



# Qrayeh

Rural tourism strategy

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NAHNOO

# Qrayeh rural tourism strategy

March 2019

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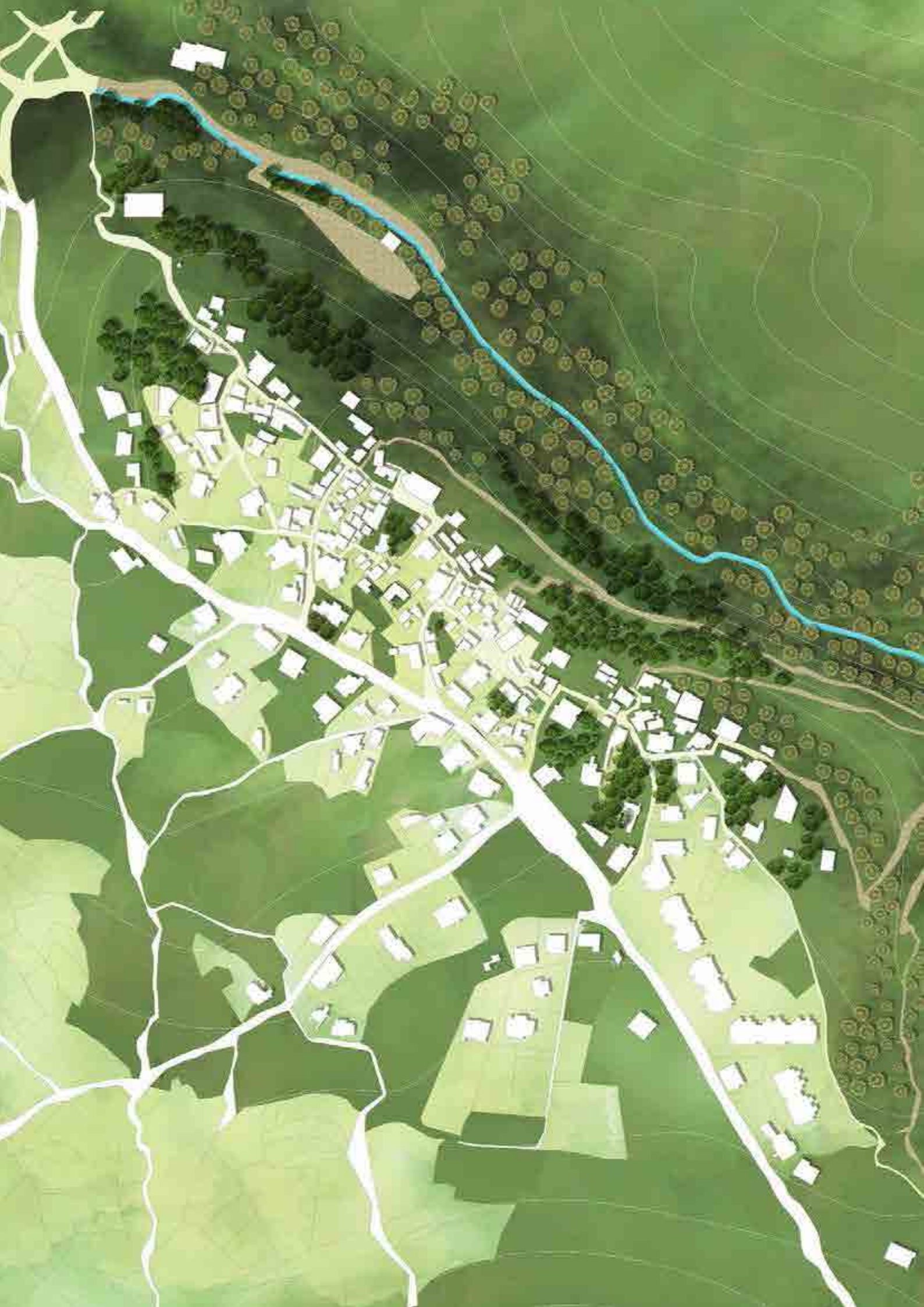
01 What p. 7

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01

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# What

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The strategy outlined in this document follows the invitation of Nahnoo Ngo to elaborate an action plan in the frame of the UNDP project on social cohesion and economic development in the Qrayeh village. The project aims to work on building up the rural tourism sector in the village throughout a participative process that gathers the local community including the residents, the municipality members, the church representatives and various actors from the civil society and faith-based organizations. The goal of the report is to assess the prospects for rural tourism in the village and deliver an action plan to raise the village profile as an attractive destination for rural-tourism in Lebanon. On the long run, if successful, the project will affect a driving economic factor by creating new-employment opportunities: the family income. The project answered three main objectives:



01- First objective: “capacity building” for a group of the local community to develop an ecotourism vision and define an action plan for the implementation in collaboration with the municipality

02- Second objective: “Mapping” cultural and environmental resources including tangible and intangible heritage and features that will help on defining a touristic portrait for the village (e.g. ecotourism/ rural tourism, etc.). In this frame, the phase contributed to delivering recommendation for designing a walkable trail that provide a cultural narrative for the village and a strategic revitalization program for vacant lots including public vacant parcels and vacant buildings.

03- Third objective: Promoting the village touristic vision. This includes providing tools for promotion and building a road map to define a promotional strategy that targets two profiles: local inhabitants and external visitors. This phase works first, on raising

local inhabitants’ awareness about the Qrayeh potential of turning into a tourist destination and mobilize their resources to help on developing the plan. On the other hand, the study identifies activities and stakeholders to engage in the scope of a strategic networking for the project implementation.



# Objectives

Six phases within

# A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

MORE THAN **15** COMMUNITY  
MEETING

SEPT

OCT

NOV

DEC



JAN

FEB

MAR

02

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# Who

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Actors

## The Local Community

The project involves a local working group (LWG) gathering a number of active citizens from the local community and legal representatives from the Qrayeh municipality.

## NAHNOO

NAHNOO is a research and advocacy platform for participatory policy-making in Lebanon, which works towards an inclusive society through four axes of intervention: Good Governance, Public Spaces, Cultural Heritage, and Youth Engagement.

NAHNOO played the expert role in strategic planning to guide the LWG in the development of the Qrayeh Rural Strategy.

The Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon -

## MOSA

## UNDP

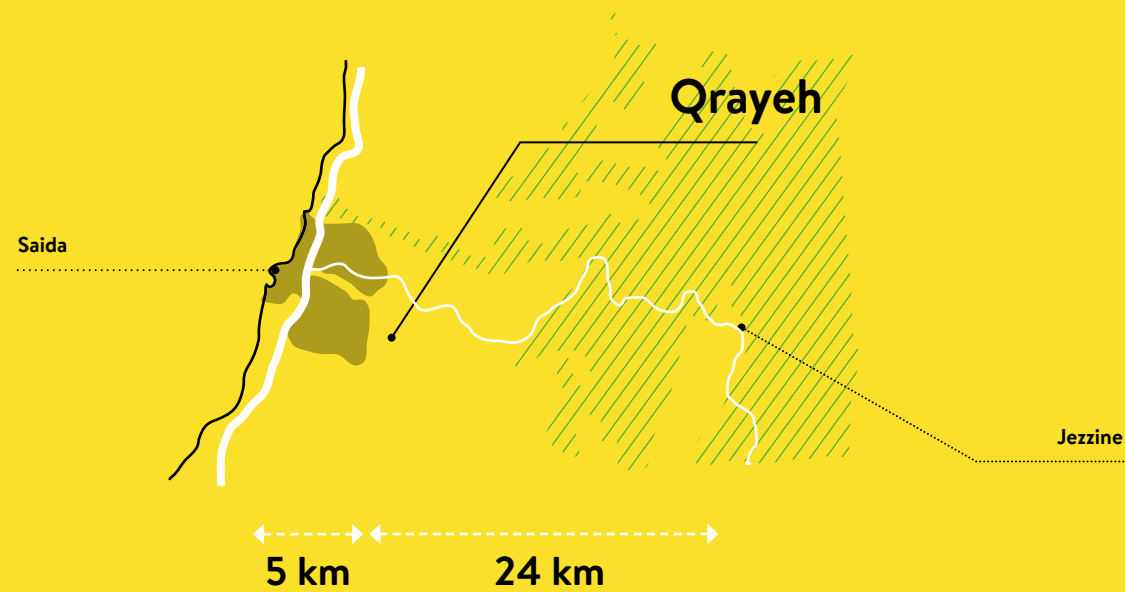
This project is part of a UNDP Peace building project I - Mechanisms for social stability in South Lebanon project.



03

# Where

Conditions of implementation





## Challenges

2862  
original inhabitants

6307  
growth since 2006

Qrayeh witnessed a rapid growth within 10 years causing high pressures on agricultural lands and infrastructure (density, refugees, infrastructure, etc.). The situation is leading to the degradation of natural landscape, the limitation of agricultural exploitation (passive cooperative, lack of export of goods,...), and the increase of youth unemployment.

# Opportunities

1

### A strategic location

Qrayeh is located in the Caza of Saida in the geographic perimeter of the Southern region of Lebanon. It benefits from a strategic location between 2 polar cities in the south Saida (5 km) and Jezzine (24 km) and from a surrounding of valuable natural landscape valleys and agricultural lands. The village area of 4,75 km<sup>2</sup> counts a population of original inhabitants of 2862 individuals, mainly Maronite Christians, including 67% living in the town.

2

### A growing population

The rapid development doubled the village population in 10 years. The overall population of the village reaches today 6307 inhabitants by counting the Lebanese families that moved to the village after the 2006 Israeli war and the conflicts of 2013 in Abra and Saida and the Syrian refugees (952 according to municipal police assessment made regularly each 2 months). This growth is impacting the village infrastructure of services and economic situation. Natural landscape is degrading due to the extension of new built settlements. The touristic regeneration approach aims to support the village in identifying ways to enhance natural landscapes by highlighting their potential to develop new economic patterns and preserve the village authentic identity including its oral heritage, habits and traditions that worth sharing and exploring.

3

### A hosting spirit

Qrayeh benefits from an advanced sense of hospitality, historical and physical patterns from ancient times, an active community of individuals, a network of youth and early retired inhabitants that have potential of engagement in new economic cycles. Several religious and youth associations animate regularly the village life by planning annual events and festivals, attracting visitors from neighbouring villages (Tanbourite, Zeghdayra, Ein el Delb, Jensnaya, kafarjarra, etc.).

4

### A rich territory of agriculture

Qrayeh is very known for its production of high quality olive oil. Its natural lands are mainly occupied by olive trees. The village is also known for Loquat trees, and recent plantation of Avocado and Qashta. Several local women are also active in the production of seasonal mounneh and organic food based on local herbal essences. Still, the village doesn't benefit from agricultural industrial production, and the work of the agricultural cooperative is suspended. Thus, agricultural products worth exploration to develop an up-scaling strategy to transform seasonal products into touristic offerings.



04

# Why

Ecotourism Vs Rural Tourism in  
Lebanon p. 24

Lebanese rural tourism : What does  
the market reveal? p. 30

## ECOTOURISM

RESPONSIBLE  
TRAVEL TO  
NATURAL AREAS THAT  
CONSERVES THE  
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINS  
THE WELL-BEING OF THE  
LOCAL PEOPLE, AND  
INVOLVES  
INTERPRETATION  
AND EDUCATION.

INTERNATIONAL

ECO-TOURISM SOCIETY, 2018

## RURAL TOURISM

RURAL TOURISM IS  
“EXPERIENCING  
THE COUNTRY” THROUGH  
A VARIETY OF TOURISM  
ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE  
POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE  
LOCAL ENVIRONMENT,  
LOCAL COMMUNITY OR  
LOCAL CULTURE.

# LEBANESE RURAL TOURISM

Between January and July 2014, a strategy for rural tourism in Lebanon was developed by the Ministry of Tourism through consultations with rural tourism stakeholders. The goal of the five-year strategy is to enhance economic opportunities in Lebanese rural areas through improving the competitiveness of specific value chains, including rural tourism and another set of agriculture sectors and food products. The assessment included an analysis of the current situation of rural tourism in Lebanon (Ehden-Bsharre-Akkar, Batroun-Jbeil-Tannourine, Shouf-Jezzine-West Bekaa, MidEast-West Bekaa and Rachaya, Hasbaya- Marjaayoun). It identified main rural tourism stakeholders, dynamic trends in rural tourism and the different segments and sub-segments. This study, not effectively operating today, showed how the Lebanese market is witnessing a higher demand for alternative tourism scenarios due to following factors:

- Mass & resort tourism (ski and beach resorts) are creating congestion and people are searching for less expensive alternative travels.
- Busy life and economic constraints privilege short and affordable escapes
- Lebanon benefits from short distance between cities and villages
- Expats and diaspora express the desire of knowing more about the country and connect to roots and sense of home in villages.

more than

87%

of Lebanese  
live in urban  
areas:  
exposed  
to stressful  
life, urban  
citizens  
desire to  
escape  
urban traffic,  
noise and  
pollution.

- The world is heading towards a more experiential tourism.

In addition, the Mckinsey report published, in January 2019, the summary of the diagnostic of tourism situation in Lebanon. The document announces the key challenges to address in order to achieve a positive development in the sector by 2025-2035, amongst it: lack of tourism data to inform decision making, limited hospitality infrastructure catering for the upper mass and luxury segments especially outside Beirut, absence of brand image for Lebanon, etc.

Among the priorities initiatives proposed to address the challenges, two main points support the Qrayeh project : first, attract one anchor-tenant in ultra luxury ecotourism; second, encourage the development of authentic ecotourism offering.

The Qrayeh rural tourism project contributes to a vision in search for alternatives to the actual tourism market in Lebanon, not only to propose new economic patterns but also to answer an increasing need for new rural tourism destinations, and answer the demand of Lebanese locals and foreigners.

The project integrates the path of developing authentic eco-tourism offering more than searching of a anchor tenant in luxury eco-tourism offering. The works aims to guarantee the full engagement of local people in investing their local resources to develop new economic opportunities and induce a direct benefit for the local community.

The form of anchor-tenant or external investment can be eventually planned in a perspective of supporting the Local working groups throughout a win-win relation of professional partnerships to upscale local initiatives and support any branding or hospitality activities.

Developing thus a rural/eco-tourism strategy in Qrayeh requests a good understanding of the offering and the demand.



## IS ECOTOURISM THE MEAN TO REVITALIZE THE TOWN?

According to the international Ecotourism society (2018), Ecotourism is a responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.

NATURE + LOCAL PEOPLE + INTERPRETATION + EDUCATION

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that the municipality and the local working groups should adopt the following tourism principles:

- Minimize impacts.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.
- Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help on raising sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates.
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the locals and work in partnership with them to create empowerment.

## QRAYEH & ECOTOURISM:

A RURAL COMPONENT

NATURE = AGRICULTURE  
+ LOCAL PEOPLE  
+ INTERPRETATION  
+ EDUCATION

Qrayeh is known for its agricultural lands and products. The most important crops are olives, loquat, citrus, bitter orange "abou sfeir", Thyme, sumak, avocado and cream and cream "Qashta" (lately), in addition to the cultivation of vegetables of all kinds. The main nature of Qrayeh doesn't consist of exceptional natural sites like a cedar reserve, or a sandy beach, a forest or a river. Its nature relies on agricultural lands which bring us in the strategy to use an additional tourism typology:

RURAL  
TOURISM

05

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# How

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Components &  
Strategic Goals p. 36

Documenting  
Local Resources p. 46

Qrayeh's Rural Tourism  
Strategy p. 68

Action Plan 2019-2022  
p. 110

## SGs - Strategic goals

# How to define a new competitive rural destination in Qrayeh?

Qrayeh benefits from a relaxed and quiet environment and conserves beautiful scenery in the valley located between the water source of the river and the hilly old town : Jal Dheim, Jal Faysal, etc.

It is a village where agriculture (olives and Loquats and bitter orange) takes place in a natural and unpolluted environment. An area potentially rich in traditions and ancestral customs, that can provide “visitors” / “tourists” a dose of unknown to attract and convince the decision of leisure.

Today, fresh and traditional local food are made by local women, famous for their “mouneh”. These two resources are essential for the development of local food and agricultural experiences, food trails discovery, organic food, etc.

The village benefits from several intangible and natural heritage that worth discovery and conservation: Grottos, cultural and historic events, religious sites are eventual spaces to explore in the planning.

The grade of conservation of the village old agricultural houses, the social community life and the strong relation to the land resources are in line with the development of authentic rural experiences.



In order to transform these resources into components for rural tourism, the planning should take in consideration the following strategic goals:

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SG 01

# Local Resources

## Natural

natural paths p. 48

Argriculture p. 56

Edible herbs p. 60

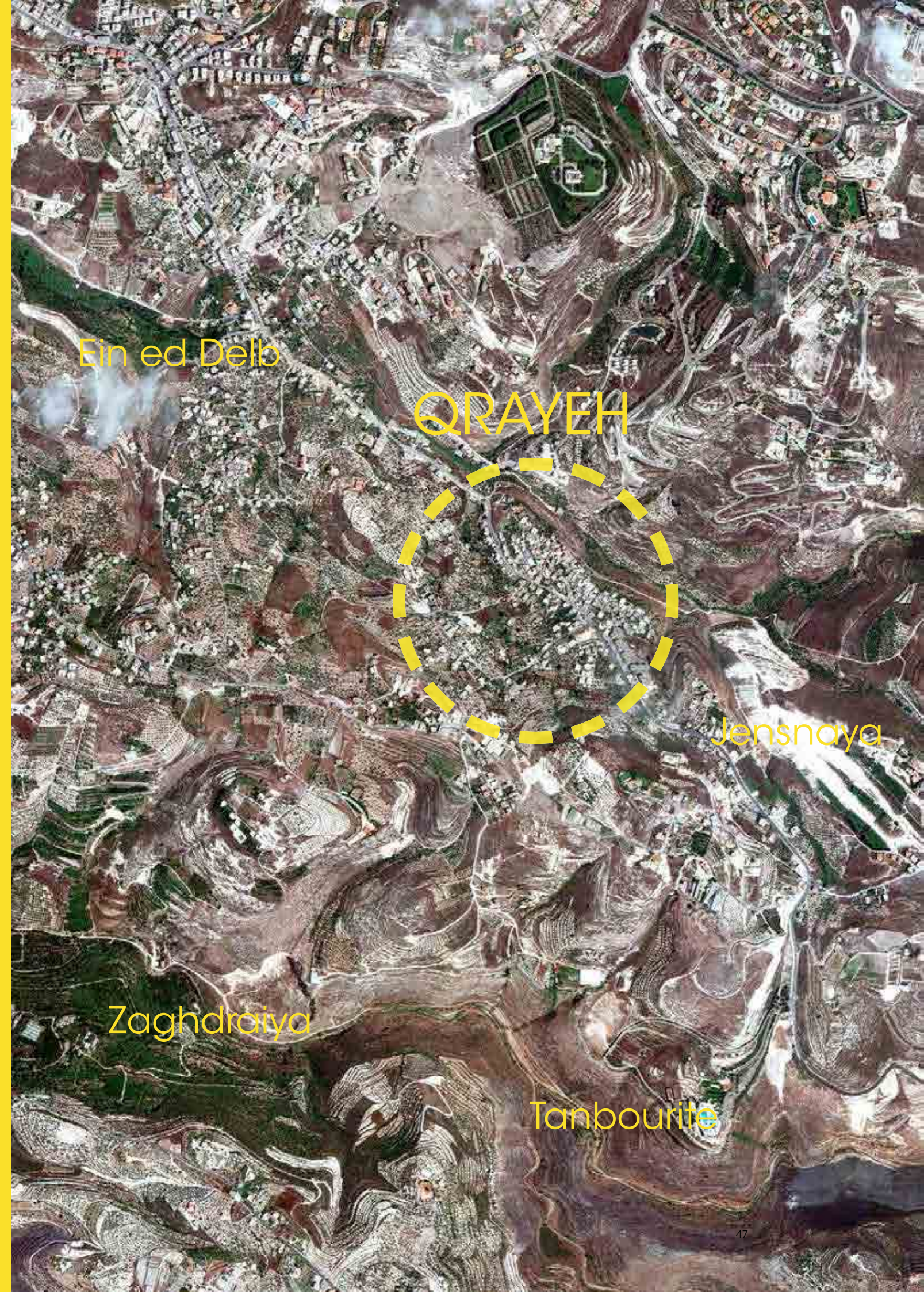
Seasonality p. 64

## Intagible

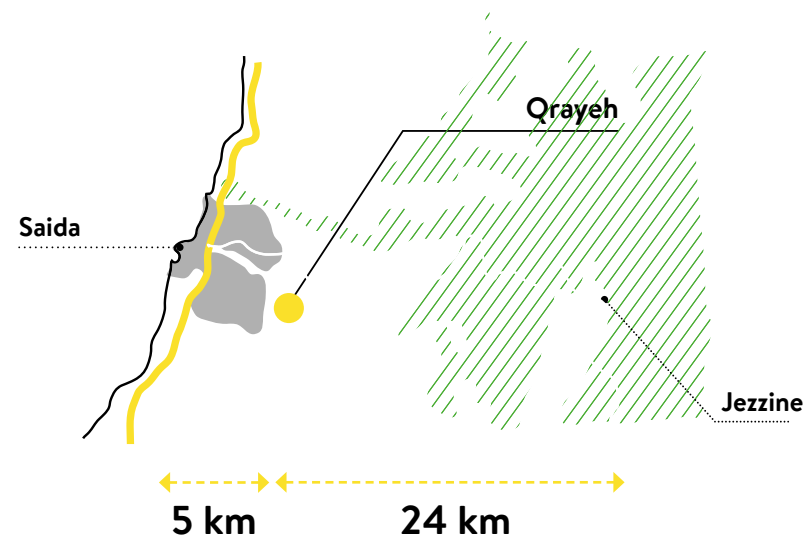
p. 67

## Tangible

p. 75







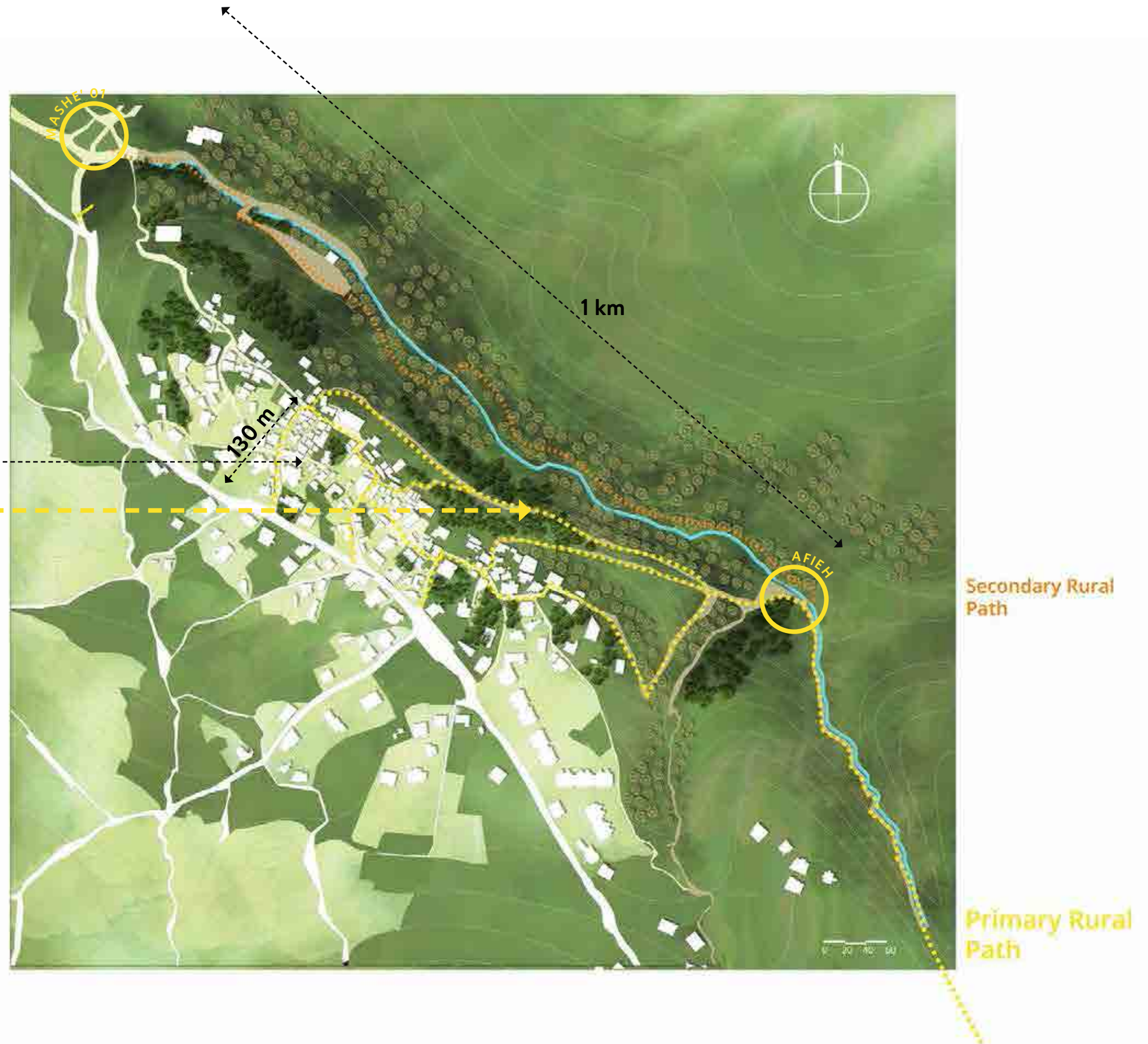
### Mapped area of the old village

### Location of the studied natural paths

The studied area of the village included the old village zone that is located between the main Saida-Jezzine Road and the natural valley that separates the municipality of Qrayeh from Jezzine Municipality and Ein el Delb.

During the process, 18 potential houses were mapped as well as two natural paths were identified and split into:

- One primary path, located on the upper topographic layer of the valley, accessible as a public path and establishing direct connections with the old village inner streets.
- Second primary path, located in the lower topographic layer of the valley and extending from a public owned land (mashe') (parcels 183, 184, 185) (Table of "Unbuilt land ownership and typology", p. 58), following the river line and crossing several olive and loquat lands owned by private or religious entities. The path offers an exceptional immersion in the natural landscape of Qrayeh.

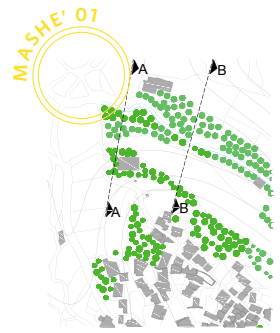




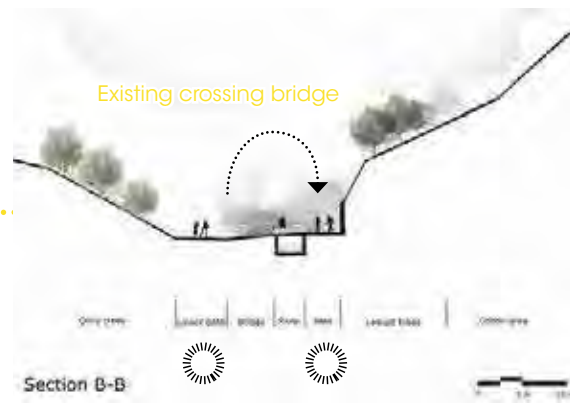
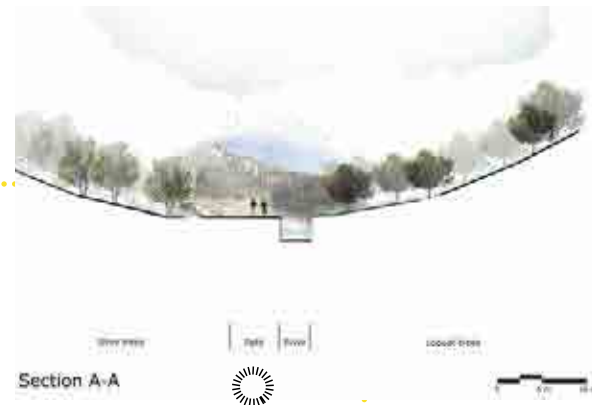
# The natural trail

WWW.NAHNOO.ORG



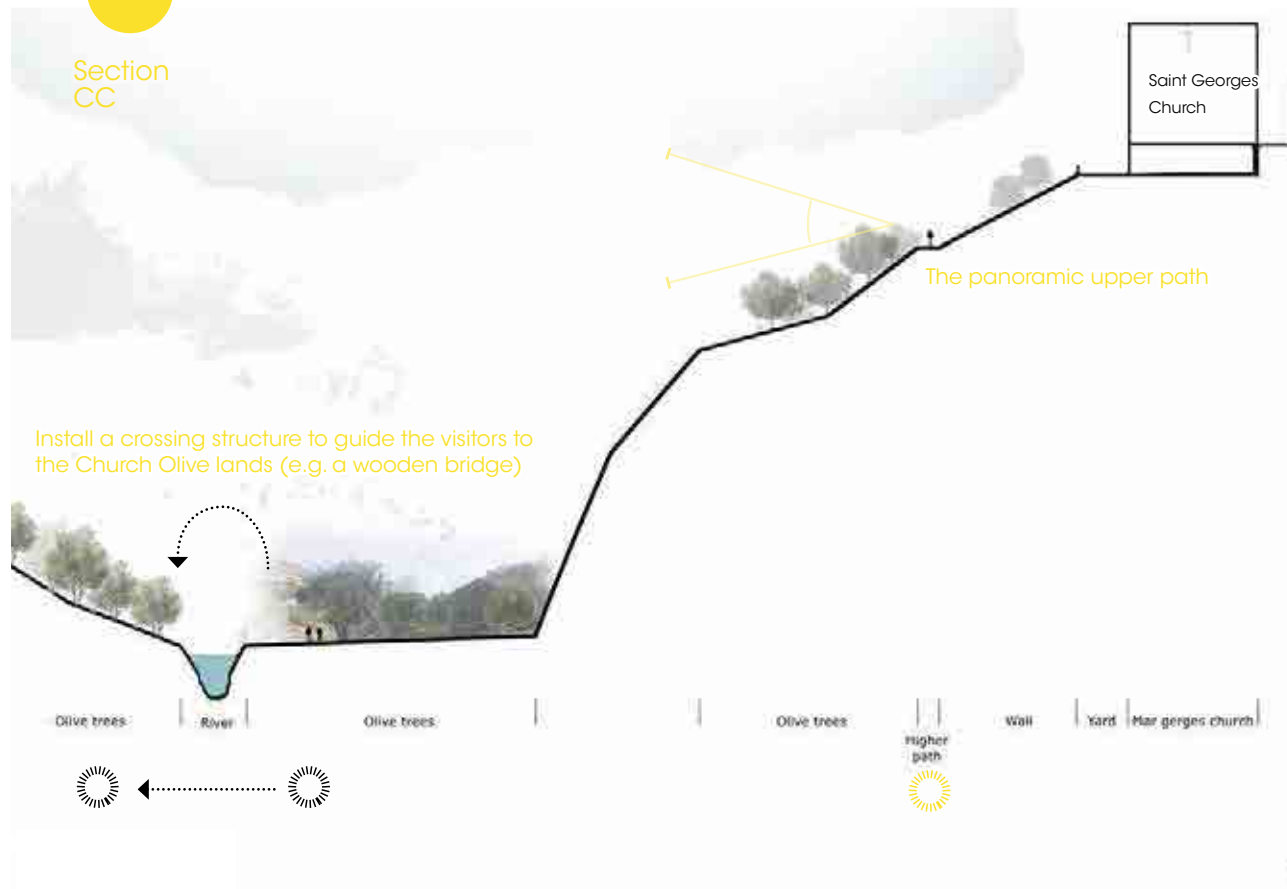


Section AA  
an immersive lower path



Section BB

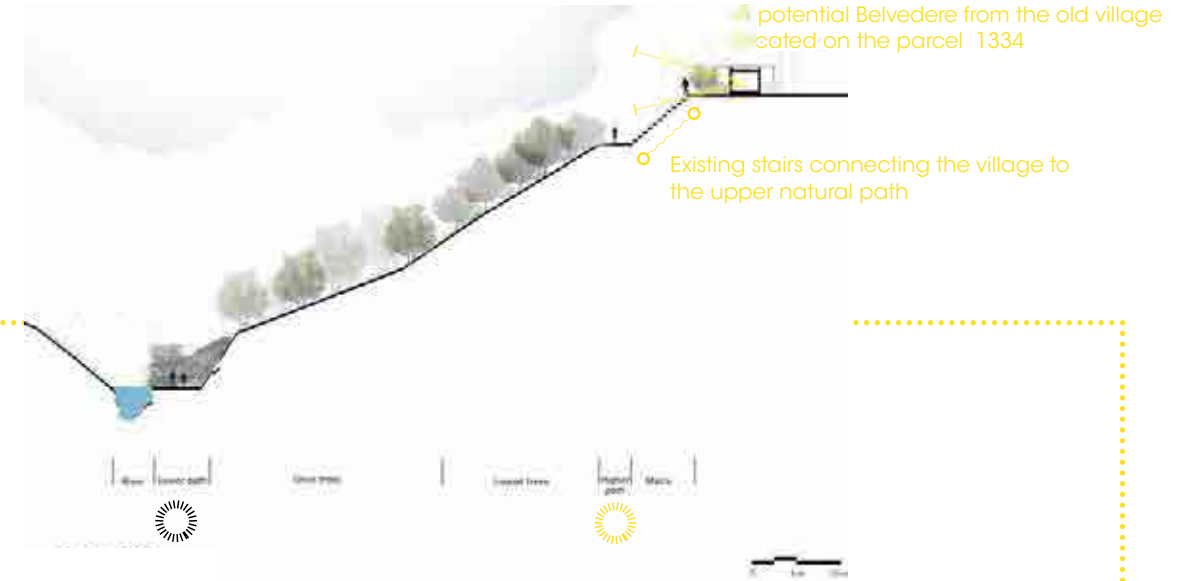
Section CC



The panoramic upper path

Install a crossing structure to guide the visitors to the Church Olive lands (e.g. a wooden bridge)

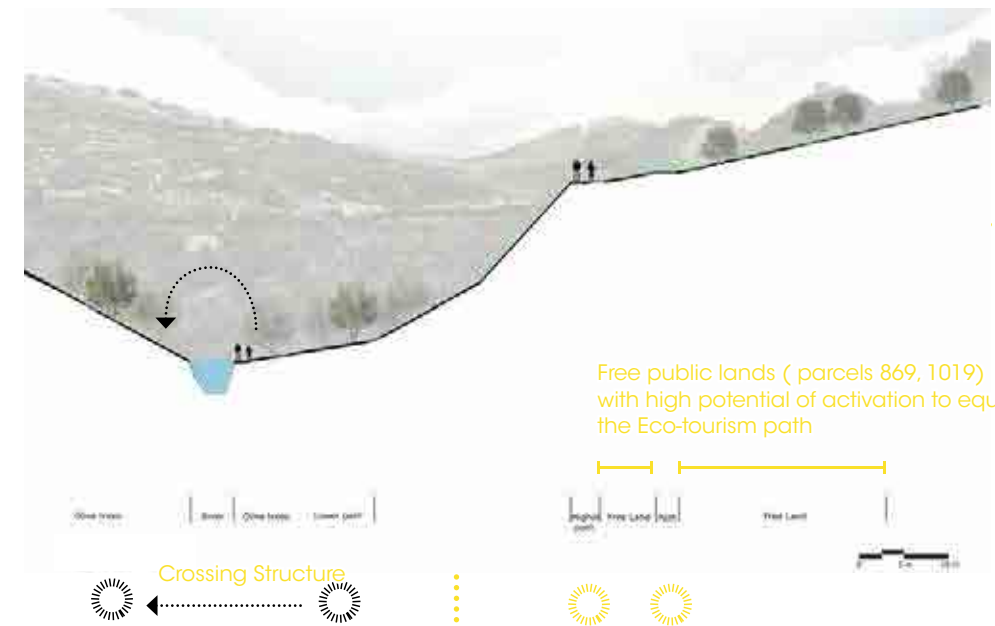
Section DD



potential Belvedere from the old village  
located on the parcel 1334

Existing stairs connecting the village to  
the upper natural path

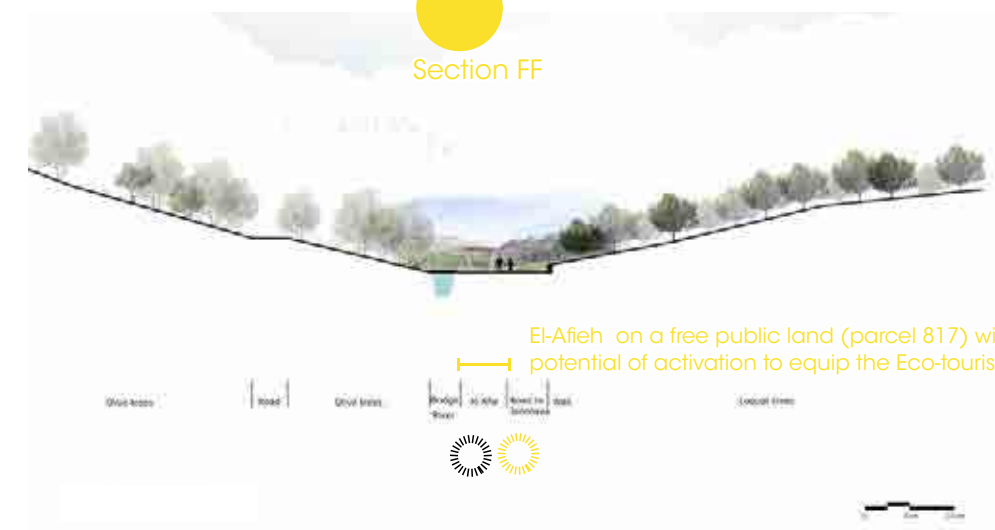
Section EE



Free public lands ( parcels 869, 1019)  
with high potential of activation to equip  
the Eco-tourism path

Crossing Structure

Section FF



El-Afieh on a free public land (parcel 817) with high  
potential of activation to equip the Eco-tourism path



# Agriculture

The proposed natural paths cross several lands of loquat, olives and bitter orange (p. 58). A landscape with rich agricultural heritage incorporating cultural values going beyond the fruit . While interviewing local agricultural land owners, different men insisted on the high attachment of their town to comestible plantations of Olives, Loquat and bitter orange (Figure "Agricultural seasons", p. 64). They also highlighted their relation to edible herbs and local homemade products (Figure "Seasonal food products", p. 65). The village is indeed very known for the high quality production of olive oil and is very characterized by the smell of Loquat flowers that invade its internal streets.

Loquat flowers and branches shade hospitality spaces in several gardens of Qrayeh. "Em Samir", an old lady, told us how she receives her guest under the Loquat tree in sign of generous hospitality. She also shared stories, of her young age, about convivial celebrations where neighbours used to gather under the trees to spend time and sing improvised traditional songs exalting Qrayeh's landscape. Several traditional songs were documented in the process, called "raddiyet", mentioning geographical references in the village (e.g. "Jal Dghem") and celebrating different seasonal plantations.

One of the major rural characteristic of the village is related to agriculture, which is to be preserved, promoted and transferred to young generations. Most of the agricultural men are very old and stopped working in their lands. Many are delegating the management of their seasons to an external actor. This is damaging the production due to the unprofessional agricultural techniques.

Moreover, Loquat plantations and picking are considered very sensitive, and short in exploitation. Nonetheless, it is clear that the inhabitants aren't aware of the variety of use of Loquat branches, wood, fruits, seeds and flowers in different culinary and design contexts. Qrayeh can take advantage of these characteristics to conceive a distinct identity at the national context.



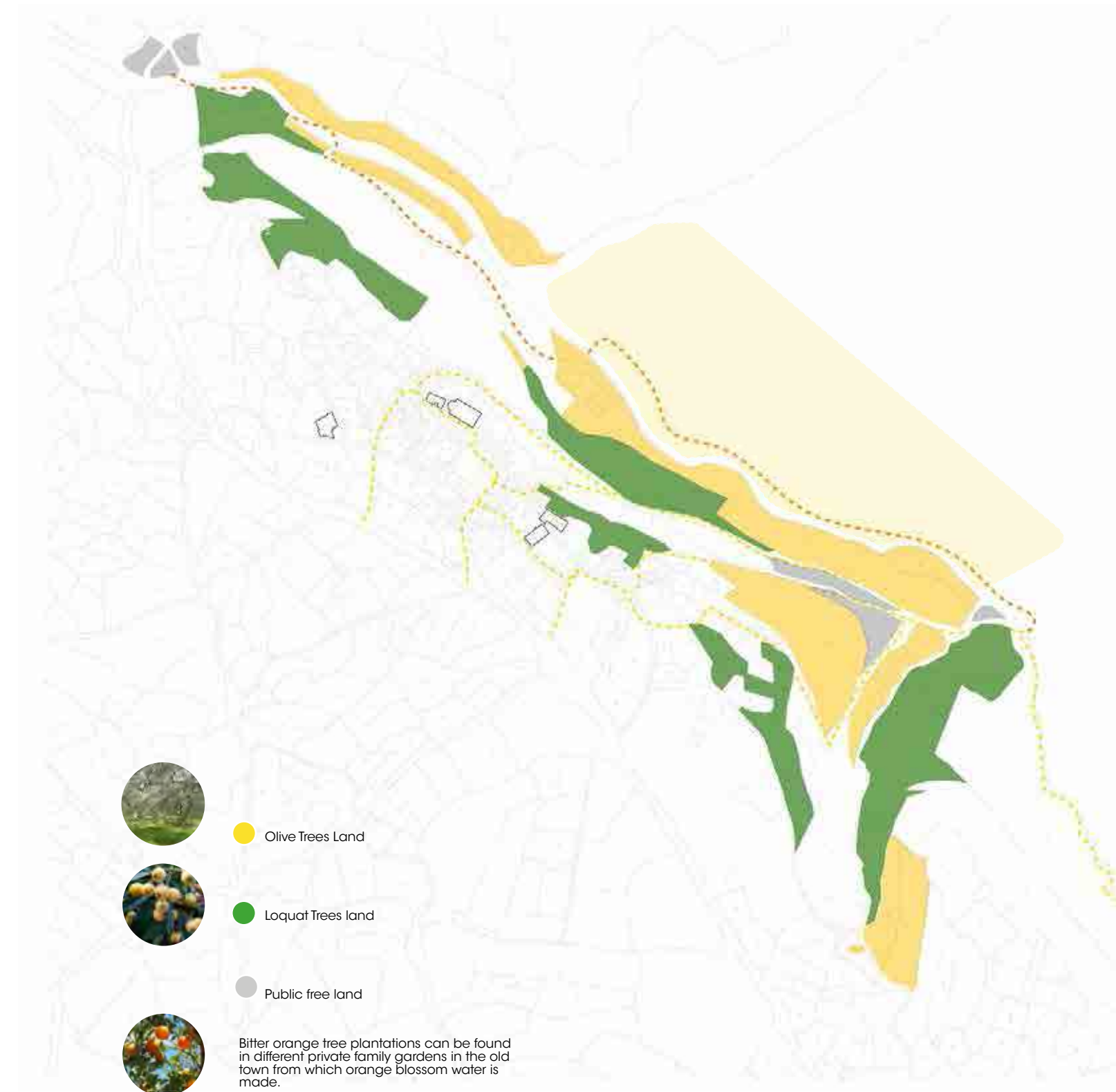


رض غير مبنية  
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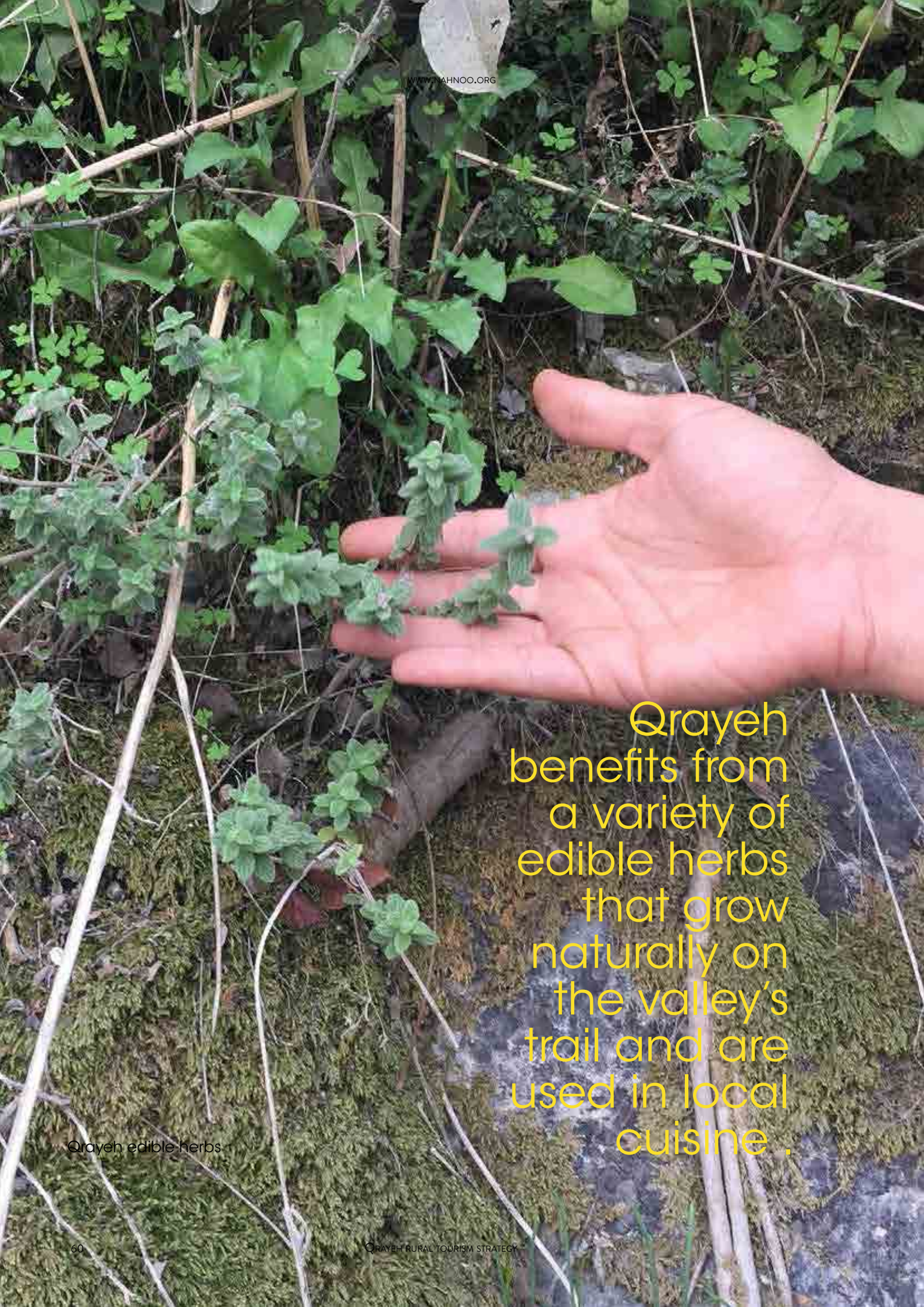
Agricultural Olive lands Agricultural land-Loquat trees

Public land    Unbuilt private lands

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privacy reasons



















Qrayeh edible herbs

Qrayeh benefits from a variety of edible herbs that grow naturally on the valley's trail and are used in local cuisine .

English name	Arabic name	Location	Indegious knowledge	Recipes
 Pigweed, redroot amaranth, redroot pigweed	قطيفة	Grows in gardens amongst cultivated plants or as a weed in greenhouses. Cannot grow in the shade, and requires a well-drained but moist soil. Worldwide spread	Fortifies the blood- Treatment of constipation- Beneficial for health and the whole body- High in vitamins- Increases Hb in blood- Treats inflammation- Treats stomach- aches-	Pigweed with onion
 Bermuda Buttercup	حميصه	Wild soil grows in the wet bushes, near the canals, and is grown to fertilize its leaves. It is a herb that is about 30 centimeters high and is of two types: the large orchid acidosis and the small gardener acid, there is small acidosis in most temperate regions of the world. It grows in wasteland, pasture, and harvest in the early summer.	The leaf is a detoxifying herb, and its fresh juice has a significant diuretic effect, similar to that of other acidosis, moderate laxative and can be a long-term cure for chronic diseases, especially those related to gastrointestinal tract.	
 Eryngo	قرصة العنة	Fields and rocky places, usually in dry soils. Requires a well-drained soil and a sunny position. East Mediterranean region	Anti-cancer properties . Antipoison effect . Treatment of asthma Treatment of digestive tract disorders	Eryngo Salad - Kueikh Eryngo Salad - Chouf Eryngo with Tahini
 Soapwort	الحلاوي	june to september /West Asian regions and spread in Syria, Beria and agricultural and especially the coastal area	It is used as a disinfectant to treat lung infections, to stimulate the secretion of bile, diuresis and anti-rheumatism, and to be absorbed by adding a teaspoon of dry jams in a cup of boiled and cooled water for 8 hours. Then a quarter of a cup 3 times a day, and as a boiled 6 g of dry jars in a glass of water and taken by tablespoon 3 times a day. It is used as a skin treatment for eczema and acne, and roots in the food industry are used as a harmless foam material and used in shampoo industry	
 Bull's eye	مشّ، حليب، دنب الفرس	Fields.	Nutritious Nutritious like meat Treats inflammation	Bull's eye with chickpeas Burghol with Bull's eye
 Mallow	خبيزة	Hedgerows, woodlands, sunny edges, dappled shade Requires moist soils. Waste places and road sides, of lowland, hilly areas or even desert, depending the species.Flowering in march-april-may and june	Medicinally mallows are used for all sorts of wonderful things from tummy troubles to sore throats,Making a decoction or strong tea from the leaves and roots can be added to shampoo to treat dry hair or dandruff. Taking this same decoction can be used to treat stomach ulcers	Mallow and Chickpeas Mallow Sauté Mallow with Burghol Stuffed Mallow
 Sage	قصعين	Dry banks and stony places, usually in limestone areas and often where there is very little soil . Cannot grow in the shade, requires dry or moist soil and can tolerate drought . Southern Europe to Asia Minor but grows also in the US.	To relieve stomach and G.I. discomforts.	Sage Herbal Tea Stuffed Sage Leaves
 Dwarf Chicory	هندبة برية	Grassy meadows and arable land, especially on chalk and usually between olive trees Cannot grow in the shade and requires moist soil Worldwide spread.		Chicory with Kichik and Onion
 Fennel	شومر، شمرة	Dry stony calcareous soils Can grow in dry or moist soil and can tolerate drought. The plant can also tolerate strong winds but not maritime exposure. Middle East, Southern Europe and Southwest Asia	Folowering in june-july-august-october-september	Fennel Omelet Fennel Salad
 Garden rocket	جرجير	Road sides and waste, warm, lowland places ;extending to medium highlands usually less than 900 m above sea level.	Flowering in march-april-may and june	Garden Rocket Salad
 Desert viper's grass	قعفور	Desert grounds, especially with clayey soil in places with basaltic pebbles and gravels, particularly in the north eastern desert.		Sauté Desert Viper Grass
 Spanish thistle	مرار	Waste grounds and road sides of mountainous Mediterranean regions	Flowering in may-june-july-august-october and september/Helps in digestion Healthy for body Beneficial for fortifying blood	Spanish Thistle in Oil

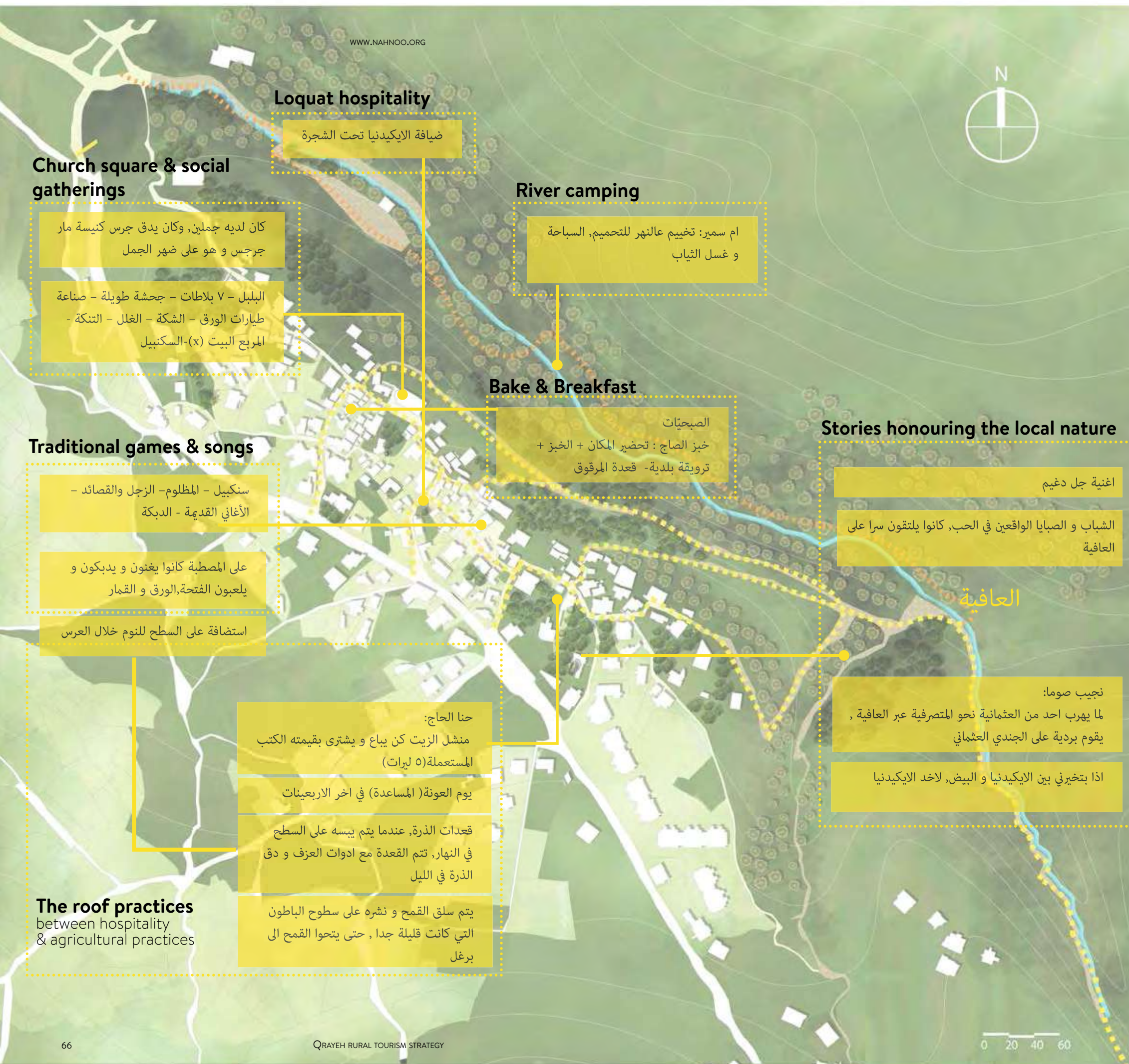






# Qrayeh geopoetics

## local stories and authentic practices





Design a strategy

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# The old Town

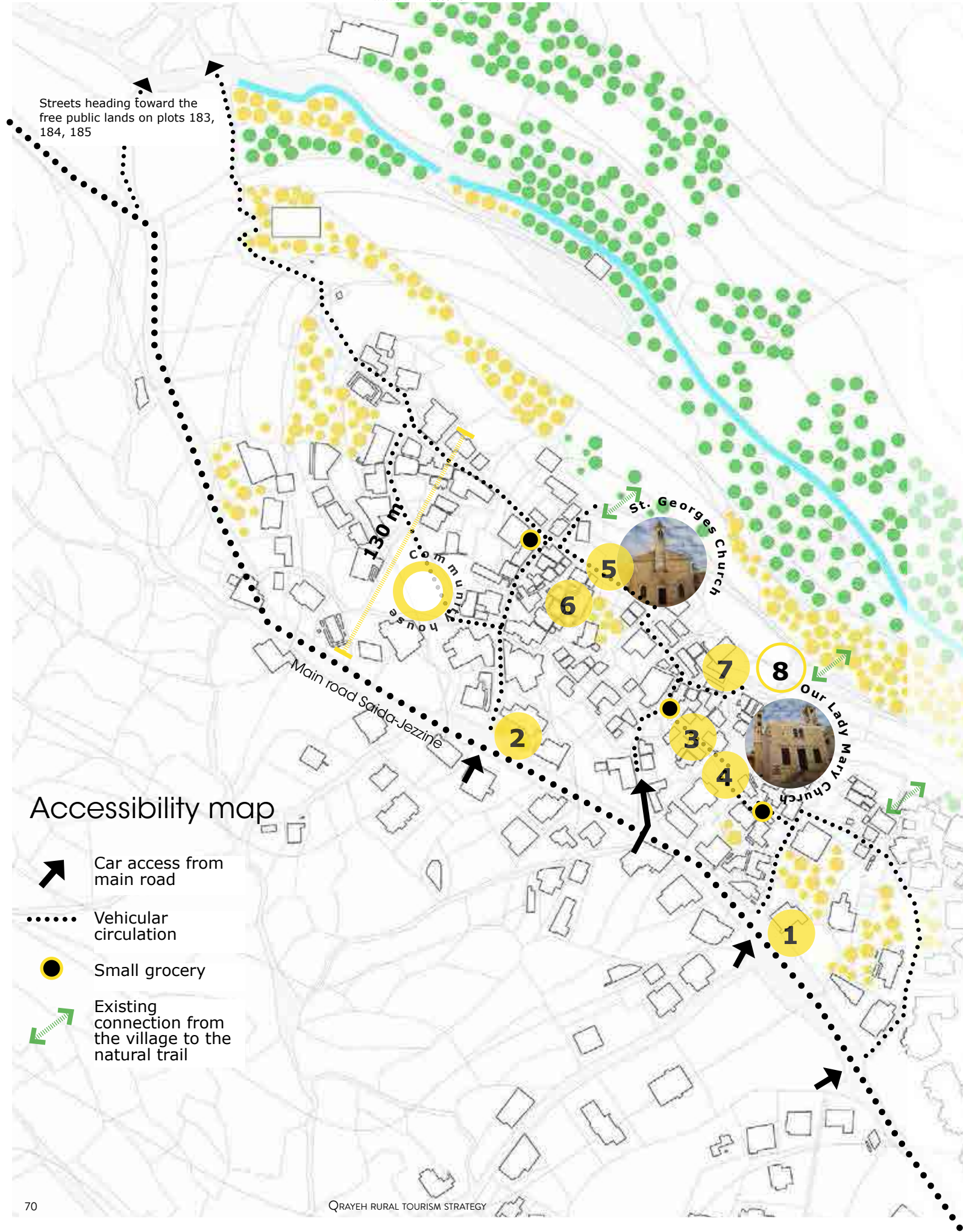
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Accessibility p. 69  
Vacant buidings p. 75

## Accessibility

Qrayeh benefits from exceptional walkable distance environment (“Accessibility map”, p. 70). Major connections between the village and the natural path don’t overpass 500 meters length, which is internationally recognized as a very friendly walkable environment including elderly people. Today, the human scale environment lacks from walkable friendly infrastructure. The road of Saida-Jezzine divides the village in two distinct parts the old (northern side) and the new village (southern side). The frequency and the fast flow of vehicles makes the crossing between the two part of the town uncomfortable. The old town is mainly concentrated between the road and the natural valley which limits the division of the old town space and ensure a good pedestrian flow within its perimeter.

Four vehicular entrances connects the main road to the old part of the village. Car permeability is ensuring a good car access for the village inhabitants, nevertheless the streets tightness and the predominance of asphalt materials don’t ensure a good cohabitation between the car flow and the pedestrian flow. Reaching a more rural friendly atmosphere requires rehabilitation works of the inner streets to develop a more pedestrian friendly infrastructure “Better accessibility strategy”, p. 72). Greening works at the entrances of the old town from the main road would also be valuable for the rural tourism project to increase the visibility the rural tourism network that is being implemented in the old town. These greening interventions can act as passive



1

Main road - non pedestrian friendly



2

Discret wayfinding to access the old town



3

walkable distance - asphalted streets



4

Square used as parking lot



5

St. Georges Church Square



6

Abandoned traditional houses



7

car dominance close to the natural valley

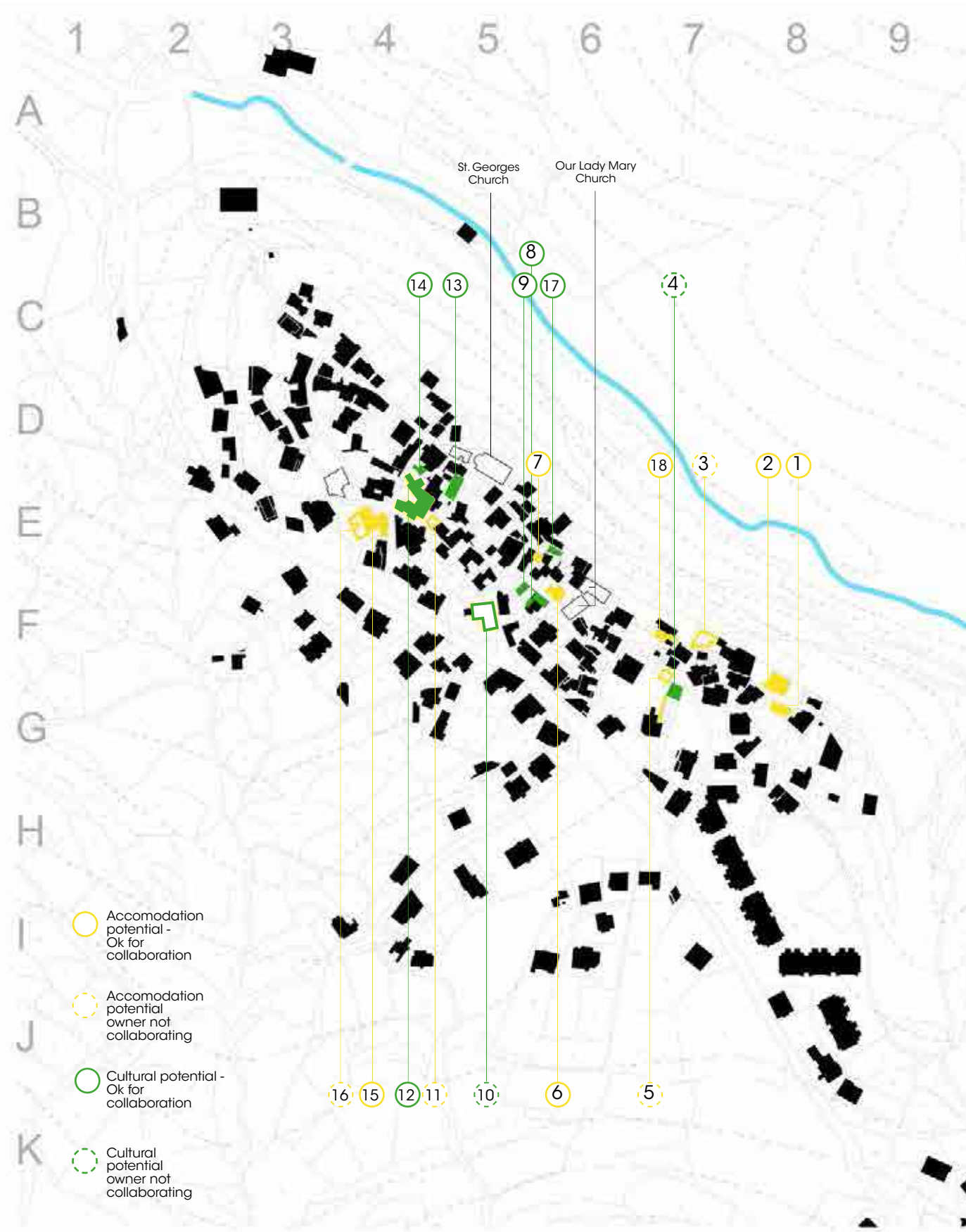


8

Pedestrian accessibility to the trail







## Vacant buildings

During the process, we mapped 18 vacant and misused buildings, only 12 will be engaged in the project reflection written in this report due to the receptivity of their owners.



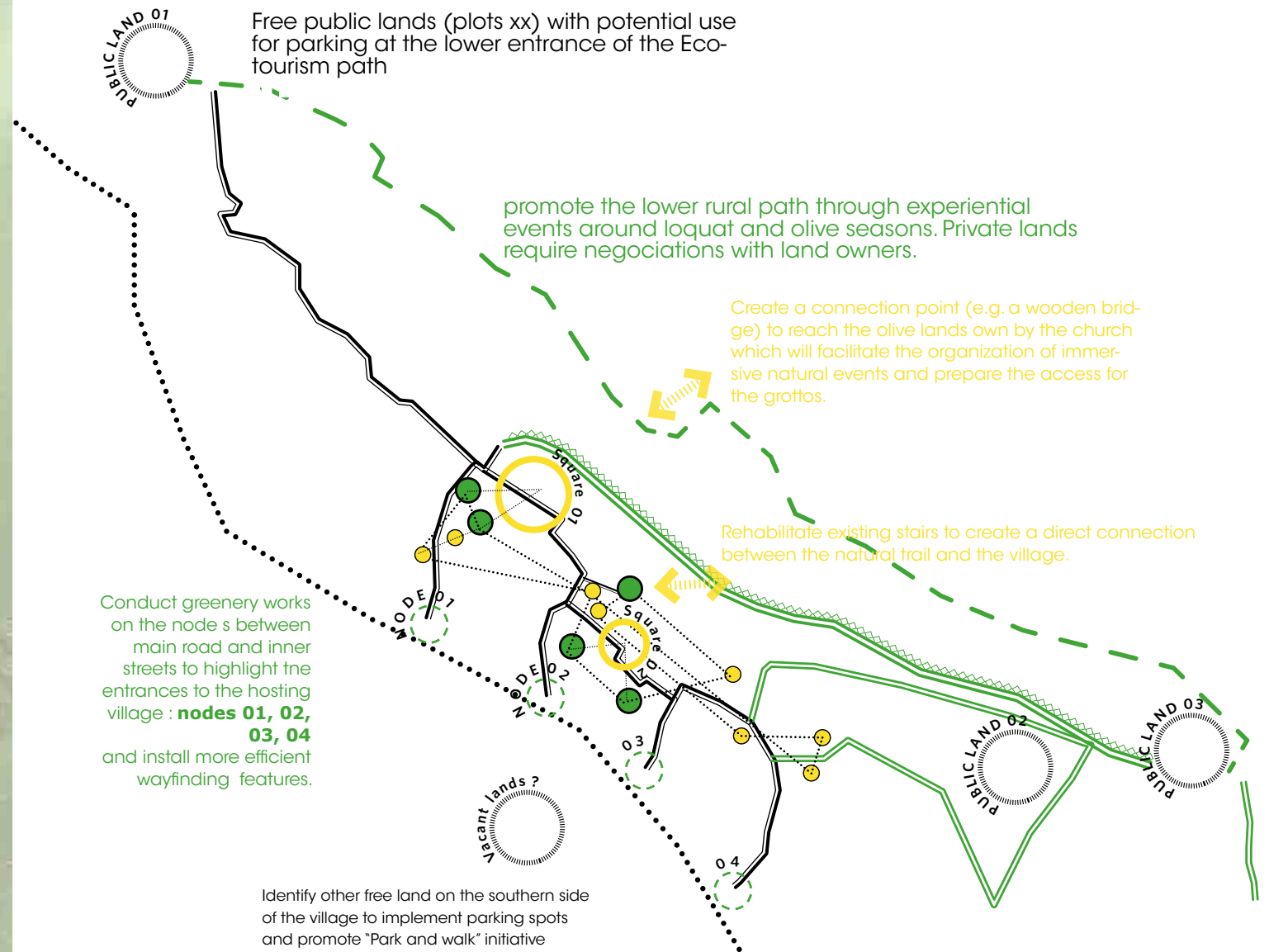
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Implement

# Activation Strategy



○ Requalify the identity of the squares located beside the church of St. Georges and Our Lady Mary

● Activate traditional houses or spaces with panoramaic views to develop programs related to the rural tourism services.

● Create a network of accomodation offerings by rehabilitating misused buildings and activating rooftops.

— Redesign street sections to provide a more authentic rural atmosphere and a pedestrian friendly environment

— Execute a stabilized soil for the upper path for more comfortable walking practices and limit vehicular access

◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇ Requalify the upper path edges by promoting the plantation of edible local plants and installing meditation spots.



# Rural Path



Refreshing door

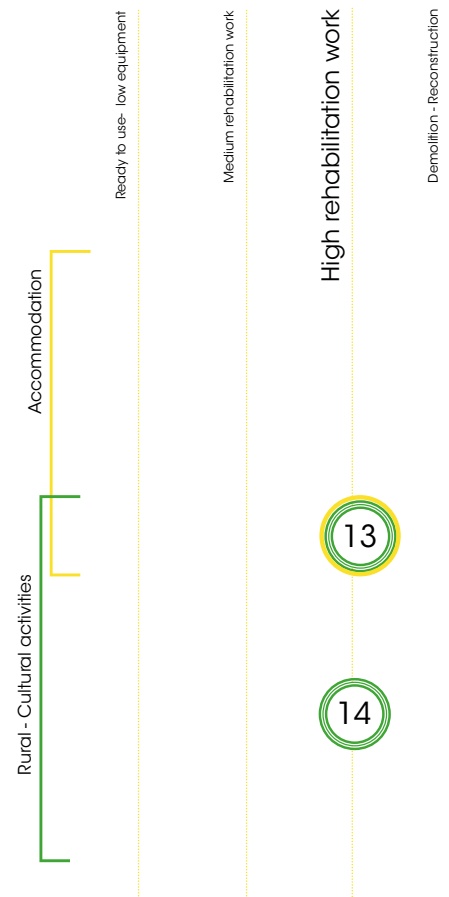


Aromatic park



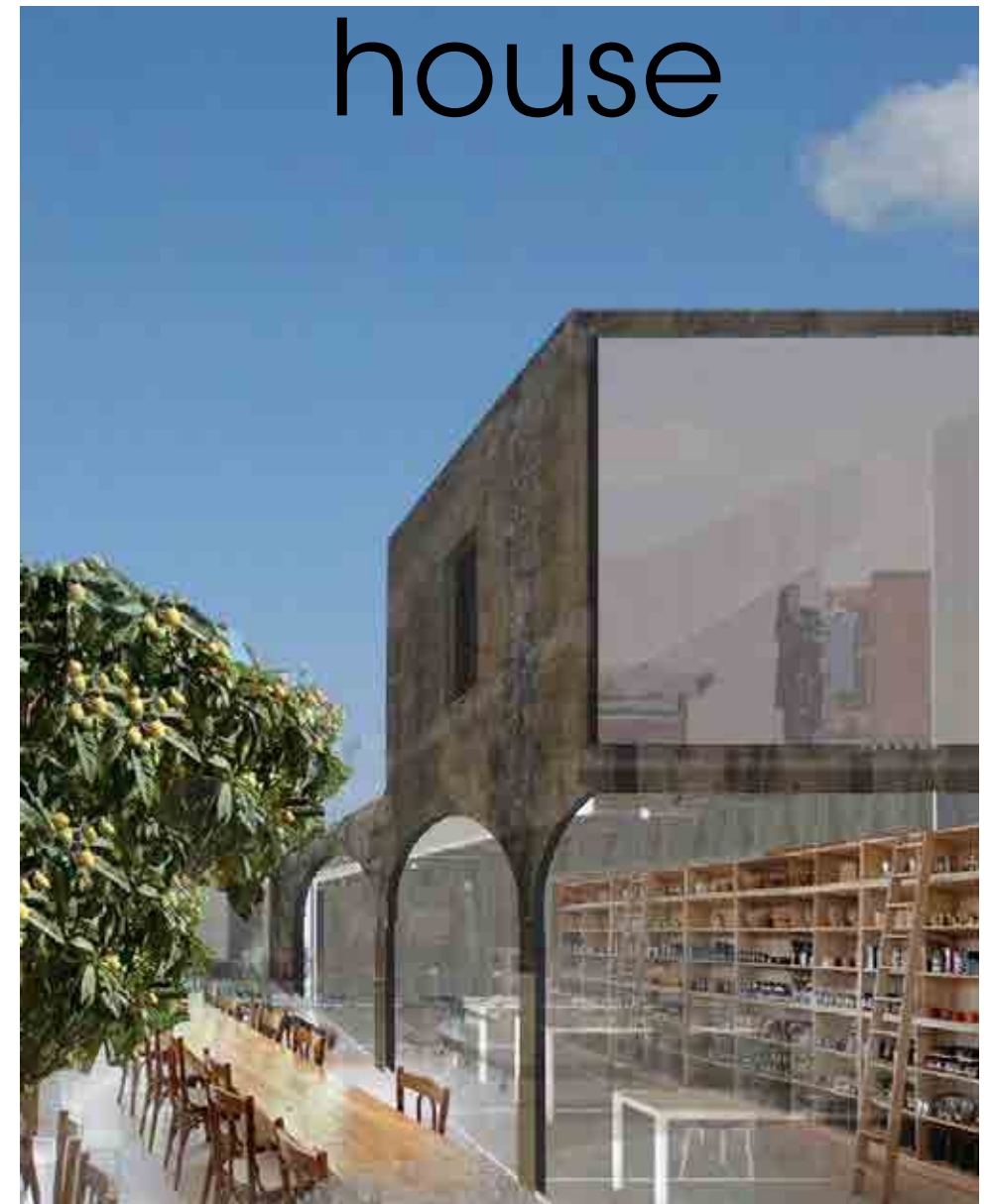
Meditation chairs





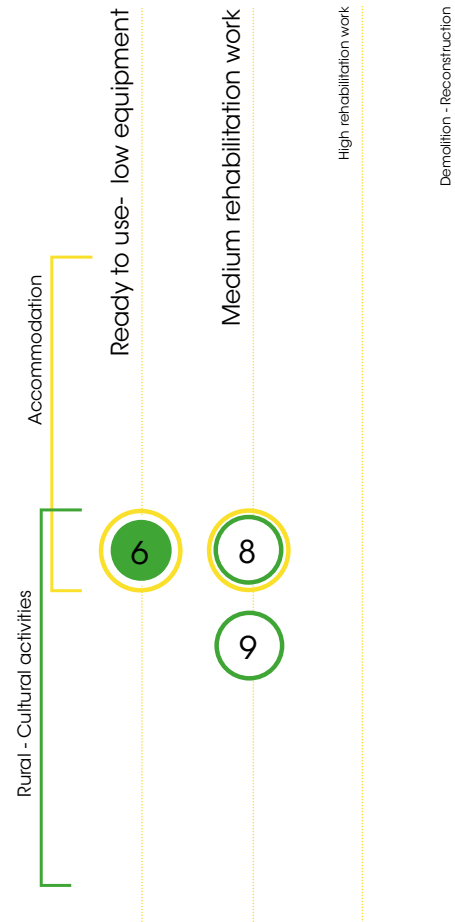
# Architectural programming

## بيت المونة Women delights house



Local grocery and organic food restaurant  
Guest house





# AGRI-HUB

## لقاء الاجيال و ثقافة الزراعة

Agri-hub will expand possibilities to address the agricultural challenges of Qrayeh by connecting young local professionals to the demand for experiential innovative agriculture, education and land knowledge.

6

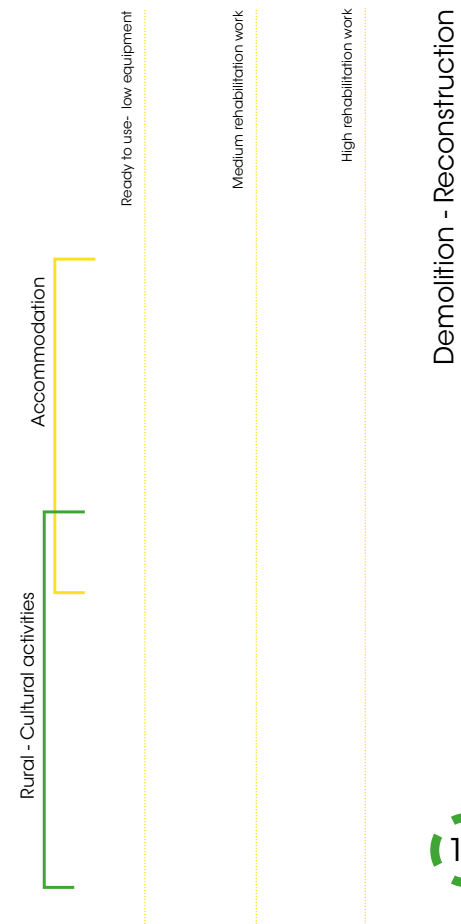


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9

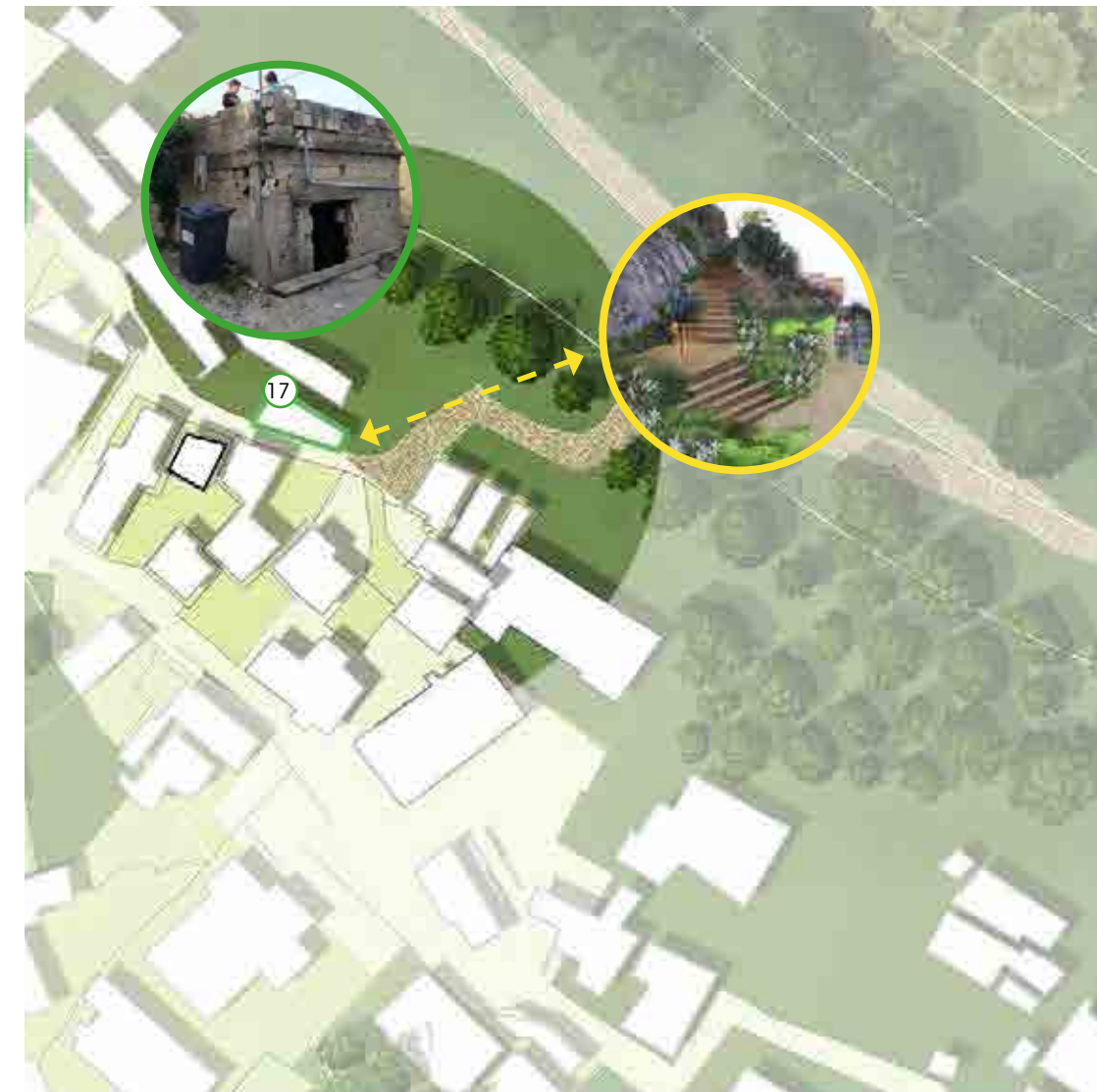




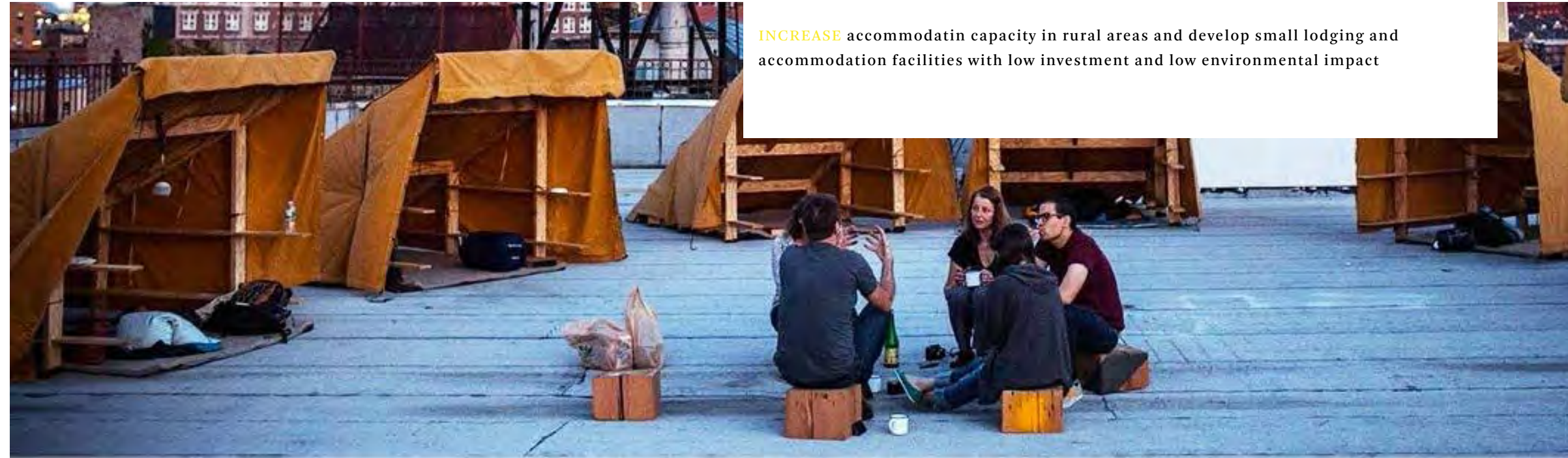
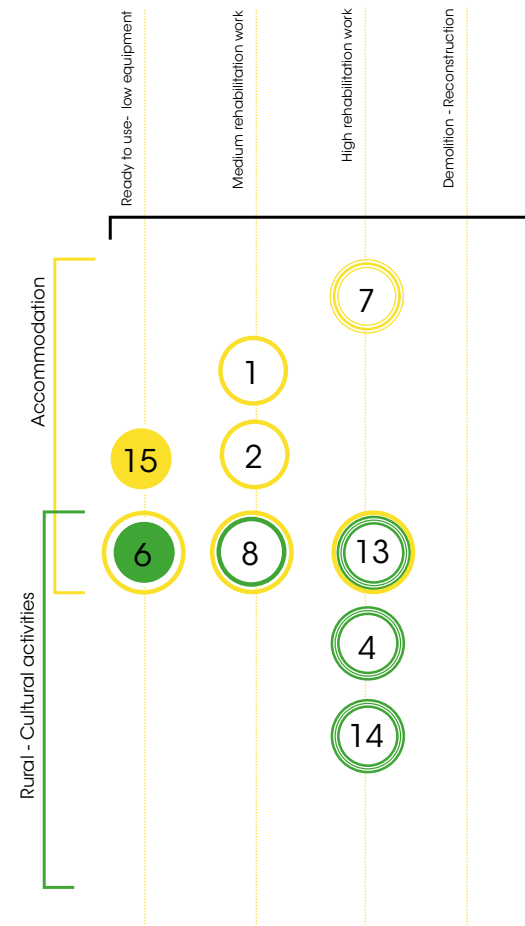
## المنظرة

### A lookout point

Replace existing abandoned shelter for animals with a lookout terrace offering a recreational area with an exceptional panoramic view on the eco-tourism trail.





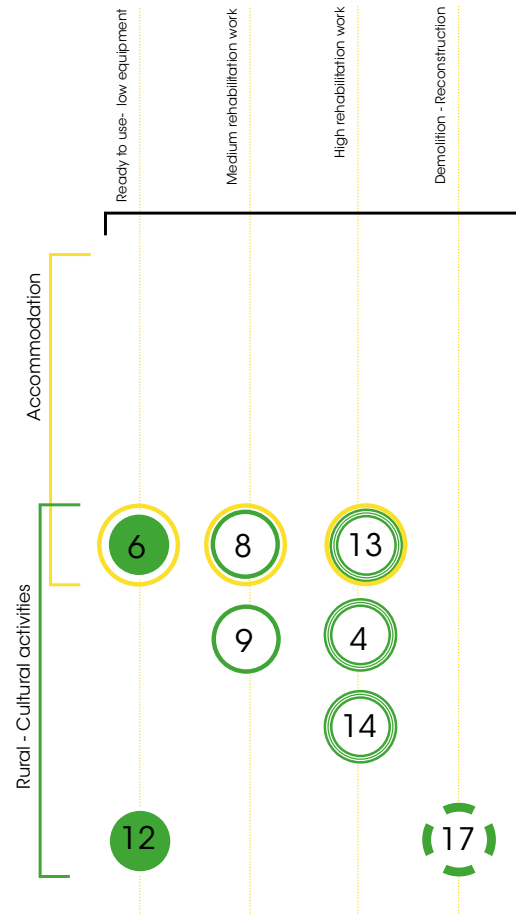


An authentic re-  
looking



# Camping & Guesthouses

# العلية و السطح كرم الضيافة



+ CHURCHES' **SQUARES**  
 + **NATURAL PATH**  
 + **Courtyards** +  
**Rooftops**

Experiential  
 events  
 all year round

Go to calendar

## SG 05 MARKETING & PROMOTING

ORGANIZE around the year festivals in Qrayeh promoting local heritage and seasonal products : Loquat, Olives, bitter orange, Mouneh, etc.





Saint Georges day - 22 April

## Our Lady Mary's day - 8 september

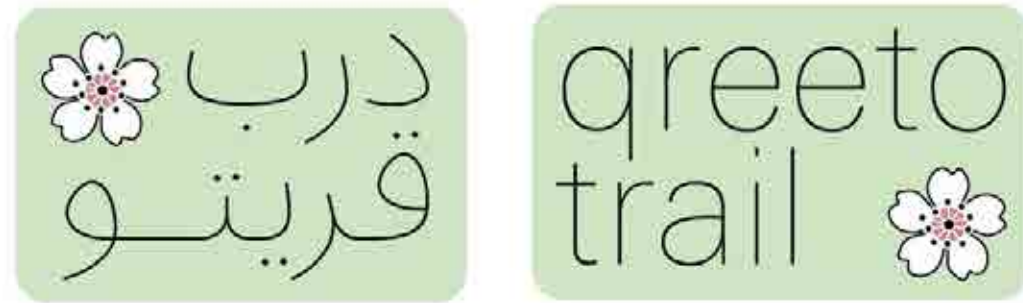
4 december

# عيد الاكي دنيا تحت الشجرة

تموّن و تمشی

# بيوت الطيب





## SG 05 MARKETING & PROMOTING

DEVELOP marketing and promotional tools (e.g. social media pages, website, branding kit & logo...)

Apply unified branding and labelling for all the project features and products by using the following pallet of colours and graphics.

Loquat products & trail



Agricultural seasons



Home made products



Olive products & trail



Guesthouses



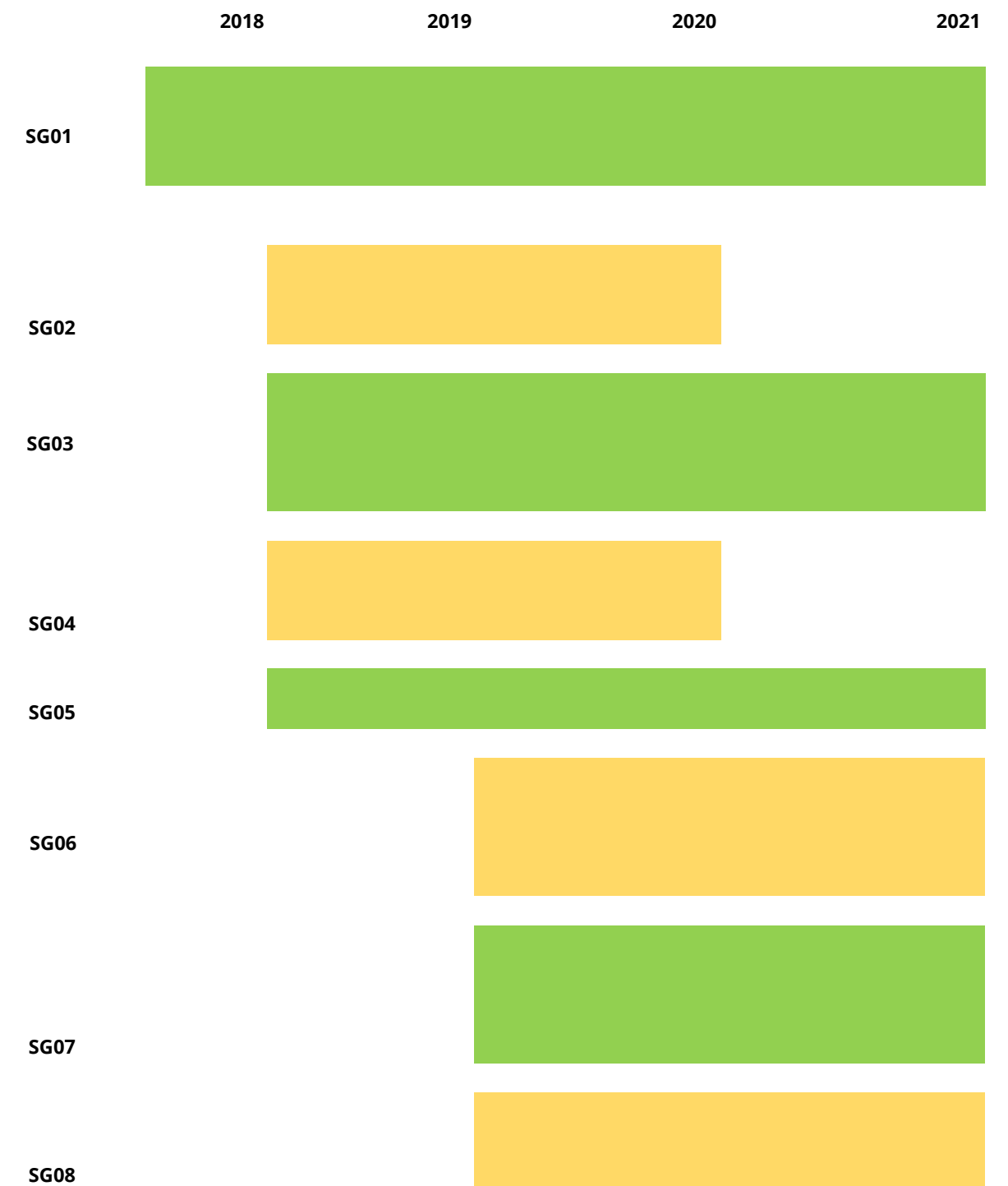
Flora / natural trail

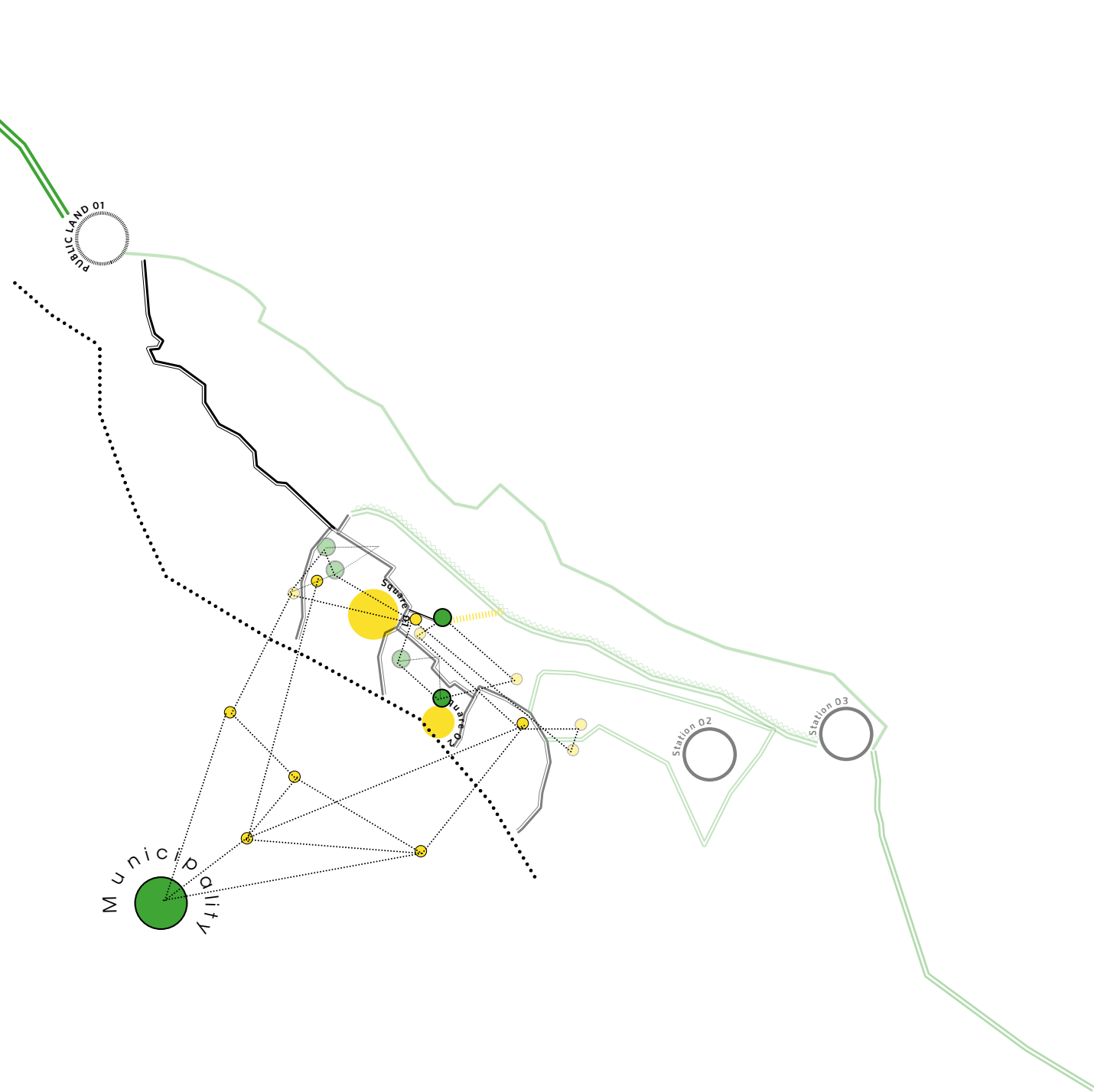




# ACTION PLAN

2019-2022





2021-2022

Pages 112-117: information  
removed for privacy reasons



## About NAHNOO

NAHNOO is a research and advocacy platform for participatory policy-making in Lebanon, which works towards an inclusive society through four axes of intervention: Good Governance, Public Spaces, Cultural Heritage, and Youth Engagement.

Through multidisciplinary and participatory research, capacity-building workshops, and grassroots initiatives, NAHNOO provides a platform for both youth and professionals to engage in development activities, acquire, and nurture the skills needed to impact policy-making at local and national levels.

[www.nahnoo.org](http://www.nahnoo.org) | [info@nahnoo.org](mailto:info@nahnoo.org)

## QRAYEH RURAL TOURISM STRATEGY

### Concept by

Qrayeh Local Working Group & Municipality

### Expertise Strategy Design by

NAHNOO | Farah Makki

### Participatory Research & Mapping

NAHNOO | Farah Makki

in collaboration with Nour Makki

& Qrayeh LWG

### Supported by

Ministry of Social affairs

UNDP

### Funded by

UK aid





