

AITA CHAAB VILLAGE PROFILE

1. LOCATION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Aita Chaab is a village located South West of Bint Jbeil. It is around 136 kilometres away from Beirut, and 17 kilometres from the centre of the Caza'. Aita Chaab is characterized by a moderate climate; its elevation is around 650 meters above sea level with an average annual rainfall of 600-700 mm.

The village is distinguished by its hills surrounded by pastures suitable to be used for agricultural purposes.

2. POPULATION

The total population of Aita Chaab is around 12000. The village inhabitants witnessed internal displacement, by which around 4000 villagers were displaced to other parts of the country. The internally displaced villagers are mainly located in Beirut, specifically in Bir Hassan, Hay Madi, Shiah and Hay El Sellom (See Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of the Population

Population	Number	In Percent
Residents	8000	66.7
Displaced	4000	33.3
Total	12000	100.0

There are 8000 inhabitants during the winter, while the number rises to around 9000 people during the summer. The number of registered voters is around 6000 voters, of which 64 % voted in the 2010 elections.

2.1 Age Groups

It is estimated that 50 percent of the population are less than 21 year old.

2.2 Labour Force

Unemployment is low in Aita Chaab, as it affects around 100 young people. Poverty, however, affects 10 percent of residents- mainly small farmers or those who do not own any land.

As for the women and children at Aita Chaab they participate in agricultural work of the village, particularly in the cultivation of tobacco.

The labour force is distributed in the following economic sectors:

- Agriculture (75%) such as the cultivation of tobacco.
- Construction (10%)

- Government Employees Sector, mainly in the security forces or the military (15%)

3. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

3.1 AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Most of the arable land is cultivated with tobacco. Further, the villagers lease additional land for the cultivation of tobacco from their neighbouring villages such as Bint Jbeil, Yaroun and Aytharoun. Additionally the village farmers cultivate some types of grains and olives, which are consumed by the residents of Aita Chaab. Also in Aita Chaab it is apparent that there are large parcels of land filled with laurel trees, which are mainly used for the production of soap.

Aita Chaab also produces a limited number of Agro-industrial products that are traded in neighbouring villages. The different types of Agro- productions are as follows:

- Soap. A soap factory was built through the assistance provided by Qatar. The factory is being managed by the municipality to help small producers in the village. The produced soap is usually requested by Mariam Nour’s foundation and Jihad Al Binaa.
- Tobacco

In addition to the agricultural cooperative in the village, a women association was established recently for the purpose of producing and marketing agro-products, particularly the production of laurel soap. Additionally, another women association was founded to manage an oil press.

3.2 LIVESTOCK

There are five families who are breeding and keeping cows (4-5 cows per family). Additionally there are five herds of goats.

It is apparent that Aita Chaab doesn’t produce enough milk and meat to meet the needs of the population. As such the villagers have to secure these needs from neighbouring villages.

3.3 CRAFTS AND TRADE SECTORS

There are several craft and trade activities in Aita Chaab (see Table 2).

Table 2: Crafts and Trades

Profession	Number of Workers or institutions
Metal Industry	4 people
Car Mechanics	2people
Wood industry	6 people
Grain Mill	1 Mill
Olive presses	2 presses, one donated by the Italians

Restaurants	3 restaurants
Swimming Pool	1 pool

4. EDUCATION

Enrollment to primary education is 100 per cent. There are two primary schools in Aita Chaab and this year a vocational school will be opened in the village. Additionally, there are two private schools that attend to children with special needs.

5. HEALTH STATUS

There are two functioning clinics at Aita Chaab, and a third one is being opened by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Additionally, the village has three clinics for general medicine, three dental clinics and four pharmacies.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Aita Chaab experiences, like other villages in the Caza, several environmental problems, these problems can be identified as follow: Reliance on one artesian well for both the provision of drinking water and irrigation services. The rain water is usually stored in private wells for use in the cultivation of tobacco. Additionally, during the 2006 war the Israeli bulldozers destroyed dozens of these wells and wiped out their landmarks.

7. INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES

Aita Chaab is governed by a municipal council which was founded in 2004, and is currently administrated by 15 members elected by the locals of the area. The municipality is part of the Municipal Federation of Bint Jbeil. The council is assisted by several committees composed of locals from the village. There are 13 contracted employees working in the municipality. The Municipal hall was built with the assistance provided by Qatar, as well as a civil defence building and an artesian well. Additionally, the municipality owns a factory for laurel leaf oil, donated by UNDP.

The municipal council to provide a number of services to the residents of Aita Chaab, which includes the: Collection of wastes and disposal in village dump.