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The Jordanian National Action Plan for Children (2004-2013)

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In developing the National Plan of Action for Children (NPA), the following was taken into consideration:

First Global and Regional commitments made to children, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Arab Plan of Action for Children (2004-2015), and the new agenda and priorities for children set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002 in "A World Fit for Children."

Second National strategies and plans and commitments made to children which include the National Early Childhood and Development Strategy (2000), the National Early Childhood Plan (2003-2007), the National Strategy for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2003), the draft National Strategy for Youth (2005-2009), and the policy recommendations of the national Study on Disadvantaged Children in Jordan.

Third The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which aim at eradicating extreme poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.

Fourth Jordan's achievements made for children in the past years, such as in the field of health, and education. The End of Decade Report for the year 2000 indicated that there is an evident progress in all areas relating to children. Sustaining these achievements and successes is thus the responsibility for all individuals, and governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Fifth The political, social and economic challenges the world is facing, and the region in particular.

Sixth Research as the basis for comprehensive planning which defines the needs of different groups. Evidence-based planning is the basis for continuity and success.

Taking all of this into consideration, the Jordanian National Plan of Action (2004-2013) was developed based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and A World Fit for Children document. This was the guiding framework for decision-makers in all sectors concerned with children, when developing detailed programmes for children of all age-groups to be implemented through the National Plan of Action.

Our Vision for Jordan's Children

To create a safe environment that develops the capabilities of children by supporting legislation, policies and programmes that cater to the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of children.

Our Mission

Our mission is to build a "Jordan Fit for Children", children of today and leaders of tomorrow. To provide them with a secure environment that guarantees their right to survival, development, protection and participation.

Our mission is achieved through the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children which puts the best interests of children first, in our families, communities and precious homeland.

The Overall Goal of the National Plan is to:

1. Provide a general framework and direction for action in all fields and sectors that concern children.
2. Strengthen cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors for comprehensive planning based on full participation and joint responsibilities.
3. Reduce gender and geographical disparities by increasing access to quality services that guarantee a secure life for all children.
4. Provide a basis for research, monitoring and evaluation in all fields related to children.
5. Attract local and international financing for the implementation of this Plan.

The process of developing the National Plan of Action

- In November 2002, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), formed a steering committee. This committee included representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and academia working for children. The committee started the process of drafting a 10-year national plan for children for 2004-2013.
- The Steering committee's first meeting was held in November 2002 where steps for developing the National Plan were outlined. An executive committee was formed to follow-up on the preparation of the National Plan. The executive committee comprised representatives from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Social Development, the Higher Council for Youth, Save the Children Fund, NCFA, and UNICEF.
- The Steering and Executive Committees agreed to develop the National Plan based on the initial framework of the Draft Arab Plan of Action for Children which focused on seven components: health, education, protection, media, culture, sports, and young people.
- In June 2003, a national workshop was held and an action plan presented. Seven working groups were formed. Each group included representatives of governmental and non-governmental sectors, the private sector and the academia. A chairperson and rapporteur were appointed for each group.
- Members of the working groups met intensively during July 2003 to December 2004 to prepare the sub-components of the National Plan.
- In January 2004, the first draft National Plan was completed and was sent to all concerned parties for their review.
- In January 2004, the structure of the final endorsed Arab Plan of Action was changed, and subsequently, the National Plan was merged into five sections: (1) Securing a Healthy Life, (2) Development and Strengthening Capabilities of Children, (3) Protecting Children in Difficult Circumstances, (4) The Role of the Media, (5) Monitoring and Evaluation.
- In April 2004, the second draft was completed and reviewed by the Executive Committee.
- In June 2004, the working groups conducted specialised sessions to finalise the different components of the National Plan for adoption at a national level.

- A review team was formed to go over the National Plan's components for a final time. The team was comprised of the main groups that developed the draft National Plan, they were joined by additional experts and officials nominated by the Secretary Generals of the various implementing Ministries. The Secretary Generals headed the final specialised sessions.

- In August 2004, a consultant was contracted to assist in the estimation of the financial costs of the National Plan. A group representing ministries directly concerned with the implementation of the National Plan was formed to estimate the financial cost according to the following structure:

- Each of the main ministries involved appointed two focal points, financial and technical, to coordinate the costing of the plan.
- Each activity in the National Plan was reviewed and costed. The plan also differentiated between activities already budgeted for and activities that still require funding.
- Costs were estimated according to experience and financial records available to the implementing partners. Factors that lead to change in cost, such as population growth, inflation and change in exchange rates, were taken into consideration.
- The full details of the costing calculations used by the focal points and the consultant were compiled and are available as a reference at the National Council for Family Affairs. Cost monitoring will be part of the overall regular reports that will be used to monitor the National Plan. A summary of the Plan's budget is attached as an annex to this document. Approximately 70% of the funding needed is included in the government's budget.

- A monitoring and evaluation consultant was also contracted in August 2004 to work with the members of the Steering Committee on finalising a general framework and mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of the Plan.

- In September 2004, the National Plan was presented in its final form in preparation for its launch in October 2004, by Their Majesties King Abdullah II and Queen Rania.

As for the participation of children and adolescents in the process, this was done as follows:

- In April 2004, the Jordanian Women's Union conducted training for facilitators from the Jordanian Children's Parliament. A summarised draft National Plan

was developed for discussion with young people from the Children's Parliament in the Northern, Middle and Southern regions.

- In April 2004, three workshops were conducted for members of the Children's Parliament in the Northern, Middle and Southern regions, during which members discussed the National Plan and presented their comments and recommendations.

- In July 2004, a regional meeting was held for the participants from the Children's Parliament from the Northern, Middle and Southern regions.

- In August 2004, a sub-committee studied the recommendations made by the Children's Parliament and incorporated them in the final National Plan. The final report of the children's recommendations was attached (without modification) to the National Plan as an annex.

The main components of the National Plan are:

1. Development and Strengthening Capabilities of Children
2. Protecting Children in Difficult Circumstances
3. The Role of the Media
4. Monitoring and Evaluation
5. Securing a Healthy life

Component One: *Securing a Healthy Life*

This component aims to ensure that children have a healthy and safe life and to guarantee every child's right to survival, a dignified life, access to healthcare, balanced nutrition and a healthy environment.

Maternal Health

A child's health is directly linked to its mother's health. Jordan witnessed a continuous improvement in maternal health, as the ratio of maternal deaths related to pregnancy dropped from 48 to 41 per 100,000 births between the years 1990-2002. The number of mothers who delivered with the assistance of qualified medical supervision has reached more than 98% irrespective of geographical location. However, the percentage of women receiving postnatal care remains low. The results of the Department of Statistics' 2002 Demographic and Family Health Survey showed that 65% of mothers who are examined immediately after giving birth, do not return for postpartum examinations, mostly because they feel it is unnecessary to do so.

There still remain many challenges in the field of maternal health, most important of which are the

establishment of necessary systems for monitoring high risk pregnancies during and after birth, and reducing iron deficiency anaemia in women in their childbearing years.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Reduce maternal deaths from 41 to 15 per 100,000 live births
2. Reduce iron deficiency anaemia among pregnant women from 42.5% to 15%
3. Reduce morbidity among mothers by half

The health of children under five years of age

The under-five mortality rate was reduced from 39 to 27 for every 1,000 live births between the years 1990-2002, while infant mortality rates dropped from 34 to 22 for every 1,000 live births during the same period. It is worth noting that 70% of infant deaths occur during the first month of life. There is thus a need for programmes directed at maternal and infant health around the time of delivery.

With the continuing success of the National Immunisation Programme, the percentage of immunised children remains high. The percentage of children who received the polio vaccine reached 98% in the year 2002 and Jordan has been polio free since 1995. The Ministry of Health introduces new vaccines to the national immunisation programme, depending on the availability of financial resources. Research on the causes of children's illnesses is limited, but reports from hospitals and healthcare centres show that most of the illnesses children suffer from are acute respiratory infections.

Although there have been major achievements in the field of children's health and nutrition, and while most mothers start breastfeeding, the percentage of exclusively breastfed babies remains low in Jordan. The Demographic and Family Health Survey for the year 2002 showed that only 26% of women exclusively breastfed their babies in the last 24 hours preceding the interviews. In addition to the need to focus on promoting exclusive breastfeeding, there is a need to also focus on micronutrient deficiencies. Recent studies show that 20% of children below five years are anaemic, 15% suffer from Vitamin A deficiency, and 33% of school age children suffer from iodine deficiency.

There are still many challenges facing children's health, most important of which is to maintain the achievements Jordan has reached in this field, ensure that achievements reached at the national level are also mirrored at all subnational levels, reduce micronutrient deficiency amongst children. Also there is a need to strengthen the role of healthcare centres as baby friendly centres and to promote exclusive breastfeeding.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Reduce neonatal mortality rates from 16 to 10 for every 1,000 live births.
2. Reduce the mortality rate of children aged 1 month to 1 year from 7 to 4 for every 1,000 live births.
3. Reduce under-five mortality rate from 27 to 15 per 1,000 live births.
4. Reduce micronutrient deficiencies among children under one year of age by half and reduce vitamin A deficiencies among children under five from 15% to 5% and iron deficiency from 20% to 10%.
5. Reduce the incidence of household accidents among children under one year and children under five years by half.
6. Reduce the incidence of disabilities among children by half.
7. Reduce mouth and dental diseases among children by half.

Adolescent health

"Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views" conducted by the Department of Statistics in 2003, in cooperation with UNICEF, revealed that more than 90% of youth aged 10-19 years evaluate their health as good or very good, and that the main health problems they suffered from were respiratory and digestive infections.

Regarding their knowledge of healthy lifestyles, young females and males ranked three main healthy practices they followed: healthy eating 60%, exercise 43%, and personal hygiene 28%. Around 70% of the youth regarded smoking to be the most harmful practice affecting youth health, followed by drugs, 8%. Dental health is considered an area that needs special attention. Approximately 16% of young people mentioned that they never brushed their teeth, whilst 20% said they only brushed their teeth once a day.

As for their knowledge of the physical changes which take place during puberty, only 33% of young females and males were able to identify three correct signs of male puberty, while only 25% of young females and males identified three correct signs of female puberty.

This calls for an increase awareness-raising programmes for adolescents.

The National Plan intends to set up and implement national policies and programmes directed towards adolescents' health. The policies and programmes will

comprise clear objectives and indicators to help improve adolescents' physical and mental health.

The National Plans aims to:

1. Reduce morbidity among children and young adolescents aged 5-12 years by half in the following areas: acute respiratory infections, digestive system illnesses, malnutrition, disabilities and dental illnesses.
2. Reduce morbidity of 13-18 year olds by half in the following areas: acute respiratory illnesses, digestive system illnesses, malnutrition, reproductive health illnesses, household accidents, road accidents and dental illnesses.

HIV/AIDS

The spread of HIV/AIDS in Jordan is considered low. Reported cases since 1986 reached 355, of which 136 were reported to be Jordanians. There is a need to continue with awareness-raising campaigns for the promotion of healthy lifestyles and life skills especially amongst adolescents, to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Jordan.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Finalise a comprehensive national strategy on AIDS prevention which puts emphasis on prevention strategies for youth.
2. Continue monitoring and prompt reporting on sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS
3. Promote healthy life styles especially among young people.
4. Provide early diagnosis services and comprehensive care for patients infected with HIV/AIDS.

Protecting the Environment

The National Plan aims to:

1. Enforce and monitor legislation to regulate pollutants and ensure food safety
2. Increase the percentage of households connected to the public sewage network
3. Provide parks and playgrounds in urban and rural parts of the country
4. Support programmes for children and adolescents to increase their environmental awareness

The goals of this first component directly correspond to many of the Millennium Development Goals, which

Jordan is committed to implementing by 2015.

These goals are:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Reduce child mortality rates from 22 to 11 for every 1,000 live births, and under-five mortality rates from 27 to 13 for every 1,000 live births.
- Improve maternal health, and reduce maternal death to 12 for every 100,000
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- Ensure Environmental sustainability

Component Two: Development *and Capacity Building*

The general aim of the Development and Capacity Building component is to ensure that children have the best start to life through providing a stimulating and a safe environment at home and childhood centres, and to receive quality education (pre-school, basic and secondary), that is developmentally appropriate, and encompasses opportunities for self-learning and life-long learning, with integrating information technology, and reforming the education for the knowledge economy. Furthermore, this component aims to increase the children's knowledge of their cultural heritage, and improve their abilities to make informed decisions, and enhance their inter-personal communication skills, develop their creativity and capabilities and enable them to exercise their right to express their views and to participation.

Pre-Schools and Early Childhood Development

Jordan is amongst the first countries in the Region that has developed an Early Childhood Development strategy and plan of action. Jordan has witnessed a noticeable development in its policies and programmes relating to early childhood in the different sectors. With regard to pre-school education, the percentage of children enrolled in kindergarten (KG) (4-6 year-olds) has risen from 23% in the year 1990 to 33% in the year 2004. Of these children, 5% are enrolled in public KGs, 77% in private KGs, and 18% in the NGO sector (NCFA qualitative data on Preschools in Jordan - 2003/2004).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) oversees the establishment and licensing of KGs, and establishes public KGs in disadvantaged and remote areas. In the scholastic year 1999/2000, 15 rooms were established to serve as KGs, and by 2003/2004, the number increased to 203. The MOE is aiming to establish an additional 140 rooms during the years 2004-2008. The number of private preschools in the year 2003/2004 in all governorates amounted to 1205. The MOE, and the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), developed a national KG curriculum, and a draft KG licensing standards, in addition to training teachers and administrators on early childhood education.

Many challenges still prevail in early childhood education as the quality of programmes offered is below the required standard. Most private preschools do not abide by the conditions of establishing and licensing of preschools, as monitoring tools are weak. In addition, most KG teachers lack the needed educational specialisation, and do not receive comprehensive "in-service" training on early childhood education.

Jordan also witnessed a significant increase in nurseries (for ages birth to below four years), supervised by the Ministry of Social Development, as their total number reached 730 by end 2002. It is worth noting that 57% of these nurseries are governmental, 38% are private, and 4.6% are affiliates of the NGO sector. The number of children enrolled in these nurseries amount to 1.7% of the nursery age population. There are several challenges in the particularities of these nurseries and of the manpower working in this field. Amongst the informal early childhood programmes is the Better Parenting Programme that is being implemented by more than 13 national partners with the support of UNICEF. This programme aims at training caregivers and parents on the knowledge, skills and practices needed to promote the proper and holistic development of their children, and to enable them to provide a stimulating environment for their children at home. Since 1998, the programme has reached more than 45,000 parents and 1,500 caregivers and social workers.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Increase the percentage of children enrolled in preschool (KG 1) from 28% to 35% by the year 2008, and to 50% by the year 2013 , and to increase enrolment in KG2 from 47% to 52% by the year 2008 and to 70% by the year 2013
2. Provide nurseries for children of working mothers
3. Define the desired early childhood standards and outcomes that Jordanian children are expected to achieve at different stages of their development.
4. Develop and evaluate preschool and nursery curricula.

5. Develop a national system for capacity building and certification for all professionals working in the field of early childhood
6. Outline a national regulatory framework for all early childhood institutions in the country.
7. Expand parenting programmes to empower parents to provide a nurturing environment for their children and promote the role of civil society organisations and local communities in providing early childhood programmes

Basic and Secondary Education

The Ministry of Education offers free and compulsory basic education for 10 years for children aged 6 to 16. The enrolment of children in schools for the year 1999/2000 amounted to 96% in the primary cycle (grades 1-6), 92% in the basic cycle (grades 1-10), and 80% in the lower and upper secondary cycle (classes 7-12), with no gender differences between the male and female enrolment (Ministry of Education, Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project documents, 2002). In spite of the high enrolment rates, the educational system faces a number of challenges which include the following:

1. Teaching methods do not place emphasis on achievements, which calls for increased focus on teachers' in-service training.
2. Management of the educational system is centralised, which affect the schools' ability to be innovative, flexible and free to initiate.
3. Approaches to school management are conventional, and do not encourage the participatory approaches with the teachers and students.
4. There is a high emphasis on academic skills, and less emphasis on other important life skills and competencies in general, such as communication, critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving, etc...
5. Relations between the school and the family and community in general should be built and strengthened.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Increase the percentage of basic education completion rates and decrease the percentage of school drop-outs.
2. Encourage the private sector to invest in basic education in the various governorates and districts.
3. Increase the number of schools that offer basic education.
4. Provide a supportive system to assist needy families in keeping their children in schools, which includes provision of text books, materials and meals.

5. Improve the quality and quantity of extra-curricular programmes.
6. Diversify secondary education and link it to the market needs.
7. Expand the establishment of vocational schools and training centres, and develop its programmes to meet market needs.
8. Encourage productivity of vocational schools.
9. Enable school drop-outs to acquire vocational education and skills.
10. Enhance informal education programmes, developing its quality and emphasising the notion of self-learning to enable learners to continue learning and training.
11. Encourage increased participation and involvement of students, families and communities in the work of the schools.

These aims are in line with the second goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that Jordan committed to achieve by the year 2015 – which is to enable female and male children everywhere, to complete primary education.

Quality of Education

With regard to improving the quality of education, the MOE encourages the development of teaching methods and educational programmes based on the new advancements in the fields of computerisation, curricula and training. Thus, the four broad national initiatives that have been derived as the reform agenda are: life long learning, responsiveness to the economy, access to information and communication technology, and quality learning. The Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) (2003-2008) was introduced to achieve these goals and the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II to have the ideal education that will effectively contribute to build an economy based on knowledge.

The basic components of this project are:

- Reorientation of education policy objectives and strategy through governance and administrative reform;
- Transform education programmes and practices for the knowledge economy;
- Support provision of quality physical learning environments; and
- Promotion of learning readiness through early childhood education.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Providing proper class and school environment that

- meets the needs of knowledge based economy.
2. Developing the skills of the educators to be in line with the curricula and the knowledge based economy.
 3. Developing the school educational system according to the needs of the knowledge based economy.
 4. Developing the learning resources to be in line with the new learning outcomes under the umbrella of the educational reform for the knowledge based economy.
 5. Developing the methods of teaching and assessment to be in line with the outcomes of the new curricula.
 6. Developing comprehensive curricula that guarantees the development of the student's skills towards a knowledge based economy.

Children with Special Needs

The philosophy of the MOE focuses on giving attention to children with special needs. With regard to gifted students, the MOE has started working on the academic acceleration programme as of the scholastic year 1997/1998, which allows the gifted student to progress academically in line with his/her academic achievements and mental abilities, regardless of age limits. As for children with disabilities, 300 resource rooms for learning difficulties have been introduced throughout the Kingdom, under which the capabilities of those working with this group of children have been enhanced.

These achievements, however, do not represent the level that governmental and non-governmental institutions aim for adopting and implementing the concept of inclusive education that integrates children with disabilities from the early years of schooling. In addition, there is a need to develop teachers' rehabilitation and training programmes to enable them to meet the needs of children with special needs, and to promote parents' role in the programmes specially designed for this group of children.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Increase the percentage of children with disabilities who are enrolled in government schools
2. Increase the services and educational opportunities for gifted students

Cultural and Recreational Activities

The Ministry of Culture and Amman Municipality, as well as a number of governmental and non-governmental

institutions, are working towards providing cultural and recreational activities as well as libraries, clubs, centres and children parks. But there is consensus that there are insufficient cultural and recreational programmes that develop the children's abilities. Also there is a shortage in exciting cultural material in the Arabic language targeted to children.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Increase the percentage of children (according to age group) who are able to articulate knowledge of clearly defined spiritual, religious and moral understandings.
2. Encourage children to appreciate the beauty of the Arabic language and to use it in different aspects of their lives, and to enhance their appreciation of their Arab and Muslim identity as it is linked to the Arabic language.
3. Increase children's knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, and in particular their civil rights, according to defined standards
4. Create an artistic environment for performing arts in all its forms (theatre, music, art, and dancing) to be the core elements in creating a national artistic identity.
5. Increase children's knowledge of their positive cultural heritage and their knowledge of the experiences of Jordanian and Arab pioneers.

Social and Political participation of Children and Youth

With regard to social and political participation of children and youth, the "Jordanian Youth: their lives and views, 2003" study revealed that the percentage of youth membership in sports, social, and cultural activities falls below 10%, and that youth aged 20-24 years enrolled in a political party does not exceed 1%. This indicates that children and youth were not prepared for participation in public life at a younger age.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Support youth participation in the productive social work through

participating in the voluntary work which serves the environment and local community development.

2. Enhance citizenship amongst youth, through providing opportunities for responsible participation in all aspects of the political life.

Component Three: Protecting Children in Difficult Circumstances

This component of the National Plan aims at protecting children from all forms of violence, neglect, physical, sexual and psychological abuse. It also aims to protect children from all forms of economic exploitation and to eliminate the worst forms of child labour which deny children their right to education and normal development. It also aims to protect children from possessing or dealing with drugs and narcotics, and from delinquency. This component seeks to advocate for amendments in the existing legislation for children in conflict with the law to guarantee their reintegration in society.

The final section under this component addresses the rights of children in cases of emergencies to prompt humanitarian aid and support.

Children in need of protection are defined as those deprived of parental care, in conflict with the law, addicted to narcotics and drugs, child labourers, neglected and abused, or victims of exploitation or of armed conflict. Jordan has worked on amending national legislation to be in line with international conventions and submitted to its Parliament the Draft Childhood Act in 2004.

There are limited statistics on the magnitude of the problems related to protection. Official figures reflect the number of cases which have been reported or identified by different government or civil society child protection organisations. These figures do not reflect the real size of the problem. Amongst the important initiatives that shed light on this group of disadvantaged children is the 2004 "National Study of Disadvantaged Children" prepared by the National Council of Family Affairs with the support of the World Bank. This study provided qualitative and quantitative information on disadvantaged children and on the programmes and policies directed at this group of children. The study concluded with policy recommendations which have been integrated into the National Plan, to improve the lives of disadvantaged children.

Children deprived of parental care

A total of 1,136 orphans or children of broken homes lived in care institutions in the year 2000, of which 249 were in public institutions, and 887 in private ones (Evaluation of Child Care and Rehabilitation Centres in Jordan, 2004, Khalil Elayyan, UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Development). According to statistics of the Ministry of Social Development, 80% of these children are from broken families, 15% children are born out of wedlock, and 5% are orphans. The situation differed from one institution to the other, and while institutions in general provide children with their basic food and shelter, there is a clear shortage of comprehensive

educational and social programmes and individual child plans to cater for the psychological, social, recreational, and educational needs of children. There is a clear need to improve the performance of counsellors, and to develop rehabilitation reintegration programmes for these children in their communities. Amending the Personal Status Law, which raised the marriage age to 18 for both sexes, is considered to be an important achievement.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Support programmes to empower at risk families with coping mechanisms, with the objective of strengthening the capacity of these families to care for and protect their children.
2. Improve the quality of educational, psychosocial and recreational services in the child care institutions.
3. Fulfil the rights of every child living in care institutions to develop and improve his/her abilities.
4. Develop appropriate programmes to support foster family systems to enable more children to grow up in a family environment.

Children in Conflict with the Law

According to the National Study of Disadvantaged Children in Jordan and statistics from the Ministry of Social Development, 30,000 children, aged 15–18 years, were arrested during the years 1999-2001. The Study noted that 11% of the total number of crimes are committed by children and that 800 minors are annually institutionalised in the Ministry of Social Development juvenile rehabilitation centres. According to the Ministry most of the offences committed by these children are petty such as theft or fighting. Males form 96% of those arrested. It was also found that 56% of these children attended schools at the time of committing the offence. The Ministry of Social Development offers services for children in conflict with the law through seven rehabilitation centres. The age of criminal responsibility is currently set at seven years but the Childhood Act calls for raising it to 10 years.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Empower 30% of families with children at risk of delinquent behaviour with skills and competencies to deal with their children by the year 2005.
2. Decrease the number of children living in institutions and reintegrating them in families and communities.
3. Provide an appropriate environment for stimulating the developmental and social needs of children in rehabilitation institutions.

4. Develop legislation and improve capacities and procedures for dealing with children in conflict with the law in accordance to international norms.

Children Addicted to Narcotics and Drugs

The number of children addicted to narcotics and drugs in Jordan is quite low. The statistics of the Drugs and Narcotic Department show that the total number of children arrested in drug cases was 159 during 1997 – 2001 (The National Study of Disadvantaged Children in Jordan, the National Council for Family, supported by the World Bank, 2004). These figures, however, do not reflect the true situation, and there is a need to conduct a study to find out the exact figures of drug abuse in Jordan.

The Drugs and Narcotic Department conducted a study on 122 delinquents at the Ministry of Social Development's youth rehabilitation centres which revealed that 52% of those interviewed had previous experience in using psychotropic and addictive substances. As for smoking amongst children, the percentage of children aged between 13-15 years who smoke is 19.3%, 25% of boys and 14.5% of girls.

Despite developments in rehabilitation services offered to drug addicts, services offered to children still do not meet national needs. The passing of legislation to monitor the conduct of youth to protect them from the dangers of alcohol and drugs is a national achievement but monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are not effective.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Raise awareness and offer guidance to the child and family on the dangers and harms caused by substance abuse.
2. Encourage the provision of counselling services in homes.
3. Train those working with child addicts on the legal, social, psychological and health implications of these addictions.
4. Establish specialised comprehensive centres that deal with children with addiction problems.

Child Labour

Jordan gives special attention to child labour and works towards establishing related legislation for protecting children. Jordan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No.138 which specifies the minimum working age. Jordan endorsed ILO Labour Convention No.182 that prohibits the worst forms of child labour. In 1996, Jordan amended the Labour Law to raise the minimum age for entry into labour from 13 to

16 years, and the minimum age for undertaking hazardous jobs to 18 years. Jordanian law states that children should not work for more than 6 working hours per day. The law also prohibits children from working from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. The law, however, did not protect children working in the unofficial sectors (agriculture, households and family enterprises). The Ministry of Labour undertakes supervision visits to monitor the situation of children in the workforce. Amongst the important achievement in this regard is the establishment of a Child Labour Unit in 2001 in cooperation with the ILO, and the formation of a national strategy to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in 2003.

With regard to the scope of the problem, "Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views", conducted by the Department of Statistics and UNICEF indicated that 5.5% of children aged 10-14 years were working. In another study conducted by the Department of Statistics in 2004, it was found that the main reason behind children dropping out of school was related to economic factors, in addition to low scholastic achievement, and the cost of education, especially in families with a large number of children. Despite the fact that the percentage of children dropping out of school is considered to be low in Jordan (0.8%), the National Study for Disadvantaged Children indicated that around 85,000 children below 16 years dropped out of school during 1990-1999.

At the time of writing the National Plan of Action, there were no studies about the volume of children in the streets. Ministry of Social Development records in 1999 indicated that there were 636 children working in the streets, 15% of whom were below the age of 9 years. Child beggars in 2002 numbered 626 out of whom 134 were girls. These figures reflect the negative effect that the prevailing difficult economic conditions are having on the ability of families to cope and to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The Juvenile Law has been amended to classify this group of children as children in need of protection and not as delinquents.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Jordan by the end of 2013, and decrease the number of child labourers under 16 years of age.
2. Rehabilitate and reintegrate working children in schools and secure their right to free primary education and appropriate vocational training.
3. Conduct studies to better understand the scope of child labour in Jordan, especially those working in hazardous jobs. Studies should focus on the magnitude, geographical allocation, patterns, reasons and consequences.
4. Offer alternatives for increasing the income of

- families of children who work.
5. Develop national legislation that is in harmony with international conventions on the prevention of child labour, and ILO Convention No.182 on the prevention of the worst forms of child labour.
 6. Raise awareness on the issue of child labour and its negative effects on the child's physical and psychological development.

Children victims of abuse and neglect

The number of cases of children, victims of abuse and neglect reported to the Family Protection Department reached 1312 since its establishment in 1997. Five units were added to the Department to serve children in different governorates. A new methodology for taking children's testimonies has been introduced. Now the police record statements made by children on video cameras to ease the pain of recounting several times details of the traumatic experience.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Decrease cases of child abuse in all their forms, physical, psychological or sexual, and neglect, through expanding preventive measures.
2. Develop and improve the quality of services offered in this field, such as shelters, counselling, health, legal and police services.
3. Eliminate child pornography, commercial sexual exploitation of children and trafficking.
4. Protect children with special needs from discrimination, abuse, exploitation, negligence and violence.

Children in Armed Conflict

The Plan aims to protect children in armed conflict according to the standards of International Humanitarian Law by encouraging the implementation of UN resolutions specifically in the occupied territory. The Plan also aims to provide training for those working in the field of child right and promoting international cooperation in this regard.

Component Four: The Role of the Media

The revolution in the information communications technology (ICT) and the increased use of public media communication are considered to be vital factors in influencing children. The ICT revolution is influencing the young generation. In addition, and as children are exposed to all forms of media due attention should be given to its effect on children in Jordan.

Over 96% of Jordanian families own a television and 80% of them own a radio. According to the

Demographic and Family Health Survey carried out by the Department of Statistics in 2002, the number of families who own satellite dishes has witnessed an increase to 42%, whilst less than 5% of families have internet connection.

With regard to print media, a study on Media Habits in Jordan, (UNICEF 2001) revealed that 45% of Jordanians do not read a newspaper. It is worth noting that 52% of adolescents aged 15-20 years do not read the newspaper, according to the study.

The survey "Jordanian Youth: Lives and Views" revealed that watching television during leisure time was considered the most important activity for young people (41% male and 46% female) aged 10-24 years. About 6% of young males and 14% of young females stated that listening to the radio was one way they spent their leisure time. It is worth noting that the percentage of male and female youth who watch television decreases as they grow older, while the number of those listening to the radio increases.

Whilst there are some children's programmes in the Jordanian media, their quality, content and approach need to be re-examined. It is very important to use media channels to allow children the opportunity to discuss and participate in issues that concern them using a participatory approach. By the same token, it is also important to protect children against harmful media influences.

The National Plan aims to:

1. Increase the number of programmes that allow interactive discussions between children and adults on social matters that concern them
2. Upgrade the quality of programmes for children in the media
3. Use the media as a channel for raising the awareness of children about rights and responsibilities

Component Five: *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Monitoring and evaluating the National Plan lies within the responsibilities and mandate outlined in the law of the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA). The law includes the Council's contribution to policy, setting measures and development plans related to the family and its members, and monitoring the implementation of these plans. The NCFA, therefore, has to continuously coordinate with all partners and agencies to monitor achievements and challenges faced when implementing the National Plan.

To guarantee that the monitoring and evaluation process

forms an integral part of the National Plan, impact and process indicators were defined to measure progress.

For each activity in the logical framework of the National Plan, a column for the indicators, and another column for the source of verification for each indicator were included.

All activities were logically coded and numbered to ensure easy reference during the monitoring and evaluation process, and during reporting on progress achieved and challenges faced.

Also, a draft integrated monitoring and evaluation plan of National Plan was drawn and enclosed in the main document. A draft matrix to be used by all partner agencies in reporting on achievements and constraints in the implementation of the Plan is also attached.

Process for Monitoring and Evaluating the National Plan

A technical committee will monitor and evaluate the National Plan under the umbrella of the NCFA with representation from of the Ministries of Planning and International Cooperation, Health, Education, Social Development, Interior, Labour, Culture, and the Department of Statistics. Members should also be from the Higher Councils for Media and Youth as well as children, youth, the academia, non-governmental organisations, UNICEF and a monitoring and evaluation expert.

The NCFA, represented by its Childhood, and Monitoring and Evaluation Units, will coordinate the work of the Committee and record its deliberations.

The responsibilities of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee will be to:

1. Follow-up on the situation of Jordanian children using specialised computer software, such as the DevInfo Software, used by the Department of Statistics to monitor Jordan's progress in relation to the Mid-Decade Goals.
2. Follow-up on the implementation of the National Plan by submitting reports by the main implementing partners. Follow-up will be through review meetings bi-annually during the first three years, and annually thereafter. A mid term review will be held after five years and a final review in the last year of the National Plan's implementation.
3. Define research priorities that need to be undertaken to address the gap in the indicators and information required for follow up on the National Plan, coordinating with relevant parties, in

particular the Department of Statistics and donor agencies, is a must. Generating needed resources to conduct and make use of these studies and research, is another priority.

- A focal person from the Ministries and main participating agencies will be appointed to follow-up on the implementation and monitoring of the Plan. The focal persons will be given training if needed, on monitoring and evaluation in general, and on the National Plan monitoring mechanisms in particular.
- An annual plan will be prepared for the Ministries and institutions. This plan stems from the National Plan and will be integrated into the annual plans of these ministries and institutions.
- Unified monitoring forms, based on the structure of the Plan (copy included in the Arabic National Plan) will be compiled, in coordination with the focal persons from the main Ministries and institutions.
- The NCFA will compile all reports submitted by the Ministries and institutions in a special database designed by NCFA's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.
- Annual progress reports will be submitted to the NCFA's Board of Trustees. Achievements, challenges and measures that need to be taken to face these challenges will be discussed in the technical committee.
- A review of the responsibilities of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, as well as of monitoring and evaluation tools will be done periodically and updates will be carried out based on lessons learnt.

Estimated Cost for Monitoring and Evaluation

The estimated cost of the National Plan's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for 2004-2013, is approximately 500,000 Jordanian Dinars. This amount is in addition to the cost of studies and fieldwork undertaken to address the data gaps needed for follow-up on the implementation of the Plan. This latter cost is to be met by the official implementing agencies.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, in consultation with relevant agencies, may submit project proposals to international and local donor agencies for their consideration.