

Policy Brief

Inclusivity of Low-Fee KG2s in Jordan



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مؤسسة الملكة رانيا
QUEEN RANIA FOUNDATION

Research Brief: Inclusivity of Low-Fee KG2s in Jordan

In 2017, the Jordan Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF launched an eight-year executive plan to universalise Kindergarten 2 (KG2) access across Jordan by 2025.¹ To achieve this ambitious goal requires expansion of not only public KG2 classrooms, but of low-fee KG2 provision by private and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) as well.² Importantly, expansion of access should maximize access to vulnerable children, including refugees and children with disabilities. This brief examines the inclusivity of the current low-fee KG2 sector, based on interviews conducted with 648 KG2 administrators at 593 private and 55 CBO-based KG2s in May - June 2023.

In 2022, the MoE and Higher Council for the Rights of Disabilities, along with other national and international stakeholders, convened to reiterate the national commitment to inclusive and equitable education under SDG 4 and to agree on the following definition for inclusion and diversity in education:

*Systems, political will, and commitments by all key partners and stakeholders are in place to guarantee that all students regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances have equal and equitable access to quality education in their home or host communities, with learning environments that embrace diversity and support their participation and achievements towards reaching their full social, emotional, physical, and cognitive potentials.*³

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities and Additional Needs

Access to early childhood education can mitigate the challenges faced by children with disabilities, yet access is often lower for those children most in need (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020). The Jordan 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2017) devotes its seventh component to the preschool stage, highlighting the importance of early intervention and of establishing inclusive learning environments in nurseries and KGs to allow children with disabilities to reach their full potential.⁴

To assess how low-fee KG2s fared with respect to inclusion of these children, trained enumerators asked administrators a series of questions about the total number of children enrolled, the number with

Key Findings:

- Low-fee KG2s are largely inclusive by gender, but students with disabilities are under-represented – just 1.1% of students served by these KG2s were reported to have diagnosed disabilities.
- Most low-fee KG2s do not serve any non-Jordanian or refugee students. More than half of all refugees served by this sector are concentrated in fewer than 5% of KG2s.
- CBO-based KG2s are more inclusive of refugees and students with disabilities than private KG2s, on average, but most refugee and Syrian students are enrolled in private KG2s.

¹ Jordan National Human Resource Development Strategy. (2017). <http://en.heac.org.jo/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-HRD-Strategy.pdf>

² For the purpose of this brief, the term “low-fee” includes private and CBO-based KG2s charging 50 JOD per month or less. It also includes KG2 services offered by CBOs free of charge.

³ MoE - Ministry of Education. (2022c). Jordan declaration on Inclusion and diversity in Education.

https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/declaration_on_inclusion_and_diversity_in_education.final-26june_0.pdf

⁴ MoE - Ministry of Education. (2022d). The 10-year strategy for inclusive education.

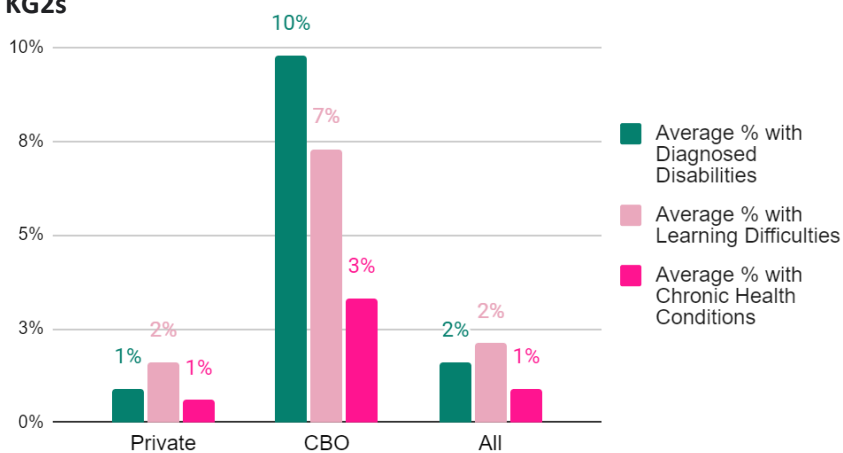
https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/the_10-year_strategy_for_inclusive_education_0_0.pdf



diagnosed disabilities, chronic illnesses and other demographic questions. As reported by KG2 administrators, just 1.6% of the students at the average low-fee KG2 in Jordan have diagnosed disabilities, 2.1% have learning difficulties, and 0.9% have chronic health conditions.⁵ Collectively, across all low-fee KG2s reached, the number of children with these identifications was lower than the average rate across KG2s: just 1.1% of the student population at these KG2s were reported to have diagnosed disabilities, 1.5% were perceived as having learning difficulties, and 0.7% had chronic health conditions. In the qualitative interviews, low-fee KG2 administrators reported that they did not serve many students with disabilities because their teachers do not have the skills to support them.

In contrast, the percentage of students with disabilities reported by CBO-based KG2s was about ten times higher, on average, than the percentage reported at low-fee private KG2s, and this difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$, Figure 1). CBO-based KG2s also reported higher percentages of students with learning difficulties and chronic health conditions.

Figure 1. Average percentage of children with diagnosed disabilities, learning difficulties and chronic health conditions reported at low-fee KG2s



Since the term “disability” is often stigmatized, KG2 providers were also asked a series of more “neutral” questions inspired by the Child Function Module developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics for ages 5-17.⁶ Although this study’s adaptation of these questions has not been validated in any prior study and not all types of functional difficulties were included in the

questionnaire,⁷ responses to these questions suggest that substantially higher numbers of children with disabilities may be served by low-fee KG2s in Jordan than reports of official diagnoses may suggest. Based on these responses (summarized in Table 1), the percentage of students with difficulties in these functional areas in these low fee KG2s could be somewhere between around five to 7 percent.⁸

⁵ The primary reported diagnosed disabilities consisted of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Down Syndrome, and motor/movement impairments. The main learning difficulties cited were speech disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and hypomnesia, which is characterized by memory deficits. The main health issues reported were asthma, diabetes, and visual impairment. Note: There will likely be children with special educational needs who have not been identified as having such needs.

⁶ See <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-unicef-child-functioning-module-cfm/>. Instead of asking about an individual child as in the official Washington Group questions, these adapted versions asked KG2 providers to estimate the number of children with various types of difficulties. For example, to assess the prevalence of hearing difficulties, they were asked, “Do any of the children enrolled in your KG2 have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid? How many?”

⁷ Due to limited interview time, the questionnaire did not include questions about emotional difficulties like anxiety or depression.

⁸ Since the survey was not able to capture how many of the reported functional difficulties were overlapping (i.e. the extent to which students had multiple difficulties or the students reported under each category were mutually



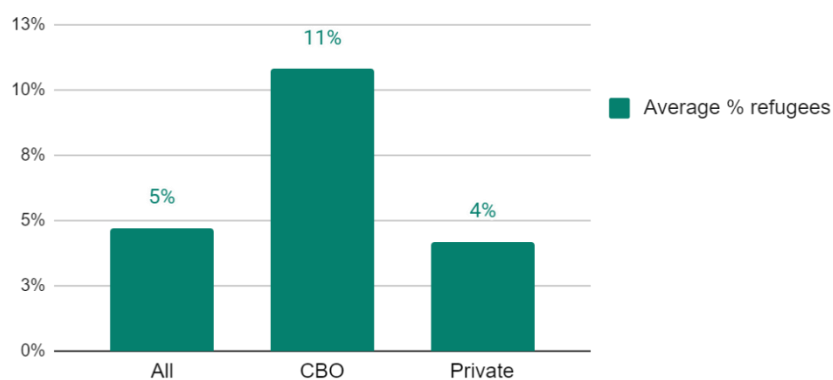
Table 1. Reported percentage of students enrolled in low-fee KG2s with various functional difficulties

Functional difficulty type	Private	CBO	All
Seeing	0.93%	1.05%	0.94%
Hearing	0.17%	0.39%	0.19%
Walking	0.28%	0.62%	0.31%
Remembering or Concentrating	3.75%	5.44%	3.90%
Communicating	1.44%	1.97%	1.49%

Inclusion of Refugee and Non-Jordanian Children

The population of refugee students served by low-fee private and CBO-based KG2s was concentrated in specific locations. While the mean percentage of refugees enrolled was about 5% (see Figure 2), 53% of CBO-based KG2s and 73% of low-fee private KG2s reported they did not serve any refugees.

Figure 2. Average Percentage of Syrian and refugee students reported at low-fee private and CBO-based KG2s



More than half of all of the refugees served across all KG2s interviewed were clustered in just 23 sites (4% of the 648 KG2s), nearly all of which were relatively large KG2s, serving 60 students or more students, in urban areas in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid and Zarqa. Due to the small size of the CBO sector, more refugee students were collectively served by low-fee private KG2s than CBO-based KG2s. However, the average CBO reported serving a much higher percentage of refugee students than the average low-fee private KG2 (Figure 2).

The pattern for inclusion of non-Jordanian students was similar to that of refugees. The average CBO-based KG2 served a higher percentage of Syrian or other non-Jordanian nationalities than the average low-fee private KG2, although this difference was not statistically significant (Table 2). Looking at the population of non-Jordanian students served across these two sectors, most were attending private KG2s rather than CBOs: 83% of Syrian and 85% of other non-Jordanian students reported across both sectors were attending private KG2s.

exclusive), it is not possible to produce an overall estimate. However, a minimum estimate is provided here by summing the functional difficulty area with the highest reported number for each KG2, and a maximum estimate represents the sum of the percentage for each group.



Table 2. Average % of Enrolled Students by Nationality

	Private	CBO	All
Average % Jordanian	92.6%	87.4%	92.1%
Average % Syrian	5.3%	9.3%	5.6%
Average % Other Nationalities	2.1%	3.3%	2.2%

Inclusion by Gender

The average KG2 population was approximately 48% female, a rate which aligns with the population of the age 0-4 cohort (48%) and is slightly lower than the age 5-9 cohort (50%) in Jordan in 2022.⁹ Enrollment rates for girls and boys were roughly equal regardless of KG2 type and governorate. There was a slightly lower percentage of girls enrolled in rural KG2s (46.1%) compared to sub-urban (49.8%) and urban (47.8%) KG2s.

⁹ Department of Statistics, 2022. See http://www.dos.gov.jo/owa-user/owa/emp_unemp_number.show_tables.y?lang=E&year1=2022&t_no=14

