



MODERNIZING THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CORPORATION HOTEL AND TOURISM TRAINING CENTERS

CASE STUDY FROM JORDAN



In partnership with:

Ministry of Labour



وزارة العمل

Vocational Training Corporation



Vocational Training Corporation

*Ministry of Tourism &
Antiquities*



وزارة السياحة والآثار

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACOR	American Center for Oriental Research
ASEZA	Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
BDS	Business Development Services
BOD	Board of Directors
CBO	Community Based Organization
CoE	Centers of Excellence
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DoA	Department of Antiquities
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GOJ	Government of Jordan
JAU	Jordan Applied University
JHA	Jordan Hotel Association
JHTEC	Jordan Hospitality and Tourism Education Company
JITOA	Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association
TVET	Technical Vocational Educational and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation
MBR	Market Based Representatives
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICE	Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
MSME	Medium and Small Micro Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PNT	Petra National Trust
PSP	Private Sector Participation
RSCN	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
SAVE	Scientific, academic, volunteer and educational
SIU	Strategy Implementation Unit
SSC	Strategy Steering Committee
TA	Tourism Associations
TOT	Institutional of Trainers
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive summary

The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) was established in 1976 as a semi-autonomous organization under the management of the Minister of Labour. The main roles of VTC are to provide vocational training opportunities for the technical workforce of Jordan through upgrading professional skills in a workplace and providing vocational training through apprenticeship schemes, training programs and intensive short course training.

The main objective of modernizing the Vocational Training Corporation Centers is to have trainees trained to reach an appropriate level of competence in order to apply specific knowledge and skills in tourism disciplines such as food and beverage service, food production, housekeeping and associated hospitality and communication skills for the tourism sector in Jordan.

Vocational training, to be effective, should serve as a bridge between employer needs and those of work seekers and this can only be achieved through effective partnerships between the VTC and industry stakeholders. It is through this partnership approach that vocational training can add real value to development efforts within the tourism industry. The delivery of hotel and tourism training has a number of unique features and the training environment for hotel and tourism programs must attempt to match as closely as possible the 'real work environment' that students will face when entering the industry. This can only be achieved through this partnership approach.

Consequently, USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project worked on developing a partnership between the Ministry of Labor and VTC to create a public-private structure to develop the GoJ-owned VTC Centers. A comprehensive assessment of all Hotel and Tourism VTC Centers was conducted to assess their capital, operation, human, and academic needs.

A strategic plan was prepared for the VTC Hotel & Tourism Unit as well as its 15 centers spread throughout Jordan. Research undertaken as part of the development of this strategic plan has indicated that there is a distinct lack of partnership between the key stakeholders in terms of how vocational training for the industry is planned, managed and delivered. As a consequence, vocational training in tourism in Jordan is not currently producing the quantity or quality of outputs to meet the needs of a growing industry.

In order to move forward in a structured manner, it was proposed to develop a 'Model Center' at Madaba, which would enable the specific measures in relation to the VTCs to be fully implemented into one center. This approach led to the development of a center of excellence for vocational training in hotel and tourism, which served as a template for replication in an additional three centers: Aqaba, Petra and Al Salt Centers and then in all centers.

Needs for development of human resources for the tourism industry

A Manpower Training and Educational Survey of Jordan Tourism Industry, was commissioned and published. This report provided valuable planning data on the levels of manpower training and educational across all sectors of the tourism industry in Jordan.

It was recommended in the manpower training needs that in order to further strengthen the human resource base, standards of performance and professionalism of Jordanian tourism a manpower strategy should be put in place which, supports the development of professional career paths for key occupations in the tourism sectors and provides clear, flexible and relevant courses and programs leading to national qualifications which hold international recognition for excellence.

One of the major recommendations was also to develop a training strategy by categories of job, to include delivery of training; national accreditation and national specifications for training courses for trainers; draft specifications and terms of reference for train-the-trainers program and refresher courses for hospitality teaching staff in education and training institutions. There was a strongly held view in the education needs that teachers lack practical experience working within the industry. Many of the respondents emphasized the need for teachers to gain more experience within the tourism industry. This might be facilitated by the use of lecturer-exchange programs with international institutes and colleges.

Additionally, respondents were interested to strengthen their curricula and expose their students to modern subject content and approaches. Many teachers were using outdated textbooks and journals. Of those textbooks that are available, many are not available in Arabic and when translated, they are often inadequate. There was a need to examine existing curricula in light of international best practice in the area and recommend initiatives to strengthening current approaches;

Institutional assessment of VTC Corporation, Unit and Centers

Institutional assessment of the VTC included three elements: VTC Corporation, VTC Unit and VTC Training Centers for Hotel and Tourism.

Assessment of the Vocational Training Corporation and Unit - The assessment of the VTC was made following direct consultations with representatives of the organization and through discussions with center directors and industry stakeholders. Although contacts with senior management within the VTC were limited, the meetings that did take place provided an insight into the challenges faced by the organization. Further understanding of the key issues facing the VTC was gathered from discussions with a wide range of stakeholders. Examination of the VTC portrays an organization that was challenged to respond to the rapidly changing needs of the hotel & tourism industry. Whilst there seemed to be a genuine motivation among VTC personnel to improve the quality of outputs from the Centers, the pace of change must be enhanced and the levels of bureaucracy within the organization reduced.

The difficulties faced by the VTC were grouped into a number of areas: Status of hotel & tourism training within the VTC, strategic direction, organization structure & human resources and resource allocation & Budgeting. In summary, the VTC needed to provide cohesion and direction in managing vocational training for hotel and tourism. The 'top down' management approach described by most Center Directors was hindering development. There was a need for structures which facilitate greater autonomy and accountability. There was also evidence of a fragmented approach to program development, and custom designed programs developed for particular clients. There was a need to examine the nature, structure, content and length of all programs offered at the Centers.

Assessment of the Vocational Training Centers – Hotel and Tourism - In general, the results of the diagnostic assessment of the centers indicated that there was much work to be done to enhance the quality of hotel & tourism training in the Centers. Site visits were made to eleven Centers and the corresponding assessments have highlighted the following challenges facing the Centers; Center Management, Quality of Training & Learning Outcomes and Resource Management. The diagnostic assessment of the VTC and the Centers has highlighted that whilst there have been improvements made in recent years; there is much work still to be done. To address the problems identified, a full review of how hotel & tourism training was managed and delivered both within the VTC and at the level of the Centers was required. All aspects of vocational training need to be examined in this review, from curricula development right down to the nature of the tools and resources available as teaching aids.

A comprehensive strategy must be developed with appropriate resources and management structures put in place to facilitate implementation of this strategy and the creation of a model center which addresses all the current issues identified in this assessment should, form part of any new strategy. This model can then be used to develop a Center Operations Manual, which will provide guidance for the management of all Centers and provide a template for consistency of application.

The development of model centers of excellence at Madaba, Abu Nussair and Aqaba had been agreed as part of the drive to enhance the quality of the training offered within the vocational training centers. The objective was to launch the first model center at Madaba in September 2006, which would enable the concept to be implemented and fine tuned. Following this, the remaining two centers would be developed and ultimately all vocational training centers would be aligned to this model.

To facilitate this model center approach a number of key activities were to be completed. First, a broad framework for the development of the model centers has to be defined, which reflects international best practice and the specific needs of hotel & tourism training in a vocational context in Jordan. Second, it is necessary to benchmark the current performance of the three designated centers against this best practice framework to determine the existing gaps that must be bridged. This report describes the outcomes of both activities.

In developing the model centers, it was important that the key areas to be addressed are defined and specific criteria established to guide future efforts. These criteria must encompass all activities that comprise the management and operation of a center of excellence and should reflect international best practice, from both educational and commercial perspectives. The research undertaken has indicated that a model center of excellence should be developed with seven core elements in mind, which included: (1) leadership and direction, (2) organization and communication, (3) planning and control, (4) facilities management, (5) program design and delivery, (6) program quality and assessment and (7) student recruitment and support.

These seven core elements will be used to guide the development and management of the model centers. Within each element are a range of performance criteria that must be achieved, if the center was to operate to a high standard that meets international best practice norms.

It should be noted that, broadly, elements 1-4 relate to how the center was managed and operated, whilst elements 5-7 focus on the educational remit. The goal of the model center approach was to bring a commercial mindset to the management of the centers, so that the centers operate to a standard that reflects the industry they serve, whilst at the same time protecting the educational goals and objectives of vocational training. Having established the model center framework, it was then essential to examine the current performance of the designated centers, with a view to identifying the priority issues to be addressed.

This institutional assessment focused on benchmarking the centers against the criteria within elements 1-4 and a summary of the findings are presented below:

- Capability of instructors was poor and quality of training delivery would be questionable;
- Center management did speak about the range of planning and control measures they implement, but clear outcomes were not seen;
- Center management was poor, reactive and lacking in leadership;
- Clear evidence that planning and control are structured;
- Culture of continuous improvement not evident at the center;
- Facilities were of poor quality; standard of hygiene, maintenance and professionalism were poor.
- Little evidence of effective planning, management and control;

- Organization structure and internal decision making processes need strengthening, if center was to become model of excellence;
- Quality of instructors was poor, with low motivation levels;
- Significant concerns exist as to how program outcomes are assessed;
- Standard of hygiene, maintenance and overall professionalism was very good.
- Student numbers are low and center team showed no sense of urgency in addressing the problems.

The institutional assessment report provided two important outcomes that assisted in the development of the model centers. First, it has defined the framework for the model center and the best practice criteria that must be achieved. Second, it had identified the current performance gaps in the three centers, when benchmarked against the model center criteria.

Given that Madaba was chosen the first center to be developed and time was of great importance, work was already underway across a number of elements to move the process forward. A sample of the activities being implemented at present, include:

- A development plan was being prepared, which will serve as an operations manual;
- Industry Steering Committee has been established and terms of reference defined;
- Program development Working Group was in place and terms of reference defined;
- Instructors training plan developed and currently being implemented.

Partnerships for the development of the VTC

In July 2006, HE Minister of Labour and HE Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, the VTC Director General, and the USAID (Siyaha) Chief of Party signed an MOU in collaboration with



senior industry partners from the hotel and tourism sector to improve and develop a stronger workforce for the upcoming years by supporting the VTC in various training programs, expert advice and guest speakers, supporting training materials and resources, etc.

The establishment of an Industry Steering Committee - Human Resource Development in Tourism was initiated at a meeting of senior industry managers in May 2006 in Amman. The Industry Steering Committee was facilitating senior tourism industry representatives

to provide leadership and direction for human resource development. It will also provide a forum for a meaningful and effective partnership with the hotel, restaurant & tourism sectors.

This was essential to ensure that outcomes from the initiative make a tangible contribution to the future development of the industry. Industry Steering Committee - Human Resource Development in Tourism brought the following qualities to the role:

- An in-depth understanding of the role and unique characteristics of human resource development, training and education in hotel & tourism;
- Awareness and understanding of the key elements of the strategic plans and developments in HRD;

- A commitment to support the efforts of the Vocational Training Corporation and other education and training institutions in seeking to improve the quality of vocational training in hotel & tourism.

The Industry Steering Committee - Human Resource Development in Tourism has been established to create a framework for the development of a viable strategic partnership between the tourism industry (hotel & restaurant sectors) and the appropriate public and private institutions (Vocational Training Corporation). Advisory in nature, the committee supported the development of a world class approach to human resource development for the tourism industry and will help ensure the continued alignment of institution activities with industry needs.

Strategic and operational directions and recommendations for implementation

The importance of human resource development in tourism has been well established and vocational training represents an important component in the overall context of enhancing the skills & knowledge of tourism employees. This Section provides details on a number of issues which will impact on the formulation of a cohesive strategy for the Vocational Training Corporation – Hotel & Tourism Unit and the Vocational Training Centers. First, it explores some general characteristics of vocational training, and more pertinently, the unique features of training in the tourism field. Once this has been achieved, a review of the findings of the diagnostic assessment of the VTC - Hotel & Tourism Unit and the Centers was provided.

To serve as a benchmark against which the development of any new strategy must be aligned, an examination of some best practices in vocational training for hotel & tourism are also outlined. Finally, the Section creates a bridge between the current position and best practice expectations, by defining the strategic goals for the VTC Hotel & Tourism Unit.



Technical Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) funds assured

The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) represented by H.E. Eng. Khalil Kurdi, Director General of VTC and the Technical Vocational Educational and Training Fund represented by Mr. Saed Bakri Director General of TVET Fund was entered into August 31, 2006. That MOU was signed for the purpose of rehabilitation of the Vocational Training Corporation, Hotel and Tourism Centers, development of the theoretical and practical training program, designing and implementing of the suitable training program in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Ministry of Labour, Vocational Training Corporation, Jordan Tourism Development Project (Siyaha) and other industry partners from Hotel and Tourism sector.

The agreement was approved for funding the rehabilitation of the Hotel and Tourism at the Madaba VTC Center according to the international standards to become as a model center and the training project in the tourism sector – Madaba Centers, as this two project are considered a part of the entire project for the rehabilitation of the Vocational Training Centers – Tourism sector in corporation with the private sector. This project was aiming to train around 4,920 trainees during the coming 5 years, with a project budget of JD3 million. In that agreement, TVET fund will be

funding all training requirements, trainers' wages, trainees' fees, capital and operational costs, and the development of training programs.

Model Center implementation and pre opening action plans

The Model Center implementation plan and pre-opening plan for Madaba VTC Center, - provided feedback on the assessment of progress made in July 2006 against the model center implementation plan, prepared in May 2006. The plan focused upon identifying the construction work required to transform each center into a model of excellence, and the work priorities at the centers to meet the launch date deadline of early September 2006. The plan also specified the support materials for the opening of the centers including an equipment list and a summary action checklist which summarizes all the measures necessary to develop a model center. This checklist was also be used for guiding the opening of future centers.



Program curriculum and occupational profile

The program curriculum design was based on a comprehensive research and study of occupational profiles and skills standards. These occupational profiles formed the structure and content of the program curriculum. The first program designed was the Certificate in Hospitality Skills - Level 1 as accredited and awarded by the VTC. The aims of the program were to have the trainees trained to reach an appropriate level of competence in order to apply specified knowledge and skills in food production, food and beverage service, housekeeping and associated hospitality and communication skills for the Jordan tourism sector. Within this aim, the purpose of the program included:

1. Development of basic cookery, food and beverage service and housekeeping skills
2. Establishment of a base of skills and attitudes, for further professional career development;
3. Preparation of trainees for all dimensions of working life in kitchens; restaurant and housekeeping;
4. Development of an awareness of present and potential job requirements in the industry.

The duration of the program is 48 weeks. The program can be adapted to meet the needs of full time or part time training. The program consists of two component blocks: 24 weeks in VTC Center and 24 weeks of practical training in industry.

48 weeks						
Weeks	1 wk	21 Weeks	1 wk	1 wk	24 wks	
Hours	30 hours	630 hours	30 hours	30 hours	960 hours	

Subject Syllabus	Induction English Language – basic level (30 hours)	Food Production (210 hours)	Examinations	Preparation for Industry Training (including field trips and industry speakers)	Practical Training in Industry
		Food & Beverage Service (105 hours)			
		Hospitality & Communications (105 hours)			
		Housekeeping (105 hours)			
		Hospitality & Communications (English Language) (105 hours)			

The module syllabus is presented separately and on completion of four modules the trainee shall be eligible for the award of the VTC Certificate. The program learning and teaching content is allocated as follows:

Subject	Hours
Food Production	210
Food and Beverage Service	105
Housekeeping	105
Hospitality and Communication	105
Hospitality and Communication (English Language)	105
Subtotal	630
Induction course & Basic Language Course	30
Examinations and Practical Tests	30
Preparation for Industry Training	30
Total Learning Hours at VTC Center	720
Practical Training Hours (24 weeks x 40 hours/week)	960
Total Learning Hours for Program	1,680

Practical Internship Training in Industry

Trainees are required to undertake a minimum period of 24 weeks' practical training in industry as part of the program. Trainees follow an agreed induction and training program while in industry and are monitored by a VTC Training Advisers. Supervisors in industry were asked to complete a report in conjunction with a VTC Training Adviser.

Assessment Structure

Successful completion of the program will be based on successful completion of the following three assessment components:

Assessment Component	Details
Continuous Assessment	Assessments will be based on key tasks linked to each stage of the syllabus and on the stated aims and objectives of the module
Written Assessment	The written examination in the form of multiple choices will be based on material from the syllabus in approximately the percentages shown.
Practical Test	The practical test will be based on trained skills and the practical test will be supervised by industry moderator

General assessment guidelines and student academic regulations:

The general assessment guidelines and students academic regulation aimed to develop a program and general assessment regulations handbook for administration of programs and prepare continuous assessment, practical assessment and exam preparation guidelines for instructors in the VTC Centers specific to hotel and tourism training disciplines. The handbook contained important information for trainees of the – Hospitality and Tourism Centers. It provided



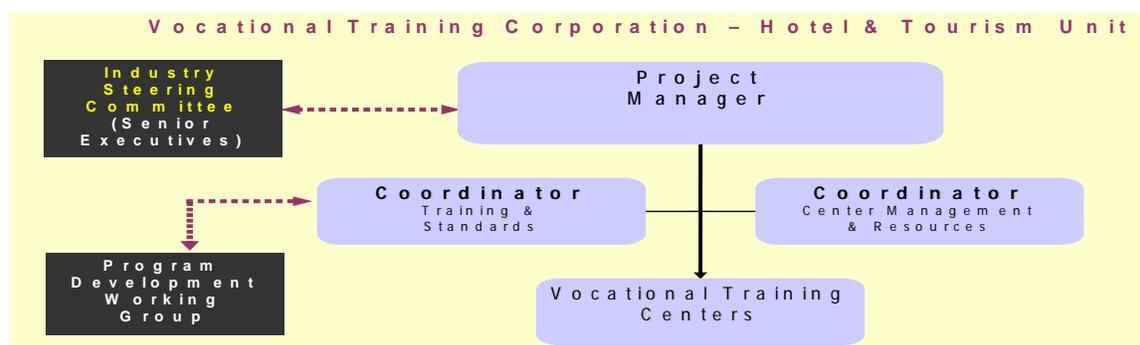
also details of the context and operation of the VTC regulations which affect academic quality and student behaviour. The regulations outlined some of the center's requirements of students.

Teaching and training approach and methodology

The close connection between the different elements of the program demands that an integrated approach be adopted in the implementation of the syllabus modules. This will require teachers to integrate subject matter from a range of syllabus sections; co-operate closely with other teachers implementing the program course and complement the industry work experience.

Establishment of the VTC Project Management Unit

The strategic plan developed for the VTC – Hotel & Tourism Unit and the VTC's has proposed the development of model centers of excellence at Madaba, Abu Nussair and Aqaba. An important feature in making these centers a reality was the creation of a project management structure, which provides for the efficient and effective management of the range of activities necessary to develop the centers. The agreed structure is depicted below:



This structure offers a clear mechanism for managing the development of the model centers. Broadly the individual roles can be defined as follows:

- Project Manager – To oversee the management of all aspects of the development of the model centers and to participate on the Senior Industry Steering Committee;
- Coordinator, Training & Standards – To assume responsibility for all matters directly relating to training and standards in the centers, such as program design & delivery, Instructor competence and hygiene and safety;
- Coordinator, Center Management & Resources – To assume responsibility for all matters relating to how the centers are managed and resourced, including improving management effectiveness, developing a revised budgeting process for hotel & tourism training and facilities management within the centers. They should liaise directly with the center directors.

Establishment of Partnership for Practical Training in Industry (PPT) Committee

In September 2006, Siyaha convened a Partnership for Practical Training in Industry (PPT) Committee to coordinate the design and implementation of practical training internship in industry for students of VTC programs. Siyaha prepared two SOW's for consultants to prepare a practical training internship guidelines workbook for students and an operation manual for industry, and for the development of assessment and exams guidelines for the VTC centers.

Student text books, teacher resource manual and standard production recipes:

The Student text books and Teachers Resource Manual have been developed with the financial assistance of the USAID/Jordan Development Program (Siyaha) and in partnership with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The curriculum development includes the development, designing and printing of four students text books in Food and Beverage Services, Food Production, Housekeeping and Hospitality Skills, and in order to build the capacity of the teachers and trainers at the VTC training centers, USAID/ Siyaha has developed a training resource manual for whom are involved in the teaching of the above mentioned text books. In order to deliver a successful and fine Student Text Books and Teacher Resource Manual, USAID/ Jordan Tourism Development Project sought the cooperation and assistance from the Project Development Working Group which included around 30 representative from the Vocational Training Corporation, industry senior managers and educators whom are technical expertise in hotel and restaurant operations, and to get their valuable feedback in the researching, preparation and verifying the content of the various units in the Student text books and Teacher resource manual.

In addition to that we seek the assistance and approval of VTC – Hotel and Tourism Unit in verifying the context, grammar, punctuation and technical content of these books in the translation from English to Arabic. In addition to the student text book and teacher resource manual, USAID Siyaha developed the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) with standard production recipes which included recipes for appetizers, salads, soups, pasta, stock, sauces, meat, poultry, fish, vegetable and desert.

Student recruitment program and VTC open houses

As a process of student recruitment program Vocational Training corporation hotel and tourism project management unit have been conducted visits to Mosque, met with local community leaders and introduced the VTC Hotel tourism program to them and gave them a comprehensive picture of the training in the VTC Center and about the practical training at the industry. During the visits, the project management unit provided people with promotion leaflets describing the procedures of the program, how to apply and invit



e them to the open house days. The open house days were part of the VTC marketing campaign to raise the awareness about careers in tourism and hospitality sector, and also served to recruit high school students to join the new VTC Hospitality Program. The open house days were held at the hospitality and tourism Vocational Centers (VTC) and in which it enabled prospective students and their parents to visit the VTC centers and find out about the hospitality and tourism program and speak to teachers, current students and industry representatives whom were at hand to distribute materials about their facilities and answer questions from students and their parents about working in the hospitality sector.

A strong start - intake of 600 trainees in 1st year of program

Launch of Mababa VTC Center: In January 2007, Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah inaugurated the Center for Hotel and Tourism Training at the Madaba Vocational Training Corporation (VTC). The launch of the model center was in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and the Vocational Training Corporation.



The event was attended by government officials, and others, who toured the facility and were briefed on the project.

Launch of Aqaba VTC Center: The Center for Hotel and Tourism Training at the Aqaba Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) center was launched in July 2007 following an extensive revamp and upgrade of the facility. This initiative was led by the Vocational Training Corporation, Ministry of Labour and the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA). The launch event was attended by His Excellency Mr. Basem Al Salem, Minister of Labour, along with the Chief Commissioner of ASEZA, Director General of VTC and other dignitaries, in addition to wide representation from hotels, restaurants and tourism companies.



Restaurant training program signing ceremony



In May 2007, HE Minister of Labor and HE Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, the VTC Director General, and the USAID (Siyaha) Chief of Party signed an MOU in collaboration with Jordan Restaurant Association for the purpose of the development of the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) – Hotel & Tourism Centers and for improving the standards of training and education of student/trainees for the tourism industry in Jordan.

Positive feedback from trainees - hospitality training gets an upgrade

Khamis has a passion for cooking, and thanks to an overhaul of tourism vocational training centers in Jordan, he has been able to pursue a career in hospitality and gain valuable experience in a 5* hotel.

Last year the Madaba Vocational Training Center (VTC) underwent a major overhaul of its organizational structure, training curriculum and facilities. The revamp came as part of a USAID/Siyaha initiative to upgrade the Vocational Training Corporation – Hotel & Tourism Unit and the Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) in Jordan in order to address the pressing need for skilled labor in the local tourism sector. The Madaba VTC was selected to be a model center in this upgrade process, whereby the new learning model was first implemented and developed in Madaba, and then adopted by other VTC centers nationwide.

Mr. Khamis Abu Judeh, a student from Madaba, is part of the first batch of students to take up studies at the revamped center and talks about his training with gusto. Having finished Tawjihi (the local high school degree) with a focus on hotel studies, Khamis wanted to continue his studies in that field. Although his parents, who saw a good future with hotel training, encouraged his choice, finances were stretched so Khamis had to take care of his education on his own.



When the nearby Madaba center opened it, it was ideal for Khamis as not only could he continue his training, but he could also get paid for it, as the new program developed by USAID/Siyaha paid an allowance of JD50 to trainees each month. The upgrade also entailed reducing the length of the program from two years to six months at the center, plus a further six months working in the industry. Khamis was impressed with the new course, saying, “Everything is available here, good facilities, books and equipment. I even regret doing Tawjihi; I wish I had come here earlier!”

He is now nearing the end of his six-month training period, which he is doing at a 5* hotel in Amman. Stepping out of the kitchen of the hotel restaurant where he is working, wearing a slightly lopsided white chef’s hat, Khamis is exactly where he wants to be. “I’ve always wanted to get into this field. I love cooking and want to become a chef,” he says. “Now I have been given the chance to do that.”

Female Students at Vocational Training Centers came top at the International Hospitality Forum Competitions

Amman, November 2007

Supported by the USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project (Siyaha), four Tourism and Hospitality Unit Vocational Training Centers (VTC) from around Jordan took part in the 7th International Hospitality Forum (IHF), which was held at Amman Exhibitions Park from 30 October to 1 November.

The participation of the VTC highlighted the quality of hospitality training available through its Tourism and Hospitality Unit centers, which total 11 centers across the country. The centers that participated were the Madaba, Salt, Petra and Aqaba centers.

Seven students from the Madaba VTC competed in an exciting bed-making competition that had skill, speed and accuracy at the core of the judging criteria. These students had fully completed the year-long Certificate in Hospitality Skills program, which was upgraded by USAID/Siyaha and developed to include six months of industry training. Suzan Masandeh came first, followed by Khamees Abu Joudeh and by Iyad al Atrash in third place. Jury member Mr. Eyad Hamdan, Executive HR Manager at Le Royal hotel, was impressed with the students' skills. "They did very well compare to professional competitors. Some participants who have 10 years' experience get confused and nervous at these competitions. But these students are calm and collected. Quality is more important than speed; speed comes with experience," he said.

At the same time, twelve VTC students from the centers in Salt, Petra and Aqaba took part in a salad making competition at IHF. Provided with the ingredients and tools needed for preparing a Greek salad, three teams of four students each, competed to produce the best salad, which was evaluated by IHF international jury members. The evaluation criteria were based on taste, technique, presentation and other important factors. Muna Al Nasrat from Petra clinched the top prize, followed by Mohammad Al Smeirat of Salt and by Arige Abu Aisheh of Aqaba.

"The new curriculum for Hospitality Skills Level 1 now offered to over 600 students by the VTC has proven that young Jordanians can adapt to new professions such as tourism very quickly," said Dr. Joseph Ruddy, Component Leader, USAID/Siyaha. He added, "I felt so proud to see these young ladies and gentlemen displaying their skills and competency by competing at an international competition. This event is a wonderful motivation for young people and these VTC students who will soon become the industry professionals of tomorrow are already talking about improving their skills in service in preparation for the next competition."

"It was wonderful to see eight female students from VTC centers in Salt, Madaba, Petra and Aqaba take part in IHF's activities and even more so to see that the top winners in the bed-making and salad-making categories were young women," said Samar Shawareb, Managing Director of Events UnLimited the co-organizers of IHF. "I hope that this will encourage more female students to join VTC centers and other educational institutions offering hospitality and tourism education as job opportunities in this industry are widely available", added Shawareb.

The VTC Tourism and Hospitality centers were revamped last year, with support from USAID/Siyaha, in order to enhance the quality of hospitality education available in Jordan.

A new hospitality skills program was introduced, with six months of theoretical training at the centers followed by six months of practical training in industry.

The VTC participated at IHF 2007 to demonstrate to the hospitality industry the quality of education available at the VTC centers and the skill level of students and teachers. Also, the VTC considers it vital to be part of this important industry event to attract potential students and enable existing ones to gain a better understanding of the industry, as well as discovering the options that are open to them.

USAID/Siyaha is supporting the VTC to gain greater exposure to the tourism sector and solidify its role as a reliable source of qualified labor for the hospitality industry. “USAID/Siyaha is acting as a catalyst to strengthen the availability of human resources within the tourism sector in order to support meeting the goals of the National Tourism Strategy by 2010,” said Mr. Eric Johnson, USAID - Private Enterprise Officer. The International Hospitality Forum (IHF) is Jordan’s premier event for the hospitality and foodservice sector.

The 3-day event featured a wide selection of products & services for the hospitality and foodservice sector, in addition to, various industry competitions including culinary art competitions, table settings, bed-making and others. IHF 2007 was organized by Events UnLimited and Hospitality Services.

Vocational training center for hospitality and tourism in Marka is transformed into a state-of-the-art facility

Amman February, 2008

Marka – The Center for Hotel and Tourism Training at the Marka Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) center was launched today following an extensive revamp and upgrade of the facility. This initiative was led by the Vocational Training Corporation, Ministry of Labour and the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The launch event was attended by His Excellency Mr. Farouk Haddidi, Secretary General of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, along with the Director General of VTC, Mr. Jay Knott, USAID Mission Director in Jordan and other dignitaries, in addition to representatives from hotels, restaurants and tourism companies.

The Marka center is the fifth of the VTC’s 11 centers around the country to undergo a revamp of its facilities, following centers in Madaba, Salt, Wadi Musa and Aqaba. Funding for the upgrade of the Market center came from the Ministry of Labour’s Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) fund.

The center now has two modern training kitchens, a brand new training restaurant and a hotel replica training bedroom, where students will learn the practical side of housekeeping. As with all the other upgraded centers, the virtual bedroom facility is modeled on 5* hotel standards, giving students the closest possible experience to actually working in a hotel. The Marka center now has the capacity to train 60 students at once and can take in two shifts each day, so that it accommodates for a total of 120 students during the course of each program.

The center has also been fitted out with full audio-visual supports, a library with comprehensive computer facilities and internet access for students to study and learn. In addition, there is a small student leisure facility and cafeteria, and separate male and female cloakrooms with modern changing facilities. The fund provided for uniforms for students as well.

Currently there are 110 students studying for the Hospitality Skills Level 1 program, which is accredited by the VTC. The 48-week program was introduced last year to the Madaba model VTC center, and this is the first intake of students for the new program at the Marka center. At present there are around 600 in total students on the program studying at the revamped centers.

According to His Excellency Mr. Farouk Haddidi Secretary General of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan’s hotel and tourism sector is rapidly expanding with a projected 11,000 hotel rooms coming on stream in this decade and the VTC Hotel and Training Centers will play a critical role in bridging the labor gap of almost 25,000 new employees. He said, “Marka VTC

will be one of the main providers of skilled professionals for positions in kitchens, restaurants and accommodation services.” He also added, “The hotel and restaurant industry partnership with the VTC training centers is ensuring that training of all students is meeting the demanding needs of tourism businesses. We look forward to launching a new VTC Center Adoption Scheme where major hotel and restaurant companies will adopt and patron a center.”

His Excellency Mr. Farouk Haddidi Secretary General of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities thanked also in his speech the students for choosing this kind of program, and at the same time thanked the Vocational Training Corporation, Technical Vocational Education Training Fund and USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project for their support to such a pioneer project in Jordan.

USAID Mission Director Mr. Jay Knott said: Jordan's hotel and tourism sector is rapidly expanding and centers like the Marka Vocational Training Center will be the main providers of skilled professionals for this sector. The renovation of the centers and upgrading of the curriculum would not have been possible without our strong partnership between the public and private sectors. Our efforts will have an impact on improving the lives of thousands of families as the graduates of these centers gain the skills needed to find employment in the tourism sector.

H.E. Mr. Khalil Kurdi, Director General of the Vocational Training Center said in his speech that the opening of the Marka Vocational Training Center comes to serve the community of this area and create job opportunities for the young generation after being qualified to work in the hospitality and tourism sector, according to the latest standards.

According to Mrs. Susanne Grigoleit, Advisor to the Minister of Labour, The Jordanian labour force is characterized by a young age structure due to high population growth. Each year the Labour market needs to absorb 50,000 new people, which represents a major challenge. The hotel and tourism sector has been identified as a fast growing industry. A number of large scale projects are under development, leading to future expansions of the accommodation sector and the related infrastructure

An estimate number of 10,000 rooms are confirmed to open during the next four years, as well as countless number of restaurants. This leads to a demand of approximate 25.000 skilled laborers for the hospitality industry from today until 2011.

The USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project provided technical support, teacher training and Training of Trainers (TOT), quality assurance systems to ensure high standards, and an upgraded curriculum along with student and teacher textbooks, which were designed and printed by the USAID tourism project earlier this year for use in all tourism and hospitality VTC centers.

Wider Industry Support for Vocational Training in Jordan

Madaba Vocational Training Center for Hotel and Tourism – Irish Library

Madaba January, 2008

Last month a new, state-of-the-art, hospitality-specialized library was officially opened at the Madaba Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) center for tourism and hospitality training. The library was funded by Ireland Aid and was opened by H.E. Mr. Gerard Corr, Ambassador of Ireland and H.E. Mr. Ramsey Khoury, Honorary Consul of Ireland. The Minister of Labour also attended the event.

The Government of Ireland financed the library through an In-Country Micro Projects Scheme grant in the amount of US\$25,000. The donation came in support of continued efforts to upgrade the VTC Hotel and Tourism Centers, which is being led by the Ministry of Labour with support from the USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project.

The bilingual library is equipped with over 200 references and textbooks covering an impressive range of specialized topics, from hotel management to cake decorating, and introducing students to cuisines from all around the world. The books were selected for the library by experts in the field.

The facility, which can accommodate up to 30 students at any one time, is also decked out with modern desks, shelves and chairs, as well as computers and internet services. Students also have access to valuable online databases and resources.

The Madaba VTC center library is the first in a series of libraries that aim to provide students of tourism and hospitality in Jordan with access to a wealth of quality information on specialized topics. Two other centers, in Aqaba and Salt, are soon to be equipped with similar libraries.

World renowned Swiss culinary arts institute supports the development of tourism industry trainers and instructors

Amman February, 2008

In support of the development of training in Jordan's hotel and tourism sector, Nestle Pro Gastronomica Switzerland, an internationally reputed culinary arts institute, conducted a three-day workshop on food and beverage management. The workshop is the second in a series of three being conducted in Jordan over a six-month period as a result of an invitation from the Ministry of Labour to the Nestle institute. The event was supported by the USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project and organized and coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and took place at the Madaba VTC Hotel and Tourism Training Center.

The workshop served to enhance the skills and knowledge of instructors and students in the area of food and beverage management with the aim of effectively raising the standard of training in this area. It was presented by Professor Dr. O. Sykora, Program Director at Nestlé Foundation – Pro Gastronomica, who has extensive international experience in hospitality management. The Nestlé Foundation – Pro Gastronomica, which is based in Vevey, Switzerland, is a world renowned Swiss-based Institution for development of Culinary Arts and Gastronomy.

The three-day intensive training program was attended by over 35 executive chefs, specialist chefs, restaurant owners, restaurant managers, restaurant service staff and VTC supervisors and instructors. Nestle provided a range of teaching materials and text books for the workshop. Several topics were covered during the workshop. These were: menu planning, purchasing for quality food production, designing standardized menus, kitchen and restaurant organization, storage and refrigeration controls, best practices in safety and hygiene, food and beverage merchandizing, nutrition in the menu, evolution of culinary art, and changing habits and future needs.

“Seminars conducted by Dr. Sykora are an added value to the development of hospitality training; they assure continuity of professional training development. All participants regarded the information provided and the active discussions that took place during the workshop beneficial and stimulating,” said Ms. Susan Grigoleit, Advisor to the Ministry of Labour. She added, “The Ministry of Labour hopes to encourage major gastronomic organizations to follow the example of Nestle Pro Gastronomica to support the development of a fast growing industry that provides many job opportunities to young Jordanians.”

According to Dr. Joseph Ruddy from the USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project, Nestle's Pro Gastronomica program is an important element in ensuring that Jordan's tourism industry

stays competitive in providing exciting and innovative gastronomic experiences for tourists. “New ideas in food and beverage operation are now as much in demand as professionalism, experience, training and last but not least a willingness to be innovative in using local high quality Jordanian food and beverage products,” said Dr. Ruddy. He added, “With today’s demanding tourists, hoteliers and restaurateurs must not only offer a high quality menu, and perfectly balanced dietary dishes; they must also offer exciting ‘food for thought’.”