

Abu Qash Village Profile



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Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in the Ramallah Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Ramallah Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment;" the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

The "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in Ramallah Governorate.

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

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

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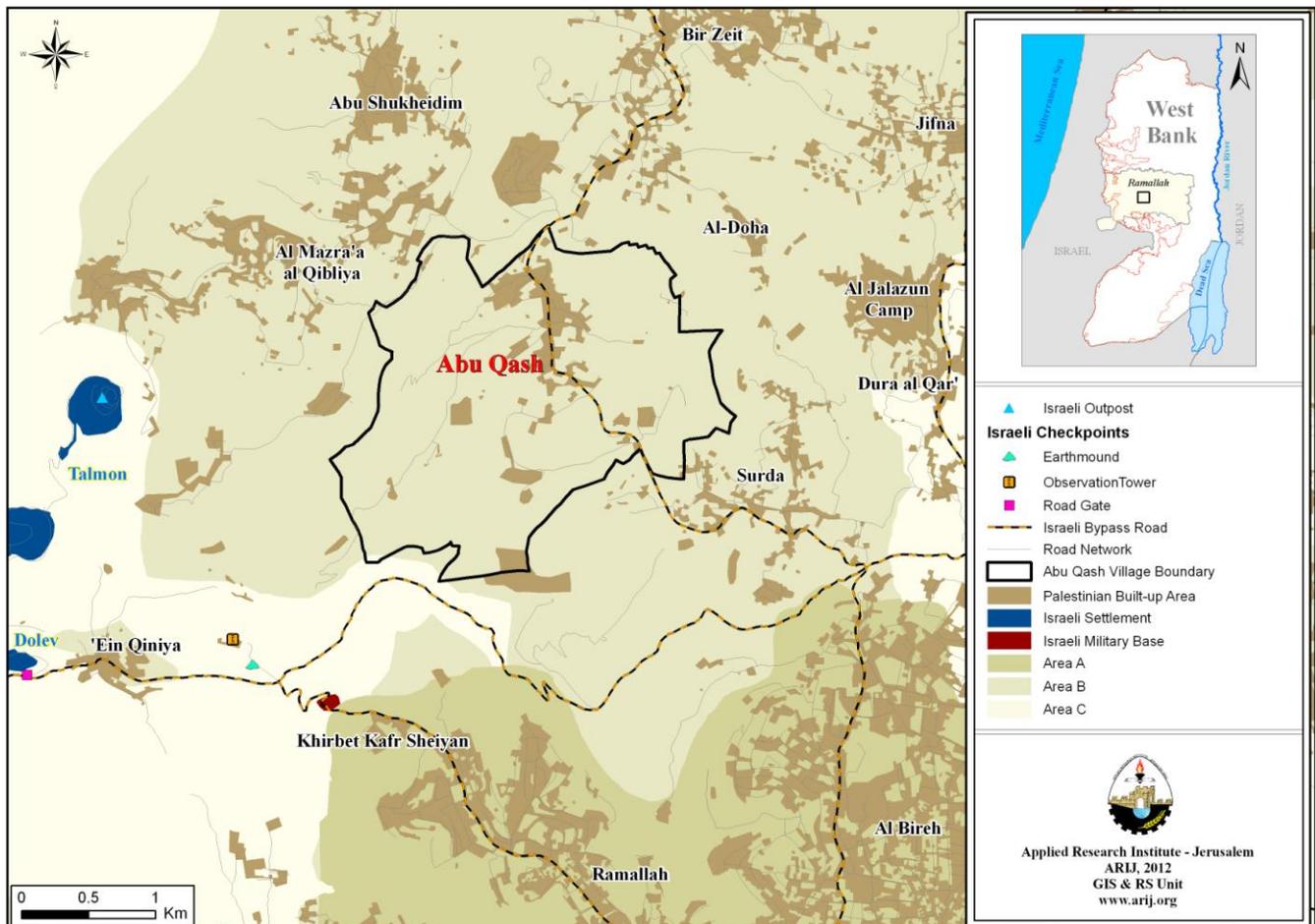
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Abu Qash Village Profile

Location and physical characteristics

Abu Qash is a Palestinian village in Ramallah Governorate, located 5.3km north of Ramallah City. It is bordered by Surda and Jifna villages to the east, Bir Zeit to the north, Al-Zaytouneh and Ramallah city to the west, and by Ramallah city and Surda village to the south (ARIJ-GIS, 2012) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Abu Qash location and borders



Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2012

The village is located at an altitude of 751 m above sea level. The mean annual rainfall in the village is 660.4 mm, the average annual temperature is 16 °C and the average annual humidity is 61% (ARIJ-GIS, 2012).

A village council was established in 1996. It consists of nine members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority and three employees. It has a permanently rented headquarters but does not own a vehicle for the collection of solid waste (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011). Main responsibilities of the Council include:

- Management of the construction licensing process.
- Implementing major projects and studies related to village development.
- Construction of elementary, preparatory and secondary schools.
- Waste collection, street cleaning and pavement, rehabilitation and construction of roads.
- Supplying an electricity network or generators.
- Supplying and maintaining a drinking water network.

History

According to the Village Council, there are three different stories behind the name of Abu Qash:

1. Abu Qash in Arabic means the source of wheat and barley; the village was famous for the cultivation of such crops and so it was named Abu Qash. This etymology is considered to be the most credible.
2. A Moroccan tribe came to the village and named it after their village in Morocco.
3. A man named Abu Qash lived in a nearby military site and gave his name to the village.

The village was constructed 500 years ago, and its population are believed to be of Jordanian origin (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011) (See photo below for Abu Qash village).

Photo of Abu Qash

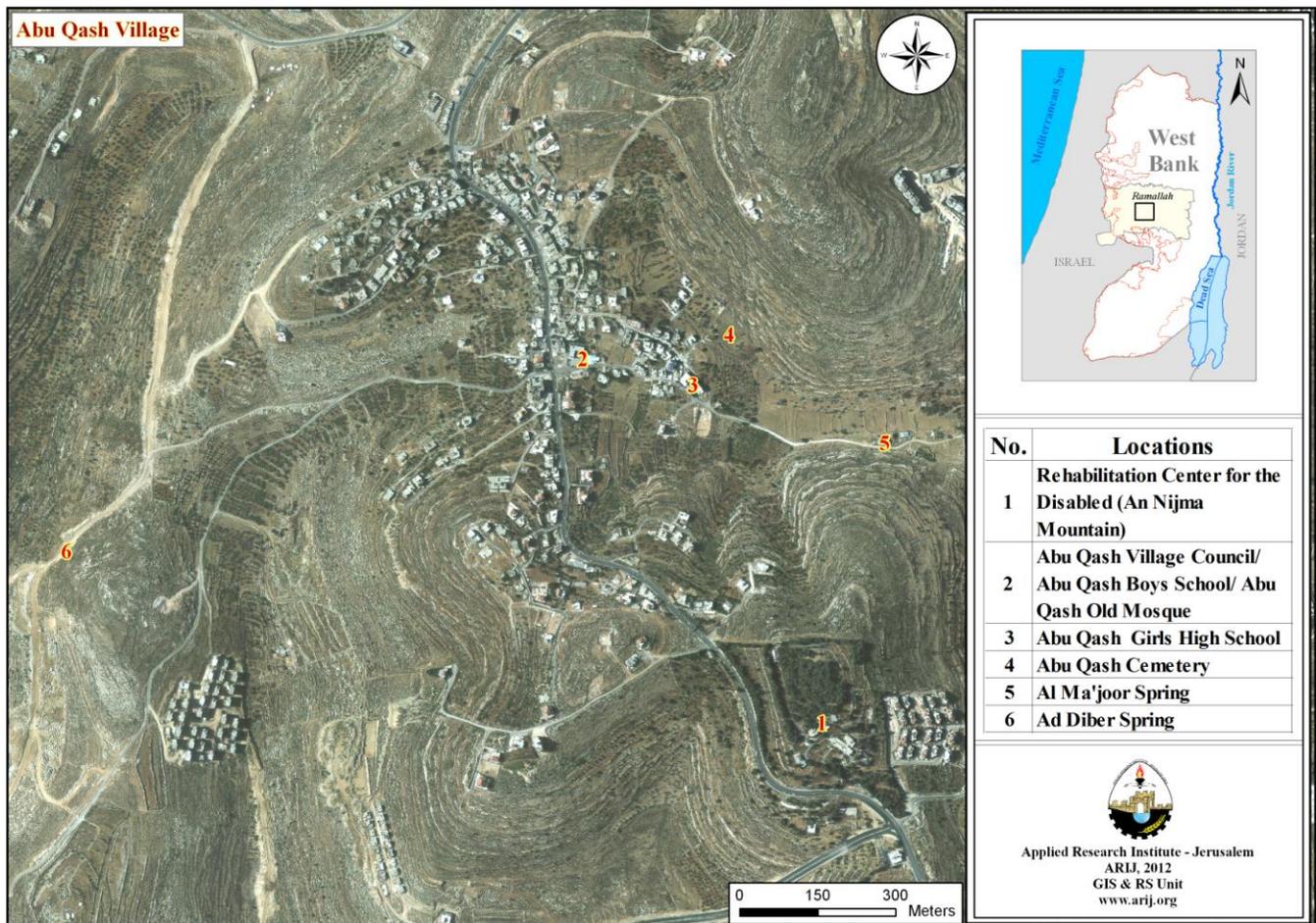


ARIJ Photo Courtesy

Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are two mosques in the village, Al Omari (Abu Qash Old) Mosque and Al Saliheen (New) Mosque. There are some sites of archaeological interest, including Khirbet Al Hafna which contains an olive oil-press and walls and foundations of buildings, and a set of military Khirba (ruins) (Al Dabbagh, 1991) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main location in Abu Qash Village



Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2012

Demography and Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Census in 2007, the total population of Abu Qash was 1,319 inhabitants, of whom 664 were male and 655 were female. There were 273 households and 401 housing units in the village.

Age Group and Gender

The 2007 Census results for Abu Qash village showed the distribution of the population in terms of age group and sex, demonstrating that 36.5% of the total population was less than 15 years of age, 56.9% were in the 15-64 age group and 5% were 65 years of age or older. The sex ratio in the village was 101.4:100, meaning that males and females constituted 50.3% and 49.7 % of the population respectively.

Families

The village residents are from several families, including the Al Qa'ed, Mayha and Al Bayatna families (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Immigration

ARIJ's survey indicated that several families have left the village since 2001 (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Education

According to the results of the PCBS, Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 6.1% of the population were illiterate, of whom 81.4% were females. Of the literate population, 12.3% could only read and write with no formal education, 16.1% completed elementary education, 21.6% completed preparatory education, 23.2% completed secondary education, and 20.3% had a specialized academic degree (See Table 1).

Table 1: Abu Qash population (10 years and above) by sex and educational statement

Sex	Illiterate	Can read and write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	Doctorate	Not stated	Total
M	11	65	89	87	136	27	61	1	9	2	2	490
F	48	54	67	123	89	37	56	-	3	1	3	481
T	59	119	156	210	225	64	117	1	12	3	5	971

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

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are two registered governmental schools in the village run by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). These are Abu Qash Boys Elementary School and Abu Qash Girls Secondary School. The Village lacks a secondary school for boys and there is no scientific stream in the girl's secondary school, meaning that most students travel to Prince Hasan and Al Majida Wasila schools in Bir Zeit (around 4 km from the village) to complete their education. There are no kindergartens in the village.

The education sector in Abu Qash suffers from some problems such as the lack of laboratories in the schools, the lack of educational, information technology, and sport equipment (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

In 2010/11 there were 20 classes, 296 students, and 31 teaching staff in the village. Classroom density was recorded at 15 students per class, and the average number of students per teacher was 10.

Health Sector

There are no medical or health centers in the Village of Abu Qash; however, there is one private pharmacy.

In case of emergencies, patients are transferred to hospitals or medical centers in Ramallah City or Bir Zeit for treatment (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

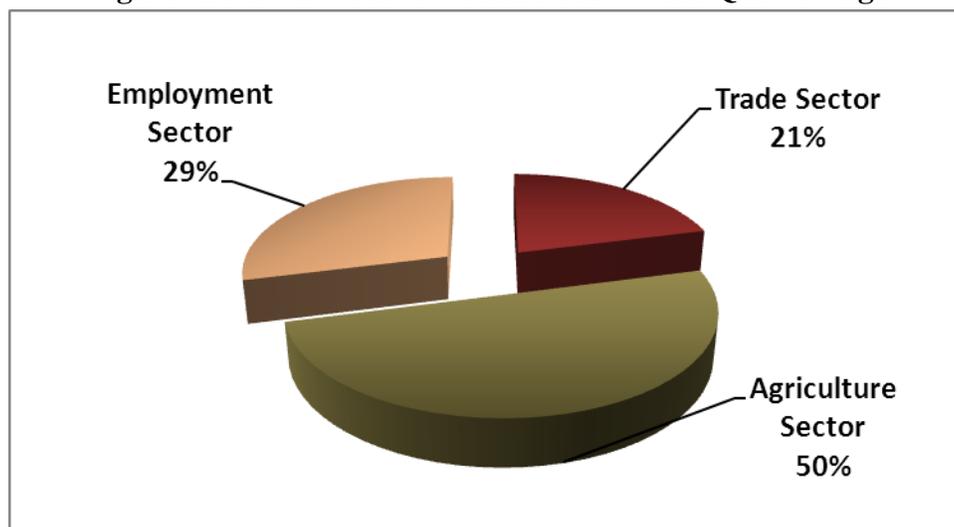
Economic Activities

Abu Qash’s economy is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly the agricultural sector, which absorbs 50% of the village’s workforce (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011) (See Figure 1).

In Abu Qash there are 10 grocery stores, a butcher, two fruit and vegetable shops, 4 service offices, and 8 occupational industry shops such as carpenters’ workshops.

Unemployment in Abu Qash reached approximately 10% in 2011 and particularly affects those who work within the agricultural sector. The Israeli occupation and its associated practices have contributed significantly to unemployment in Abu Qash (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Figure 1: the main economic activities in Abu Qash Village



Source: Abu Qash Village Council, 2011

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census (2007), 37.3% of the population was economically active, of whom 83.7% were employed, and 62.3% of the population were not economically active, of which 49.9% were students and 38% were involved in housekeeping (Table 2).

Table 2: Abu Qash population (10 years and above) by sex and employment status

Sex	Economically active				Non-economically active							Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (never worked)	Total	Student	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & not looking for work	Others	Total	Not stated	
M	243	27	21	291	154	1	28	8	5	196	3	490
F	60	6	5	71	148	229	28	-	4	409	1	481
T	303	33	26	362	302	230	56	8	9	605	4	971

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

Source: PCBS, 2009.

Agricultural Sector

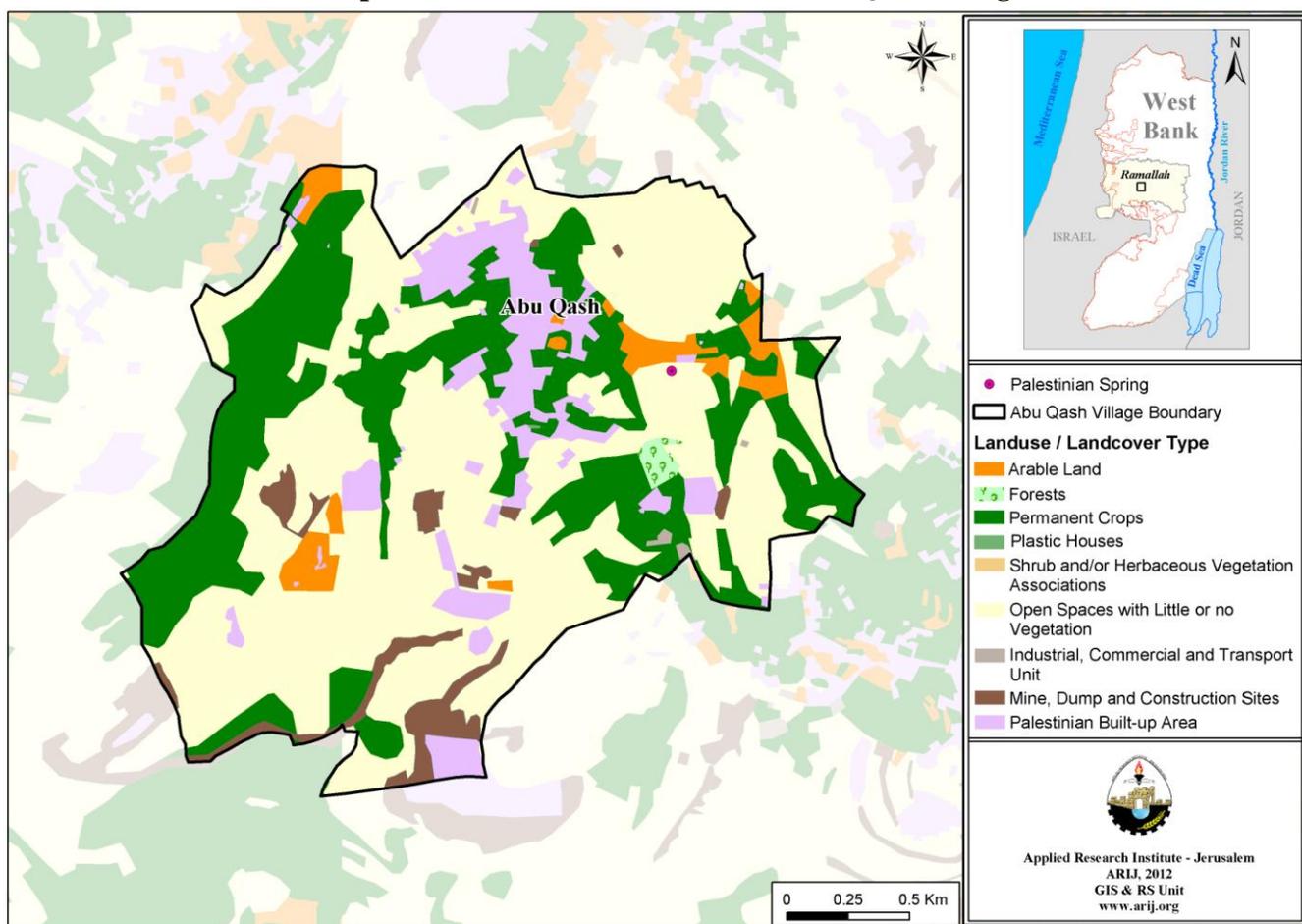
Abu Qash Village lies on an area of 4,900 dunums, of which 1,589 dunums are arable lands, and 464 dunums are registered as residential (see Table 3 and Map 3).

Table 3: Land use and land cover in Abu Qash village in 2010 (area in dunum)

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (1,589)				Inland water	Forests	Open Spaces	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlement, Military Bases & Wall Zone
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
4,900	464	1,422	1	0	166	0	23	2,635	189	0

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

Map 3: Land use and land cover of Abu Qash Village



Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2012

Table 4 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Abu Qash. Snake-cucumber and squash are the most cultivated vegetables.

Table 4: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Abu Qash Village (area in dunums)

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetables		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
14	0	0	0	7	0	5	0	2	0	28	0

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Ramallah, 2009

Abu Qash Village is famous for the cultivation of olives; there are 781.5 dunums of land planted with olive trees (Table 5).

Table 5: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Abu Qash Village (area in dunums)

Olives		Citrus		Stone-fruits		Pome fruits		Nuts		Other fruits		Total area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
781.5	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	80	0	80	0	954.5	0

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Ramallah, 2009

Table 6 shows the total area of field crops cultivated in Abu Qash, with cereals covering the largest area (approximately 60 dunums). Dry legumes, particularly beans, are also cultivated in Abu Qash.

Table 6: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Abu Qash Village (area in dunums)

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Oil crops		Forage crops		Stimulating crops		Other crops		Total area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
60	0	19	0	25	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	109	0

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Ramallah, 2009

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

The field survey conducted by ARIJ shows that 7% of the residents in Abu Qash rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep and goats (See Table 7).

Table 7: Livestock in abu Qash village

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
0	164	657	0	0	0	0	11,550	2,500	0

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Ramallah, 2009

There are around 30 km of agricultural roads in the village, which are suitable only for the use of animals (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

The agricultural sector in Abu Qash suffers from many problems, including:

1. Lack of water resources.

2. Lack of agricultural capacities and awareness of the importance of agriculture.
3. Lack of agricultural roads
4. Lack of economic feasibility.

Institutions and Services

There are no official institutions that provide public services to the community, except the Village Council (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Abu Qash is supplied with electricity by Jerusalem Electricity Company through the public network established in 1980. Approximately 100% of housing units in the village are connected to the network. However, Abu Qash residents experience some problems with the electricity supply, primarily the weak electrical current and the high prices of public services (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

The village is connected to a telecommunications network and approximately 80% of the housing units are connected to phone lines (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Transportation Services:

Residents of Abu Qash use public transportation that passes through the village from Ramallah city and other neighboring villages (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011). There are 2 km of paved roads in good condition and 15 km of internal roads, 5 km of which are paved but in poor condition and 10 km of which are unpaved (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Water Resources:

The water company in Jerusalem provides the village with water through the public network constructed in 1978. This network supplies water to almost all the housing units in the village. In 2010, the quantity of water supplied to the village was approximately 61,143 m³ (PWA, 2009), and therefore the amount of water consumed per person is estimated to be 127 liter/capita/day. However, no resident of Abu Qash consumes this amount of water due to water losses during water transfer and distribution. These losses are estimated at 26.5 %, and therefore the average water consumption per capita is 93.3 liter/capita/day (Jerusalem Water Authority, 2011). The rate experienced by Abu Qash residents is slightly low compared with the minimum quantity of 100 liters/capita/day proposed by the World Health Organization.

There are 3 water springs in the village used to irrigate agricultural lands planted with vegetables (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

To determine water costs, the water authority has adopted an upward rate where the price of water increases with increasing consumption. Table 8 shows the price of water by category of consumption.

Table 8: Water tariffs of Jerusalem Water Authority adopted since 01.01.2012

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

Source: Jerusalem Water Authority, 2012

Sanitation:

Abu Qash Village lacks a public sewage network; most of the population uses cesspits as main means for wastewater disposal (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day is approximately 98.5 cubic meters, or 36,000 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the village, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 65 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys with no regard for the environment; there is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to both the environment and to public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

Solid Waste Management:

Abu Qash village does not have a system for the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by citizens and establishments in the village. Residents of Abu Qash collect and dispose of waste individually, primarily through burning it on nearby lands (Abu Qash Village Council, 2011).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Abu Qash is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Abu Qash residents is nearly 0.9 tons, or 337 tons per year (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

Environmental Conditions

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

Water Crisis

- Water is cut off by the Jerusalem Water Authority for long periods of time during summer in several neighborhoods of the village for several reasons:
 - (1) Israeli control over Palestinian water resources. Consequently, the Jerusalem Water Authority purchases water from the Israeli company of Mekorot in order to satisfy residents' needs.
 - (2) High rate of water losses, because the water network is old and in need of rehabilitation and renovation.
- Weak water pressure, particularly in areas where it is supplied uphill.
- Lack of the village's share of water allocated by the company that supplies the village with water.

Wastewater Management

- The absence of a public sewage network means that in Abu Qash residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits and endocrines for the disposal of wastewater, and/or discharge wastewater in the streets. This is particularly common in winter, as citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers during this period. These methods facilitate environmental damage, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the village. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater and water collected in household cisterns (rainwater harvesting cisterns), as it mixes with the waste water thus becomes unsuitable for drinking, because most cesspits are built without lining, allowing wastewater to enter into the ground and avoiding the need to use sewage tankers. Moreover, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without concern for the damage it causes to the environment and to residents' health.

Solid Waste Management:

- The complete lack of waste collection services leading residents to burn waste randomly near houses and on nearby lands.
- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Abu Qash and the other neighboring communities in the governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill, because the appropriate land is within Area C and under Israeli control. Additionally, the implementation of such projects

depends on funding from donor countries. The lack of a sanitary landfill is a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste, and produces bad odors and distortion of the landscape.

Impact of Israeli Occupation

Geopolitical status in Abu Qash

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed in 28th September 1995 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Abu Qash was divided into areas “B” and “C”. Approximately 4,892 dunums (99.8% of the village’s total area) were assigned as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has a complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. Area “B” constitutes most of the inhabited Palestinian areas, including municipalities, villages and some camps. It is worth mentioning that all of the village’s population resides in area “B” which constitutes the larger area in comparison to the total area of the village. The rest of the village’s area, constituting 8 dunums (0.2% of the total area), is classified as area “C”, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory. In area “C” Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through a consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration (table 9).

Table 9: The Geopolitical Divisions of Abu Qash – Ramallah Governorate

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total village area
Area A	0	0
Area B	4,892	99.8
Area C	8	0.2
Nature Reserve	0	0
Total	4,900	100

Source: Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2011

There are no Israeli settlements on Abu Qash lands, although some settlement blocs are very close to the village and located on neighboring villages' lands. These include Beit El settlement bloc and Beit El military base, both of which are built on lands of Al Bireh and Dura al Qar'. Beit El military base was constructed on 1422 dunums of Al Bireh lands and houses the central Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank, a detention center, and an Israeli military camp. Beit El settlement is one of the major Israeli settlements in the Ramallah and Al Bireh Governorate; it was established in 1977 on almost 1056 dunums of land and is currently inhabited by approximately 5,500 Israeli settlers. Talmon and Dolev settlement blocs are located on the western side of Abu Qash village on Al Mazra'a al Qabaliya and Al Janiya lands; these settlements are inhabited by more than 3,700 Israeli settlers and surrounded by a group of settlement outposts.

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented projects

The Village Council of Abu Qash has implemented several development projects during the past 5 years. For more details please see Table 10.

Table 10: Implemented development projects and plans in Abu Qash, 2011

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Constructing an elementary school for boys	Educational	2008	GTZ
Constructing a secondary school for girls	Educational	2008	Arab Monetary Fund
Paving sub roads	Infrastructure	2007	Ministry of Local Government
Supplying street lightings	Infrastructure	2007	Abu Qash Village Council

Source: Abu Qash Village Council, 2011

Proposed Projects

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

1. Establishing a sewage network (6 km) to be connected to all housing units in the village.
2. Supporting poor and needy families in the village through productive projects that would achieve self-sufficiency such as sheep and poultry farms, beehives and home gardens.
3. Rehabilitating existing water springs and constructing a water reservoir with a capacity appropriate to the size of the village's population (about 2500 people).
4. Establishing a fully-integrated health center to be equipped with modern facilities and a qualified medical staff working seven days a week, and providing an ambulance to transport emergency medical cases.
5. Constructing headquarters for a sport, social and cultural club, a women's center and a sports stadium.
6. Constructing five classrooms in Abu Qash Boys School to accommodate students from the ninth to the twelfth grade.
7. Rehabilitating the village's main street (1 km) through repaving, establishing a roundabout island and sidewalks, and rehabilitating sub-roads (4 km).
8. Reclaiming 150 dunums of agricultural lands and rehabilitating a further 80 dunums, in addition to constructing agricultural roads (6 km).

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

The village suffers from a significant shortage in infrastructure and services. The following table shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the Abu Qash Village Council's point of view and feedback from ARIJ's survey.

Table 11: Development Priorities and Needs in Abu Qash

No.	Sector	Strongly needed	Needed	Not a priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and pavement of roads	*			32 km*
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks	*			4 km
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas		*		5 km
4	Construction of new water networks	*			4 km
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of new wells or springs	*			3 springs
6	Construction of water reservoirs		*		500 m ³
7	Construction of a sewage disposal network	*			6 km
8	Construction of a new electricity network			*	
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection		*		15 containers
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste		*		1 vehicle
11	Providing a sanitary landfill			*	
Health Needs					
1	Building of new clinics or health care centres	*			1 health center
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres			*	
3	Purchasing of medical equipment and tools			*	
Educational Needs					
1	Building of new schools			*	
2	Rehabilitation of old schools		*		science laboratories, sport tools, playgrounds and computer labs
3	Purchasing of new equipment for schools		*		
Agriculture Needs					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands		*		100 dunums
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns		*		50 cisterns
3	Construction of barracks for livestock		*		20 barracks
4	Veterinary services		*		
5	Forage and hay for animals		*		1,500 tons per year
6	Construction of new greenhouses		*		20 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses			*	
8	Field crops seeds		*		
9	Plants and agricultural supplies		*		

*2 km are main roads, 10 km are sub roads and 20 km are agricultural.

Source: Abu Qash Village Council, 2011

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