

Policy Brief

Status of Low-Fee KG2s in Jordan



Implemented by



مؤسسة الملكة رانيا
QUEEN RANIA FOUNDATION

Research Brief: Status of Low-Fee KG2s in Jordan

The Jordan National Human Resources Development Strategy (2016-2025) set an ambitious national objective of universalizing kindergarten (KG2) by 2025. This brief examines low-fee KG2s outside the public sector – defined as private and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) offering KG2 services for 50 JOD per month or less¹ – to assess their capacity and potential for expansion as part of the KG2 universalization effort.

Prevalence and distribution of low-fee KG2s

To verify the number and status of low-fee KG2s, data collectors reached out by phone in April 2023 to every potential low-fee KG2 known to the Ministry of Education and PLAN International.² Additional sites were also identified in a later stage of data collection via google searches, word of mouth, and in locations visited while gathering data. Out of the 1,773 potential private KG2s and 158 potential CBO-based KG2s³, about half (51%) were found to be out-of-scope, as they charged fees above 50 JOD per month (44%), did not offer KG2 (4%) or had closed (3%). A total of 593 private and 68 CBO-based KG2s were confirmed to offer KG2s services for 50 JODs monthly or less, and the status of an additional 285 sites remain unknown, since they could not be reached. The minimum number of low-fee private and CBO-based KG2s in operation is thus 661, while the maximum number is likely to be under 1,000, assuming the proportion of the unreachable 285 locations⁴ who do not provide low-fee KG2s services is similar to the proportion for those that were reached (51%).

Key Findings:

- At least 661 low-fee KG2s were operating in Jordan as of April 2023, mainly located in Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa.
- The typical private low-fee KG2 has three classrooms and serves around 40 students, whereas the typical CBO-based KG2 has three classrooms and serves around 50 students.
- Around half of KG2s reported enrollment decline following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 65% of private and 61% of CBO-based low-fee KG2s said they were not at full capacity, and collectively could fill more than 27,500 additional seats.

Table 1. Status of potential low-fee KG2s contacted

Type	Attempted to reach	Confirmed out-of-scope	Confirmed in-scope	Unknown (could not reach / refused)
Private	1,773	910	593	271
CBO	158	76	68	14
Total	1,931	986	661	285

¹ For the purpose of this brief, the term “low-fee” includes KG2 services offered by CBOs free of charge.

² Plan International Jordan conducted a study in 2021-2022 to identify and better understand the situation of CBOs providing Early Childhood Development services (“Situation Analysis of Grass Root Organizations Working in Early Childhood Development in Jordan Final Report” (2022), unpublished).

³ The CBO list included all entities offering early childhood services, and was not specific to the KG2 level.

⁴ A further piece of evidence that many of the 285 unconfirmed locations may not be operational is that 43% of the 285 unconfirmed locations could not be reached at available phone numbers after 3 attempts.



Two-thirds (66%) of the low-fee KG2s identified were located in Amman and Irbid, with an additional 20% in Zarqa. The remaining 14% were distributed across Balqa, Mafraq and Karak (Figure 1).

Fees Charged

Following the initial outreach by phone, data collectors were able to conduct in-depth interviews with administrators at 55 CBO-based (67%) and 593 private KG2s (69%) to learn more about the situation of each KG2. On average low-fee KG2 administrators reported charging monthly fees of 38 JOD. The average fee charged by CBO-based KG2s was 30 JOD per month, notably lower than at low-fee private KG2s (39 JOD per month). Overall, 69% percent of CBO-based KG2s charged less than 40 JOD per month, compared to just 44% of the private KG2s surveyed.

The fees charged by KG2s differed by governorate as well. In Amman, there was only one KG2 surveyed who said they charged less than 20 JOD per month, and 74% charged more than 40 JOD. KG2s in Mafraq, Zarqa, and Irbid tended to have the lowest fees (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Location of low-fee KG2s reached

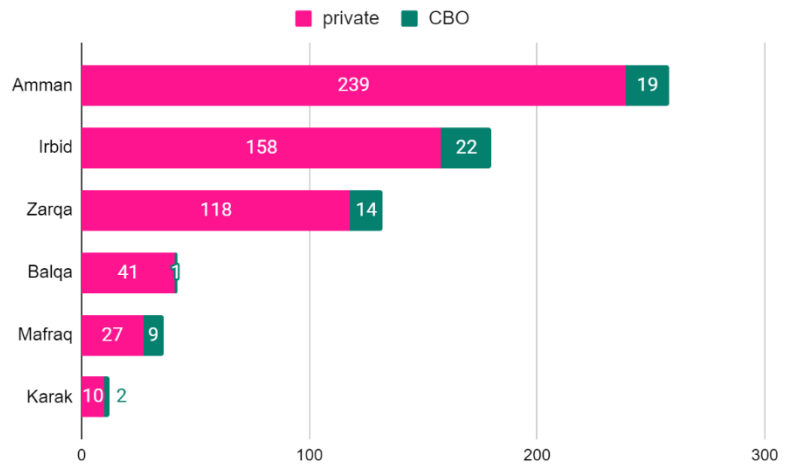
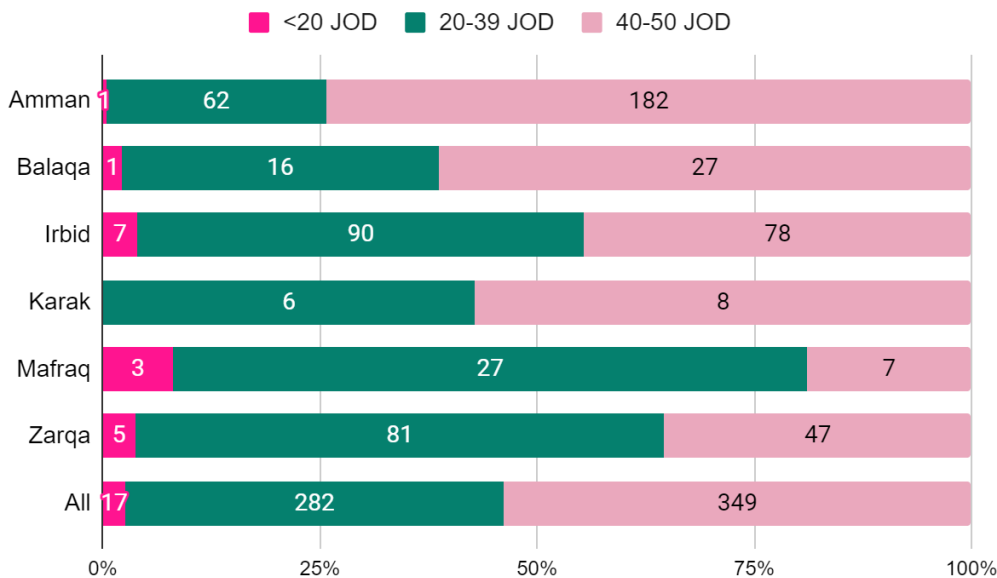


Figure 2: Monthly fees charged by low-fee KG2s, by governorate



Licensing

Nearly all (96%) KG2 administrators surveyed said that their institution was licensed. There were no statistically significant differences in reported licensing rates by enrollment level or the number of years in operation. In fact, the average unlicensed KG2 was reported to be in operation for 21 years, while the licensed KG2s had been in operation for 17 years on average. However, there was a significant difference in licensing rates by KG2 type: only 83% of CBO-based KG2s were licensed, compared to 98% of private KG2s ($p < .001$).

Table 2: Low-fee KG2 characteristics, by reported licensure status

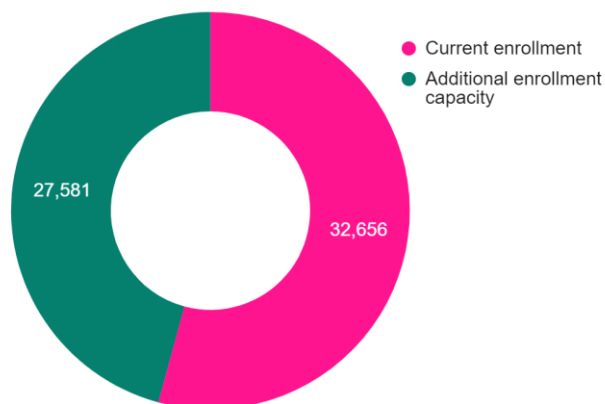
	Licensed	Unlicensed	All
Number of KG2s	625	23	648
Average enrollment	50.6	43.7	50.4
Average years in operation	17.4	21.4	17.5
% CBO-based	7.4%	39.1%	8.5%
% private	92.6%	60.9%	91.5%

Enrollment and capacity for expansion

Collectively, the 648 KG2s surveyed served 32,656 students in the 2022-2023 school year; 3,053 enrolled in CBOs and 29,603 in private KG2s (Figure 3). Most low-fee non-public KG2s in Jordan served 60 students or fewer. The typical private low-fee KG2 had three classrooms and about 40 students enrolled (the median was 41). Most CBOs also had three classrooms, but served more students, with a median of 50 students enrolled. The size of low-fee KG2s varied by governorate, with larger enrollment levels in Zarqa (median=49), Irbid (median=45), and Balqa (median =45). About half of low-fee KG2s reported that enrollment had decreased since the COVID-19 pandemic, while about 37% said enrollment had increased and 12% reported no real change in enrollment.

Survey results suggest that most low-fee KG2s have the physical space to expand, and those lacking the physical capacity have the willingness to expand if it were to become feasible. Sixty-five percent of private and 61% of CBO-based low-fee KG2s said they were not at full enrollment capacity, and the number of additional students these KG2s could enroll collectively amounted to more than 27,500 (about 1,900 across CBOs and more than 25,500 for private low-fee KG2s). Given current enrollment levels, this suggests that the low-fee KG2 sector is currently only serving 54% of its total enrollment capacity.

Figure 3. Current number of students enrolled vs. additional enrollment capacity at low-fee KG2s



Research Brief: Status of Low-Fee KG2s in Jordan

The Jordan National Human Resources Development Strategy (2016-2025) set an ambitious national objective of universalizing kindergarten (KG2) by 2025. This brief examines low-fee KG2s outside the public sector – defined as private and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) offering KG2 services for 50 JOD per month or less¹ – to assess their capacity and potential for expansion as part of the KG2 universalization effort.

Prevalence and distribution of low-fee KG2s

To verify the number and status of low-fee KG2s, data collectors reached out by phone in April 2023 to every potential low-fee KG2 known to the Ministry of Education and PLAN International.² Additional sites were also identified in a later stage of data collection via google searches, word of mouth, and in locations visited while gathering data. Out of the 1,773 potential private KG2s and 158 potential CBO-based KG2s³, about half (51%) were found to be out-of-scope, as they charged fees above 50 JOD per month (44%), did not offer KG2 (4%) or had closed (3%). A total of 593 private and 68 CBO-based KG2s were confirmed to offer KG2s services for 50 JODs monthly or less, and the status of an additional 285 sites remain unknown, since they could not be reached. The minimum number of low-fee private and CBO-based KG2s in operation is thus 661, while the maximum number is likely to be under 1,000, assuming the proportion of the unreachable 285 locations⁴ who do not provide low-fee KG2s services is similar to the proportion for those that were reached (51%).

Key Findings:

- At least 661 low-fee KG2s were operating in Jordan as of April 2023, mainly located in Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa.
- The typical private low-fee KG2 has three classrooms and serves around 40 students, whereas the typical CBO-based KG2 has three classrooms and serves around 50 students.
- Around half of KG2s reported enrollment decline following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 65% of private and 61% of CBO-based low-fee KG2s said they were not at full capacity, and collectively could fill more than 27,500 additional seats.

Table 1. Status of potential low-fee KG2s contacted

Type	Attempted to reach	Confirmed out-of-scope	Confirmed in-scope	Unknown (could not reach / refused)
Private	1,773	910	593	271
CBO	158	76	68	14
Total	1,931	986	661	285

¹ For the purpose of this brief, the term “low-fee” includes KG2 services offered by CBOs free of charge.

² Plan International Jordan conducted a study in 2021-2022 to identify and better understand the situation of CBOs providing Early Childhood Development services (“Situation Analysis of Grass Root Organizations Working in Early Childhood Development in Jordan Final Report” (2022), unpublished).

³ The CBO list included all entities offering early childhood services, and was not specific to the KG2 level.

⁴ A further piece of evidence that many of the 285 unconfirmed locations may not be operational is that 43% of the 285 unconfirmed locations could not be reached at available phone numbers after 3 attempts.



Two-thirds (66%) of the low-fee KG2s identified were located in Amman and Irbid, with an additional 20% in Zarqa. The remaining 14% were distributed across Balqa, Mafraq and Karak (Figure 1).

Fees Charged

Following the initial outreach by phone, data collectors were able to conduct in-depth interviews with administrators at 55 CBO-based (67%) and 593 private KG2s (69%) to learn more about the situation of each KG2. On average low-fee KG2 administrators reported charging monthly fees of 38 JOD. The average fee charged by CBO-based KG2s was 30 JOD per month, notably lower than at low-fee private KG2s (39 JOD per month). Overall, 69% percent of CBO-based KG2s charged less than 40 JOD per month, compared to just 44% of the private KG2s surveyed.

The fees charged by KG2s differed by governorate as well. In Amman, there was only one KG2 surveyed who said they charged less than 20 JOD per month, and 74% charged more than 40 JOD. KG2s in Mafraq, Zarqa, and Irbid tended to have the lowest fees (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Location of low-fee KG2s reached

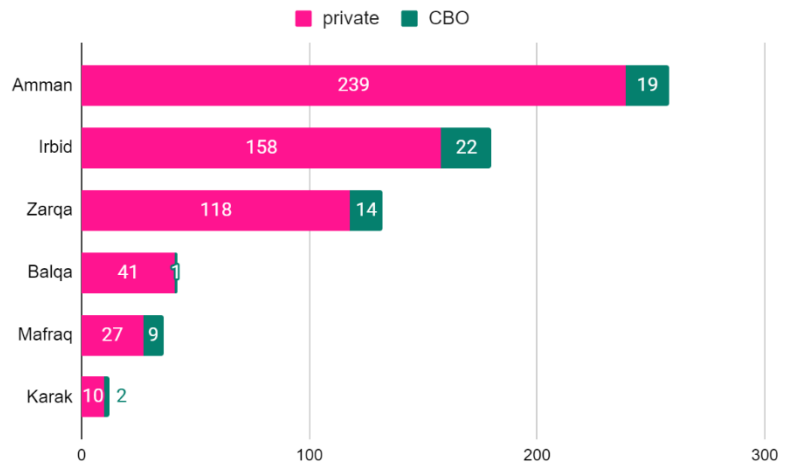
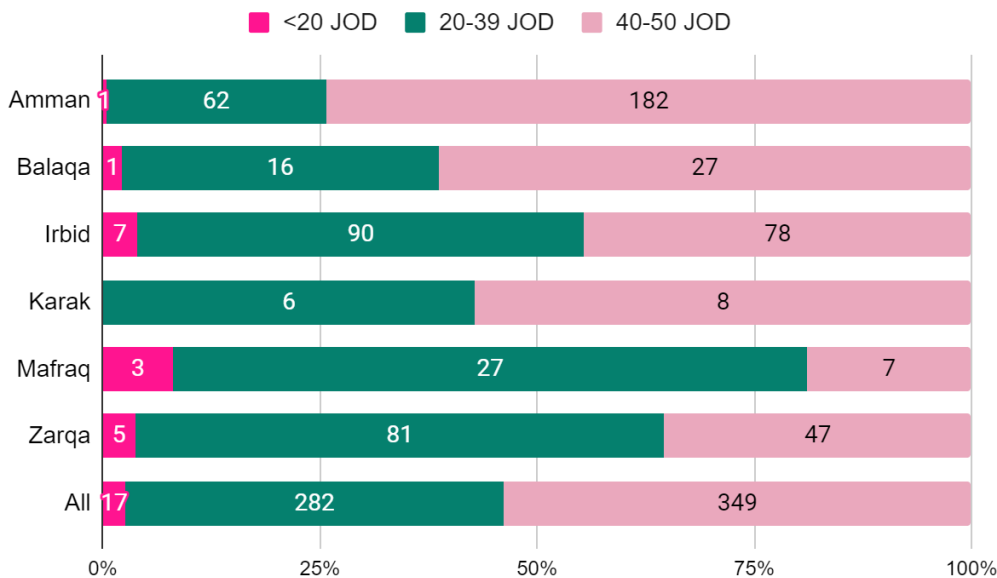


Figure 2: Monthly fees charged by low-fee KG2s, by governorate



Licensing

Nearly all (96%) KG2 administrators surveyed said that their institution was licensed. There were no statistically significant differences in reported licensing rates by enrollment level or the number of years in operation. In fact, the average unlicensed KG2 was reported to be in operation for 21 years, while the licensed KG2s had been in operation for 17 years on average. However, there was a significant difference in licensing rates by KG2 type: only 83% of CBO-based KG2s were licensed, compared to 98% of private KG2s ($p < .001$).

Table 2: Low-fee KG2 characteristics, by reported licensure status

	Licensed	Unlicensed	All
Number of KG2s	625	23	648
Average enrollment	50.6	43.7	50.4
Average years in operation	17.4	21.4	17.5
% CBO-based	7.4%	39.1%	8.5%
% private	92.6%	60.9%	91.5%

Enrollment and capacity for expansion

Collectively, the 648 KG2s surveyed served 32,656 students in the 2022-2023 school year; 3,053 enrolled in CBOs and 29,603 in private KG2s (Figure 3). Most low-fee non-public KG2s in Jordan served 60 students or fewer. The typical private low-fee KG2 had three classrooms and about 40 students enrolled (the median was 41). Most CBOs also had three classrooms, but served more students, with a median of 50 students enrolled. The size of low-fee KG2s varied by governorate, with larger enrollment levels in Zarqa (median=49), Irbid (median=45), and Balqa (median =45). About half of low-fee KG2s reported that enrollment had decreased since the COVID-19 pandemic, while about 37% said enrollment had increased and 12% reported no real change in enrollment.

Survey results suggest that most low-fee KG2s have the physical space to expand, and those lacking the physical capacity have the willingness to expand if it were to become feasible. Sixty-five percent of private and 61% of CBO-based low-fee KG2s said they were not at full enrollment capacity, and the number of additional students these KG2s could enroll collectively amounted to more than 27,500 (about 1,900 across CBOs and more than 25,500 for private low-fee KG2s). Given current enrollment levels, this suggests that the low-fee KG2 sector is currently only serving 54% of its total enrollment capacity.

Figure 3. Current number of students enrolled vs. additional enrollment capacity at low-fee KG2s

