



Hajati-KG2 Post-Distribution Monitoring Report

Cash Transfer to Promote Early Childhood Education

The Hajati-KG2 programme was possible due to generous financial support from, among others, the Australian and Norwegian Governments and the Abdallah Family Foundation. The authors acknowledge their commitment to the enhancement of early childhood education for vulnerable children in Jordan.

Ipsos Jordan, a data collection company contracted by UNICEF Jordan, was responsible for the quantitative data collection, and we want to thank them for their professionalism and commitment.

Finally, we wish to express our deepest gratitude to all the families who took part in the quantitative and qualitative research, allowing the authors to acquire the data required to produce this post-distribution monitoring report.

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UNICEF Foreword

Early childhood education, including preschool, is an essential part of a child's education, providing the skills that children need as they continue their learning. It is also one of UNICEF's priorities. The Government of Jordan aspires to reach the goal of universal preschool education for five-year-olds (KG2). Fortunately, the demand for KG2 in Jordan is growing, also among hundreds of thousands of Syrian and other refugees. At the same time the country faces economic challenges resulting from the 2008/09 global recession, which disrupted trade routes at closed borders, and now faces the unprecedented challenge of COVID19. These challenges, in turn, have increased poverty levels; in fact, 78 per cent of refugees currently living in Jordan exist below the poverty line.

To contribute to Jordan's universal KG2 goal, UNICEF launched the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme for 519 KG2-age children from 512 vulnerable families across Jordan. We did this with a monthly cash transfer per child of 20 Jordanian Dinar (JOD) throughout the 2018/19 school year. More than two thirds of parents and caregivers surveyed stated that they had enrolled their children after receiving the cash support. Almost all those surveyed felt that KG2 improved their children's social, emotional and cognitive skills in preparation for their future education. The success of this programme allowed us to scale-up the 2019/20 school year, covering almost 1,000 children this time, with an increased monthly cash transfer of 25 JOD to reflect increased life costs.



The demand for KG2 in Jordan is growing, also among hundreds of thousands of Syrian and other refugees.

Using quantitative data and qualitative data this report makes three recommendations: to improve the targeting and designing of the programme to redress challenges met in the pilot project and increase the rate of success; to combined Hajati-KG2 with economic and social programmes to support the most vulnerable families; and to promote and encourage parental participation in child's education and development.

In March 2020 KG2 centres were closed due to COVID19. Nevertheless, UNICEF continued to send the monthly cash transfer to participating families and monitored the situation of beneficiary families. It is a challenging time for reaching equity for children all over the world.

We are not intimidated by those obstacles ahead. It is now even more important for children to continue with their early education in a world of emergencies and even a global pandemic. UNICEF is already planning to launch a third Hajati-KG2 for the school year 2020/1, because vulnerable families across Jordan, especially children, are being hit once more by elements not in their control such the economic consequences of the COVID19 crises.

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Representative,
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Background

One of the key policy frameworks for the achievement of the national goals for the education sector in Jordan is the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018–2022 by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The ESP was established to guide the development of the education sector in parallel with broader national strategies. One out of the five main objectives of the education sector’s five-year strategic plan addresses Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED), specifically to “increase access to quality education for children (both male and female) in early childhood and to increase their readiness to learn for life.”¹ Furthermore, as part of its key policy initiatives in 2019, the Government of Jordan (GoJ) announced its ambition to universalize Kindergarten (KG2) by September 2020,² which will further increase the demand for Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Jordan is experiencing increasing demand for KG2 as a result of the growing population and heightened awareness on the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD), which has been an important goal for the GoJ.³ Pressure on the public education system has also increased in the past few years due to the need to integrate Syrian refugees. As of April 2020, the number of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan was 656,213,⁴ while the total number of Syrians in the Kingdom is estimated to be 1.3 million.⁵ There has also been a significant transfer of students from private to public schools for socio-economic reasons.⁶

The economic decline in Jordan over the past decade has in large part been caused by the global financial crisis of 2007/08, evident by the decline in real GDP per capita since the crisis (-1.9 per cent annually on average since 2010),⁷ and exacerbated by the political turmoil in the region in the wake of the Arab Spring. The Syrian conflict, in particular, and the closing of the Iraqi-Jordanian border, have negatively impacted

Jordan’s economy, in terms of disrupting key trade routes and reducing exports.⁸ These economic challenges have resulted in increased poverty. The poverty rate for Jordanians in 2018 was 15.7 per cent,⁹ which was an increase of 1.3 percentage points from 2010 (14.4 per cent).¹⁰ For refugees in Jordan, 78 per cent live below the poverty line.¹¹

Even so, Jordan has achieved substantial progress in promoting access to education, with an estimated 1.37 million students enrolled in the formal cycle (KG2 to Grade 12) as of 2017/18. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for basic education is nearly universal at 94.7 per cent, compared to 71.2 per cent for secondary education. However, enrolment is comparatively lower in early childhood education. Official Ministry of Education data indicates that the NER for pre-primary education (aged 4–5 years) is 36.5 per cent overall for the academic year 2017/18. For KG2-aged children, MoE data shows net enrolment of 61.4 per cent as of 2017/18.¹²

However, a kindergarten mapping study that surveyed more than 10,000 families in Jordan (completed in August 2018), found that 84 per cent of the children overall attended KG2 in 2016/17, with significant differences based on nationality. While 92 per cent of Jordanian children had attended KG2, only 52 per cent of Syrian children had enrolled in kindergarten. The study also found that there is considerable additional KG2 provision coming from other unrecognised sources (not officially licensed or registered).¹³ Data from the MoE’s Education Management Information System (EMIS) showed that only 31 per cent of children enrolled in KG2 in Jordan in 2016 were in public educational institutions run by the Ministry of Education, even though this share of children enrolled in public kindergartens increased steadily (almost +7 per cent) from 2013 to 2016.¹⁴

Chapter 1

Introduction



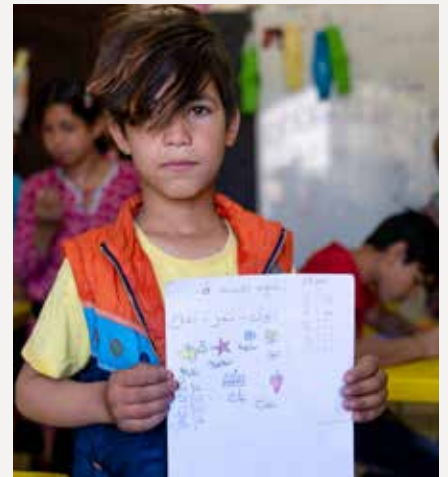
As part of its efforts to support the Government of Jordan's ambition to offer universal KG2 provision, and to promote Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – regarding inclusive and equitable quality education, especially ensuring that the most vulnerable children in Jordan are able to participate in at least one year of early childhood education – UNICEF Jordan launched a pilot programme to increase enrolment and participation in KG2. The Hajati-KG2 pilot programme supported 519 children in the KG2 age category (5 years), from 512 vulnerable families across Jordan. A monthly cash transfer of 20 Jordanian Dinars (JOD) was made to each of these children during the 2018/19 school year to increase participation in early childhood education.

The innovative Hajati-KG2 pilot programme built upon, and used the same cash transfer modalities, as the pre-existing Hajati programme, which has been supporting children from vulnerable families with unconditional, but labelled, monthly cash assistance to promote participation in basic education. This allowed the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme to quickly target and deliver cash assistance to eligible beneficiaries. Due to funding shortages in 2018, the Hajati (basic education) programme had to be scaled down; from covering 55,000 children during the 2017/18 school year, it was reduced to supporting 10,000 children during the 2018/19 school year. An impact evaluation conducted by the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, in collaboration with the UNICEF Jordan Country Office, showed that those children who continued to receive the cash assistance reaped ongoing benefits, and the positive impacts

extended beyond the main educational goals of Hajati, and included both enhanced mental health and nutrition.¹⁵

The results from this Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report show that the Hajati-KG2 programme positively contributed to increasing participation in KG2, as 74 per cent of the assisted children were enrolled in KG2 for the 2018/19 school year. Out of the children who were not enrolled in KG2 prior to receiving the assistance from UNICEF, 68 per cent of the respondents stated that they had indeed enrolled their children after receiving the cash support. In other words, the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme ensured that almost 290 children were able to enrol to KG2, and nearly all (99 per cent) of the respondents felt that KG2 improved their children's social, emotional and cognitive skills, and were therefore better prepared for basic education. Furthermore, for the 18 per cent of children who were enrolled in KG2 prior to receiving the first cash transfer payment, it is probable that the Hajati-KG2 programme contributed to ensuring that they stayed in kindergarten. In total, it is likely that the Hajati-KG2 pilot supported the KG2 participation of 385 (74 per cent) of the assisted children.

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The positive results of the pilot programme, in terms of increased participation in KG2 for the majority of the assisted children, provided a successful indication of the potential positive contribution of scaling up the Hajati-KG2 programme. Hence, for the 2019/20 school year, the programme was scaled up to cover almost 1,000 children from vulnerable families, with a monthly cash transfer of 25 JOD. The amount was increased from 20 JOD to 25 JOD monthly to reflect the updated costs of enrolling and attending early childhood education, and to ensure the same modality as the Hajati (basic education) programme.

Following on from the Background (including a discussion of the pressure that the public education system is facing, which has increased in the past few years due to socio-economic reasons and the need to integrate Syrian refugees) and the Introduction (information on early childhood education in Jordan, with a specific focus on KG2, and having highlighted the Government's ambition to achieve universal KG2 provision), the structure of the report will proceed



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as follows. The next section is the methodology. This report uses a mixed-methods research design, with three primary data sources: quantitative data is drawn from two surveys – one conducted through UNICEF’s helpline and the other through face-to-face interviews by a contracted data collection company; qualitative data is derived from field reports collected throughout the implementation of the pilot programme. The methodology section also discusses the limitations in targeting and the research design.

The fourth section elaborates on the characteristics of the respondents, specifically on demographics and income (sources), to get basic information on the family and its composition, along with a preliminary

assessment of the beneficiary households’ economic situation.

The fifth section discusses the main findings from the pilot programme, focussing on the cash support, educational outcomes – in terms of the perceived importance of education for the parents and if the assisted children were participating in KG2 – and on parents’ engagement with their children in KG2, especially on the frequency of accompanying them to kindergarten and spending time with them on educationally stimulating activities. The last section provides some concluding remarks and a subsection on the lessons learned and recommendations for future (similar) programming.

1.1 Objectives

The main goal of this post-distribution monitoring report is to assess if the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme was successful in achieving its intended objective of contributing to increasing participation in KG2. Along with the educational outcomes, the analysis also focuses on parental engagement with the children that were assisted with cash support and enrolled to KG2, especially on the frequency with which parents accompanied their children to kindergarten and spent time with them on educationally stimulating activities. Another key objective of this report was to analyse what lessons could be learned from the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme, what were the best practices and recommendations that could be carried forward and applied, to improve similar interventions in the future.

Chapter 2

Methodology



This report uses a mixed-methods research design, with three primary data sources. Firstly, quantitative data was drawn from a survey that was provided to the beneficiaries towards the end of the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme, to capture how many of the assisted children were still enrolled and participating in KG2.

Secondly, further quantitative data was derived from a post-distribution monitoring survey of most of the beneficiaries after the school year had finished, in order to assess the main goals of the pilot programme, such as educational outcomes, the use of the cash assistance, and parents' engagement with their children in KG2. Thirdly, qualitative research, in the form of field reports, was collected for a subsample of beneficiaries, to monitor how the pilot programme was being implemented, specifically in terms of children's wellbeing and to get a sense of the effectiveness of the cash transfer on increasing enrolment and participation in early childhood education.

2.1 Quantitative

As stated above, the quantitative part of the analysis used two different tools. First, a survey that was conducted through UNICEF's helpline to observe how many of the assisted children were enrolled and participating in KG2. Second, a more extensive PDM survey that was presented to the beneficiaries at the end of the pilot programme when the school year had concluded, to capture the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the cash transfer on the programme's desired outcomes.

2.1.1 Helpline Survey of Enrolment and Participation

This quantitative survey aimed to assess how many of the assisted children of the 512 households that were supported with cash transfer enrolled and participated in KG2. The survey was conducted through the UNICEF helpline in April and May 2019. Out of the 512 beneficiary households, the data of 401 households was analysed. The survey asked about whether the child was enrolled, and in what kind of educational institution (public, private or other). For those that had not enrolled in KG2, a follow-up multiple-choice question was asked to determine why, with several options to choose from (economic barriers, transportation, capacity, not interested, etc.). The final two questions enquired about whether the families were actually using the cash assistance for its intended purpose – KG2 enrolment and participation – and if KG2 had helped their children to improve their social, emotional and cognitive skills, in order to be better prepared for basic education.

2.1.2 PDM Survey through Face-to-Face Interviews

From the 512 beneficiary households, the 72 families who were included in the qualitative research (section 3.2) were excluded from consideration for the PDM survey. From the remaining 440 beneficiary households, a random sample of 264 households were surveyed via face-to-face interviews, with each interview lasting

approximately 20 minutes. These interviews were conducted during July and August 2019.

For the data collection of this quantitative post-distribution monitoring survey, UNICEF contracted IPSOS, a data collection company. Interviews were pre-scheduled with beneficiaries, who were given a detailed explanation of the objectives of the survey. It was explained that UNICEF primarily wanted to assess the effectiveness of the cash-transfer pilot programme on increasing enrolment and participation to KG2. Reassurances were given regarding the confidentiality of responses, explaining that the answers would be used only in an aggregate format for analysis. Fieldwork managers and supervisors conducted checks to ensure that the completed questionnaires were uploaded successfully. They also called back 30 per cent of interviewees to cross-check data quality.

The questionnaire can be divided into four parts. The first part asked about the characteristics of the respondents, specifically on demographics and income (sources), to get basic information on the family and its composition, along with a preliminary assessment of the beneficiary households' economic situation. The second part focused on the cash support, and asked about what the families had spent the assistance on, to assess how much of the social transfer



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went towards its intended purpose of increasing enrolment and participation in KG2. The third part aimed to assess the perceived importance of education for the parents, and whether there were noticeable differences based on gender. The last part focused on parents' engagement with their children in KG2, determining the frequency with which parents accompanied their children to kindergarten, and how much time they spent with their children on educationally stimulating activities.

2.2 Qualitative

To complement the data from the

quantitative research, qualitative field reports were collected during the programme implementation. The field monitoring home visits were conducted by UNICEF with 72 beneficiaries. The sample of 72 participants was randomly chosen from different governorates. The beneficiaries were contacted two days before the field visit to make sure they approved the visit and understood its purpose. The qualitative research allowed the respondents to provide more in-depth and elaborate responses, as the questions were more open-ended compared to the quantitative surveys, and also provided a platform for the beneficiaries to

share their feedback and any potential challenges they might have faced during the programme implementation. In total, UNICEF provided 16 field monitoring reports from the 72 households that were visited.

The field visit questionnaire asked about registration procedures, household demographics, if the beneficiaries also received assistance from other international or humanitarian organizations, and if the programme was positively contributing to increased enrolment and participation in KG2 and the overall wellbeing of children.

For those that had not enrolled their children to KG2, there was a follow-up question about existing barriers. The beneficiaries were also allowed to share any other challenges or concerns they might have. Finally, before the home visit ended, UNICEF reaffirmed and explained the importance of children attending KG2, especially in terms of early childhood development.

2.3 Limitations

The helpline survey that was conducted at the end of the pilot programme, to gather data on enrolment and participation in KG2, revealed some challenges regarding targeting. The Hajati-KG2 pilot programme had three targeting or eligibility criteria for potential beneficiaries to be considered for the cash support.

First, only children of the approximately 39,000 households that were assessed for the Hajati programme at the beginning of the 2017/18 school year were considered for the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme, as the pre-existing database already included many vulnerable families across the Kingdom in need of assistance to support their children's education. Second, the families were only eligible for assistance if they had KG2-aged children (born in 2013) who were not yet enrolled in KG2. Third, there had to be local KG2 services in relatively close proximity to the family's home, with the available capacity to accept children.

Priority was given to families in the governorates of Mafraq and Ma'an. However, since there were not enough eligible beneficiaries in these two

governorates to reach the pilot target of 500 families, additional governorates were included, with priority given to Irbid governorate. Certain districts in Mafraq, along with the governorates of Amman and Zarqa, were given less priority, as to avoid interference in an ongoing impact evaluation of the Hajati (basic education) programme.

The post-distribution monitoring data showed that 91 assisted children out of the total 498 that were surveyed, or the 367 children that had enrolled to KG2, had registered for KG2 prior to receiving the cash assistance. Additionally, out of 127 children who were not enrolled in KG2, 28 children stated that there was no KG2 institution in close proximity to their house (8), or there was not enough capacity or availability to accept them in the kindergarten (20).

The post-distribution monitoring data showed that 91 assisted children out of the total 498 that were surveyed, or the 367 children that had enrolled to KG2, had registered for KG2 prior to receiving the cash assistance.

One potential limitation of the methodological design is that the quantitative research, through the two surveys, did not include questions on the indirect benefits of the cash transfer on fulfilment of other basic needs, such as food and nutrition, health, living conditions, and mental health. The aforementioned impact

evaluation of the Hajati programme,¹⁶ along with the PDM analysis and report,¹⁷ found that the positive impacts extended beyond the main educational goals of Hajati, also enhancing mental health and nutrition, and reducing poverty and the adoption of negative coping mechanisms.

While the cash assistance was specifically intended to increase enrolment to KG2, we know that it is likely that some beneficiaries would spend part of the cash transfer on other basic needs rather than solely on education. The key findings of this post-distribution monitoring report on the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme found that 56 per cent of the beneficiaries dedicated the full amount of the cash assistance towards the needs of the child/children attending KG2, while 18 per cent of families used the money to cover both household needs and KG2 expenses, and 26 per cent of households needed to reallocate the entire cash support to other household needs due to their difficult financial situation.

As the methodological design, and subsequently the analysis, primarily focused on educational outcomes, along with parents' engagement with their children in KG2, it is likely that the findings described in this PDM report underestimate the overall positive contributions of the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme, as the findings do not include reference to the indirect benefits on other basic needs (food security and nutrition, health, and living conditions), which affect children's development and wellbeing, to which the cash assistance also likely contributed.

Characteristics of Respondents



Geographical Distribution of Hajati-KG2

Families were considered for the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme if they had least one KG2-aged child that was not enrolled to early childhood education at the time, and with a local kindergarten in relatively close proximity to their home.

50.4%

Most of the Hajati-KG2 families live in Mafraq

36.4%

The Hajati-KG2 families live in Irbid

98.5%

An overwhelming majority (98.5 per cent) of the beneficiary families live in urban areas.

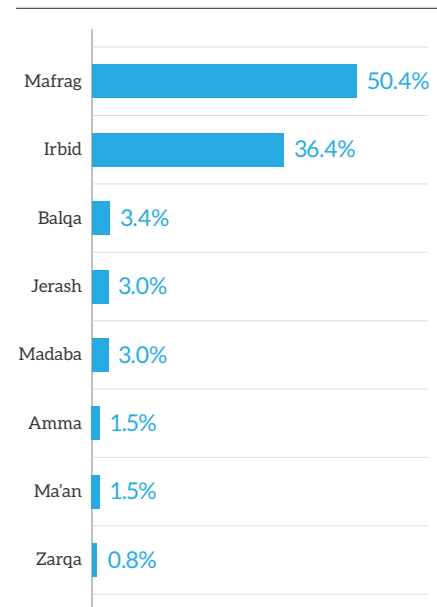
This section elaborates on the characteristics of the respondents, specifically on demographics and income (sources), to get basic information on the family and its composition, along with a preliminary assessment of the beneficiary household's economic situation. As mentioned in the Introduction, families were considered for the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme if they had least one KG2-aged child (for the school year 2018/19 this corresponds to the birth year 2013), that was not enrolled to early childhood education at the time, and with a local kindergarten in relatively close proximity to their home.

3.1 Demographics

In terms of geographical distribution, most of the Hajati-KG2 families live in Mafraq (50.4 per cent) and Irbid (36.4 per cent), around 3 per cent each in Balqa, Jerash and Madaba, 1.5 per cent each in Amman and Ma'an and 0.8 per cent in Zarqa (Figure 1). An overwhelming majority (98.5 per cent) of the beneficiary families live in urban areas.

In terms of nationality, 98.5 per cent of the beneficiaries are Syrian, while the remaining 1.5 per cent are Jordanian. The majority of Syrian families and in the concentration on the Mafraq and Irbid governorates mainly results from the historical targeting methodology of the regular Hajati programme, which assessed families of children that were enrolled in 205 double-shift schools (DSS) at the start of the 2017/18 school year, along with the aforementioned geographical prioritization and targeting of beneficiaries. Targeting for Hajati was restricted to DSS, because they were expected to house comparatively

Figure 1
Geographical Distribution of Beneficiaries



large numbers of vulnerable children, including Syrian refugees.¹⁸

Figure 2 displays the family size and number of children per family for the surveyed beneficiaries. The average family size among the Hajati-KG2 population is 7.3, which is considerably higher than the average family size of 4.7 in Jordan.¹⁹ The average family size of 7.3 for Hajati-KG2 beneficiaries is similar to the average household size among the poorest decile (10 per cent) of the Jordanian population, which is 7.7, of which 4.6 are below the age of 20.²⁰ Hajati-KG2 families on average have 5.1 children. These characteristics can be explained by the fact that the majority of beneficiaries in the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme are Syrian, who on average have larger family sizes with an average 5.3 family members,²¹ and because they are considered relatively more vulnerable as based on the targeting criteria.



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Among the children of the Hajati-KG2 families, 18.7 per cent are between the age of 0 and 5, 39.7 per cent between 6 and 9 years, 20.9 per cent between 10 and 12 years, 13.5 per cent between 13 and 15 years, and 7.1 per cent between 16 and 18 years.

Furthermore, as can be seen from Figure 3, the majority of the beneficiary households (57 per cent) are female-headed households. The average age among the female heads of household is 35.6, while male household heads are 40.5 years old on average. Among the Hajati-KG2 beneficiary families, all male heads of household (HoH) are married, while 14 per cent of female household heads are either separated, divorced, widowed or their husband does not live within the household.

Figure 2

Family Size and Children Per Family

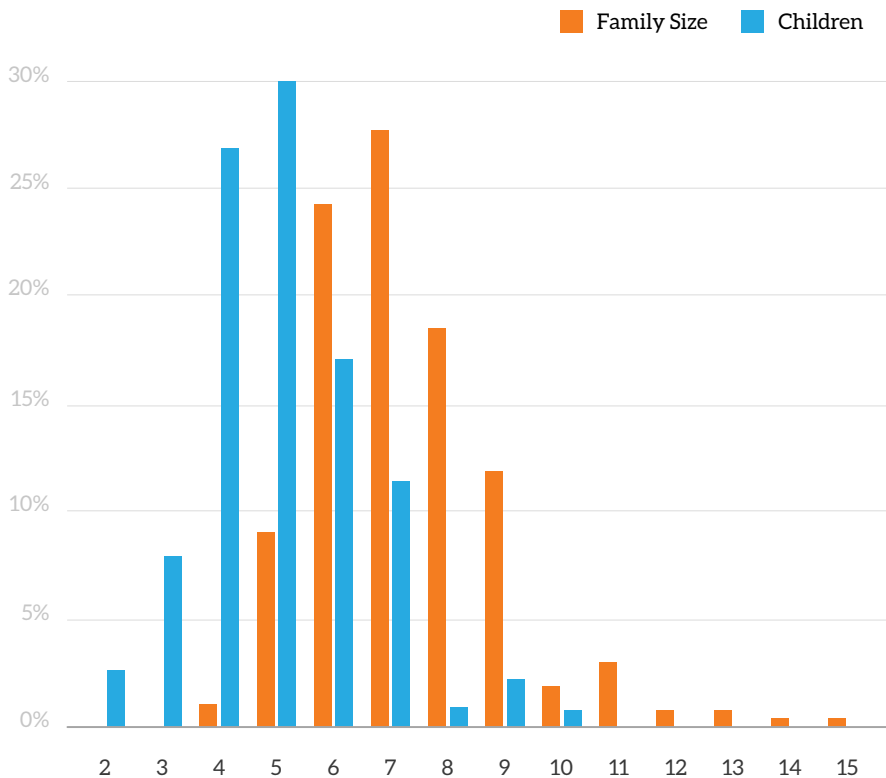


Figure 3 Gender of the Head of Household

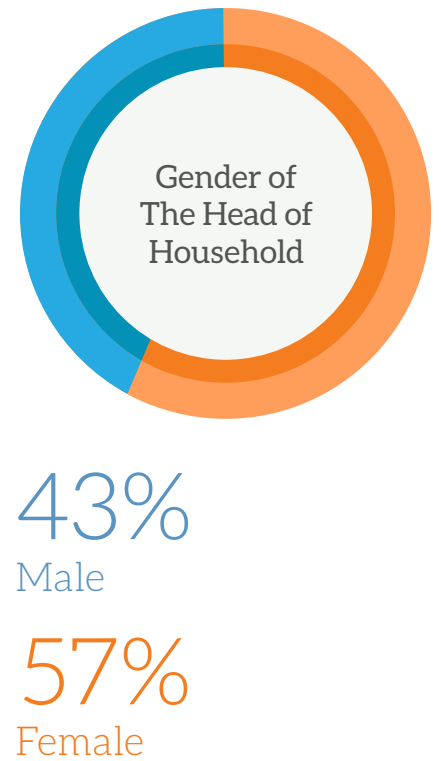


Figure 4 Level of Education of Head of Household, by Gender

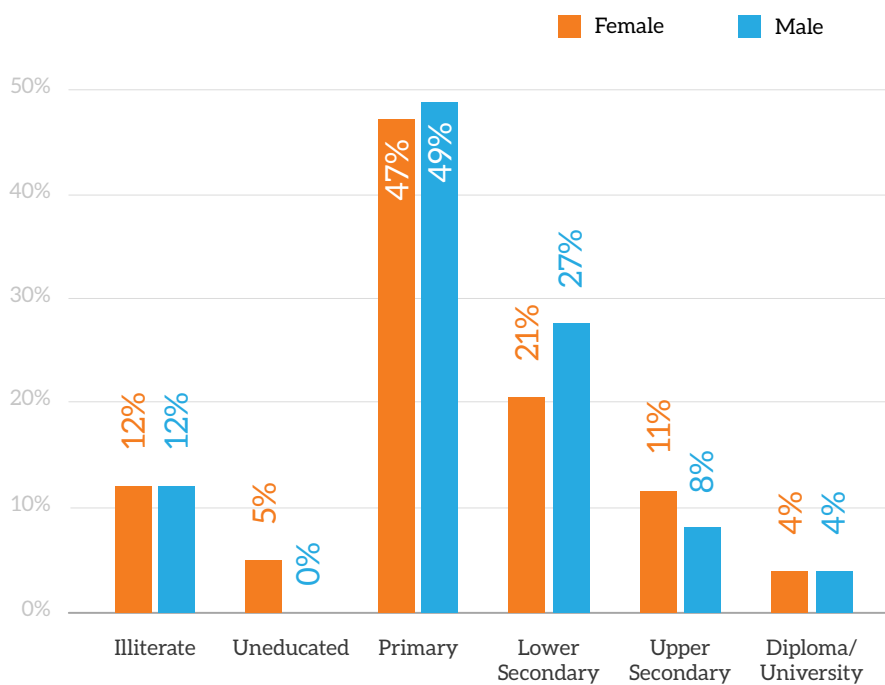
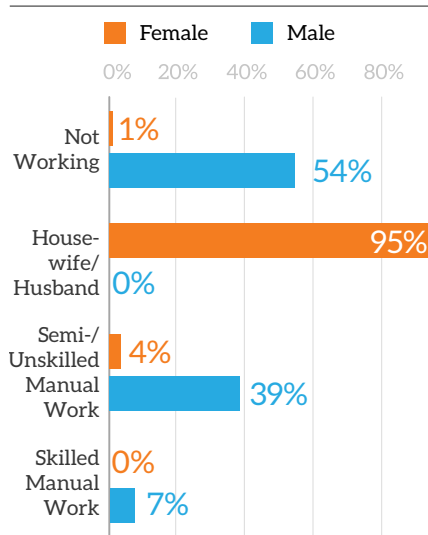


Figure 4 shows the level of education of the head of household (HoH), which shows that 88 per cent of Hajati-KG2 HoH from both genders are literate. However, only 36 per cent of female and 40 per cent of male HoH, respectively, have completed basic education, i.e., lower secondary school or above.²² Around 5 per cent of female HoH have not obtained any education at all.

Furthermore, the occupation of the head of household shows significant differences between the females and males. As can be seen from Figure 5, 95 per cent of female HoH are housewives, while 54 per cent of male HoH are not working, i.e., they are unemployed or temporarily not working, unable to work, retired or on long-term leave. Furthermore, 39 per cent of male HoH are either semi-skilled or unskilled manual labourers,

and 7 per cent are skilled manual labourers. Only 4 per cent of female HoH are engaged in semi-skilled or unskilled manual work.

Figure 5 Occupation of Head of Household, by Gender



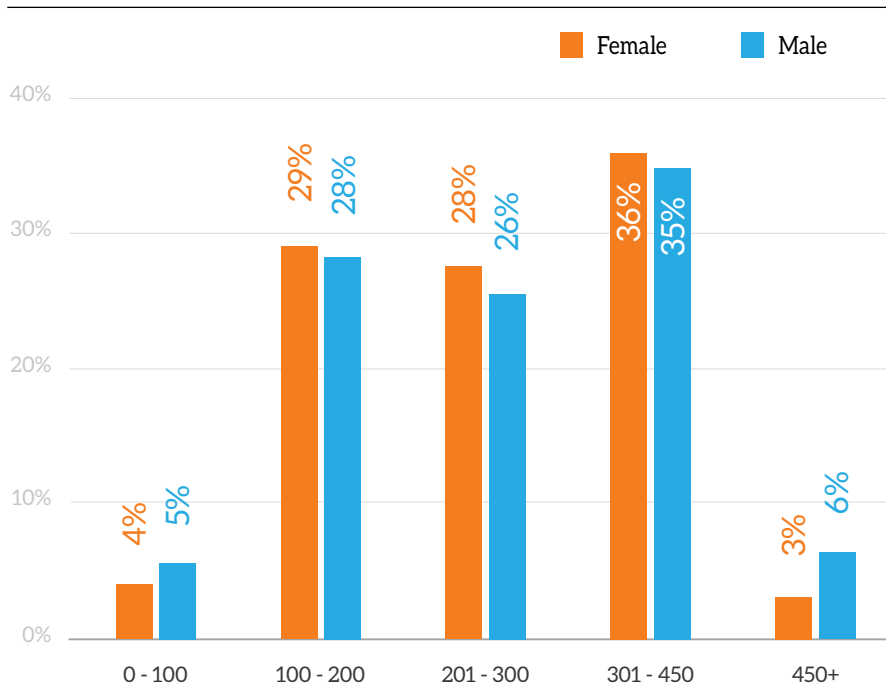
3.2 Income

This subsection highlights the economic difficulties that Hajati-KG2 beneficiaries face. Figure 6 shows the monthly income of families. As we can see, the overwhelming majority (95 per cent) of beneficiaries have a monthly income, combined from all income sources, including social transfers, below 450 JOD, which is the median wage in Jordan.²³

There is also a small percentage (4 to 5 per cent) of respondents that reported a monthly income of less than 100 JOD. Most of the families have a monthly income between 101 and 450 JOD which, considering the average family size of 7.3 among the Hajati-KG2 population, with an average of 5.1 children per family, indicates that these families have to spread their incomes thinly to support the basic consumption needs of a large number of family members. The average working person in the poorest decile of the Jordanian population earns 241 JOD per month, including overtime and bonuses,²⁴ and more than one third of Hajati-KG2 families earn less than that on a monthly basis.

Surprisingly, there are no significant differences, in terms of monthly family income, between female- or male-headed households, even though Figure 5 showed that 95 per cent of female heads of household are housewives. This might indicate that the Hajati-KG2 families, who are mostly Syrian (98.5 per cent), rely heavily on cash assistance from humanitarian organizations, as their most frequent source of income, to be able to cover their basic needs.

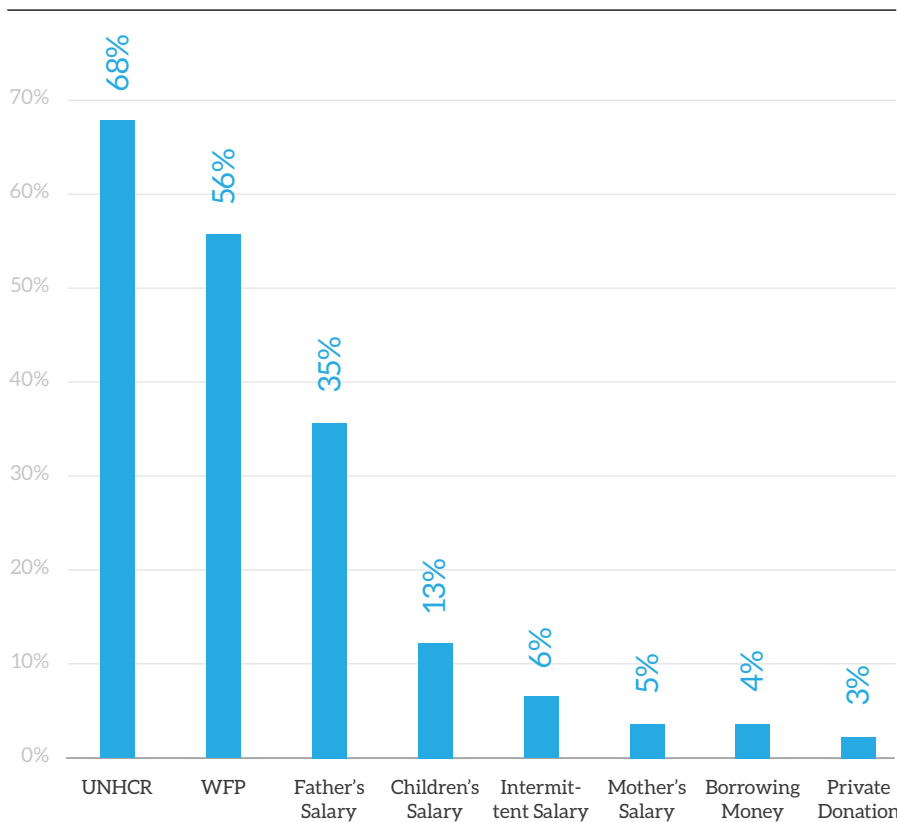
Figure 6 Income Brackets by Gender of Head of Household (JOD/month)



This might indicate that the Hajati-KG2 families, who are mostly Syrian (98.5 per cent), rely heavily on cash assistance from humanitarian organizations to be able to cover their basic needs.

We know that social transfers are significantly more important, as a share of income, for the poorest segment of the Jordanian population (8 per cent of total income among the poorest, versus 2 per cent among the wealthiest).²⁵ Indeed, as we see in Figure 7, the largest sources of income among the Hajati-KG2 beneficiaries are cash assistance from UNHCR (68 per cent) and WFP (56 per cent). For approximately one third (35 per cent) of respondents, the salary of the father contributes to the family income. However, during the qualitative interviews, men expressed concerns about their job security, demonstrating the financial insecurity families face due to the lack of a stable income.

Figure 7 Income Sources of Hajati-KG2 Beneficiaries



The fourth largest income source is salary from working children, contributing to the family income for 13 per cent of respondents. This is a large percentage, showing how households have to revert to negative coping strategies in order to fulfil basic needs. Almost 6 per cent of beneficiaries reported income from intermittent work, which refers to irregular daily work. Further sources of income are mothers' salary (5 per cent), borrowing money from families, friends or other institutions (4 per cent), private donations, e.g., from families or friends (3 per cent), and income from the family business (0.4 per cent).

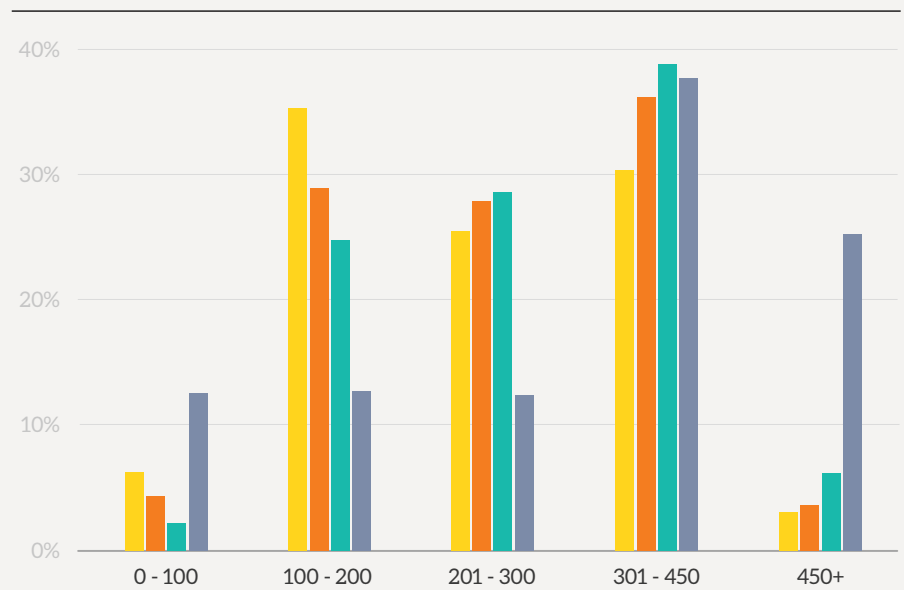


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The income level of Hajati-KG2 beneficiaries disaggregated by the occupation of the head of household, shows that families whose household head is engaged in labour (either unskilled, semi-skilled or skilled), have a slightly higher income on average compared to families whose household head is not working, whereas 54 per cent of male HoH and 96 per cent of female HoH are not working.

- Not Working
- Housewife/-husband
- Semi-/Unskilled Manual
- Skilled Manual Work

Figure 8 Income Level by Occupation of Household Head (JOD/month)



Key Findings

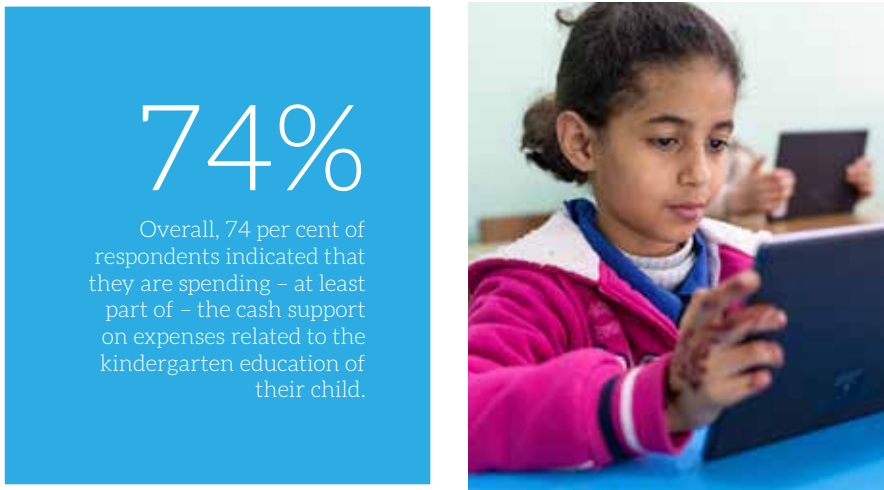


As stated previously, the main goal of this post-distribution monitoring report is to assess if the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme was successful in achieving its intended objective of increasing enrolment and participation in KG2.

This section discusses the main findings, focused on the use of the cash transfer, educational outcomes (in terms of the perceived importance of education for the parents and if the assisted children were enrolled to KG2), and on parents' engagement with their children in kindergarten (specifically on the frequency with which parents accompanied their children to kindergarten, and how much time parents spent with their children on educationally stimulating activities).

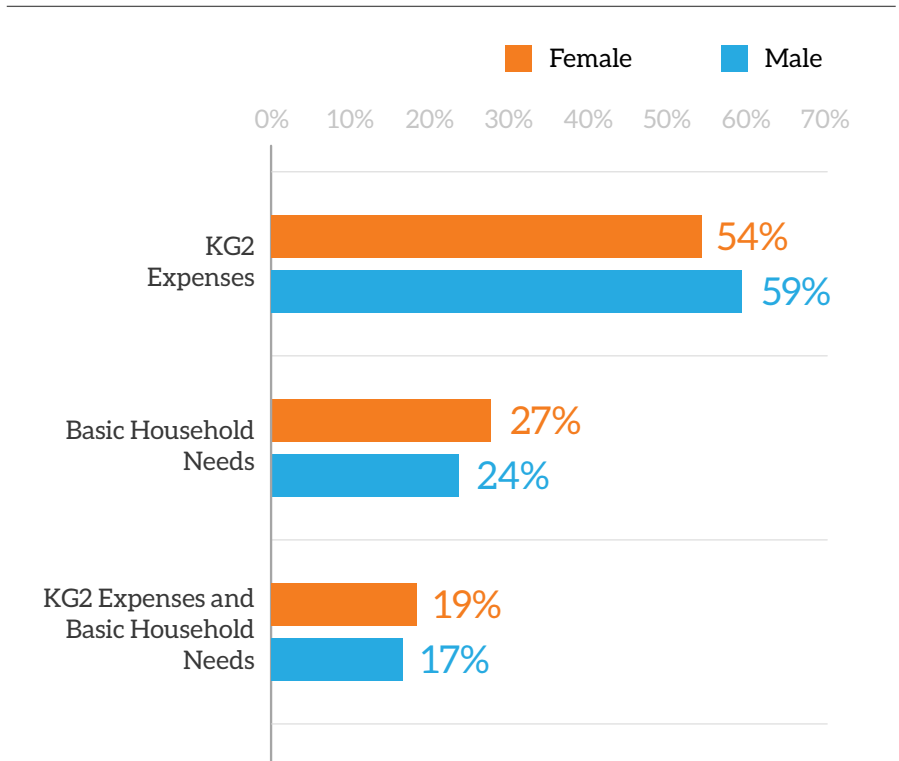
4.1 Use of Cash Assistance

The qualitative interviews revealed that many beneficiary families were able to register their children in the closest available KG2 after the first transfer of the Hajati-KG2 cash assistance. Overall, 74 per cent of respondents indicated that they are spending – at least part of – the cash support on expenses related to the kindergarten education of their child, with a slightly higher share among male-headed households (76 per cent) compared to female-headed households (73 per cent), as can be seen in Figure 9. Furthermore, 56 per cent of Hajati-KG2 families dedicated the full amount of the cash assistance towards the needs of the child/ children attending KG2, 18 per cent of families used the money to cover both household needs and KG2 expenses, and 26 per cent of households needed to re-allocate the entire cash support to other household needs due to their difficult financial situation.



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Figure 9 Cash Assistance Expenditure Categories, by Gender of Head of Household



Tuition for KG2 is the most prevalent spending category among both female and male-headed households

Figures 10 and 11 give a more detailed description of the specific KG2-related expenditures. Tuition for KG2 is the most prevalent spending category among both female- (59 per cent) and male-headed households (50 per cent), followed by food, clothes and stationery for the child/children attending KG2 (27 per cent for female-headed households and 37 per cent for male-headed households), as well as transportation costs (10 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively). During the home visits, many families reported that they used the Hajati-KG2 assistance to pay for stationery, pocket money, transportation and KG2 tuition fees, which they would not have been able to afford without the cash support.

Expenditure on basic household needs or other non-KG2-related items is displayed in Figure 12. The majority of families spent part of the cash assistance on food (63 per cent among male-headed households and 58 per cent among female-headed households), and to cover other important expenditures, such as tuition of siblings (30 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively), as well as clothing for their children (19 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively). Furthermore, the qualitative interviews revealed that some families spent the cash assistance on expenses such as electricity bills and medicine; for example, to pay the urgent medical bills of extended family members.

Figure 10 Overview of Expenditure on KG2, Female Head of Household

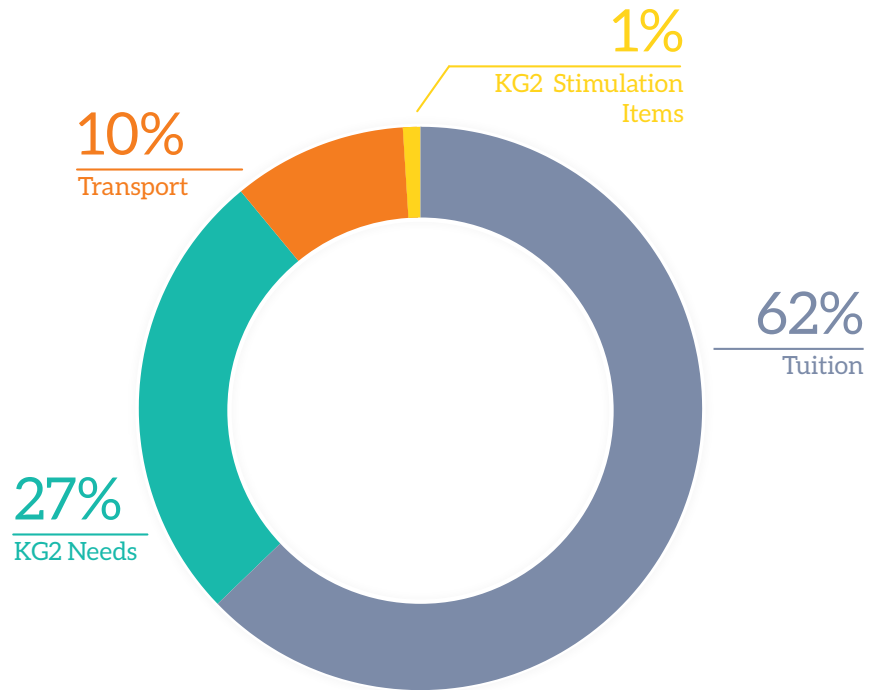


Figure 11 Overview of Expenditure on KG2, Male Head of Household

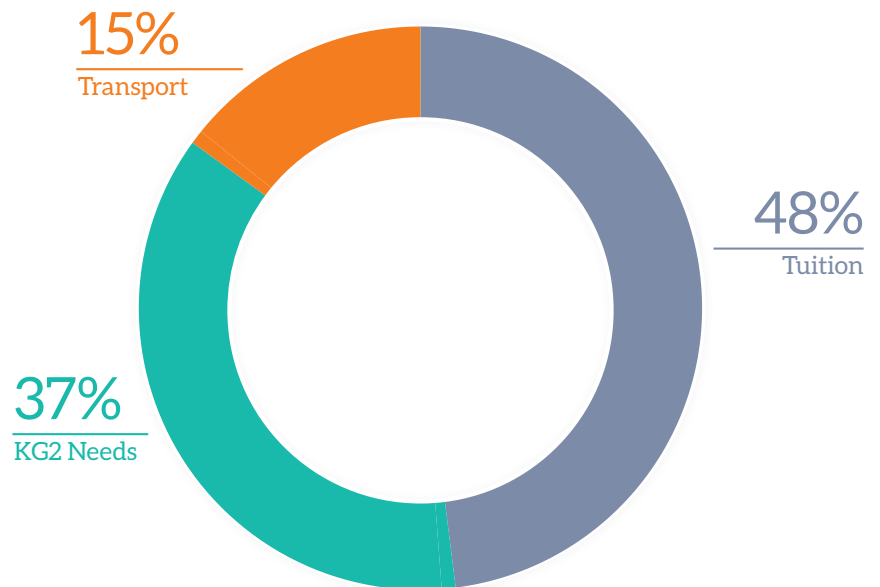
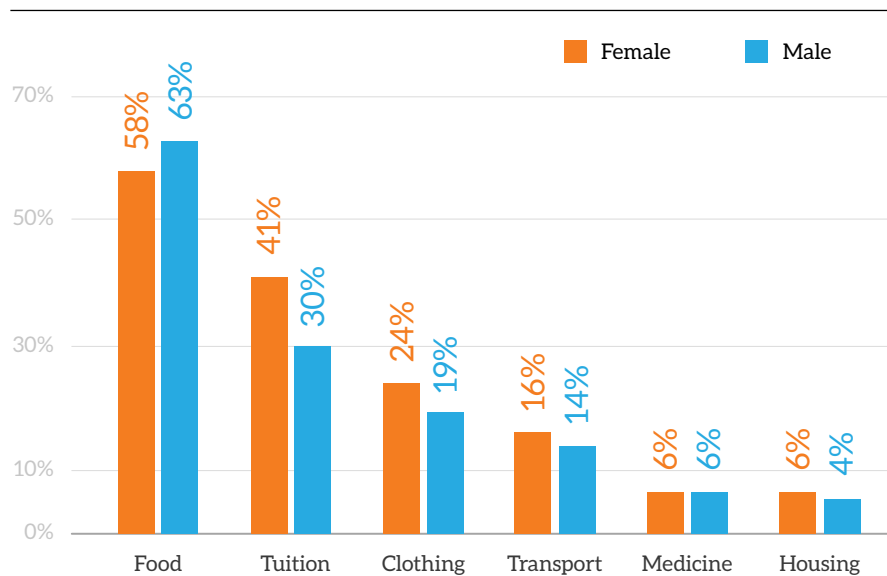


Figure 12 Expenditure on Basic Household Needs and other Non-KG2 Related Items, by Gender of Head of Household



4.2 Educational Outcomes

In line with the Government's ambitious key policy initiative to deliver universal KG2 provision,²⁶ UNICEF is dedicated to increasing children's participation in kindergarten, especially for the children of vulnerable families in Jordan, as well as to create awareness among caregivers of the importance of early childhood education.

The Hajati-KG2 pilot programme also aimed to enhance the engagement of parents in their children's education. For instance, during the qualitative data collection, UNICEF staff continued to explain to the caregivers the importance of ECED for their children, especially to develop their socio-emotional and cognitive skills. The key message is that the early years of a child's life are one of the most important phases of their lives, and children's learning and development during the early years can lay the foundations for learning capacities and

healthy social interactions in the future. As the main goal of the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme was to increase the KG2 participation of the 519 children, of 512 vulnerable families, that were supported with cash assistance during the 2018/19 school year, the following subsection on the findings related to educational outcomes focuses on the perceived importance of education for the parents and whether or not the assisted children were enrolled in KG2.

4.2.1 Perceived Importance of Education

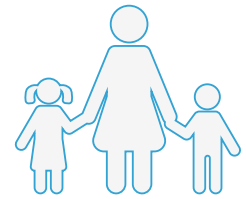
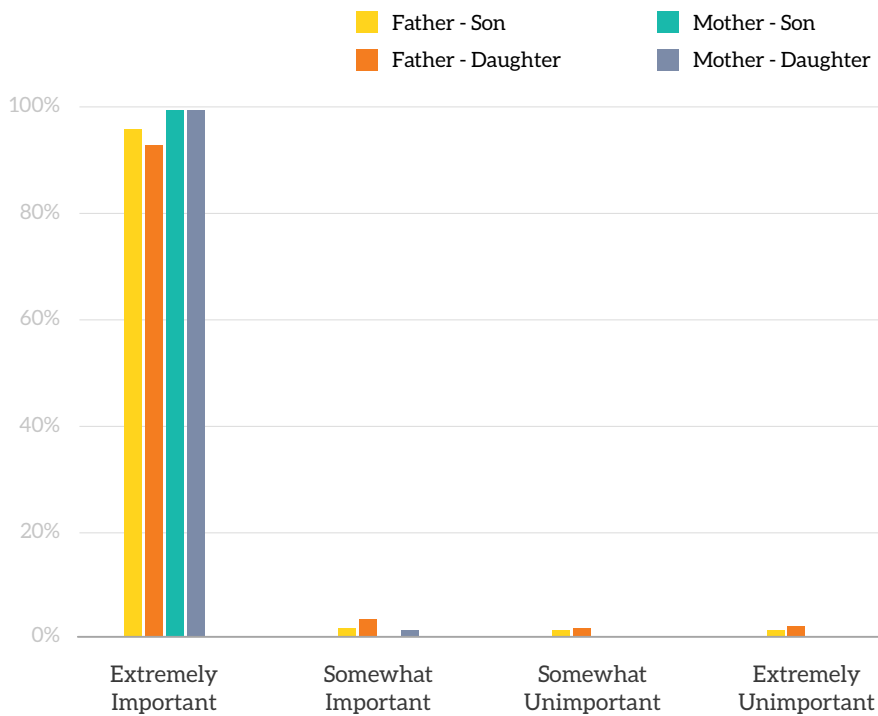
For the overwhelming majority of the Hajati-KG2 parents and caregivers, education is perceived to be extremely important. Figure 13 shows that 99 per cent of mothers believe that education is extremely important for both their sons and daughters, with slightly lower numbers among fathers; 96 per cent and 93 per cent of fathers think education is extremely important for their sons and daughters, respectively.

Only 7 per cent of fathers and 1 per cent of mothers believe that education is somewhat important or not important at all for their daughters (compared to 4 per cent and 0 per cent for sons). For the minority (2 per cent) of fathers that don't believe that education is important for their children; they mentioned that they prefer their sons to work to help provide for the family, and they believe that education is less important for their daughters because they envisage that their daughters will get married. There are social barriers to education for girls.

These barriers were further highlighted by indications of gender disparities in the ways fathers and mothers perceive their daughters and sons. During field monitoring visits, UNICEF personnel observed and gathered anecdotal evidence of household dynamics that pointed to gender-based concerns, as some of the Hajati-KG2 female beneficiaries mentioned that social norms restrained them from moving freely outside their homes. All humanitarian interventions including Hajati-KG2 programme should be gender-sensitive and cognisant of existing cultural and socio-economic structures that lead to gender inequalities. The Hajati-KG2 programme strives to promote preschool enrolment and attendance for both vulnerable girls and boys.

During the qualitative data collection, parents identified key benefits that ensue from their children's participation in KG2. Many caregivers stated that KG2 is an important element in preparing their children for basic education.

Figure 13 Perceived Importance of Education, by Gender of Caregivers and Children



99%

of mothers believe that education is extremely important for both their sons and daughters

They mentioned that their older children, who did not attend kindergarten, mostly due to financial (or in some cases, registration) barriers, faced more challenges when enrolling to basic education. Furthermore, the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme made parents become increasingly aware of kindergarten services and the benefits of early childhood education.

Parents also believed that their children became more open to the world around them, as they were making new friends and interacting with children from different backgrounds, rather than spending most of their time at home. In a few cases, participating in KG2 helped to enhance the speech ability of some children who used to be timid and, to some extent, isolated at home. During the end-of-year survey conducted through the UNICEF

helpline, 99 per cent of respondents whose children were enrolled in kindergarten said that they believed that KG2 improved their children’s social, emotional and cognitive skills, which would also help them be better prepared for basic education.

4.2.2 Increased Enrolment in KG2

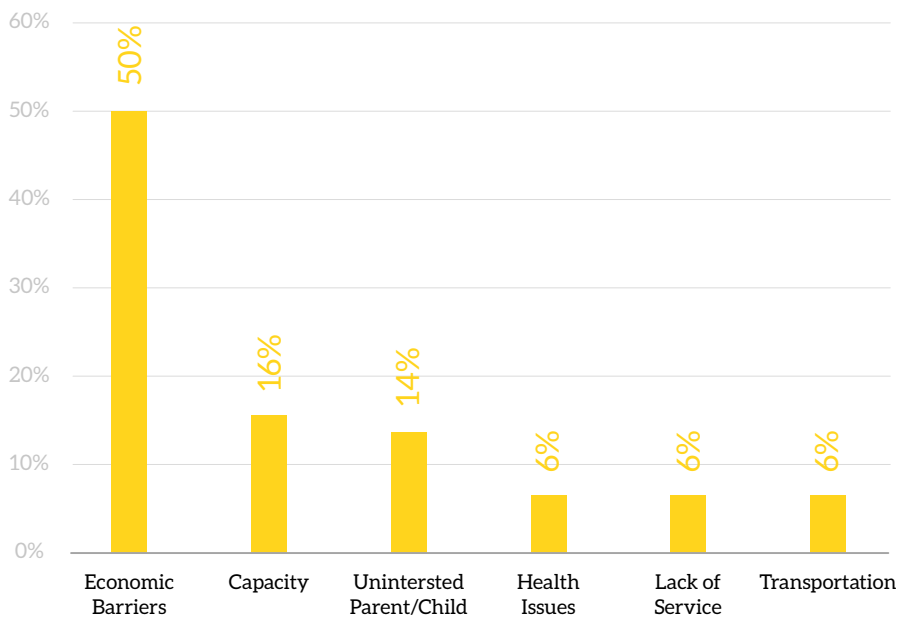
The data from the PDM survey showed that 74 per cent of the assisted children were enrolled in KG2 for the 2018/19 school year. Out of the children who were not enrolled in KG2 prior to receiving the cash support from UNICEF, 68 per cent of the respondents stated that they had indeed enrolled their children to KG2 after receiving the assistance. In other words, the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme ensured that almost 290 children were able to enrol to KG2.

Furthermore, for the 18 per cent of children who were enrolled to KG2 prior to receiving the first cash transfer payment, it is probable that the Hajati-KG2 programme contributed to ensuring that they stayed in kindergarten. In total, it is likely that the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme supported the KG2 participation of 74 per cent (or 385) of the assisted children.

As can be seen in Figure 14, the main reason for the non-enrolment of the 26 per cent of assisted children who did not enrol in KG2 was economic barriers (50 per cent), even after receiving the cash support, followed by lack of capacity by local KG2 services (22 per cent), and the lack of interest in KG2 by the parents or the children (14 per cent).

Figure 14

Main Reasons for Not Enrolling in KG2



There are economic barriers, especially for families who live too far away from public kindergarten facilities, or where there is a lack of access to the nearest public KG2 provision.

During the qualitative data collection, some of the beneficiaries mentioned that the tuition fees for private KG2 was upwards of 35 JOD per month, which many of these families are unable to afford. Upon recommendation by UNICEF staff, some families were successful in negotiating the tuition fees with the principals of private KG2s, and ended up paying around 20 JOD per month. Furthermore, transportation issues were also identified as a major financial burden that prevented families from enrolling their children in KG2. Results from the aforementioned KG mapping study in Jordan found that there were wide variations in costs for kindergarten services, ranging from 11–20 JOD to more than 50 JOD per

month, and it was evident that Syrian families were comparatively more focused on, or concerned about, the costs and financial implications.²⁷

4.3 Parents' Engagement with Children in KG2

UNICEF Jordan's objective is to enhance the engagement of both parents, fathers and mothers, in early childhood education and development activities with their children, for example, by accompanying them to kindergarten, and spending time with them on educationally stimulating activities. Beneficiaries received monthly messages to promote ECE, but messages were reviewed for future programme implementation to address the needs of co-parenting (for fathers and mothers to more fully share in the joys and responsibilities of rearing children) and of male caregiver engagement.

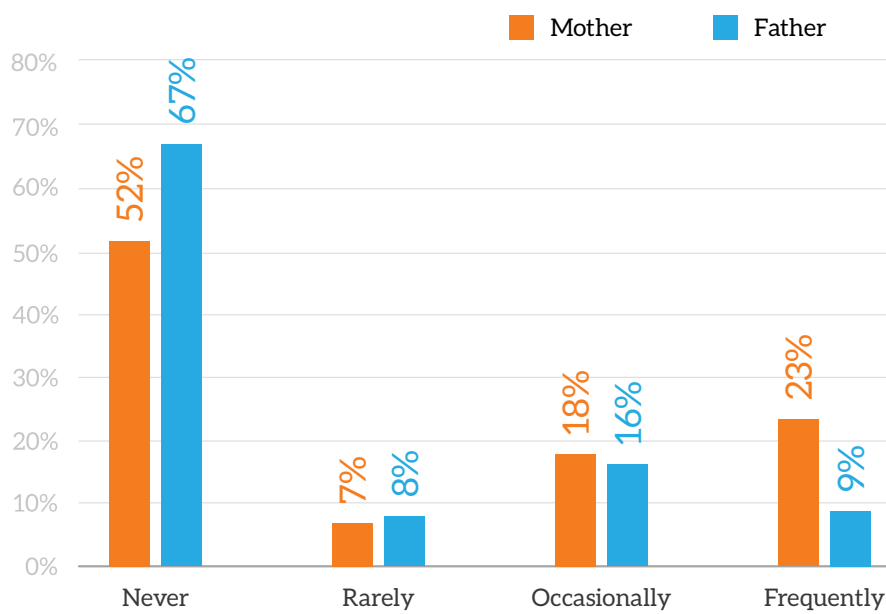
Field monitoring visits by UNICEF provided anecdotal evidence that the mothers, especially in very vulnerable communities, assumed the majority of caretaking responsibilities, indicating the persistence of gender traditional roles. Despite gender parity in education,²⁸ Jordan has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world at 13.5 per cent, with 80.2 per cent of women who have had a tertiary education not in employment.²⁹ ECED programmes such as Hajati-KG2 aspire to promote gender equality from the earliest stages of life.

4.3.1 Accompanying Children to KG2

Accompanying children to kindergarten is especially important in areas where there is lack of regular, safe and affordable means of transportation, which was often reported as a barrier to enrolment in KG2. This poses an even greater challenge for large families, where parents are unable to leave the rest of their children unattended while taking their child/children to KG2.

Figure 15 shows that 52 per cent of mothers and 67 per cent of fathers never take their child/children to kindergarten, while 23 per cent of mothers and 9 per cent of fathers have reported that they frequently accompany their child/children to and from KG2; 18 and 16 per cent of mothers and fathers, respectively, occasionally take their children to kindergarten. Other than the parents, other acquaintances outside the family (14 per cent), siblings (12 per cent), and friends and other family members (5 per cent) accompany the child/children to KG2.

Figure 15 Frequency of Accompanying Children to Kindergarten, by Gender of Caregiver



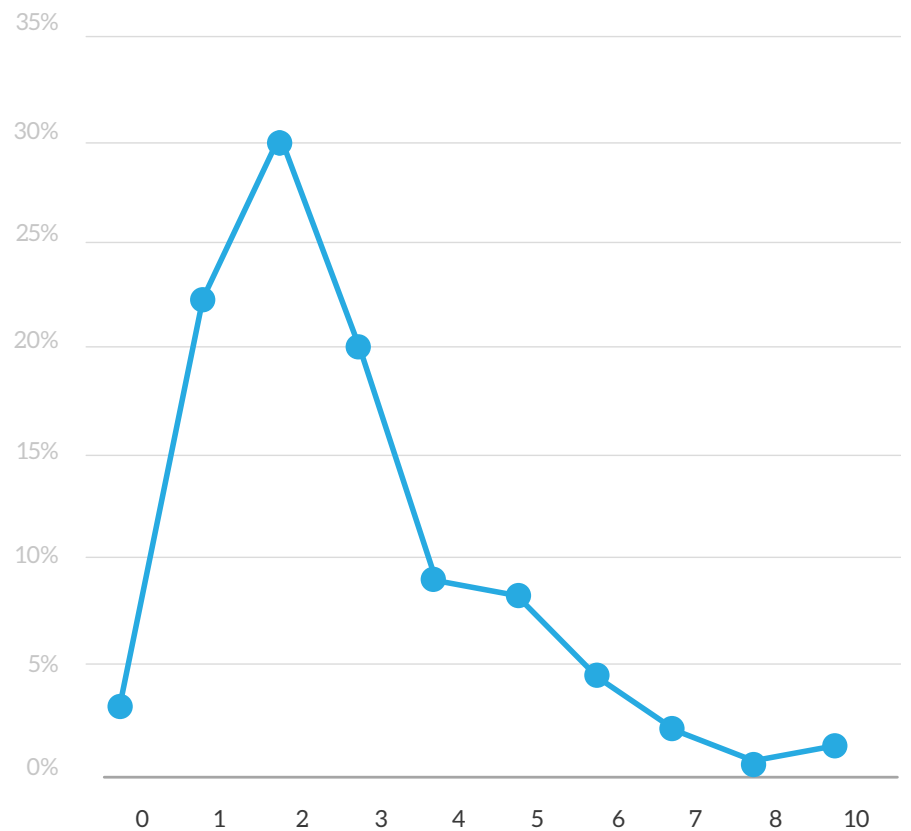
Despite gender parity in education, Jordan has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world at 13.5 per cent, with 80.2 per cent of women who have had a tertiary education not in employment.

4.3.2 Children’s Stimulation Activities

The post-distribution monitoring survey also focused on the amount of time a KG2-aged child spends playing and engaging in stimulating activities such as reading, colouring books, looking at magazines, and playing games, as well as the parents’ level of engagement with their children during those activities. On average, the children spent 2.7 hours per day on stimulating activities, and 45 per cent of children spent three hours or more per day on stimulation activities, as can be seen in Figure 16.

Regarding the stimulation activities, 50 per cent of children play with physical toys such as dolls, balls, kites or action figures, which support their cognitive and social development through, for instance, sharing toys with other children or learning from trial and error and using their imagination.

Figure 16 Hours spent by KG2-Aged Children on Stimulation Activities



As can be seen in Figure 17, 39 per cent of children use books or magazines for drawing or colouring, and 16 per cent are reading from books or magazines, which also supports their imagination and language development. The data showed that around one third (31 per cent) of children do not engage in any form of stimulation activities.³⁰

Moreover, parents were asked about their degree of participation with their children when they are playing and engaging in stimulating activities. The results showed that 71 per cent of mothers and 78 per cent of fathers said that they are not involved in their children’s stimulation activities, while 22 per cent of mothers and 20 per cent of fathers engage with their children between 10 and 30 per cent of the time, and 7 per cent of mothers and 2 per cent of fathers engage in their children’s stimulation activities more than 40 per cent of the time. As Figure 18 shows, during the majority of stimulation activities, children are joined by their siblings; 74 per cent of KG2-aged children are with their siblings on more than 40 per cent of stimulation activities, while some children tend to play and read by themselves (16 per cent of KG2-aged children play alone on more than 40 per cent of their stimulation activities).

39 per cent of children use books or magazines for drawing or colouring, and 16 per cent are reading from books or magazines

Figure 17

Stimulation Activities for KG2 Children

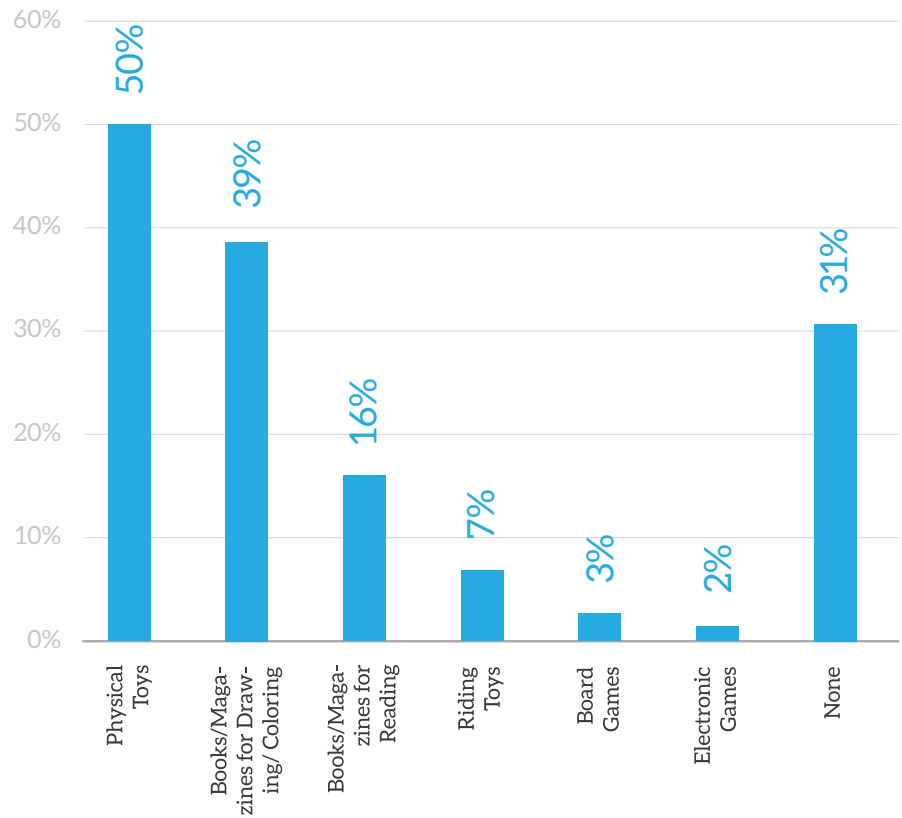
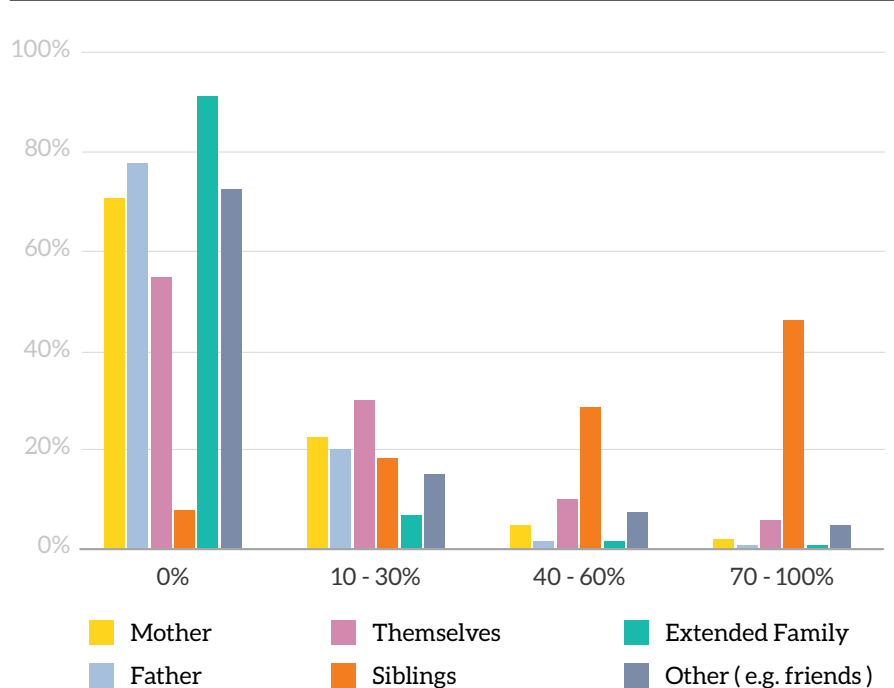


Figure 18

Degree of Engagement with KG2-Aged Children during Stimulation Activities



Conclusion



Through the implementation of the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme, UNICEF Jordan learned valuable lessons, which helped to formulate specific recommendations for future programming to increase enrolment and participation in early childhood education for the children of vulnerable families.

5.1 Programme Design and Targeting

The Hajati-KG2 pilot programme had three targeting or eligibility criteria for children of vulnerable families to be considered for the cash support, and the post-distribution monitoring data revealed some challenges in the targeting of beneficiaries. One criterion to be eligible for the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme was that there had to be local KG2 services in relatively close proximity to the family home, with the availability to accept the children that

were to receive cash support.

Out of 127 children who did not enrol in KG2, the caregivers of 28 children stated that there was no KG2 institution in close proximity to their house (8) or there was not enough capacity or availability to accept them in the local kindergarten (20). The ESP 2018–2022 also mentioned that one of the major obstacles to improving access to KG2 was the limited availability of kindergartens throughout the country.

Another criterion was that families were only eligible to be considered for assistance if they had KG2-aged children (born in 2013) who were not yet enrolled in KG2. During the screening process for the pilot programme, the beneficiaries said that their children were not enrolled in KG2. Nevertheless, the post-distribution monitoring data showed that 91 assisted children (18 per cent out of the total 498 that were surveyed), had registered to KG2 prior to receiving the cash assistance. However, it could be that the respondents misunderstood the question, or even misremembered the dates, as the data was collected at the end of the school year.

The screening process for consideration to the Hajati-KG2 programme should be enhanced, to ensure that the beneficiaries correctly fulfil the eligibility criteria. For the pilot programme, these two criteria – having a local KG2 with capacity and families not yet having enrolled their KG2-aged children – was based on self-reported data, through the use of RapidPro, which is an innovative two-way communication tool used by UNICEF Jordan to communicate with beneficiaries. RapidPro should be used as an initial screening mechanism, to exclude families who do not meet the basic requirements, to reduce the operational variable costs that would have otherwise been incurred if the whole population of interest (the Hajati database) was to be surveyed.

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However, a second screening process must be established, to verify the information provided by potential beneficiaries, at least for a subsample, to avoid the targeting challenges that were revealed at the conclusion of the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme.

5.2 Economic Barriers

Many families mentioned a lack of financial resources as the primary reason why they were unable to enrol their children in KG2. Out of the 127 children of the Hajati-KG2 pilot that did not enrol in KG2, the main reason for 63 children was economic barriers, even after receiving the cash support. This is consistent with findings from the aforementioned KG mapping study in Jordan, which found that 46 per cent of families whose children did not attend KG2, would have enrolled their child/children to kindergarten if it were either free (35 per cent) or less expensive (11 per cent).³¹

While public kindergarten is free in Jordan, limited access, in combination with the increasing demand for early childhood education, leads to many families having to enrol their children in private KG institutions. Only 31 per cent of children enrolled in KG2 in Jordan in 2016 were in public kindergartens.³² Furthermore, the indirect costs of education, such as transportation and stationery, which come on top of fees to private KGs, can be a significant barrier for families wanting to give their children access to ECE. UNICEF Jordan should focus on enhancing and expanding its referral mechanisms, ensuring that the most vulnerable households are referred for additional cash, or in-kind assistance, to support the fulfilment of their basic needs. The remaining Hajati-KG2

beneficiaries that are not receiving additional cash support – mostly, they are Syrian refugees – could be referred to the UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or the World Food Programme (WFP) for multi-purpose or food assistance, respectively. Jordanians could be referred to the National Aid Fund (NAF), which is the largest non-contributory social protection scheme in Jordan, whose primary objective involves the delivery of social assistance, or to a local NGO such as Tkiyet Um Ali, that provides food assistance to poor Jordanians.

5.3 Promote Parental Engagement in ECE

There are considerable significant positive effects of early childhood education on the development of socio-emotional and cognitive skills for children, and substantial life-benefits, boosting outcomes such as education and health. There are also long-term economic gains from ECE in terms of increasing future earnings through the heightened probability of obtaining high-skilled livelihood opportunities, whereas disadvantaged or vulnerable children benefit the most from early childhood education.³³ While the key findings showed that the education of their children is perceived to be extremely important for the overwhelming majority of the Hajati-KG2 parents and caregivers, most people might not entirely comprehend the significant impact early childhood education and development can have on future outcomes for children.

For example, a 20-year randomized controlled trial study in Jamaica found that early childhood interventions, through psycho-social stimulation and parenting engagement activities, to



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develop cognitive and socio-emotional skills, increased future earnings by 25 per cent for the treatment group.³⁴

Out of the 127 children in the Hajati-KG2 pilot programme that did not enrol in KG2, 18 respondents (or 14 per cent) cited a lack of interest either for the child/children or the parents. While the Hajati-KG2 programme is not a conditional cash transfer programme, the fact that the assistance is labelled is highly effective in communicating to families the purpose of the cash assistance and encouraging them to send their children to kindergarten. Labelled cash transfer programmes for education can have a “very large impact on school participation.”³⁵ Cash transfer programmes provide an opportunity to engage with beneficiaries.

The Hajati-KG2 pilot programme did communicate the main purpose of the programme to the beneficiaries at the outset, and the beneficiaries also received messages on a monthly basis during the programme implementation about cash assistance and benefits of early childhood education and development.



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The awareness raising and information provision aspects of the Hajati-KG2 programme, the cash 'plus' component, should continue to be a point of emphasis, and the programme should also aim to identify innovative and effective communication mechanisms to promote behavioural change. The results of this post-distribution monitoring report also found that 71 per cent of mothers and 78 per cent of fathers said that they are not involved in their children's stimulation activities. Future early childhood education interventions should include a strong emphasis on awareness-raising and the promotion of positive parenting as a key element for healthy child development.

The 2018/19 Hajati-KG2 pilot programme resulted in the KG2

enrolment of 74 per cent of KG2-aged children in households that received the cash transfer. After the July 2019 announcement by the Prime Minister presenting the Government's undertaking to offer universal KG2 provision by September 2020, UNICEF launched a second Hajati-KG2 programme scaling up the intervention to reach almost 1,000 beneficiaries. The design of the second-year programme was informed by the findings of the evaluation and recommendations noted in this report. For example, measures were taken to improve targeting and vetting those who responded in the first instance that their children were not enrolled in KG2; referral systems have improved and young volunteers trained to increase the direct contact with beneficiaries and therefore

referrals to other agencies through the Helpline; and finally, monthly messages have underlined the importance of fathers engaging with their children in stimulating activities such as playing and storytelling.

Despite the closure of all schools and KG2 centres on 15 March 2020 due to COVID-19, UNICEF continues to distribute the Hajati-KG2 cash transfer to beneficiary households and to learn from programme implementation. UNICEF is already planning to launch a third Hajati-KG2 programme for the school year 2020/21, with the need expected to be far greater as a result of the negative social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable households across Jordan.

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