promote job creation projects as part of their programme of development assistance; many cultural heritage projects over the course of the last decade have been conceived in terms of job creation, a strategy that Riwaq embraces.

Pressure on land has tended to accelerate demolitions in historic town and village centres. The main check on this process is fragmented property ownership. Inheritance laws provide for the division of property among multiple heirs, making it difficult for property to be sold or transferred; many owners are absentee, residing in Palestinian cities or abroad, making agreement more difficult. As a consequence, property values in historic towns and villages like Birzeit have remained low. They tend to be inhabited by the elderly, and by poor and disadvantaged populations who rent from absentee owners. Lack of maintenance and investment means that historic buildings in these areas survive, but in poor condition.

The new official interest in cultural heritage may be slowly changing perceptions about historic areas. Cultural heritage has recently been endorsed by the PA as an important aspect of nation-building – a way to preserve collective memory and the sense of a historical Palestine. The PA, municipal governments, donors and NGOs believe that cultural heritage can support the development of an independent Palestinian tourist industry, which would bring much-needed revenue to the West Bank (currently tourism to key sites on the West Bank, many of which are biblical, is controlled by Israeli tour operators).

Riwaq is one of the key actors lobbying for the protection of the cultural heritage of Palestine. Since its establishment in 1991, this non-governmental organisation has pursued a multi-tiered strategy that includes documentation, conservation, revitalisation, community participation and activism, legislative reform and lobbying, publicity, job training and public awareness programmes. Since 2007 the cornerstone and guiding strategy of its activities has been the “50 Villages” programme – an ambitious plan to save select villages where an estimated 50% of the surviving historic structures

of Palestine are located. The historic centre of Birzeit was the pilot project for the “50 Villages” programme.

B. *Local architectural character, including prevalent forms and materials*

The architecture of the historic centre of Birzeit, like other West Bank towns and villages, is generally made of local limestone and lime mortar. Most buildings in the historic centre are one storey in height. The traditional house consists of one or more square modules, each covered by a dome (*qubba*). Lime plaster is used on the roof and for interior walls and ceilings.

Houses were used collectively by the extended family, without a clear hierarchy of rooms for different functions. Because of this, and because of the lack of modern amenities, the houses came to be seen as obsolete; many were abandoned in favour of stone and concrete “villas” in the newer parts of town. However, those families that remained in the old town – living there themselves, or renting to newcomers – have typically added kitchens and bathrooms to the domed units. These additions, mostly built of concrete with flat ceilings/roofs, can be seen throughout the old town. They tend to be on the rear side of houses and hence do not compromise the historic character of the town, which retains a high degree of integrity.

In addition to houses, the old town includes a number of religious structures, including the Greek Orthodox church, the Latin Catholic church and a mosque. There are a few concrete structures within the old town, in particular the municipal Women’s Association Building.

C. *Climatic conditions*

The climate is temperate, with hot dry summers and mild, rainy winters. For nearby Ramallah, average rainfall is about 635 millimetres (25 inches); average temperatures range from about 29°C (84°F) in summer to 4°C (39°F) in winter.

D. *Site and surroundings*

Birzeit is located 11 kilometres north of Ramallah, and 25 kilometres north of Jerusalem.

The historic centre of Birzeit town, as delineated by Riwaq, is 40.6 square *dunhams* (about 4 hectares/10 acres). The distance from east to west is around 290 metres, slightly over a quarter of a kilometre. The terrain is hilly, with the town itself at 780 metres (2,340 feet) above sea level. Surrounding hills are terraced agriculture, especially olive groves.

The southern and western edges of the old town are lined with houses, shops and public buildings constructed during the first half of the 20th century in stone and/or concrete. These include the buildings of the old Birzeit campus; several have been donated to the revitalisation effort by the Nasir family, the founders of Birzeit University. The newer areas of Birzeit are located to the west of the old town, extending north and south along the road from the university. The university itself is several kilometres to the south-west of the old town.

According to official PA estimates, the resident population of Birzeit (new plus old towns) was 5,172 in 2012. In addition, the mayor estimates that about 6,000 students reside in the town. The population of the old town is very small: when Riwaq began its work in 2008, it counted 183 individuals, representing 36 families. Of these, 16 families owned their premises, and 20 rented. Before the project, there were three businesses located in the old town: a mechanics' shop, a grocery store and a bakery. Six new businesses have opened since the project started: five restaurants and cafés, and a mosaic workshop.

E. *Topography*

See point D above.

III. *Programme*

A. *History of the inception of the project*

Riwaq was established in 1991. While other NGOs are devoted to the conservation of historic centres, Riwaq differs in two ways. First, it is the only NGO without a specific geographical mandate – that is, it is not linked to one city, like the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalisation Programme/Welfare Association (both of which received Aga Khan Awards in 1998 and 2004, respectively). Second, it is the only conservation organisation that has made rural areas a priority. This priority has emerged through documentation work and activism: around 90% of the Palestinian population resides in rural areas and villages; according to Riwaq's estimates, and some 50% of surviving historic structures are located in these areas.

The Birzeit project emerged from work conducted by Riwaq over the last two decades, in particular:

- *“Registry of Historic Buildings” and sites in Palestine*
Conducted between 1994 and 2007, this ambitious project documented over 50,230 historic buildings at 420 sites in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The Registry can be accessed through Riwaq's website, <http://www.riwaq.org>.
- *“50 Villages” initiative*
Based on an analysis of data collected, Riwaq selected 50 villages that retained a high degree of historic integrity. By conserving these 50 villages, they argued, 50% of the surviving historic structures could be conserved. Given the rural character of Palestinian society, and the difficult economic circumstances in the countryside, a focus on villages would also have the greatest socio-economic impact. The “50 Villages” initiative was announced at Riwaq's 3rd Biennale,³ held in Birzeit's old town in 2009, when the project was in its second year. It was endorsed by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in his opening speech. Mayors of the 50 villages were brought to Birzeit to tour the project, and to discuss the launching of similar projects in their hometowns.⁴

- *Lobbying and legislative reform*

Riwaq was awarded a World Bank tender in 2000 to develop national Cultural Heritage Law, with Birzeit University Institute of Law. The law would extend protection to vernacular architecture and sites, as well as sites of environmental and cultural importance. (Currently the only category of heritage protected by Palestinian law – a law inherited from the British mandate period – is “antiquities”, that is buildings constructed before 1700.) The law has not yet been ratified, in part because of insufficient support from the Department of Antiquities and Tourism, which appears to support a more traditional concept of cultural heritage. However, in 2006, the PA Minister of Local Government issued an official decree ordering the protection of historic centres. This is seen by Riwaq as a provisional success: a legal means to halt demolitions in historic centres. In addition, Riwaq has worked with individual municipalities to develop protection plans and by-laws for some villages, including Birzeit (the by-laws are amendments to municipal master plans).

Birzeit was chosen as the pilot project for “50 Villages” for several reasons:

- proximity to Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority;
- proximity to, and historical links with, Birzeit University;
- the presence of a supportive municipality and a number of active local NGOs, including Rozana School;⁵
- a diverse, but socially and economically disadvantaged, population (Greek Orthodox, Latin Catholics, and Muslims);
- a largely intact historic fabric, which was compromised by neglect and degradation;
- the presence of diverse resources around the town, including archaeological sites, natural springs and olive groves.

Riwaq believed that these factors – both limitations and opportunities – would increase the project’s chance of success and heighten its visibility. The goal was to provide a model for similar initiatives throughout Palestine.

B. *How were the architects’ and specialists chosen?*

The staff of Riwaq is currently composed of 11 architects, several of whom have secondary specialisations (restoration, planning, anthropology, bioclimatic design); one civil engineer; three administrative staff; three interns; and two part-time consultants (regeneration, fund-raising). Most of the staff were educated at Birzeit University. Many who worked on the Birzeit project were hired after their work as student interns on the registry project. They are an exceptionally dynamic group of professionals committed to community development and empowerment; the majority of the staff is young (under 40), and most are women. The organisation appears to be fairly non-hierarchical, with a culture of open discussion and debate.

C. *General programme objectives*

The Birzeit project marked Riwaq’s shift from the restoration of individual buildings to what one senior member describes as an “aggressive and comprehensive” approach to conservation – what it calls “preventive conservation”. This includes upgrading infrastructure; street paving; rehabilitation

of public spaces and creation of new ones; conservation of stone facades and walls lining the public space; restoration and reuse of select buildings; and community empowerment and economic regeneration. With regard to the latter, conservation has been promoted as a job creation strategy, in particular, because of its high labour input.⁶ Riwaq has incorporated training in conservation techniques and the revitalisation of local crafts.

The general aim of the Birzeit project was to rehabilitate the historic fabric of the town – to “de-stigmatised” it and create a sense of value – and use this as a basis for revitalisation and development. The goal was to keep people living in the old town, and to create new interest and investment – making it a desirable place to live, work, do business and pursue leisure and entertainment. The process was conceived as participatory from the outset: public meetings, community planning sessions and focus groups were held before and throughout the project; the results of these sessions determined, and guided, work done on the ground.

This emphasis on community participation is linked to the wider goals of Riwaq – which extend beyond the physical fabric. Saving and restoring historic centres, Riwaq hopes, will promote awareness of the old social and cultural bonds that shaped the village/rural landscape – providing inspiration for current and future generations of Palestinians, and promoting solidarity. Thus, the project is seen as one of both physical and cultural conservation.

D. *Functional requirements*

Not applicable.

IV. *Description*

A. *Building data*

See Appendix 1.

B. *Evolution of design concepts*

The work was based on early and ongoing studies on patterns of property ownership, land and building use (existing and prospective), spatial/typological analysis, demographics, and social mapping/legibility. Studies were informed by ongoing community meetings and focus groups, which continued during the course of the project.

Riwaq looked at the public and semi-public spaces (street, courtyards, gardens) as volumes – focusing on the surfaces that line these spaces (walls, street surfaces, landscapes). Debris and vegetation were removed; masonry surfaces were cleaned and repointed; crumbling buildings were stabilised and, in a few cases, rebuilt or restored. An existing water system was upgraded; pipes were laid for a future sewer system; streets were paved. At the same time, new elements were designed, like the garden/playground (Riwaq lobbied for this, and designed it; it is the first such space in the town). Individual buildings were identified as key generators in urban revitalisation, and were

restored. In these projects, all labour was locally sourced; local trades were encouraged and, in a few cases, revived through promotion and workshops. A project of street naming and signage was implemented; and a cemetery clean-up and tree-planting initiative were implemented with the community. Other activities have included lobbying, community initiatives and outreach, publicity (like the Biennale), the creation of a heritage walk and map, design studios with Birzeit and a US university, and other initiatives. In addition, two architects at the municipality were trained in conservation planning and techniques.

Riwaq's work combines conservation techniques and creative design, rooted in and driven by a participatory process. This is evident, for example, in their approach to public space: interventions were both visible (linking and designing small sequences of public spaces) and invisible (a project to name streets, based on local memory and narratives). The idea was to discover, and enhance, the link between social and physical spaces.

The Birzeit project was carried out over a period of about five years. It includes numerous phases, initiatives, partner organisations and sponsors, as well as international collaborations and events. It is difficult to fully capture the scope and breadth of the work conducted at Birzeit – because of what appears to be an exceptionally reflexive and fluid process. Riwaq did not attempt to realise a “grand vision”, but rather approached the work as an unfolding process, to be constantly adjusted and revised according to new discoveries and opportunities.

Below is a rough sequence of the main initiatives:

- 2006
 - Riwaq protection plan for Birzeit.
- 2007
 - initial studies, mobilisation/start-up and fund-raising.
- 2008
 - public meetings with municipality, local NGOs, residents, business owners, university professors, and other stakeholders and interested parties to develop a joint vision for what the old town could become. These meetings continued throughout the project. Results were incorporated into ongoing studies, which were then taken back to the meetings;
 - phases I and II “preventive conservation” (ending February 2009; undertaken jointly by the municipality and Riwaq);
 - restoration of Hosh el-Elia, a building owned by the municipality and restored for use as a restaurant.
- 2009
 - restoration of Birzeit Guest House (Hosh el-Atem), another municipally owned building;
 - “think-net” brainstorming sessions; Riwaq Biennale;
 - urban design studio with Birzeit University;
 - SWOT analysis with community and stakeholders; identification of target projects.

- 2010
 - phase III “preventive conservation” (August 2010–February 2011);
 - restoration of Birzeit University Residences;
 - cemetery clean-up (with community);
 - tree-planting (with community);
 - street naming/signage implemented;
 - development of a heritage trail and tourist map, linking the old town to the surrounding landscape and villages;
 - children’s playground begun (completed March 2011).
- 2011
 - phase IV “preventive conservation” (August–December);
 - restoration of Circus School building; improvement of the Palestinian Writing Workshop building;
 - community workshop for strategic planning document (finalised 2012).

For more information, please see the list of projects provided in Appendix 1.

C. *Structure, materials, technology*

Riwaq maintains accepted international standards in its restoration work. This means use of original or traditional materials; reusing stone wherever possible; use of lime plaster (not cement); reversible interventions; and so on. It upholds these standards to the best of its ability through drawings and specifications, contractor selection, and on-site supervision. Most critically, Riwaq produced a manual of conservation practice; this has been used in at least one independent restoration, the Science Museum.

At the same time, Riwaq believes that the built environment has to be creatively adapted to modern needs. Urban spaces are revalued, redesigned and linked in physical ways that reflect social networks. If a ruined building, or part thereof, can be salvaged, they rebuild it in the spirit of traditional work (for example, the second floor and roof of the Rozana School). The existence of local crafts provides an opportunity to revive traditional elements and to invent new ones. Examples are:

- traditional patterned cement tiles – a craft that survives but was dying out – are used in restored buildings;
- smithing: local blacksmiths create gates and grilles after new designs by Riwaq for several restored buildings. (Riwaq also organised a joint Belgian-Palestinian initiative to exchange experience in smithing;
- carpentry: windows and doors are restored by local carpenters, who also build new windows and doors when required.

D. *Origin of technology, materials, labour force, professionals*

All materials and labour are sourced from the West Bank. A conversation with one of the restoration subcontractors (who managed the Birzeit University Residences project) confirmed that Riwaq’s

contracts require 90% of labour to be local, that is, from the village or town where the project is being implemented. While this helps in short-term job creation, it may hinder opportunities for individuals so trained to work on Riwaq projects in other towns. The subcontractor also noted that Riwaq's estimates for restoration work do not always reflect current prices, which have risen dramatically over the course of the last decade. (A Riwaq official present at this meeting said the NGO would take note of both concerns.)

V. Construction Schedule and Costs

A. *History of project*

See Appendix 1.

B. *Total costs and main sources of financing*

See Appendix 1.

C. *Comparative costs*

Not applicable.

D. *Qualitative analysis of costs*

Not applicable.

E. *Maintenance costs*

Not applicable.

F. *Ongoing costs and “life performance”*

Not applicable.

VI. Technical Assessment

A. *Functional assessment*

Riwaq's conservation work involves a) conservation/upgrading of the public realm; and b) restoration of select buildings with public/community functions to act as catalysts for further interest and development. The organisation works to involve local stakeholders, and also to multiply spin-off effects (creation of jobs, encouragement of local trades and so on) The assumption is that once the historic centre has been upgraded and improved, the municipality and private sector will step in to fuel revitalisation.

In the best of cases, this is a long-term process – and Palestine is far from the best of cases, with multiple economic and political challenges. Given that the Birzeit project was completed only in 2011, the degree of “buy-in” from the private sector, cultural organisations and the municipality is promising. The municipality has been an active partner throughout the rehabilitation work. This year, it has devoted ILS 200,000 (around USD 51,000) to street paving and infrastructure in the old town.⁷ There has been some support from private business and families. Birzeit Pharmaceutical Company contributed funds for the creation of the playground, and for the clean-up of the cemetery. The Nasir family (founders of the university) leased two former university buildings for use by non-profits, the Circus School and the Palestinian Writing Workshop.

As noted above, foreign tourism is hampered by the Israeli occupation. But there is a strong possibility that Birzeit will become a focus of a local/regional tourism and recreation. The very successful annual Heritage Festival, for example – which last year reportedly attracted close to 10,000 visitors from around the West Bank – may set the tone for visits throughout the year. “Summering” and other such escapes to scenic places is a very old activity in Palestine and other parts of the *mashriq*. This tradition has been hampered by the disappearance and inaccessibility of scenic places under the occupation. The reassertion of Birzeit’s old town as such a destination is one of the most valuable outcomes of the project.

It was difficult to judge activity in the old town, since the weather during the site visit was quite cold. It is said that the area is fairly active at night, especially in warm weather.

In addition to new users attracted by new functions (especially students), old users – shop-owners, churchgoers and residents – have benefited from, and appreciate, the rehabilitation work. There is a general sense among those interviewed that the historic centre provides types of public space that are absent from the overcrowded new towns and cities. The fact that these “new” spaces are at the same time “old” – part of the local fabric and society – only increases their validity. Urban upgrading and conservation, in effect, have provided a powerful message about the importance and relevance of heritage.

There have been a reasonable number of local initiatives in the historic centre (in terms of both financial and institutional commitment). These include several restaurants, an internet café and cultural organisations. One of the latter is the Science Museum – a private, philanthropic initiative based in Ramallah, devoted to children’s science and environmental education. This dynamic organisation chose the old town of Birzeit as the site for its museum as a way to communicate to children the links between past and future, built and natural environments.

One of the most promising initiatives is the eventual occupation of Hosh el-Atem, a series of loft-like apartments that were carefully restored and landscaped for Birzeit University. Selling the aesthetic of “traditional” architecture to the university was not easy, but it was finally agreed that the university would furnish the units. The Ethnographic Museum at the university is launching its first residency programme: artists and scholars will be housed here, and will be able to use university facilities. Riwaq hopes that some university departments and programmes will return to the old town; this seems to be an important first step.

The Circus School, run by a couple (Palestinian-Dutch), has occupied a former university building at the edge of the old town. It worked with Riwaq to renovate the building, and has plans for expansion. The school offers training in modern circus techniques to young boys and girls from across Palestine. For more on this impressive organisation, go to <http://home.palcircus.ps/en/1/3/239/>. The Palestinian Writing Workshop is also located in a former university building, improved with the help of Riwaq. This organisation teaches creative writing to young people, and sponsors workshops and other activities (<http://palestineworkshop.org>).

At least one of the restaurants, a family-run falafel-and-shisha operation, seems to be very successful, with a clientele that includes local residents, students and tourists. (It was packed on a very cold Saturday evening in March). The owners are planning to move to a larger space that was restored under the project (Hosh el-Elia; the first business in that space failed, apparently due to family reasons). Next to the falafel restaurant, the proprietor's cousin – who owns the building – is opening his own coffee shop, inspired by his cousin's success. A third restaurant, which caters to larger groups, also seems to be doing quite well. Three businesses that existed in the town before the project remain: a car mechanic, a bakery and a grocery store. In general conservation was restricted to facades, but the bakery was restored on the inside, because of its importance as a historic community node. A few residents feel that the mechanic's shop is unsightly, out of keeping with the image of the restored town.⁸

The Birzeit Guest House is a fine restoration, with great potential. It is owned by the municipality, which leased it to a private individual for use as a small hotel. That enterprise failed, and a new tenant is now being sought. According to Riwaq, the municipality plans to use the rent from the guest house for maintenance and improvement of the historic centre.

B. *Climatic performance*

Not applicable.

C. *Response to treatment of water and rainfall*

Not applicable.

D. *Environmental response*

Not applicable.

E. *Choice of materials, level of technology*

The restoration methods and materials used by Riwaq, both in terms of quality, provenance and technique, are derived from traditional construction methods and consistent with best practices. The restoration work seems to be validating traditional construction methods, which for decades have been eclipsed by concrete construction. For example, the reviewer visited a rented house in the old town, where tenants had come because of lower rents and to be near in-laws. The tenants restored the interior of the house during the Riwaq project, in exchange for rent forgiveness. The wife reported

that the house was much warmer in winter, and cooler in summer, than their old concrete house. A contractor who worked on the project (Birzeit University Residences) said he was very happy to have been “reintroduced” to local materials and techniques; he was clearly very proud of his work. He said that he had convinced a private client to build a new house using the old stone techniques.

The only technical problem identified in the independent evaluation for SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) – but seen only occasionally in the field by the reviewer – is moisture in the walls after restoration, which may lead to the exfoliation or deterioration of plaster. Although this is not a structural issue, it could affect public perception and reception of the work. The reason for moisture is clear. Traditionally, plaster on roofs and interior walls was renewed regularly by owners and residents. Once buildings are abandoned, plaster deteriorates and the masonry absorbs moisture. Buildings restored in Birzeit had been abandoned for several decades – and thus had absorbed a lot of moisture.

When Riwaq restores a building, the process is fast (3–6 months) and labour intensive (so as to create jobs). After fill, debris and plants are removed, Riwaq starts with roofing and damp insulation. Missing vaults and walls are repaired or rebuilt, and stone is repointed. As a result of this work, moisture is trapped in the stone. It eventually finds its way out through the stone joints, but in the process, plaster/limewash tends to exfoliate or deteriorate. To avoid this, Riwaq has implemented the following measures:

- allow a greater time between masonry work and plastering;
- when no. 1 is not possible, Riwaq includes a provision in the contract, asking the contractor to reapply interior limewash one year after completion of the work;
- Riwaq has started to set aside funds for maintenance, so as to address these and similar problems after construction ends;
- develop a maintenance strategy with users, as part of restoration planning.

F. Emergency situations

Not applicable.

G. Ageing and maintenance problems

Not applicable.

H. Design features

Not applicable.

I. Impact of the project on the site

Riwaq hoped that the conservation and revitalisation of the historic centre of Birzeit would provide a model in the West Bank. In this, the project appears to be successful. The old town of Birzeit has been given new value (*valorisé*, to use the French term, for which there is no real English translation). Impacts should be assessed at two levels: local impact, in Birzeit itself; and transfer of

experience and knowledge gained to other sites – what we might call “spin-off” impact, or replicability.

Local impact

Local impact can be judged in terms of several factors:

- improvement of the physical environment;
- buy-in of stakeholders (municipality, private sector);
- improved economic conditions.

In terms of the first, improvement of the physical environment, the transformation has been complete, and very impressive. This is widely recognised by stakeholders, by observers and by the media. Riwaq’s work in Birzeit and elsewhere on the West Bank is regularly covered in the Palestinian press, and on a women’s talk show, *Nisa’ FM* (radio 96). The host, who was interviewed by the reviewer, cites great interest in heritage among callers. Economic regeneration will take longer to achieve, but there are already promising signs. Perhaps the most immediate and visible outcome of the project is the renewal of public space, which can be enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

Replicability/spin-off impact

The experience gained in Birzeit is being applied in, and adapted to, other sites. Currently, Riwaq is working on the preventive conservation of seven other villages. These locations were selected according to the interest of municipal governments and the presence of active local associations/counterparts. Two of the seven villages were visited as part of this mission, Abwein and Deir Ghassaneh. The reviewer also went to a third village, Ajjoul, where work is about to start up.

Riwaq begins these projects by working with municipalities, community groups and other local actors to determine the location and scope of interventions. Early phases generally involve upgrading of infrastructure; paving of streets; rehabilitation, paving, planting of open spaces; creation of parks and playgrounds; and “preventive” conservation of facades, stone walls and other features that line the streets and public spaces. Work at some of these villages was initiated while Birzeit was still in progress; all benefited, directly or indirectly, from the experience gained at Birzeit.

One lesson from Birzeit was that Riwaq had to work more quickly and aggressively. In the words of one architect: “If we spent as long as we did at Birzeit on each village, we would lose everything” – because the historic centres of villages are rapidly disappearing. Interventions are scheduled for maximum visibility and impact, to gain the trust of village residents, associations and governments. After these initial “triage” interventions are complete, longer term projects, including the restoration of individual buildings for community use, are identified and initiated.

Abwein and Deir Ghassaneh are examples of *qaryat kursi*, that is, former seats of nobility. Important complexes in the village centres are associated with noble families (in the case of Abwein, a castle; in the case of Deir Ghassaneh, a complex of houses around a public plaza). The aim is to integrate the restored complexes into heritage trails and local tourism circuits (like the “Re-Walk” trail).

Particularly impressive was the beautifully designed garden and play area, which Riwaq designed among ruined houses in Abwein.

The high labour input for conservation work is seen as compatible with job creation goals stated by both Riwaq and its donors. Riwaq requires contractors to hire 60% of labour from the village: this creates temporary employment, and imparts skills that labourers can take with them to other sites. In an independent evaluation written for SIDA, the Swedish development agency, Riwaq ranked highest among Palestinian conservation-based NGOs in the creation of work-days. The same evaluation noted that impact of the projects is especially high for local women, in two different ways. Women are assisted through village conservation projects; for example, through the creation of a facility for a women's association/coop in Abwein (under construction). They are brought in as equal players in community discussions. On another level, most of the architects at Riwaq are women. They are involved in all aspects of project management, construction administration and community work in the villages – providing a powerful role model for local women.

J. Durability and long-term viability of the project

Riwaq has done an admirable job of considering all the factors necessary to assure sustainability and replicability – emphasising, in particular, the participation of the local community and assuring early and visible benefits from the conservation process. This assessment is confirmed in the independent review commissioned by SIDA. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the Birzeit project depends on factors beyond Riwaq's control – notably, the continuing occupation and its economic effects. These affect everything from investment to tourism, to local capacity. As an example: Riwaq trained two professionals (an architect and engineer) at Birzeit Municipality in conservation planning/restoration, but at least one of these seems to have left Palestine, having moved abroad with her husband.

A related problem is that municipal government is still a relatively new enterprise (having been neglected by the PA and discouraged by the Israeli authorities). The first free and democratic municipal elections were held only in 2005. The Riwaq initiative in Birzeit coincided with the election of an enlightened and active mayor, who gave his full support to the project. Fortunately, this has created a momentum that will hopefully continue under the new administration (elected in March 2012).

Given the political situation and the reliance of Palestine on international assistance, NGOs like Riwaq are the backbone of a robust and growing civil society. It seems clear that the continued activity and vibrancy of such NGOs are essential – not only to social-economic development, but as a way to stem the emigration of local talent.

A word should be mentioned about property ownership. A few of the restored buildings, like the Birzeit Guest House and Hosh el-Elia, are owned by the municipality. Others, like the one being renovated as a science museum, are privately owned. Six families own most of the buildings in the old town; there are multiple owners (many living abroad), so it is difficult to reach agreement for sale or lease. It is to Riwaq's credit that it managed to involve owners (or owners' representatives) in the process; it helped to negotiate 15-year leases for several of the cultural organisations, in exchange for restoration work. The long-term use of these properties, of course, remains uncertain. It

is hoped that these institutions will be successful and that the leases will be renewed. Riwaq staff members feel that it will be quite some time for a real-estate market to develop in the old town, let alone to be dominated by gentrification.

VII. Users

A. *Description of those who use of benefit from the project*

- the municipality;
- property owners, tenants, business owners;
- local trades and artisans;
- community associations/NGOs that have moved to the historic centre;
- residents of the new town and visitors, including university students, local/regional tourists, foreign tourists, who come to the old town for leisure, religious services, and cultural events.

For the benefits to these groups, see point VI I above, “Impact”.

B. *Response to the project by professionals, cultural intelligentsia, users, community*

Riwaq has an outstanding reputation as architects and community activists, in Palestine and abroad. In 2012 Riwaq was awarded the Curry Stone Prize, an international award for design that improves the lives of people and the state of the world.⁹

The reviewer has had the opportunity to interview or communicate with a number of professionals and academics in Palestine and Europe, several of whom have worked with, but not for, Riwaq. Those interviewed cited the team’s energy, creativity, rigorous methodology, technical knowledge and community orientation.

Several said that the Birzeit project is an important model for heritage conservation in Palestine, aimed at the social, cultural and economic revitalisation of villages and rural areas. They cite the importance of the project as the pilot project for the “50 Villages” programme. One Palestinian architect spoke of the urgency of this work, in light of the “suburbanisation” of Palestine, that is, the proliferation of large-scale “gated communities” under a neoliberal economic regime. The revaluation and conservation of village architecture and spaces, he said, provides an important, alternative model for development in Palestine.

A Belgian professor and heritage expert, who worked with Riwaq on Hosh el-Atem, described the organisation’s approach as technically sound and also creative, with “no taboos... [I was] personally staggered by the evident creativity of the Riwaq team”. He also cited their excellent management skills, and commitment to revitalisation of the building trades.

Residents and business owners interviewed during the mission were very positive about the conservation of the historic centre. As noted above (VI I), the host of a women’s talk show, *Nisa’*

FM (radio 96), who regularly covers Riwaq's work, cites a great degree of interest and excitement among callers.

VIII. Persons Involved

See Appendix 2.

IX. Bibliography

Following is a partial list of press coverage and scholarly articles about Riwaq – “50 Villages” and Birzeit Historic Centre.

Press articles

- “Curry Stone Design Prizes Are Awarded”, *New York Times*, 26 October 2012.
- “Birzeit University Opens Guest House in Hosh el-Atem”, *Al Quds*, 24 May 2012 (Arabic).
- “Palestinians Begin the Restoration of 50 Village Centres”, Reuters New Agency, 12 October 2009 (Arabic).
- “Riwaq Participates in Birzeit Heritage Week”, *Al Quds*, 17 July 2009 (Arabic).
- “Reflect and Resist”, *The Guardian*, 12 June 2009.
- “The East Comes to the Biennale,” *Financial Times*, 13 June 2009.
- “Report from Venice,” *Art in America*, 6 June 2009.
- “Governor of Ramallah to Discuss Projects,” *Al Quds*, January 2009 (Arabic).
- “Riwaq Organises Workshop on the Rehabilitation of Birzeit Historic Centre”, *Al Ayam*, 19 July 2008 (Arabic).
- “Riwaq: Making a Present of the Past in Palestine”, *Alef* magazine, summer 2008.
- *This Week in Palestine*, October 2007 – special issue devoted to the Riwaq Biennale/50 Villages.

Media

- *Nisa' FM* – Women's call-in radio show, which regularly covers Riwaq's conservation and community work.

Web

- “Renovating an Embattled City”, Inter-Press News Agency, 29 December 2012, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/12/renovating-an-embattled-city/> accessed 26 April 2013.
- “Riwaq Wins Curry Stone Design Prize”, 15 November 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqAr_ijoJWg.
- “On the West Bank, Riwaq Biennale Takes Root Among Violence,” 16 November 2009
- <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2009/11/16/in-palestine-riwaq-biennale-takes-root-amid-violence/> accessed 26 April 2013.

- Opening of Hosh el-Atem (Birzeit University Residences) Arizona State University, <http://globalprojects.arizona.edu/node/208>.
- Regeneration of the Historic Centre of Birzeit, <http://www.palestineregenerationproject.com/birzeit.php> accessed 26 April 2013.
- Birzeit University press release: Riwaq 3rd Biennale/Regeneration of Historic Centre, <http://www.birzeit.edu/news/20270/news>.

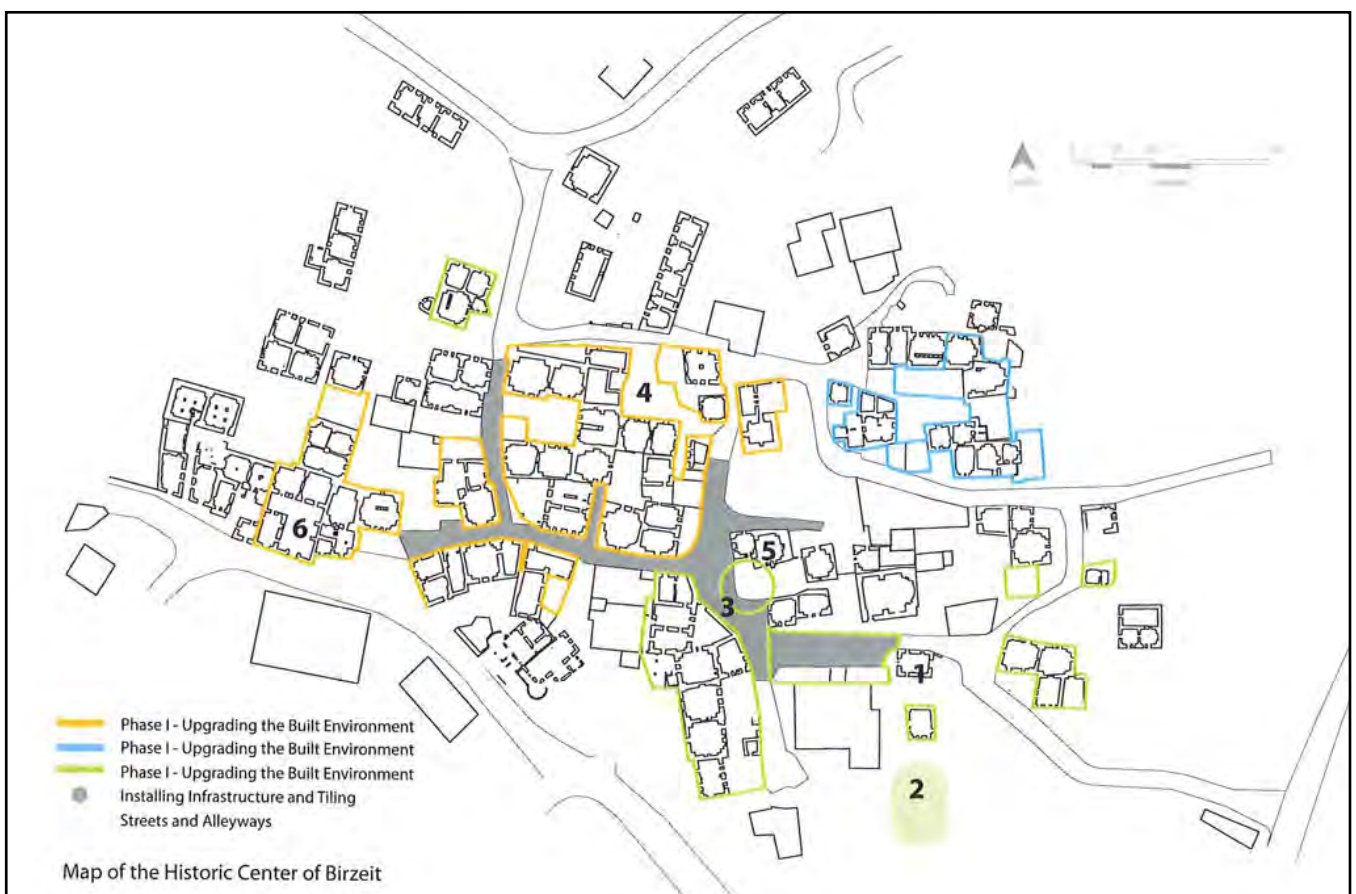
Scholarly articles

- Golzari, N. and Sharif, Y., “Reclaiming Space and Identity: Heritage-Led Regeneration in Palestine”, *The Journal of Architecture*, 16: 1, 2011, pp. 121-144.
- Issa, I., “Regenerating Bir Zeit’s Historic Centre”, in C. Reicher, et. al., *Planning Spaces through Intercultural Dialogue*, Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2010, pp. 44-63 (by an architect/planner at Riwaq).
- Shaheen, L., “Birzeit, Palestine: a Vital City”, in C. Reicher, et. al., *Planning Spaces through Intercultural Dialogue*, Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2010, pp. 86-95 (by a professor of Architecture at Birzeit University, who held a design studio in the historic centre).

Michele Lamprakos

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- ¹ Especially since the erection of the wall around Jerusalem, Ramallah is spreading to the north, towards Birzeit University and the town.
- ² In recent years Israeli authorities have begun to grant work permits again, but the current total of 40,000 is still well below the high of 200,000 in the 1990s.
- ³ The Riwaq Biennale is one of several local and international cultural events organised to raise awareness of, and support for, the cultural heritage of Palestine.
- ⁴ The “50 Villages” strategy is outlined in Riwaq’s 2009 Policy Document
- ⁵ In 2002 Riwaq restored a municipally owned building for Rozana School. The school now organises the annual “Heritage Week”, a tremendously popular festival that attracts thousands of people from all over the West Bank.
- ⁶ Job creation was actively promoted by the EU and donor organisations after the Second Intifada, which closed Israel to workers.
- ⁷ As noted above, pipes were laid for a sewer system, which has never existed in the old town: the estimated USD 1.5 million for installing a system seems beyond reach in the current climate, especially given the economic conditions in the EU, the main source of donor funds.
- ⁸ The reviewer did not have the opportunity to assess all cultural institutions and businesses. The People’s Museum and the Mosaic workshop, for example, were closed during the reviewer’s visits.
- ⁹ See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqAr_ijoJWg.





Riwaq looked at the public and semi-public spaces (street, courtyards, gardens) as volumes – focusing on the surfaces that line these spaces (walls, street surfaces, landscapes).

Debris and vegetation were removed; masonry surfaces were cleaned and repointed; crumbling buildings were stabilised and, in a few cases, rebuilt or restored.





New elements were designed, like the garden/playground. Riwaq lobbied for this, and designed it; it is the first such space in the town.

A cemetery clean-up and tree-planting initiative were implemented with the community.





In the early 1980s when Birzeit University relocated to a site several kilometres to the south, draining life from the town, streets and public spaces were neglected and buildings fell into disrepair, perpetuating a cycle of disinvestment.

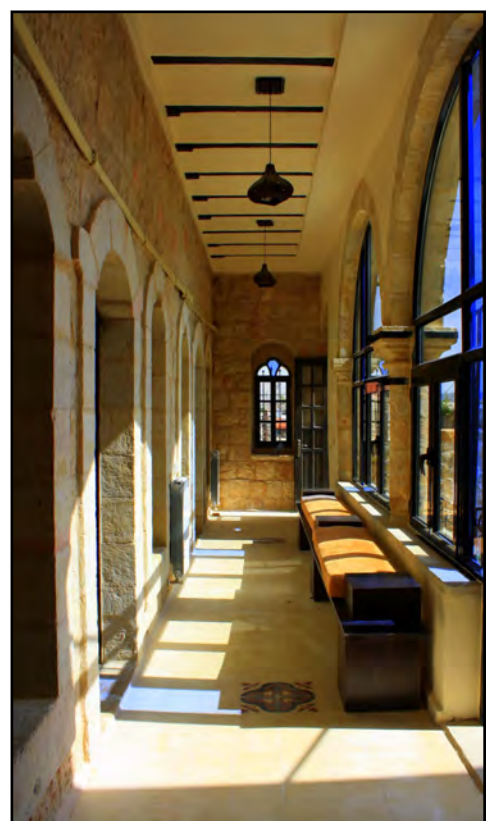
The restoration methods and materials used by Riwaq, both in terms of quality, provenance and technique, are derived from traditional construction methods and consistent with best practices.





The Birzeit Guest House is a fine restoration, with great potential. It is owned by the municipality, which leased it to a private individual for use as a small hotel.

Corridor of the Birzeit Guest House , before and after restoration. According to Riwaq, the municipality plans to use the rent from the guest house for maintenance and improvement of the historic centre.





Local blacksmiths create gates and grilles after new designs by Riwaq for several restored buildings. Riwaq also organised a joint Belgian-Palestinian initiative to exchange experience in smithing.

The Circus School, run by a couple (Palestinian-Dutch), has occupied a former university building at the edge of the old town. It worked with Riwaq to renovate the building, and has plans for expansion. The school offers training in modern circus techniques to young boys and girls from across Palestine.



MAP OF CONSERVATION PROJECTS BY RIWAQ (2001-2011)

- Palestinian village
- Historic building conservation project
- ⦿ Significant historic center (Riwaq's "50 Villages" project)
- ⦿ Historic center rehabilitation project



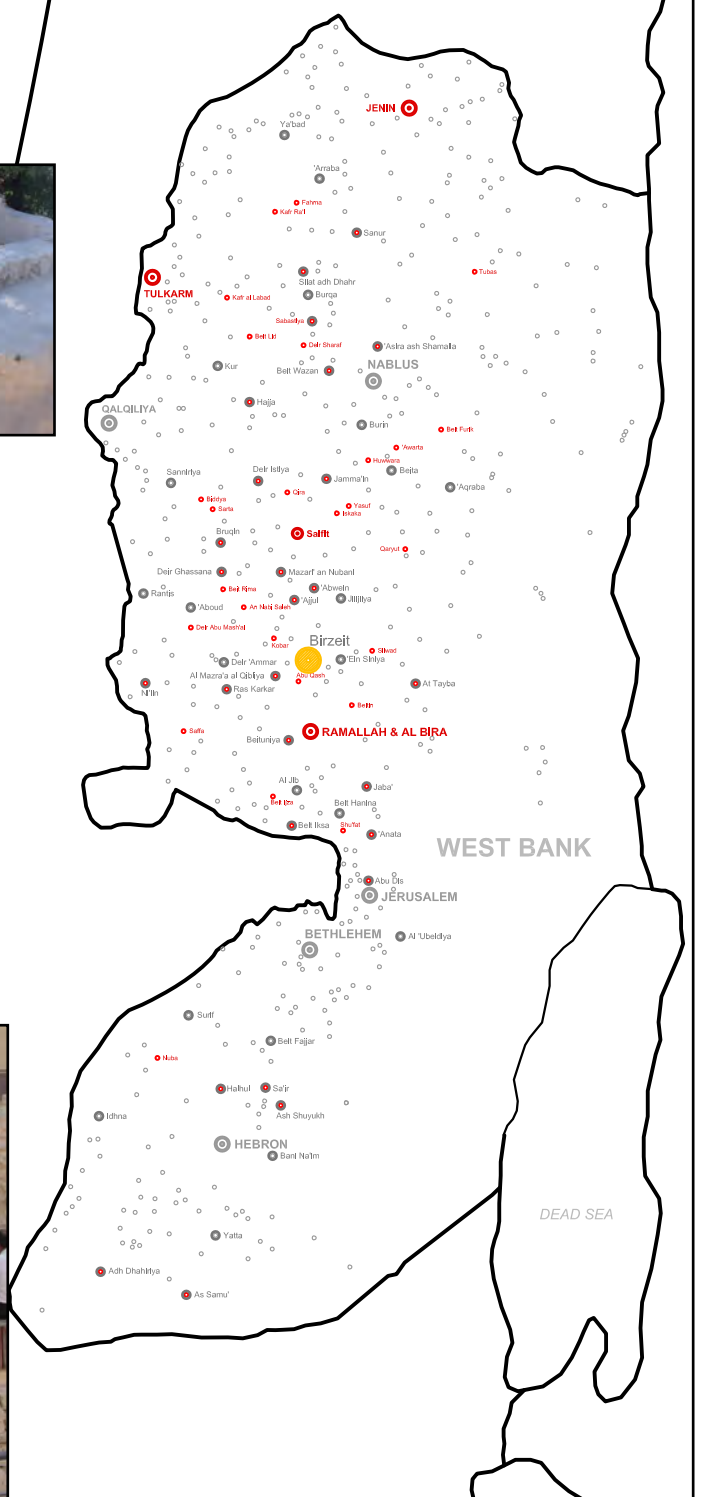
Since 2008, Riwaq has been working in other communities across Palestine, applying and adapting experience gained at Birzeit, as it was the pilot project for the "50 Villages" programme.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

JAFFA

WEST BANK

DEAD SEA



#	Project name	Description	Dates	Cost (USD)	m ²	Sponsor (s)	Partner (s)	Status
Restoration and conservation projects (physical interventions) organized chronologically by the date of project initiation								
1	Rehabilitation of Al-Rozana association building	First building conservation project in Birzeit. Rented by Municipality to be re-used as children library. Later was given to the Rozana Association which organizes the Birzeit Heritage Week annually. Second floor never had a roof as we believe it was not completed because of the 1927 earthquake. This project as one the first of the "Job Creation through Restoration" projects. Riwaq was still perfecting its labor/material combination.	Oct 2002 - Feb 2003	68'931	290	SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
2	Infrastructure and street tiling	The main commercial street connecting the entrance to the core was dug, all infrastructure laid undergrounds and then tiled. This project as also funded by CHF directly to the municipality with the assistance of Riwaq. Riwaq also took part in the design and supervision over the project.	June 2008 - Nov 2009	220'000	1'183	SIDA & CHF International	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
3	Rehabilitation of Housh El-Elia restaurant	A central building in the historic center and was one of the worst ones in terms of structural and physical conditions. Owned by the municipality and initially was supposed to be a service center for the municipality. The project was done over two phases: the first was clean up and consolidation and the second was conservation. the municipality later decided to lease it to a restaurant to provide income that can be later invested in the historic centers.	July 2008 - July 2009	145'200	644	SIDA & The representative Office of the Netherlands in ramallah	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
4	Upgrading built environment Phase 1	The first large scale intervention in Birzeit on the Urban level. More than 20 buildings were touched by this project. The main goal was to clean up, discover borders and lines, consolidate some structures where needed, and insulate buildings. This took place in two target areas at the core of the historic center and started in the main street area.	Aug 2008 - Jan 2009	92'000	4'103	SIDA	Birzeit Municipality	Finished

5	Upgrading built environment Phase 2	Another phase of building restoration taking around 12 buildings on the eastern side tone, works included façade pointing and upgrading, consolidation, insulation, rebuilding fences and walls, garden definitions and rehabilitations	Sep 2008 - Feb 2009	47'000	1'206	SIDA	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
6	Rehabilitation of Birzeit Guest-house	Building leased to municipality from the Tewfik Nasser family. Municipality with the help of Riwaq received funding from CHF international to redesign and restore the building and turn it into a small hotel and restaurant . Municipal architect (Rana Shak'a) who was hired to be the old town architect (with financial support from Riwaq) worked on eth design and Riwaq assisted in the supervision. This project was the training project for Rana.	July 2009 - Jan 2010	126'571	540	CHF International	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
7	Artistic Spring in Garden	Artist Jacob Szczęsny was part of Riwaq's 2009 Biennale showcasing Birzeit, his design was a water spring called "Polish Spring" to be put in the public garden	Sep 2009 - Oct 2009	13'891	NA	Institut e Adam Mickiewicz, SIDA	Jacob Szczęsny (artist)	Finished
8	Signage system: building numbers & street names	In cooperation with the local community & municipality, street names were gathered, discussed and agreed upon along with the numbering system. Now all buildings are numbered and streets have names in the old town but not in the new center.	April 2010 - June 2010	8'500	NA	SIDA	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
9	Rehabilitation of Birzeit University Residency Space (Hosh El Atem)	Hosh el Atem is another building complex that suffered from neglect and deterioration badly. The building is owned by the Municipality and it signed an agreement with university allowing it be turned into a residency space for visiting scholars. The project was implemented in cooperation with IPW and three training workshops took place as well in this project: Photometry, iron works & ceiling painting (painting workshop took place in Jenin although part of the agreement with IPW). again here the work was done in two phases: clean up and consolidation then conservation.	April 2010 - May 2011	186'640	850	(WBI) Wallonia Bruxelles International, (IPW) Institut Du Patrimoine Walloon	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished

10	cemetery clean up and planting	Cleanup and planting to upgrade the cemetery in the old own.	May 2010 - June 2010	4'145	1'200	Birzeit pharmaceutical company	local community	Finished
11	Upgrading built environment Phase 3	This phase of preventive conservation and here the focus was on the structural consolidation of walls surrounding and inside the town along side with building facades upgrading and insulation, this focused on the south western area of the town	Aug 2010 - Feb 2011	15'322	1'934	SIDA	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
12	Sama Birzeit: Establishing a garden & children playground	The first and only public garden in Birzeit as a town. Riwaq lobbied for it and designed and implemented it. The Birzeit Pharmaceutical company also supported it with some funds and the municipality procured the furniture. A ceramic mural in the garden was prepared by Birzeit school students as part of an art course and training organized by Riwaq.	Nov 2010 - March 2011	46'653	678	SIDA, Birzeit pharmaceutical company, Birzeit municipality	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
13	Maintenance of PalFest and the Palestinian writing workshop (PWW) building	building was leased to the PWW by Tania & Hanna Nasser. Building was in good condition but needed basic maintenance and some interventions. This marks the move of new organizations to Birzeit. The palestien writing workshop (PWW) provides training and activiteis aorund reative writing among young people	Jan 2011 - Mar 2011	13'554	250	SIDA & PalFest	Palestine Festival for literature (PalFest), Palestine writing workshop (PWW)	Finished
14	Rehabilitation of the Palestinian circus school building	the building was leased to the Circus School by the Nasser Family (Tania & Hanna). The Circus school also moved to Birzeit after deliberations with Riwaq. The funding came directly to the circus school, while Riwaq took over the conservation, design & supervision processes.	Feb 2011 - Jun 2011	165'991	1'439	Consulate General of Belgium in Jerusalem.	Palestine Circus School	Finished
15	Upgrading built environment Phase 4	The final "preventive conservation" project in the old town. This touched four locations in the north, east and west edges of the town. It included as the before: facades, consolidation border definitions, insulation and green elements	Aug 2011 - Dec 2011	30'000	330	SIDA	Birzeit Municipality	Finished

Community, cultural, training & educational activities								
1	Heritage week support and building capacity	participating in the heritage week every year by designing booth and activity to promote architectural heritage. Riwaq also financially supported the upgrading the Association service delivery by supporting the salary of one staff member for a year.	July 2008 - July 2011	8'000	NA	Riwaq & Sida	Rozana Association	Finished
2	Student courses taking Birzeit as a case study in cooperation with Birzeit University	Faculty form the College of Architecture at Birzeit University (namely: Yazid Anani & lubna Shahin) incorporated Birzeit in their curricula as a case study in projects with partner university including Palestinian and forgiven students. Three activities of this type took place: two workshops with the La Cambre Center for Visual Arts (Belgium) and one with the university of Dortmund (Germany). the result were three workshops: two in plaestine and one in belguim.	2008-2009	NA	NA	NA	Birzeit University	Finished
3	Birzeit historic center international competition	a student competition directed towards students of Central St. Martin's in the UK and the three major schools of architecture and planning in the West Bank. The competition was for the solutions for the entrances and public spaces in the old town of Birzeit. Project results informed some of the designs in eth old towns.	March 2009 - May 2009	6'000	NA	SIDA & UNESCO	Central St. Martin University & Birzeit University & Najah University & Polytechnic university - Hebron	Finished
4	lime mortar & lime stone conservation and structural consolidation workshop	training workshop geared towards architects working in the field (30 architects benefited form this). Practical training took place in the old towns of Birzeit	July 2009	9'000	NA	SIDA	Riwaq, Welfare Association	Finished

5	support for the conservation unit at the municipality	Riwaq (through Sida) supported the hiring of an architect to be responsible for the old town at the municipality. Her salary was paid by Riwaq for a year and then the municipality took over	2009	8'000	NA	SIDA	Birzeit municipality	support finished but architect still there
6	Open spaces and booth design competition	Initiating and organizing national competition for professional architects to design scenario for the local annual Heritage Week festival. The proposals had to show : historic trail shows the potential spots for booths and the booth design	Jan 2010 - July 2010	6'000	NA	SIDA	Engineering Association in Palestine & Birzeit Municipality & Rozana Association	Finished
7	Summer workshop for architecture students, Tucson University	Student summer workshop aim at exploring possibilities for rehabilitating the historic enter based on Landscape approach. 9 students and their professor (the Tejido Group) lived in Birzeit and came up with landscape solutions for urban connectivity. The reports is on: http://www.tejidogroup.org/BIRZEIT/Birzeit%20FINAL%20X(smaller withcover).pdf	Jun 2010 - July 2010	NA	NA	Tucson University	School of architecture, University of Arizona	Finished
8	Planting the historic center project	Voluntary week to plant trees. Money was collected through donations in the 2009 heritage week and planting took place in May 2010	June 2010	NA	NA	-	local community & municipality	Finished
9	School activities, art training lessons for school children and art competition	Ongoing activities for school children including theatrical shows, art lessons and drawing competitions	2010	-	NA	-	Birzeit Boys School, Catholic School, Birzeit Girls School	Finished

10	Heritage Tourist Trail Ramallah Highlands	parallel activity of designing a heritage trail connecting Ramallah to Taybeh and passing through Birzeit. The project links to Riwaq's overall goal of connecting sites together and promoting local tourism. This is end product of a three year EUROMED Heritage IV project entitled "mutual Heritage"	April 2009-August 2012	213'868	NA	the EU	partners from Mediterranean countries: Tunic, Morocco, Italy & France	Finished
Research & studies								
1	protection plan	a study and plan for the protection of the Birzeit historic center and surrounding area. Part of 16 plans prepared by Riwaq for 16 locations prior to the rehabilitation project	2006	NA	NA	Sida	Birzeit Municipality	Finished
2	Rehabilitation studies and strategic and community planning.	Multidisciplinary studies, research and strategic planning sessions includes investigating the physical environment ,the socio economic situation, community needs and aspiration						
	Architectural survey and study	done by team and students	Jan 2008 - May 2008	NA	NA	SIDA	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
	Typologies and potential use	done by team and students	Mar 2008 - May 2008	NA	NA	SIDA	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
	Connection between historic center and the surrounding environment	done by team and students	Mar 2008 - May 2008	NA	NA	SIDA	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished

	socio - economic studies	commissioned to Luna Shamieh and walid bradawl. Studies done at the beginning of the project	Mar 2008 - May 2008	12'000	NA	SIDA	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
	open spaces within the historic fabric	done by team and students	Mar 2008 - May 2008	NA	NA	SIDA	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
	Social mapping and legibility study	Done by Yara Sharif & Nasser Golzari	May 2009 - July 2009	1'400	NA	SIDA	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
3	Community planning workshops	workshops took place in 2008 during the midterm phase of the project and in 2011 in order to finalize the strategic document for the town. These were designed to talk to residents, owners, shopkeepers, and officials and local organizations in the town	2008 & 2011	NA	NA	SIDA	Historic center local community & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
4	Mid process evaluation	commissioned to Yazid Anani to reflect on the progress and inform future plans of the project	Aug 2008	2'000	NA	SIDA	NA	Finished
5	ToR for the operation of the Guesthouse	Comissioned to Solutions for Development Consultin. Tor Of trh muncaiplity to be able to tender the Guesthouse	2008	4'000	NA	NA	NA	Finished
6	Policy document	policy document sahred with key stakeholdersin the sector	avr.09	NA	NA	UNDP		Finished
7	Think Net professional workgroup	part of Riwaq's 2009 Biennale. A think Net team of local and international experts was formed and met for three days to discuss the regeneration project and its current situation & future.	Octobe r 2009	NA	NA	SIDA & multiple donors that supported the Biennale	Birzeit University & Birzeit Municipality	Finished
8	Strategic planning document	Final strategy developed and approved by municipality by the end of the project. Commissioned to Samir Baidoon	2012	2'500	NA	SIDA	Birzeit Municipality	Finished

Appendix 2: Project personnel

<i>Family Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Company/institution</i>
Staff Technical				
Abu Faz'a	Bilal	Mr.	Architect	N/A
Amiry	Suad	Dr.	Riwaq founder and previous co-director	Riwaq
Barakat	Najla	Ms.	Assistant director of community research & studies	In'ash Al Usra Society
Bshara	Khaldun	Dr.	Riwaq- current co-director	Riwaq
Issa	Iyad	Mr.	Planner/ architect	Riwaq
Jaber	Shuruq	Ms.	Architect	Ministry of local government
Jubeh	Nazmi	Dr.	Prof. at Birzeit University	Riwaq
Jubeh	Baha	Mr.	Curator of Palestine Heritage Museum	Dar Al-Tifel Al- Arabi Organization
Judeh	Lana	Ms.	Architect	Riwaq
Khdairi	Noor	Ms.	Architect	Birzeit Municipality
Mubarak	Ghada	Ms.	public relations coordinator	Arab Innovation Network
Muhawi	Farhat	Mr.	Chief architect/ planner	Friends Schools In Ramallah
Qawasmi	Sahar	Ms.	Architect	Riwaq
Rabah	Khalil	Mr.	Artist	Self employed
Safi	Shatha	Ms.	Planner/architect	Riwaq
Salameh	Michel	Mr.	Architect	Riwaq
Saleh Hamayel	Maher	Mr.	CRS supervisor	Palestine Investment Fund
Salim	Ruba	Ms.	Architect	Riwaq
Shaka'a	Rana	Ms.	Architect	Dubai University, UAE
Shqeirat	Renad	Ms.	Architect	Riwaq
Taha	Yousef	Mr.	Architect	Riwaq
Touma	Fida	Ms.	Riwaq- current co-director	Riwaq
Administration				
Daraghmeh	Harbi	Mr.	Financial manager	Ministry of finance
Daraghmeh	Samah	Ms.	admin assistant	Riwaq
Far	Mike	Mr.	Financial manager	Riwaq
Hussein	Rana	Ms.	Admin assistant	Nazarene Tours
Saleh	Fadia	Ms.	Admin and financial director	Guidance & Training Center- Bethlehem
Sobhi	Muhammad	Mr.	Office support	Riwaq board during the project
Abdullah	Ghassan	Mr.	Treasurer	IT consultant
Abu Hijleh	Lana	Ms.	Vice president	Director of CHF international in Palestine
Awwad	Maha	Ms.	Head of the board	Owner, abu Shusheh trading company
Bursheh	Christo	Mr.	Member	Dentist
Hijazi	Areej	Ms.	Member	Independent consultant
Khader	Jalal	Mr.	Secretary of the board	Attorney
Tamari	Vera	Ms.	Member	Artist & curator

Consultants (paid)

Anani	Yazid	Dr.	Assistant professor at collage of architecture	Birzeit University
Badawi	Walid	Mr.	Director of Minister of Justice Office	Ministry of Justice
Baidoon	Samir	Dr.	Chair of Business administration collage	Birzeit University
Golzari	Nasser	Dr.	Founder & lead partner	NG architects
Iyad	Joudeh	Mr.	Dircetor	Solutions for Development Consulting
Obeidi	In'am	Ms.	Faculty member at Media Studies program	Birzeit University
Shamieh	Luna	Ms.	Assistant to dean of Public policy & administration college	Birzeit University
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Ceccarelli	Paolo	Dr.	UNESCO Chair in "Urban and Regional Planning for Sustainable Local Development" and President of the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD)	Ferrara University/School of Architecture
Edwards	Michael	Mr.	Professor	Bartlett school of architecture and planning, University College, London
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Student Volunteers

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Awad	Claudia	Ms.	Architecture student	Ferrara University
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