

Towards the establishment of a Natural National Park in Upper Akkar –  
Donnieh

**Village Profile**

# Akkar el Attiqa



*In 2008 and 2009, Mada association collected data's on infrastructure, education, health and environment in various villages of the National Park pilot area. These data were collected from the municipalities, mokhtars, universities, public institutions, NGOs, school directors, cooperatives, clinics etc.*

*. Being regularly updated.*

## LOCATION

Akkar el Attiqa is located north Tripoli, 152km far from Beirut.

Roads leading to A.A are:

- Tripoli – Halba – Rahbeh or Beit Mellat – Akkar el Attika
- Tripoli – Halba – Qobayat (Shwita)- Akkar el Attika
- Fnaideq – Qamouaa – A.A is in bad conditions. Currently blocked but was used by locals and tourists visiting the area.

## BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE:

### WATER

Back in 1975, the majority of A.A houses got connected to both potable water and sewage networks (except some constructions for gravity inconvenience because the canalization system does not use pumps). Although the canalization systems exist, both networks are not functional. All the needed equipment are available and the networks construction is complete, but when the municipality started using these networks, drinking water got mixed with the sewage and all the canalizations got contaminated so the municipality had to stop the system until recruiting a new expert to find a solution and prevent such accidents in the future.

Locals pay a 70 000 L.L tax per year for the municipality that includes potable water, sewage and waste collecting services. In summer, all water streams in A.A are dry because water is deviated for irrigation purposes.

Main water sources: Nabeh el Shouh, Nabeh el Sheikh Jnaid, Ain Taya and Oyoum el Watieh...

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### POTABLE WATER

The municipality uses the Nabeh el Sheikh Jnaid water source for potable water (within a network made out of private PVC hoses that we can easily see when driving on the main road). Some residents are using cisterns to get their potable water and others who live next to water sources get their water in plastic gallons. Only 8 of the 33 water sources in A.A are not contaminated by herbicides and insecticide. Most of the contaminated sources are located beneath constructions or agricultural lands.

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### IRRIGATION

Irrigation canalizations were established in the 1960s in A.A. Irrigation water is provided by two main water sources; Ain el Soukkar and Ain Sirwal. The international bank established 35 000 meters of canalization for irrigation and is planning to establish an additional 60 000m

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The first water drops irrigation system was installed 9 years ago in A.A. This system is still yet not common probably because of the high installation cost and a certain reluctance to adopt new practices.



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## RESERVOIRS AND DAMS

Four reservoirs were established by the CDR but they are still not functional. Another reservoir is located in Ammar Kaylo and was established with donations from YMCA. In addition, there is one private reservoir that is used for irrigation.

The municipality is studying the implementation of two dams in the region. One (around 5 millions liters) will be constructed in collaboration with UNDP, the CDR and Ministry of Energy and Water.

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## ARTESIAN WELLS

There are around 15 wells in A.A (private & public) ranging from 60 m till 200m deep and 3-4 inches wide.

The government established 3 wells that should pump water in summer for irrigation and in the rest of the year for drinking. These wells were tested but they are not functional due to technical problems.

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## WATER MANAGEMENT

The North Water Public Establishment is trying to privatize some water sources in A.A but this privatization is facing resistance from the residents and municipality<sup>1</sup>.

## ELECTRICITY

Electricity network was first established in 1970 covering 20 % of the village. In 1990, the network was upgraded for the second time and is now covering 90% of A.A. In the Zabbout sub-region, a street of 3 houses is not yet

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<sup>1</sup> When buying a land in the village, the buyer gets a water use right that allows him to use a certain amount of water for irrigation. If the water privatization will take place, the farmers will be deprived from their earned rights.

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linked to the electrical network. The electricity goes off from 6 to 10 hours daily. Therefore, 6 electricity generators providing 5 Amperes for 4 hours (from 8pm till midnight) daily for an amount of 35 000L.L per month. Mazout and wood are used for heating with an increasing demand on wood. There is no solar energy systems installed yet in A.A.

## PHONE LINES

The phone lines network was established in 1997 and covers most of A.A. except: Al Marahat el Tahta and Ghizratah. **GSM** coverage is mediocre and totally absent in the Qamouaa region. Locals prefer communicating through mobiles. Internet connections are available in four network cafes. In A.A, there are 4 phone booths.

## SEWAGE

Septic tanks do not have the basic hygienic requirements and most of them are emptied in the rivers. Some of these wholes are not well isolated and their waste water joins the underground water.

A water treatment plant is serving the area of Marahat al Faw'a and Kassarat Ishhak (75 houses). This treatment plant was established within the YMCA's Marahhat Project. Treated water joins the Astwan river.



## SOLID WASTE

YMCA had built a solid waste sorting plant that is no longer in use for management difficulties. Joumeh Federation is assigned by the municipality to collect the solid waste for 10 000 000L.L per year. Collection is done on a daily basis in the centre of the village and 3 times a week in the rest of the village. Wastes are dumped in the Srar dumper near Hrar.

## POPULATION

According to the municipality, A.A population is around 14 000 (40 large families).

Population estimated according to the SDATL methodology: 7.491 residents.  
The population is growing during week ends and summer.

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Primary residence are 1898 and secondary residences 166 (ACS 2004).

According to the municipality, many houses are empty because parents always build an extra floor in their building for their kids who usually live in Beirut.

Migration reached its peak in 1860s and decreased slowly with the establishment of schools and hospitals in the region. Migration destinations in Lebanon are now Al Mina and Al Kobbeh in Tripoli. Other migrants are spread among the Arab countries, France and Australia. Emigrants don't contribute much in local investments but send some financial aid to their relatives.

## ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Around 70% of the active population is employed in the army, 5% in the police and 5% are teachers. Agriculture practices, beside home consumption needs, are considered as a complementary income for locals especially for families that don't have members in official positions.

## INDUSTRY/SHOPS

The industrial sector in A.A consists of the following : 8 concrete cement bloc plants; 6 *wrought iron*, 1 *food processing*; 1 *paving stones*; 1 *carpentry*; 3 *aluminium*;

The commercial sector consist of: 50 grocery stores; 4 Internet cafés; 20 clothing shops

## AGRICULTURE

The Agricultural land surface covers more than 32% of A.A. But only 80% of these lands are being used. This sector is increasingly being neglected.

Irrigation networks were implemented by the local population with donations from YMCA, National Bank and the Social Services (al shou2oun al Zijtime3iyeh). Fifty km of these canalizations are in very bad condition and need maintenance.

Some of the agriculture sector constraints are: mediocre marketing for the apple production; agricultural roads need reconstruction (in the Marahaat sub-region); irrigation water doesn't reach 20% of agricultural land (Ghizrata). Locals are being forced to abandon their traditional agriculture like the wild walnuts because of massive infections. Many farmers need help to rehabilitate their terraces.

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## FARMERS

Around 40% of locals are into farming as a complementary activity. Farmers mostly complain from the *Tsilla* insect that is invading the pear trees.

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## MAIN PRODUCTION:

Twenty persons have green houses (not more than 2 hectares each) for tomato and lettuce cultivation. A.A main production consists essentially of apples (36 000 trees among it Al Haffeh apples which are famous for their premium quality), walnuts, pears, and various vegetables. The olive production that used to be one of the village's traditions nowadays does not exceed home consumption needs.

The Cooperative of Akkar el Atikka, regroups officially 510 members and used to be located in Ministry of education's office. But this office is now used as a warehouse.

The cooperative activities consist of mainly finding markets for the products (apples are being sold to Libya for 1 500 L.L the Kg). The Cooperative also organized awareness session to discuss: certified plants and seeds; quality management; pruning; pesticides; expertise and engineering; nutriments and soil testing (Fouad Makhzoumi and Charbel Ghazali AUB doctors)

The cooperative's future plans are:

- To establish a peach and apple prototype garden with donations from UNDP and YMCA.
- Awareness sessions for improving local practices and encouraging local initiatives.
- Upgrade the agricultural pharmacy.
- Buy new machinery (*khorrata*) for olive harvesting
- Building a new warehouse for stock keeping.

But, the Cooperative is facing financial difficulties and is not able to initiate these projects without donations or contributions.

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## GRAZING AND LIVESTOCK

There is no livestock breeding farms in A.A. Grazing is done in the entire village. Cow's livestock is between 200 and 300 spread among different households. Goats are 3300 distributed among 17 different shepherds. It seems, in general, that grazing activities are decreasing in the village.

## BEEKEEPING

Bees Cooperative was established in 1994 and is supported by YMCA, Safadi foundation and MoA . Awareness sessions were organized by a Spanish NGO and the Safadi foundation. The bee's expert: Fadi Abou Slaiman is the cooperative consultant. Constraints identified by the cooperative: high processing costs. In order to improve the production, the cooperative is trying to fund a wax boards printing machine

## WOODCUTTING AND FIRE

Logging practices are taking place in accessible woods (each new agricultural road can increase the access to woods for woodcutting). The municipality is trying to figure out a radical solution for such illegal activities like applying more expensive fees for unauthorized logging.

Three 3 major fires took place lately and local population is afraid from natural disasters caused by fires that may take place this summer. Because the price of fuel is increasing on a daily basis and local population allowed to cut the dead wood or burned trees (leading some locals to cut green trees and keeping them in the forest till they dry out. Other locals tend to induce forest fires to collect legally the burned trees).



## EDUCATION

School Name	Level	Public/Private/Private free	Number of students	Number of Primary students	Number of Intermediate students	Number of Secondary students
<b>Qaws Akkar Al-Rasmiyye</b>	Primary - Intermediate	Public	298	182	116	

<b>Akkar Al-Atiqa Al-Rasmiyye</b>	Primary - Intermediate	Public	355	189	166	
<b>Mara7aat Akkar Al-Rasmiyye</b>	Primary - Intermediate	Public	42	29	13	
<b>Al-Maqasid Al-Khayriye Al-Islamiyye Akkar Al-Atiqa</b>	Primary	Free private	275	275		
<b>Al-Ilm Wal Iman</b>	Primary – intermediate	Private	720	538	182	
<b>Akkar Al-Atiqa Al-Rasmiyye</b>	Secondary	Public	231			231
<b>Al-Ilm Wal Iman</b>	Secondary	Private	77			77

## HEALTH

### DISPENSARIES (1)

### AKKAR AL-ATIQUA AL-SOHI AL-EJTIMA'I (HARIRI FOUNDATION)

**Status:** Private  
**Date of creation:** 2001  
**Contact:** 06 885210

**Nb of doctors and specialties:**

General Health (2)	Gastro-Enterlogy (1)
Cardiologist (1)	Dermatologist (1)
Pediatrician (2)	Gynecologist (2)
Dentist (2)	Bones (1)
Romathism (1)	Eye-specialist (1)

**Opening days:** Monday – Saturday  
**Services:** Laboratory, X-ray, Pharmacy  
**Difficulties:** Unconsciousness of people  
**Beneficiaries:** Akkar Al-Attika and surroundings

### DOCTORS AND SPECIALTIES (PRIVATE CLINICS)

General Health (2)	Diab./Endo. (1)
Pediatrician (1)	Dentist (2)
Surgery (1)	

### PHARMACIES

One pharmacy in Akkar Al Atiqa providing all needed drugs and medical supplies

### RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

#### MOSKS

Akkar Al Atiqua Al Kadim Maakouda	Al Cheikh Jneid Al Chakdouf	Al Mrahat Al Cheikh Hadid	Al Qaws Al Sayeh
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### CHURCHES

Ghizrata Church is a monumental church serving as tourism attraction

## SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

### GOVERNMENTAL CENTERS

Civil Defense Center

### MUNICIPAL CENTER

**Date of creation:** 1962  
**Contact:** 06 885057  
**Nb of employees:** 2  
**Main activities:** Expansion of side roads and waste collection

### ASSOCIATIONS/ NGO'S

#### AL TANMIYA AL WATINIYA ASSOCIATION

**Contact:** 03 840283 (Hassan Yehya)  
**Nb of volunteers:** 20  
**Main activities:** Undertaking summer camps and assisting other associations

#### AGRICULTURE COOPERATIVE

**Date of creation:** 1981  
**Contact:** Khaled Yehya 03 744843  
**Nb. of members:** 510

**Main activities:**

- Gathering farmers
- Undertaking cultural meetings about agriculture. For example: how to improve production, vaccination of the plants....
- Constructing irrigation channels
- Opening agricultural roads
- Establishing an agricultural refrigerator (Bazbina)

**Beneficiaries:** Akkar Al Atiqua

#### BEEHIVE COOPERATIVE

**Date of creation:** 1994  
**Contact:** 03 739166 (Mohamed Al Khatib)  
**Nb of members:** 90  
**Main activities:** Undertaking awareness and training campaigns about bees' living and ways of treatment of their diseases.

## INFORMAL GROUPS OR INITIATIVES

Dar Al Qoraan Al Karim

## CULTURAL AND SPORT CENTERS OR ACTIVITIES

### SPORT'S GROUNDS

<b>Activities:</b>	basketball, football...
<b>Size:</b>	5000m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Users:</b>	no users because it is under construction
<b>Location:</b>	outside school
<b>Status:</b>	municipal

### INTERNET CAFÉ

<b>Number:</b>	4
<b>Nb of computers:</b>	51
<b>Users:</b>	children, youth and adult

## TOURISTIC PRACTICES

### LODGING & RESTAURANTS

There is no hotel in Akkar el Attika. Ghassan Hanna's restaurant is offering lodge. Visitors sleep in neighbouring villages (mainly Beino).

Restaurants : Nabeh El Shouh; Nabeh El Samak and Ain El Tineh. Other eating places are also available like: Yossef Taleb, Ahmad al Shakooush, Mihran Khaddouj, Aabed el Sheikh, Hassan el Zein and Khaled Slaiman snacks. In winter time, most of the restaurants are closed. But, some cafeterias are always available for visitors. The clients are essentially from Tripoli, few from Beirut.

### CAMPING

Camps are usually held by scouts in the surrounding forests. The Kawss School has organized some camps for the international scouts. Pick nicks are very popular especially in the Qammouaa plain.

## CENTERS OF ATTRACTION

The most famous cultural monuments are:

- Akkar's fortress also known Al Sifa fortress established in 800 B.C. The fortress can only be reached on foot (a 600m walk) and the access lacks of signage. Residential buildings have been built along the footpath. The fortress land is private. For these reasons, the frequentation is very limited.
- Tombs in Zboud sub-region
- Very old church in the Haffeh region.
- Al Manzoul (meeting place for conflict management between and within villages) in Ghizrata sub-region.
- Lots of caves with important dimensions. The Mgharit el Zewyeh sub-region is famous for its numerous caves (more than 10).
- Cheikh Jnaid's living place and tomb in the Al Sayeh sub-region
- The Lebanese Mountain Trail passes by A.A

Local tourism practices: beside Ain el Samak that is a hang out place for youth, A.A has no amusement places for children.

A.A festival used to celebrate the region's historical heritage. The last festivals were held back in 1992, in the Qamouaa Plain and in 1993 in Arqa. These festivals gathered all the neighbouring villages. Festivals held by the municipality costs around 50 000\$ and need a lot of planning. Therefore, the municipality hasn't planned any future festivals.

## PLANS AND PROJECTS

Some of the following projects are ongoing and others are being planned:

- A football field is being constructed next to the new municipal building.
- Construction of a computer learning centre. (being planned)
- The establishment of a walking path that starts in Al Shouh, passes by Al Ltoun; Al Qamouaa; Makil El Shouh and ends in Nabeh el Shouh. (being planned)
- The rehabilitation of the conference room in the A.A public school and establishing a new scientific lab. (being planned)
- The creation of a public library (being planned)
- Working on opening the road leading to Akkar fortress (being planned)
- Trying to organize summer camps and other outdoor activities (being planned)
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## NEEDS

- Drinking water and the sewage networks.
- Rehabilitate the water reservoirs established by the CDR
- Implement 4 governmental water reservoirs
- Link the Zabbout region to the electric network

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- Work on the management of the YMCA funded solid waste sorting plant that is no longer in use for management difficulties
- Additional road work especially connecting secondary roads to the main road
- Implement irrigation water canalisation for al Marahat Al Ta7ta and Ghizrata
- Solve the Tsilla insect outrage that is invading the pear trees

## CONTACT LIST:

Khaled Bahri	Mayor	03 348 540	06 88 50 57	
Mohamad el Khalil	Municipal councilor	03 39 67 47		mkhalil@ieeee.org
Abou Mahmoud	Municipal councillor		06 88 53 00	
Khaled Melhem	Municipal employee	03 93 37 96		
Khaled Yehya	agricultural cooperative			
Mohamad al khatib	bee hive keepers cooperative			