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# PLAN OF ACTION TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR IN TOURISM IN PETRA



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# Table of Contents

|                                                                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Background .....</b>                                                                                  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Plan of Action to Address Child Labour in Tourism in Petra</b>                                        |           |
| <b>1. Education and community integration .....</b>                                                      | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>2. Knowledge base .....</b>                                                                           | <b>11</b> |
| <b>3. Economic alternatives .....</b>                                                                    | <b>11</b> |
| <b>4. Advocacy and awareness-raising .....</b>                                                           | <b>12</b> |
| <b>5. Legislation and regulations, including enforcement, .....</b><br><b>roles and responsibilities</b> | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Follow-up and Next Steps .....</b>                                                                    | <b>16</b> |

# Background

In spite of significant progress in recent years to address child labour in Jordan, including the adoption in August 2011 of the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL) and the revised list of Hazardous Work for Juvenile Workers in June 2011, the issue remains a concern for government and society and anecdotal evidence points to an increase as a consequence of the on-going economic crisis.

Among the challenging sectors in which children work is tourism. This phenomenon is most evident in Petra, primarily in the historical park itself, and there has been growing awareness of the causes and consequences of child labour in Petra over recent years. According to a study on working children in Petra in 2003, over 1,400 children were found engaged in work and, at that time, the highest percentage (over 60 per cent) was working in the hotel sector.

A more recent study in 2011 by Questscope in cooperation with UNESCO, focused on the broader socio-economic environment of the Um Saihoun community, the home to most child labourers in the Petra heritage site. It outlined some of the key challenges facing this community, some of which are anchored in historical and cultural factors, but which are also related to poverty and lack of education and employment opportunities. The study included reference to child labour, confirming the involvement of children in full-time or seasonal work in the area.

These findings were further reinforced by the 2012 study by Bait Al-Anbat "Child Labour in the Tourism Industry in Jordan: A Survey Study in Petra" which found that an average of 400 children work in tourism in the various activities in Petra inside and outside the archaeological site. Nearly 90 per cent of these children are boys and the highest percentage age group is 7 to 12. Almost 20 per cent of these children are illiterate.

The evidence is irrefutable. There are significant numbers of children engaged in different forms of child labour, including its worst forms, in Petra.

According to a USAID report from 2009, hospitality and tourism is Jordan's second largest industry. As at the end of 2008, its contribution to Jordan's GDP stood at 14 per cent. At that time, the industry employed around 38,000 direct employees and Jordan's tourism receipts were over JOD2.1 billion (approximately US\$3 billion). Eliminating child labour in this key economic sector should therefore be a priority in view of plans to expand the sector and enhance the quality aspect of its services as a driver of economic growth. In this context, the tourism sector in Jordan offers potential for decent youth employment, emphasising the importance of participation of employers' associations, particularly in the hotel and allied sectors, in this process.

Stakeholders focusing on child labour in Jordan have raised concerns over the issue of child labour in tourism in Petra on a number of occasions. In response to this situation and to a call from the Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority (PDTRA) for all partners to work together with the community to plan interventions to address child labour in tourism, a meeting was organised by the PDTRA in July 2012, supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, and in association with the Ministry of Labour's 9th National Week on Occupational Health and Safety.

Participants included members of the Um Saihoun community. Discussions focused on a range of issues relating to child labour in tourism in Petra, including:

- Causes and consequences;
- Challenges related to interventions;
- Links to lack of decent work opportunities for youth;
- Recommendations for next steps in tackling the issue.

A major objective of the consultation was to discuss an outline plan of action to tackle child labour. The following main headings were identified as central to this effort:

- Education – not only for children, but also for the wider community, including examination of issues relating to quality and access and how to change cultural and social attitudes and behaviour, for example, through life skills education.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising –for all stakeholders, including tourists, tourist guides, government agencies, local communities, media, etc.
- Legislation and regulations, including enforcement, roles and responsibilities – a key challenge for all stakeholders is that, by and large, legislation and regulations exist that could positively influence the incidence of child labour in tourism in Petra, but are not being enforced sufficiently or at all, neither is it always clear which stakeholder is responsible for what.
- Economic alternatives – in order to contribute to the reduction of the incidence of child labour in tourism in Petra, the issue of economic alternatives available to family members and particularly those aged between 16 to 18 is key.

Based on the outcomes of the consultation, a draft plan of action to address child labour in tourism in Petra was drawn up for further consideration and discussion by all partners. This draft was presented as the principal working document at the joint ILO/USAID/UNICEF/PDTRA Stakeholders' Workshop on the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labour in Tourism in Petra, held in Wadi Mousa on 18 November 2013. New impetus was given to the initiative to address child labour in tourism in Petra by a tourist campaign led by the PDTRA and the Jordan National Tourism Board in the summer of 2013 and by further exchanges between the ILO Child Labour Project and the USAID-funded Jordan Tourism Development Project, SIYAHA. The plan of action that follows is the result of this workshop and will be submitted to the National Committee on Child Labour in 2014 for discussion and review, prior to being finalised for implementation.

# Plan of Action to Address Child Labour in Tourism in Petra





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The issue of child labour in tourism in Petra is a matter of grave concern and must be addressed immediately through the concerted and collaborative efforts of all key national and international partners. The following Plan of Action has been discussed and agreed following an inclusive consultation process and calls for urgent political and financial commitment within the context of relevant national policy and legislative frameworks, in particular the National Framework to Combat Child Labour.

In this context, the document addresses itself primarily to the Ministries of Labour, Education and Social Development as the principal actors responsible for the implementation of the National Framework, as well as the National Committee on Child Labour, the Commissioner of the Petra Development, Tourism and Regional Authority (PDTRA) and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, among others. It will act as a key advocacy tool in mobilising national and international commitment and support for action to eliminate child labour in tourism in Petra.

## 1. Education and community integration

School drop-out is a particularly damaging phenomenon for all school-age children, linked directly to lack of awareness of parents and community leaders of the value of education and the negative physical, mental, emotional and developmental consequences of child labour on children. In addition, the issue of post-education opportunities, including access to higher education and employment, is a contributing factor to the lack of commitment by parents to schooling. Income opportunities through tourism-related activities in Petra are significant, higher even than other more skilled employment opportunities, which further reinforce the link between education, employment and child labour in the tourism sector in Petra.

A number of the challenges facing children are also linked to a lack of integration between local communities which further reinforces social and cultural divisions. These often affect education and employment pathways. Efforts need to be made to overcome these divisions and to ensure more effective and sustainable community integration in the future.

In order to effectively and sustainably address education and community integration, the following action needs to be prioritised and implemented:

- 1.1 Ministry of Education teachers working in schools in communities affected by child labour in tourism in Petra should receive pre- and in-service training on participatory and interactive pedagogical techniques, remedial education and other skills focusing on student-centred approaches.
- 1.2 The Ministry of Education should address the challenge of high turnover of teachers assigned to schools in Um Saihoun as it is important that students benefit from continuity of long-term teaching assignments. This factor has been cited as a challenge to the quality of education in schools and in terms of encouraging children to remain in schools. This should include through closer monitoring of the teaching profession in Um Saihoun, where possible, hiring teachers from the local area and appointing teachers on full-time contracts.

- 1.3 Schools in the local area should include qualified school counsellors to ensure rapid and specific responses for children at-risk of drop-out and to reinforce prevention in the longer term. In addition, youth camp programmes should be introduced for children and young people from all local areas and areas further afield in Jordan, particularly during school vacation periods, to promote local integration and exposure to other cultures and communities. This activity should involve closer collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth.
- 1.4 Efforts should be made to enhance school infrastructure and environment in the area to make it more welcoming and attractive to children and to make school more child-friendly, thereby addressing some of the reasons for non-enrolment and drop-out.
- 1.5 Children's awareness of the dangers of child labour and the importance of education and preserving the cultural heritage of the area should be stimulated through arts-based activities. Likewise, discussions should be initiated with the Ministry of Education to include cultural heritage and arts-based activities into the curriculum, as well as the impact of child labour in tourism.
- 1.6 Efforts should be made to strengthen integration of children from schools in the local area through extra-curricular activities, exchange visits and community-related activities. Programmes and facilities should be established to support extra-curricular activities, including sport, recreation and creative endeavours, and should be adequately furnished and provisioned. Extra-curricular and community-based activities should enhance the intrinsic value of community and volunteer work among children and young people as agents of social change.
- 1.7 Children and families should be informed of all educational alternatives available, particularly in cases of drop-out and possible reintegration into the formal school system or access to non-formal education, home schooling, etc. Awareness-raising and information dissemination will support education drives in the area.
- 1.8 The School Parents' Council and Students' Parliaments in Um Saihoun schools should be reactivated as a matter of urgency. They should also be informed and empowered as key community mobilisation mechanisms to reinforce messages on the dangers of child labour and the importance of education in the community.
- 1.9 Students should be provided with material and non-material incentives to stay in school, at least for a period of time to overcome social, cultural and traditional challenges towards education. These would include school prizes and awards to reinforce self-esteem and confidence among the students.
- 1.10 The supervisory role of the Ministry of Education and Governor's Office in monitoring students' attendance and drop-out should be strengthened in the local area, including specific allocation of roles and responsibilities and the capacities, competences and authority to carry these out.

- 1.11 Efforts should be made in collaboration with Vocational Training Centres (VTC), the Ministries of Labour and Education and the private sector to promote accredited vocational education and training, including apprenticeship programmes, not only in skills related to professions within the tourism sector, but in other employment sectors to also reduce dependency on tourism for income generation. Given the fact that there is not a local VTC in the area, discussions should include providing transportation to students to attend vocational education courses.
- 1.12 National Aid Fund payments to families in the local area should be linked to specific conditionalities, including proven school attendance of school-age children in the household. This should be linked to the enforcement of compulsory education.
- 1.13 A “role model” programme should be developed involving young people from local communities who have followed positive education and employment pathways and who can influence children and families of what is possible in life through education. The objective would be to establish role models for the current and future generations and to encourage young people to remain connected with their community and help children in different ways.
- 1.14 Consideration could be given to initiating discussions between the Ministry of Education and the Jordanian Armed Forces on the possibility of establishing a military school in the local area.



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## 2. Knowledge base

Based on the information to date, it is evident that there are significant numbers of children engaged in different forms of child labour in tourism in Petra. However, further actions are required to enhance the knowledge base not only on child labour, but also to support the development of interventions to address the endemic causes. It would also be important to conduct a detailed survey of child protection more broadly in the area.

- 2.1 Efforts should be made to examine the evidence base collected to date on the causes and consequences of child labour and identify interventions that could be developed based on this evidence, as well as identifying knowledge gaps where further research would be required and addressing these.
- 2.2 In July 2012, the PDTRA announced that it would be commissioning a comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the local area with Al-Hussein University. A key aim of this survey would be to identify potential employment creation opportunities other than those available in the tourism sector in the Petra area in order to assist the development of employment and training related interventions to diversify the local economy and improve access and quality of employment for youth and adults. The outcomes of this survey should be made publicly available to all stakeholders and be shared with key institutions for immediate follow-up in terms of developing interventions.

## 3. Economic alternatives

The issues of employment, particularly youth employment, and economic alternatives to reduce the dependency of families on children's income underpin the strategy to tackle child labour in tourism in Petra and are closely related to challenges in education and vocational education and training, as well as a lack of diversification in business and employment opportunities in the area. There is high dependency on the tourism sector for income generation in the Petra region which is not a healthy situation for long-term local area economic development.

In order to effectively and sustainably address employment and economic alternatives, the following action needs to be prioritised and implemented:

- 3.1 Potential income-generation activities that could be fully or partly financed by the community should be identified in close collaboration with the community. As part of this endeavour, it would be necessary to involve the PDTRA in modifying legislation and regulations to facilitate the implementation of such projects.
- 3.2 Agencies and women's voluntary groups operating within the community should be identified, engaged and mobilised to build their capacities in business and related skills to generate income. These efforts could include organising markets and selling outlets for local production, such the Petra visitors' centre.
- 3.3 A local labour market assessment and value chain analysis should be carried out in the wider area of Petra to identify current and future employment and income-generation opportunities that could benefit young people and families in the area. The survey would include tourism-related activities, but would also focus on other sectors in an effort to

alleviate the dependency on the tourism sector in the area for income generation and relieve some of the pressure that has built up over the years on the cultural heritage centre of Petra to ensure its future preservation and protection. This survey could be further supported through market feasibility studies to assess the longer term viability of employment and income-generation activities.

- 3.4 Support should be provided to mothers, especially single mothers, in the form of child care programmes and facilities to assist them in their current and future business and employment prospects. This could include the establishment of local nurseries, kindergartens and early learning programmes.
- 3.5 Child labour prevention, including hazardous work among legally employed youth, must be mainstreamed across programmes for youth employment and income-generation activities involving youth aged 16 to 18.
- 3.6 Given the connection and self-education of children in Um Saihoun in the tourism sector, efforts should be made to raise awareness of students on potential quality employment opportunities in tourism, supported by an accreditation programme. The focus of this awareness-raising activity will aim to explain to students the benefits in working in tourism through legal and appropriate channels and reinforce the importance of the future of tourism in Petra.

## 4. Advocacy and awareness-raising

The issue of raising awareness of the dangers and consequences of child labour and the importance of education is central to this Plan of Action. Many children drop out of school and work with the implicit support of parents who themselves do not see the value of education based on their own childhood experiences. In addition, the impact of limited integration with other communities in the area, poor or negative relationships with authorities and outright discrimination has reinforced a sense of social isolation within local communities which fuels negative feelings in terms of opportunities. It is vital that positive messages are transmitted throughout the community through various media and means, including education and wider community integration efforts.

In order to design and implement effective advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, the following action – which is closely related to those under the section on “Education and Community Integration” – needs to be prioritised and implemented:

- 4.1 A comprehensive evaluation should be carried out of current awareness-raising and advocacy programmes and activities involving local communities. The evaluation will make recommendations and identify opportunities and challenges to be addressed. This will include identifying which groups/bodies will convey different messages and how, based on 5 Ws approach: who, what, when, where and how.
- 4.2 Based on the outcomes of the above evaluation, efforts should be made by all stakeholders – government, particularly the PDTRA, and non-government, including schools and

teachers – to significantly increase interaction with and between local communities and to enhance the meaningful quality of such interaction. This would improve understanding between stakeholders through meaningful dialogue and ensure an inclusive and participatory approach to identifying and implementing solutions. This would also include encouraging stakeholders to plan and implement interventions in local communities themselves and to develop non-traditional methods of awareness-raising that reinforce inclusivity and participation, for example, social media.

- 4.3 A committee comprising representatives from the PDTRA and local communities should be established to discuss and address relevant issues and stakeholders and ensure the follow-up of recommendations. The committee should include representatives from the school Parents' Council and cooperate closely with this group.
- 4.4 Significant efforts should be made to raise awareness of families in local communities of child labour and education. This would not only facilitate discussion on existing legislation, but also on the roles and responsibilities of parents, the dangers of premature entry into the labour market and the importance of education. Children and young people should be included as a target group for this awareness-raising process.
- 4.5 An awareness-raising programme should be developed and directed towards parents in the community in line with paragraph 1.12 above aimed at encouraging parents to focus on the potential employment prospects of their children in an appropriate accreditation framework for tourism. This may assist in encouraging children to stay in school to be able to benefit from such a programme.
- 4.6 Stronger and meaningful interaction between local communities should be facilitated, including creative approaches to encourage the development of a wider sense of community as well as ensuring the participation of all communities in the decision-making processes for the local area.
- 4.7 Programmes should be developed and implemented to create and strengthen roles and responsibilities of educated youth as leaders in local communities and to support awareness-raising and advocacy activities.
- 4.8 Through the Petra Archaeological Park Task Force initiative launched in the summer of 2013, an awareness-raising programme will be developed targeting tourists to Petra to encourage them to contribute to reducing child labour through appropriate responsible behaviour and through a better understanding of the socio-economic context of the children and families who work there. This programme will also aim to target tourists before they arrive in Jordan and those who visit Petra. It is possible that public-private partnerships could be envisaged between hotel chains, airline companies, package tour companies, etc.
- 4.9 With reference to 4.8, a training programme on child labour should be developed specifically for Petra tour guides to enable them to interact meaningfully with tourists on the issue and to pass on key messages and generally raise awareness to influence responsible behaviour.

## 5. Legislation and regulations, including enforcement, roles and responsibilities

The poor or non-existent enforcement of existing legislation and regulations by different authorities in the local area has contributed to the socio-economic problems that beset the local communities. It is not always clear as to which authorities are responsible for monitoring and enforcing different laws and regulations. For example, a particular challenge with child labour in the tourism sector is that the children concerned are considered self-employed and therefore fall outside of the mandate of labour inspection. As a first step, therefore, it would be important to clarify existing legislation and regulations that would affect the incidence of child labour and school drop-out, the enforcement of these and specific roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

In order to effectively address the legislative and regulatory frameworks, the following action needs to be prioritised and implemented:

- 5.1 A study should be commissioned and implemented in the first half of 2014 to document and analyse existing legislation and regulations that are relevant to the issue of child labour in tourism in the Petra area, roles and responsibilities of different authorities and the level of enforcement and follow-up. The study should also identify gaps and weaknesses in legislation and regulations and their enforcement that need to be addressed, including through new legislation and regulations and/or reform. The study should also examine the level of penalties for violation of legislation and regulations and whether these act as a sufficient deterrent for the future with a view to increasing penalties related to child labour violations. In addition, it should examine the regularity of monitoring activities of legislation and regulations and the documentation of visits and follow-up of violations. It should also examine the level of protection for law and regulation enforcement agencies in conducting their work on the ground as there are many instances of physical and verbal abuse and intimidation.
- 5.2 Workshops on the enforcement of legislation and regulations relevant to the incidence of child labour in the area should be organised for all stakeholders and should include decision-makers to ensure follow-up. Monitoring and enforcement should be conducted on a more frequent basis in the local area due to the high incidence rate of child labour and school-drop out.
- 5.3 The Ministries of Labour, Education and Social Development need to raise awareness of the National Framework to Combat Child Labour and the Hazardous Work List for Juvenile Workers in the area, among all stakeholders, and to examine the enforcement of these. It is acknowledged that consideration would need to be given to applying some degree of flexibility to the implementation and enforcement of some relevant legislation and regulations, at least for a period of time, in order to adapt to the challenging nature of some local communities.
- 5.4 Families who operate businesses in the area should do so under the condition of ensuring that their children attend school during compulsory education years and compliance should be monitored. This element should be linked to the enforcement of compulsory education.



Credit: ILO/Jared J. Kohler (image not for public distribution)

# Follow-up and Next Steps

The national partners agree that the issue of child labour in tourism in Petra has been of significant concern for a considerable period of time and that action must be taken immediately to address this endemic socio-economic and cultural problem. This Plan of Action sets out the foundations for this national effort and, through discussion, commitment and resources will contribute to the development of activities, objectives, indicators and timeframe, including a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan.

As a first step, the draft Plan of Action will be presented formally to the National Committee on Child Labour (NCCL), including high-level representatives of the PDTRA, as early as possible in 2014 for discussion, possible review and ultimately endorsement. Discussions will include allocating roles and responsibilities for follow-up, particularly the development of a detailed strategy of implementation in which activities, objectives, indicators, indicators and timeframe will be set out.

It is proposed that among the key recommendations to be included in the presentation to the NCCL will be the establishment of a Regional Committee within one month of endorsing the Plan of Action mandated to oversee follow-up. The Committee will fall under the joint remit of the NCCL and the PDTRA. While the Committee will be national and regional in terms of participation and leadership, it is recommended that relevant international organisations be invited to meetings and to participate in discussions to provide technical guidance and support. As a minimum, it is suggested that this would include the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, UNESCO and USAID. This Committee will be tasked with producing the programme documents as indicated within three months of its establishment and presenting these for discussion and endorsement by the NCCL, the PDTRA and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

The final programme documents will include a detailed budget in line with the activities and a resource mobilisation plan will need to be established to ensure the availability of necessary funds to support these.

In order to maintain momentum, national partners will aim to launch activities within one month of the endorsement of the programme documents by the NCCL, the PDTRA and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

It is vital that the strategic programme documents highlight the need for holistic, integrated and coherent interventions to address this endemic problem of child labour in tourism in Petra. The final documents must therefore reflect the integrated approach set out in this Plan of Action. It is acknowledged that an ad hoc and piecemeal approach to address the problem will undermine impact and any sustainable change and should therefore be avoided. Only an integrated programme of action will result in positive change for the lives of current and future generations of children living in the Petra region.

