

## **Abstract - troped**

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**Year:** 2010

**Thesis title, country:** Solid waste management in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh governorate: A study about solid waste management at household level and the perception of solid waste in regard to its health and environmental risks in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh governorate, occupied Palestinian territory

**Key words:** "Solid Waste Management", "Perception", "Palestine", "Health", "Environment", "Public Awareness"

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Like other low and lower-middle income countries, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) has experienced a population growth and changes in lifestyle, resulting in an increase of waste generation. Since decades, the population has been confronted with insufficient infrastructure and solid waste management as well as with a disastrous political and economic situation (ARIJ, 2007b). Waste is often dumped in streets, disposed of on uncontrolled dumpsites or burnt, causing both air and water pollution (Zurbrugg, undated). Air pollution contributes to respiratory diseases and contaminated water, caused by the inappropriate dumping of waste, may lead to faecal-oral diseases (The WHO Secretariat, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to explore the solid waste management practices at household level, the perception of solid waste as an environmental and health risk and the perception of solid waste related projects in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh governorate.

The study, with its qualitative and explorative design, primarily used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and outdoors observations, as a means of gathering information. The study population was chosen by theoretical sampling and in regard to variables such as rural/urban area. After collecting the data, the information was transcribed and analysed by its content.

Twenty-eight in-depth interviews and seven FGDs were conducted in the cities of Ramallah, Al-Bireh and Beitunia and in the villages of Beit Ur Al-Tahta and Beit Ur Al-Fauqa. While participants in Ramallah and Al-Bireh didn't comment much on the topics "separation", "economy", "landfills" and "recycling", they were familiar with the scrap dealer who collects metal, and the attitude towards recycling was positive. People would be willing to separate their waste; some even started separating it to prevent harming others, though knowing that all waste is disposed of together. People often complained about waste dumped in streets. Some even suggested imposing fines on the act of littering.

The results of this study showed that the majority of participants, including children, were aware of the potential environmental and health risks of solid waste. However, most participants complained about the bad smell and some answers related to health were rather imprecise. Some people in the villages referred to the risks it held for animals, such as cows, which died from eating plastic bags. While almost all participants talked about the importance of public awareness campaigns, most of them hadn't encountered any.

Knowledge of recycling facilities in the oPt was quite vague, which corresponds with the difficulties the author had in gathering information about these facilities. So far, recycling in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh governorate exists on a small scale and is mainly conducted by an informal sector. An appraisal of all existing recycling facilities and how the existing service is already used (e.g. scrap dealer) in the West Bank is required. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns should be conducted continuously and in conjunction with the technical development. It is recommended to improve the cleaning services and to enact as well as to enforce laws to protect the environment. Furthermore, the institutional and operational management needs to be strengthened.