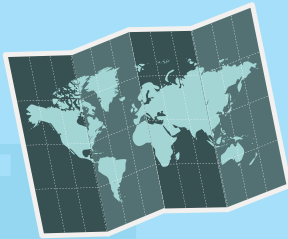




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PROTECTING CHILD RIGHTS
IN THE TRAVEL SECTOR

TRAINING NOTES FOR TAXI DRIVERS



Prepared by: Nazlı Yıldırım Schierkolk

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International Children's Center

Bilkent Üniversitesi, Merkez Kampüs, Kütüphane Binası, 06800 Bilkent, Ankara
TURKEY

Tel : +90 312 290 23 66 Fax: +90 312 266 46 78

e-mail : bilgi@cocukdosturizm.org

These training notes were prepared as part of the Project for Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in Cooperation with the Private Sector that Respects the Rights of Children that is supported by the EU Delegation in Turkey to be used in internal training in the tourism sector.

Child-Friendly Tourism

Child Friendly Tourism is an approach that aims at establishing travel environments that are free from all forms of violence, healthy and safe, in keeping with the aim of protecting the rights of children in tourism and travel. In this context travel businesses should:

- Take precautions and offer services that will ensure the health, hygiene and safety of children in their vehicles;
- Protect children from all forms of violence and sexual exploitation during travel;
- Inform personnel and clients of child-friendly tourism;
- Contribute forming social and environmental awareness focused on children.

Advantages to Taxi Ranks of Protecting Child Rights in Travel

- Positive perception, increased demand and positive media visibility through the publicity of child-friendly tourism with a good communications strategy,
- Being preferred by child-friendly hotels and gaining institutional agreements.
- Strengthening partnership and cooperation with local administrations and security forces.
- Drivers with increased awareness of organised crimes such as the sexual exploitation of children being able to take more effective precautions for their own security.



..... *These Training Notes are intended to inform taxi drivers about what they should do should they come across or suspect the sexual abuse or exploitation of children.*

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

One of the greatest risks for child-friendly tourism is the sexual abuse or exploitation of children on premises or means of transportation of travel companies. Sexual abuse is defined as any form of sexual activity that takes place between a child and an adult, or two children who are in a relationship of impropportionate responsibility, trust and power due to age or developmental differences. Sexual exploitation is the sexual use of children for any kind of gain including cash, goods, other material or other forms of gain (such as forcing children into prostitution, their use in pornography, sale for sexual purposes).

Those Carrying Out Abuse/Exploitation

- They are not only men and may be women. There is no typical age range or marital status for these people.
- They may come from any social, economic or cultural segment of the society.
- While they may not normally be sexually oriented towards children at the travel beginning, they may carry out abuse or exploitation if they find amenable
- Or they may be travelling for purposes of sexual exploitation or abuse.

Children Under Risk

- Lost or living in the street,
- Has been discriminated against due to race, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability,
- Refugee, alone (unaccompanied) children
- Has faced violence within his/her family or has been neglected by his/her family,
- Children who live in poverty in tourism regions and who do not have access to education are at greater risk.

By Turkish law, the sexual abuse and exploitation of children are crimes. It is a legal responsibility to report to authorities (the police, the gendarmerie, the prosecutor's office) in case of having reasonable suspicion of such crimes or witnessing them. Taxi drivers may come across signs of sexual abuse or exploitation as part of their jobs. On the following page, causes for suspicion regarding these crimes and what should be done in this case have been listed.

Suspicious Circumstances

- Taxi called to pick up children or youth from the middle of the road or other places from which passengers are not normally picked up.
- Taxi being called to pick up children from other cars, being told that the taxi fee will be paid at the drop-off point.
- Children often being taken to homes, hotels or massage parlours during school hours or late at night.
- Adults leaving bars/restaurants in known prostitution locations and calling a taxi.
- A customer leaving a hotel to travel to a specific location, leaving with a child (who is observed not to be the client's own) to go back to the hotel or some other location.
- Children getting on the taxi with adults are observed to
 - Act and behave strangely,
 - Be timid or frightened, avoid talking,
 - Be under the influence of alcohol or narcotics,
 - Have bruises and wounds on their bodies,
- A child taking a taxi on his/her own and is observed to have been forced into prostitution approaches the drivers flirtatiously and offers sexual intercourse in lieu of payment.

What Should Be Done

1) If the child suspected to be subjected to sexual abuse or exploitation is riding the taxi with an adult:

- The behaviour of the adult and child are observed.
- Information about the situation (pick-up address, the numberplate and make of the car involved in the incident, if any, the appearance of people who get on, names mentioned during the conversation on the ride etc.) are kept in memory to the greatest extent possible.
- The driver reports the incident to the police as soon as possible, keeping in mind his/her own security and that of the child who he/she thinks is a victim.
- Giving clear signs of suspicion or trying to intervene directly during the ride could put the lives of both the driver and the possible child victim in danger.

2) If the child suspected to be subjected to sexual abuse or exploitation is riding the taxi alone:

- The behaviour of the child is observed.
- Without waiting for the child to ask for help, the driver asks him/her whether he/she needs anything and that the driver could help if the child wants it.
- A child who is the victim of sexual abuse/exploitation may not easily trust in the taxi driver. If so the driver could communicate with the office via radio and tell the rank of where they are and where they are headed. This could instil some trust in the child.
- The driver should avoid physical contact with the suspected child victim and the use of judgmental language.
- If the child states the sexual abuse or exploitation he/she has been subjected to and asks for help, he/she is taken to the children's department of the nearest police station.

What Should Be Done in Case of Witnessing Sexual Abuse/Exploitation of Children

Drivers can easily observe passengers in the backseat from the rear mirror. If a driver observes the sexual abuse of a child first-hand during a ride, he/she may intervene in the situation as part of the authority given by the law to anyone witnessing a crime first-hand.

In such a situation, the security of the lives of the child and the driver are paramount. According to the way the incident takes place, the place and time, one of the following measures may be appropriate:

- If there is a police point along the route, the police may be notified even if they do not call on the taxi to stop.
- A pretext such as having to buy fuel may be used to stop at a close-by location, the police may then be called without the client hearing the conversation and the directions by the police are followed.
- The taxi may be clandestinely taken to the nearest police station, instead of the address given by the client.

The police should be provided with the information below when reporting on a suspected case or witnessed incident:

- Where and when (date, hour) the suspected situation/incident took place,
- The pick-up and drop-off addresses
- Causes for suspicion (dialogue overheard, impressions)
- The description of clients and the names and conversation overheard during the ride,
- Audio or video recording from the taxi, if available.

Communicating with Children in Cases of Abuse/Exploitation

- In cases involving children being subjected to violence or those that may require an emergency intervention, the taxi driver should explain how they may help the child to instil trust. The driver should take care not to give too much information about himself/herself and try to focus on the immediate needs of the child.
- Children who have been subjected to sexual exploitation (forced into prostitution, sold for sexual purposes) may not be comfortable with security forces. Nevertheless, promises that are impossible to keep (such as "Don't worry, your family will not know" or "I will not talk about what happened") should not be made.
- Given the trauma the child has been through, he/she should not be made to recount the incident and not many questions should be asked about the incident. The testimony of the child will be received by the authorities.
- During the entire process, clear language that is appropriate to the age of the child and that he/she will understand should be used.
- During and after such incidents, children may experience mental confusion, intense anxiety, anger and surprise. These emotional states may cause children to react in a variety of ways (such as providing false information, an exaggerated account of what happened, avoiding communicating, acting aggressively etc.). It should not be forgotten that such reactions by the child are normal under the circumstances and the child should by no means be approached by dismissing what he/she has to say, judgementally, accusatorily or angrily.



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For more information on subjects covered by these Training Notes, please visit the website www.cocukdosturizm.org

Notes

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