



Evidence Based Research Study:

“Access to Formal Education for People with Disability”

Prepared by:



Riyada Consulting and Training

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 **diakonia / NAD**
Rehabilitation Program

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List of Acrynoms

CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
DPOs	Disabled People's Organizations
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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1. Executive Summary:

This report presents the outcomes of a research study conducted in the West Bank and Gaza, examining the access to formal education of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The research methodology included a quantitative survey of a sample of 1000 PWDs and their parents, conducting focus groups with CBR representatives and staff members in the northern, central and southern regions of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as conducting in-depth interviews with experts and specialists in the field. The research tried to explore to what extent PWDs access education, what the reasons are for not obtaining education and how aware they are of their rights.

Even though 97.2% of the respondents (PWDs as well as their parents) believe that it is their right to attain education, it is remarkable that 18.5% of the respondents stated to never have had the opportunity to education (including 15.5% for the West Bank and 22.5% for Gaza Strip). Females were less fortunate among those who never had any education: 29% females compared 19% males. More than half of PWDs surveyed only attended primary school education. According to the survey the main reasons for not obtaining an education were the absence of specialized educational centers (15.6% of PWDs) and refusal by government schools to accept them (11.5% of PWDs). The qualitative research results show that the unsuitable school infrastructure, social restrictions and priority given to non-disabled children were among the main reasons for not obtaining an educational opportunity. In addition, Parents are not always willing to support their disabled children's access to education, as 30.7% of the parents admit that they didn't encourage them. More than half of the parents, who did send their children to school, chose to send them to public schools. Parents prefer sending their children to public schools. However, most public schools do not provide the necessary services to integrate PWDs, and the few existing specialized educational institutions are considered costly and often require special transportation, which leaves the parents with limited options.

The drop-out rate of PWDs is high, 37.9% stated that they dropped out of school. The main reason quoted for dropping out was the lack of necessary services, such as accessibility of schools, aid tools in classes, qualified teachers and appropriate teaching equipment. 26.5% quoted this as a reason for dropping-out. Other reasons were no benefit of academic education (22.8%), the lack of appropriate programs (13.5%) and the lack of attention from teachers (8.6%). Qualitative research results show that the economic conditions, the available education is not suitable for the type of disability, not willing to go to school or preferring to earn income over education as other reasons for school dropout.

Lack of teacher training on how to generally deal with PWDs in the school environment (77.8% of PWDs), inadequate infrastructure (77.2% of PWDs) and poor social integration of PWDs (76.6% of PWDs) were most mentioned by PWDs when exploring the causes of the low educational levels. Support of the parents and adequately equipped public schools seem to be the most important factors contributing to access to education.

Another component of the research investigates to which extent DPOs facilitate access to education. More than half of the respondents 50.8% think DPOs are ineffective when it comes to advocating for the right to education. 55% of the PWDs think programs or assistance provided by DPOs to enable access to education are ineffective and only 9% would describe them as effective. In Gaza even almost 75% think they're ineffective.

The last part of the report focuses on Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programs. CBR programs are generally considered to be effective to some extent when it comes to influencing policy and decision-making and facilitating access to education. Of the PWDs engaged in CBR programs, 25.9% benefited from programs in the field of education, of which 28.7% are West Bank residents and 12.9% lives in Gaza. PWDs were predominately engaged in CBR programs offering counseling, referrals to medical and rehabilitation services and social integration programs.

The report ends with final conclusions and recommendations. They are described in more details in the last chapter and below are the main recommendations:

- **Recommendations Palestinian Authority:**
 - Review the laws concerning access to education of people with disabilities and ensure their implementation¹.
 - Provide incentives to integrating PWDs in public education and to employment of people with disability.
 - Develop government programs aimed at increasing access to education for PWDs, increase effectiveness of existing government programs such as inclusive education policy, and ensure continuity and regular monitoring of government programs.
 - Enhance coordination among relevant ministries and government agencies. Especially the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education should streamline their policies and find a way to effectively cooperate.

- **Recommendations MOEHE:**
 - Provide appropriate educational environment, programs, curricula, and qualified personnel.
 - Rehabilitate the infrastructure of the educational institutions to accommodate disabled people.
 - Implement inclusive education policies and develop schools' capacities to accommodate the different types of disabilities.

- **Recommendations to CBR and DPOs:**
 - Intensify work in Gaza Strip and focus on the rights of disabled females.
 - Intensify lobbying and advocating activities and raise community awareness on the right of PWDs to education.
 - Develop partnership between the private and public sectors to maximize the opportunities of the disabled people to access education opportunities.
 - Adopt a more effective role in:
 - Enhancing parents awareness of PWDs' right to learn and emphasizing the need to integrate their disabled children in formal education.
 - Raise community awareness on the right of PWDs to formal education in order to tackle social preconceptions.
 - Make sure children attend the education that is most suitable to them.
 - Strengthen relationship with MOEHE with regard to referring and facilitating access of PWDs to formal education,

¹ A previous legal review study of the right of PWDs to education was commissioned by Diakonia and conducted by Manal Jubeh during 2010 includes detailed recommendations with regard to the needed legal review.

- Raise legal awareness among the disabled and encourage them to lobby for laws' implementation,
- Develop vocational training and education programs directed at disabled people.
- Develop job opportunities and pioneering projects that target disabled people as research results show a positive correlation between education and employment.

2. Purpose of the Study:

The right to education is universal, and it is something everyone should be able to enjoy, regardless of age, sex, socio-economic situation, or disability. Access to education for People with Disabilities (PWDs) has been proven challenging in many countries. PWDs often face many challenges to enter formal education, they are discriminated against, isolated by their family and they experience many difficulties when entering the labor market.

The overall objective of this research was to conduct an evidence based research study on disabled people's right to access formal education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The study identifies the formal education opportunities available to people with disabilities and reveals the key obstacles and challenges PWDs face while accessing education.

Part of the research is focused on the role of Community Based Rehabilitation Programs and Disabled People's Organizations in facilitating the access of people with disabilities to formal education. We investigate how they contribute to educational opportunities of PWDs and where they can make a difference.

In addition, the overall legal framework and the knowledge and perceptions of PWDs and their parents regarding the applicable laws with focus on the right to education were assessed. While the legal framework is in place and conducive to the rights of people with disabilities in general, the application and enforcement of the law remains a big challenge in Palestine.

The research study used the definition of the "disabled" according to the Disability Law No 4 for the year 1999 as the working definition as follows:

"Any individual suffering from a permanent or total disability whether cognital or not in his/her senses or in his/her physical, psychological, or mental capabilities to the extent that it restricts the fulfillment of his/her normal living requirements in a manner not usually faced by those without disabilities".

This report aims at being a tool for Diakonia/NAD and their local partners, enabling them to advocate for improved government policies and to broaden the scope of community based rehabilitation programs. It offers recommendations on policies, programs and looks into which practical mechanisms required to maximize the opportunities and rights of the people with disabilities to education.

3. Methodology:

In order to provide Diakonia/NAD with a comprehensive evidence based research on the right to education for PWDs in both the West Bank and Gaza, Riyadh Consulting and Training applied the following set of quantitative and qualitative research tools. All tools were developed by our consultant team, which has extensive experience in methodology development. All tools were agreed upon with Diakonia/NAD and the consultative group assigned to the research.

3.1 Preparatory Meetings:

At the outset of the assignment, the consulting team held preparatory meetings with Diakonia/NAD project staff to discuss the proposed methodology and implementation plan. The preparatory meetings resulted in refining the methodology, identifying the main objectives and components of the research, identifying the expected outcomes and how the research results will be linked to identifying policy issues for advocacy on the right to education for PWDs.

3.2 Formation of a Consultative Group:

The main aim of assigning a consultative group/advisory committee to the research was to ensure that technical validity of the research methods and indicators and to provide support and input to the research team in identifying the different thematic areas of the research. This made it possible to identify the main issues regarding the right to education for PWDs, and to develop indicators to measure the educational level, quality of educational services and the level of involvement of the government. It also provided the research team with a general overview on how CBR programs and DPOs projects and activities are being perceived by the PWDs and their parents. The members of the committee were repeatedly contacted and briefed throughout the project. Following are the members of the consultative group and their titles:

- Dr. Allam Jarar, Head of Rehabilitation Programs of UPMRC.
- Dr. Mahmoud Al Atshan, Professor of Modern Literature, Birzeit University.
- Mrs. Shifa Sheikha, Head of Special Education Department, Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- Mrs. Ola Abu Al Gheib, Director of Stars of Hope Society.
- Mrs. Manal Al Jubeh, Attorney at Law.
- Mrs. Reema Qanawati, Programs and Projects Development Manager, Arab Rehabilitation Society.
- Mrs. Rudaina Abu Jarad, Advocacy Program Coordinator, CBR - Nablus.

3.3 Literature Review:

In order to gain a thorough understanding of Diakonia/NAD's past efforts in education through the CBR program, our team reviewed the relevant literature and documentation available. The conceptual basis enabled our consultant team to compare data obtained in interviews and focus groups to actual project documentation.

Documentation included: log frames, project proposals, mid and final evaluations, progress reports, strategic planning, research studies and documents provided or recommended by Diakonia/NAD. Also we explored reports and evaluations conducted by Diakonia/NAD's partners. In addition, available academic and action oriented research studies were collected and reviewed.

3.4 Development of Study Tools:

The various components of this study, all required the development of questionnaires. Questionnaires were used for qualitative purposes in interviews and focus groups. The following depicts a list of questionnaires and their target group:

Table 1: Research Tools:	
Tool:	Description
Questionnaire 1:	Survey with Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)
Questionnaire 2:	Survey with parents and family members of PWDs
Questionnaire 3:	Focus groups with 4 CBR projects (community workers, supervisors, project management)
Questionnaire 4:	In-depth interviews with Diakonia/NAD and consultative group/advisory committee members

The above questionnaires were developed in cooperation with Diakonia/NAD to ensure accuracy and relevance. Through interviews with the consultative group/advisory committee members, the main indicators were identified. After this, our statistician made a first draft of the questionnaires which was sent back to the consultative group/advisory committee members for further comments and suggestions. The committee also assisted by providing the correct technical terms and definitions needed. All interviews were conducted either in person or in focus groups.

3.5 Quantitative Survey:

Quantitative research, in the form of a survey, was conducted in both the West Bank and Gaza with PWDs and their parents. Based on the statistics provided by CBR partners for 2009, a **two-stage stratified cluster sample of (1004)** persons was selected. The sample included (598) PWDs and (406) parents. The sample frame was taken from the database of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and the databases of the CBR programs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as follows:

Table 2: Sample Distribution According to Lists of MOSA and CBR:					
Sample	MOSA Lists		CBR Lists		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
PWDs	314	52 %	284	48 %	598
Parents	256	63 %	150	37 %	406
					1004

According to gender, the sample design was based on available frames from different databases including MOSA, CBR and PCBS. In all databases, males constitute more than females. Accordingly, a representative sample according to gender was: 60 % males and 40 % females.

According to region, the sample distribution was as follows:

Table 3: Sample Distribution according to Region:		
Sample	West Bank	Gaza
PWDs	62 %	38 %
Parents	62.6 %	37.4 %

The surveyed PWDs that weren't able to answer for themselves either because of their disability or because of their age (under 11 years old), were represented by a parent or caretaker. Throughout the findings we generally refer to PWDs as "respondents", while we clarify the addressed group when talking about parents or CBR-respondents.

The sample had a confidence level of (95%) and an estimated ($\pm 5\%$) margin of error. The parameters taken into consideration for the sample were as follows:

- PWDs enrolled in mainstream schools:
 - Age and gender
 - Primary School
 - Secondary and
 - Universities
- PWDs not enrolled in schools
- Parents of PWDs
- Gender
- Age
- Geographical location

The Riyadh statistician drew a sample based on detailed lists made available by the Ministry of Social Affairs and CBR programs. The sample selection was done in two stages as follows:

- Stage 1: geographical coverage of all governorates in the West Bank and Gaza including classifications of city, village and refugee camps. A representative sample of locations was selected.
- Stage 2: a random sample of PWDs and their parents was selected from each location identified in the previous stage. The sample distribution was then balanced with the demographic distribution of population in the West Bank and Gaza in the selected localities.

Detailed sample lists were prepared and used to facilitate access to the PWDs and parents and in some cases assistance was required from the CBR social/rehabilitation workers. The field research team received proper training and orientation about the objectives of the survey, process of data collection, and expected challenges in reaching out to the target group and possible alternatives. Field researchers were provided with the questionnaires assigned to them according to location.

It should be noted that a number of challenges and limitations were faced during the quantitative data collection that included:

- The social stigma of having a person with disability was much higher in Gaza strip and in a number of cases families denied having a disability in the family and thus increased the level of nonresponse beyond the estimated levels.
- The database of the Ministry of Social Affairs was updated for the West Bank and has not been updated on Gaza Strip for the past two years which resulted in a number of replacements at the field level to reach out to PWDs. This usually causes delays and requires much additional efforts to identify the replacements and receive the correct information and addresses.

3.6 Interviews:

As part of the qualitative nature of this assignment, our consultant team held interviews with Diakonia/NAD program staff and the members of the consultative group/advisory committee being experts in the field of education and disability in Palestine. Our consultant team aimed to better understand program strategies and activities and progress achieved in the past years of implementation with focus on CBR and inclusive education efforts of Diakonia/NAD. These interviews revealed challenges and problems faced by partners providing access to PWDs to the right to formal education. They also shed light into the different fields of education, such as early childhood education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training TVET, and other forms of specialized education and bring up those that are least addressed or face the greatest challenges. Partners were also able to identify key challenges, concerns, as well as lessons learnt and consequently extend recommendations. The following interviews were held:

Name	Profession	Meeting Date
Dr. Mahmoud Al Atshan	Lecturer at Birzeit University/Ramallah	27/9/2010
Mrs. Ola Abu Al Ghaieb	Director of Stars of Hope Society/ Serving Disabled Females/Ramallah	26/9/2010
Mrs. Manal Al Jubeh	Lawyer/ Specialized in research on disabled rights/Ramallah	29/9/2010
Mrs. Rodaina Abu Jarad	Advocacy Program Coordinator, CBR – Nablus.	30/9/2010
Dr. Allam Jarar	Director of Rehabilitation Program and Manager of CBR North/Nablus and Jenin	30/9/2010
Mrs. Reema Qanawati	Programs and Projects Development Manager, Arab Society for rehabilitation/ Bethlahem	30/9/2010
Mrs. Ghada Harami	Deputy Regional Manager/Diakonia Program Manager for the Rehabilitation Program, Diakonia/NAD	30/11/2010
Mrs. Irene Siniora	Senior Projects Manager, Rehabilitation Program, Diakonia/NAD	30/11/2010

3.7 Focus Groups:

The focus groups concentrated on the representatives and staff members of four CBR programs in both the West Bank and Gaza. Staff included community workers, supervisors, program management, and field coordinators. Focus groups provided further qualitative data, which enabled the consultant team to complete the assignment successfully. The following set of focus groups was conducted:

Location	Date	Number of Participants
Northern West Bank	November 23rd, 2010	7
Southern West Bank	November 25th, 2010	5
Central West Bank	November 28th, 2010	8
Gaza Strip	December 2nd, 2010	10

Our team held centralized focus groups throughout the West Bank and Gaza in order to allow a maximum number of CBR program staff to attend the focus groups. Riyada Consulting and Training based its selection of participating CBR partner organizations on Diakonia/NAD's information, as well as on the size of the organization and time period active in education and CBR activities. (See Annex 1 for List of Participants).

3.8 Analysis and Report Writing:

Upon the conclusion of the data collection for both the qualitative and quantitative components of the research, the following analysis and reporting activities were carried out:

- Reporting on qualitative data collected from the literature review, interviews and focus groups.
- Review of collected questionnaires, data cleaning and entry on SPSS.
- Analysis of quantitative data collected and cross tabulations.
- Presentation and discussion of the results with the consultative group and accommodating feedback and comments.
- Development of draft and final research reports.

4. Literature Review:

4.1 International and Local Legal Frameworks:

The right to education is universal and inalienable. It is embedded in several international and human rights instruments. Article (26) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to education”. Other treaties that refer to this right are International Covenant on Economic, Social And Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), the Convention on the Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and more recently, the Convention On The Rights of The Child (CRC, 1989). Palestinian laws also refer to this right. In the West Bank, where Jordanian Education Law still applies, art. (3) of the law states that social justice and equal opportunities for all is the basis of education. Article (24) of the amended Basic Law of 2003 regulated the right to education for all citizens and made it compulsory in public schools (Jubeh 2010).

It is positive to note that a legal framework is in place; however statistics show that much work needs to be done, especially when it comes to the disabled. Only half of the PWDs interviewed for this research attended primary school. 18% stated that they never had the opportunity for education. Research shows that there are a variety of reasons causing the low educational level of PWDs. Using different studies from neighboring countries, this literature review will try to highlight some of the reasons generally quoted for the lack of access to education and low employment of PWDs.

4.2 Government Policies:

Palestinian laws provide protection for PWDs. The Disability Law of 1999 covers their economic, social, cultural and civil rights and it states that being disabled should not prevent people to obtain their rights. Law n°(4) of 1999 also puts the Ministry of Social Affairs in charge of coordinating with all relevant ministries on the right to education for PWDs. They should facilitate access to education by providing flexible curricula, pedagogic means and proper facilities. Measures should be taken to make public places accessible to PWDs. Moreover, the law exempts PWDs from custom fees and taxes on educational materials, medical aids and means of transportation. The government and civil society should work together to adequately integrate PWDs in the educational system. Education for all is of great importance to the Palestinian government, which showed its commitment by including this right in its five-year plan. The political will exists, but mechanisms to provide educational opportunities for PWDs are still missing. A lack of financial resources, other prevailing priorities and social attitudes might prevent the government from implementing existing laws (Marrar, 2010).

4.3 Barriers in the Educational System:

Inadequate teacher training and the approach of educational staff towards PWDs remains a challenge in PWDs access to education. Teaching staff and personnel often do not know how to treat PWDs and they tend to have preconceived ideas and be uncooperative (Campbell, Gilmore, Cuskelly, 2003). This while research shows that teachers who do work with PWDs on a CBR basis acquire more accurate knowledge about PWDs, together with more positive attitudes and a change in behavior towards PWDs (Campbell, Gilmore, Cuskelly, 2003). Kozue Kay Nagata reported that health-care professionals with constant exposure to disabled people have positive attitudes towards people with physical impairments (referring to Paris, 2003).

Schools often do not dispose of the right tools and infrastructure to deal with PWDs, they are physically inaccessible to them and they don't have the means to socially integrate PWDs. It happens that PWDs leave primary education still being illiterate because of a lack of attention. Specialized educational institutions that are accessible are often located outside the villages where PWDs reside, and because of a lack of transportation, high costs or fear of safety, especially when it comes to women, they do not pursue higher education (Wehbi, 2007).

Locally in Palestine, much progress towards inclusive education was made by the MoEHE. The concept of Inclusive Education (IE) – an approach to education that recognizes that children have different educational needs and the right to receive proper responses to their needs by individualization of teaching methods, adapted curricula, and learning material in an inclusive setting and in collaboration by all actors in and outside school – has been first mainstreamed into Palestinian education in 1997 with support from Diakonia/NAD. Since then, MOEHE has worked closely with a variety of actors to promote and institutionalize inclusive education throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In Gaza however, there is no official strategy on inclusive education. It should be noted that the inclusive education program was completely disconnected from the West Bank in 2008 after Hamas-led government took control of Gaza.

However, much is still to be done with regard to physical rehabilitation of Palestinian schools to integrate PWDs with physical disabilities, given that only 50% of the schools are now adapted, as well as in the areas of teacher training, curriculum development, change of social attitudes and improving the overall working conditions and capacity of Palestinian teachers to be able to teach PWDs within their classrooms (Inclusive Education, 2010).

4.4 Poverty and Marginalization:

It was highlighted by Manderson (2004) that PWDs suffer from higher levels of marginalization when it comes to areas such as work and education. She stated that (80%) of people with disabilities live in resource-poor societies where they are typically marginalized because they are deemed incapable of contributing to society.

Enrollment in specialized educational institutions or private schools is a requirement for many people with disabilities because of absence of schools adapted to their additional needs. Lack of financial resources therefore leads to restricted learning opportunities. This creates a gap between those who can afford to send their children to specialized educational centers and those who cannot. Inadequate finances have an important impact on the education of PWDs and are directly responsible for further poverty and marginalization. PWDs without proper education continue to be marginalized in a society that already discriminates against them due to long-held misconceptions of their inadequacy (Wehbi, 2007).

4.5 Socio-Cultural Perceptions:

Studies conducted in Palestine and neighboring countries indicate overall negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. These attitudes generally influence PWDs' self esteem, irrespective of the degree they obtain or their impairment; they inhibit their social integration and empowerment.

Different attitudes are mostly caused by cultural values, living environment, age and exposure to disabled people. In Jordan, research shows that rural communities generally exhibit negative

attitudes towards PWDs, particularly towards disabled women. They are treated with cultural prejudice, isolated and sometimes hidden within the family.

There are various factors causing this behavior towards women. Parents might be afraid that their disabled daughter might prevent her siblings from getting married. To some extent these attitudes might relate to an ambivalence in the Qur'an, which sometimes emphasizes equality and other times associates PWDs with the depraved of the society (Qaryouti, 1984). Negative attitudes prevail towards women, intellectually disabled people, and in rural or suburban communities (Kozue Kay Nagata, 2007).

4.6 Parents:

Parents and peers play an important role in the eventual wellbeing and success of PWDs (Keller, 1999; Pal, Chaudhury, Sengupta & Das, 2002; Woodard, 1995). Parents often perceive their children as incapable of learning and working.

A survey conducted with 92 parents of children at elementary school age concluded that family stress had an important impact on the educational experience of children with disabilities (Keller, 1999). Another study confirmed the important role of parents in the overall societal integration of their children with disabilities (Pal et al., 2002). Negative parental perceptions limit the lives and educational performance of children with disabilities, irrespective of their impairments.

4.7 Community Based Rehabilitation: the solution?

CBR and the inclusive education approach could prove to be a method to tackle the current lack of integration of PWDs in the educational system. CBR is based on the principles of community development for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social integration of all children and adults with disabilities. Education is one of the pillars of the CBR approach. CBR aims at ensuring that PWD's have decision making roles, eliminating stigma, making the environment accessible and supporting people with all types of disabilities according to their specific needs. The CBR strategy aims at creating inclusive communities where PWDs participate fully in educational, social, cultural, religious and political activities (CBR with and for people with disabilities: draft joint position paper. ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, 2001). Essential factors that contribute to the success of the CBR approach are the willingness of the community to respond to the needs, availability of resources and support from outside the community, multi sectoral collaboration, including collaboration with DPOs and NGOs, presence of community workers and a human rights based approach.

As outlined above, there are several circumstantial factors that lead to a successful CBR approach. Societal support needs to be in place. Therefore awareness raising and professional guidance of those involved in CBR such as parents, social workers and educational staff is key to achieve the provided goals. Several studies prove that an inclusive approach generally leads towards more positive attitudes towards PWDs. Especially in the field of education; more effort can be done to include the disabled.

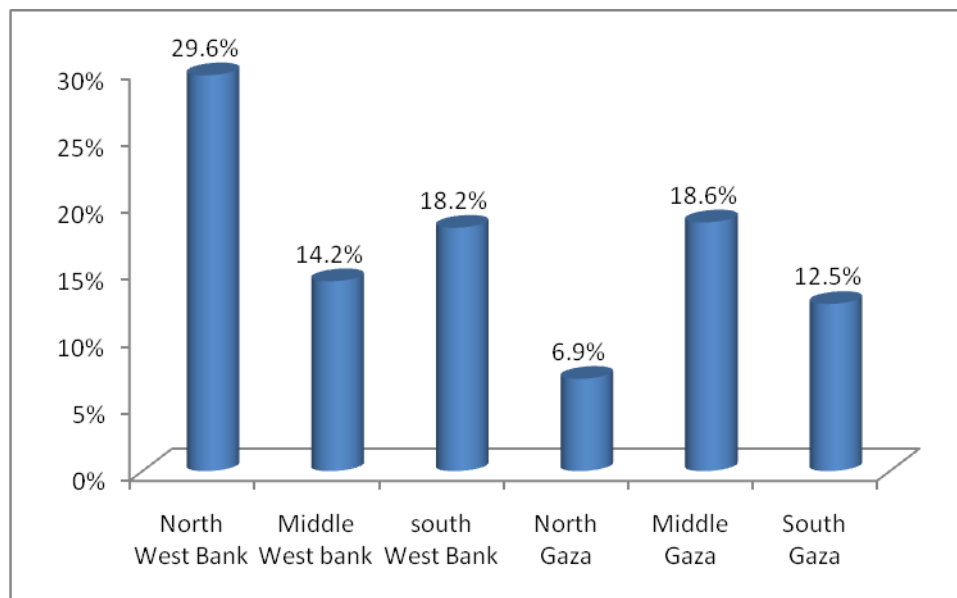
5. Findings:

5.1 General Background of the Surveyed: People with Disabilities (PWDs):

5.1.1. Sample Distribution:

The survey focused on PWDs in the West Bank and Gaza, with about two thirds of the respondents coming from the West Bank and the remainder living in Gaza. Of those surveyed from the West Bank, most respondents 29.6% come from the Northern West Bank. As for Gaza, most of respondents 18.6% come from middle Gaza.

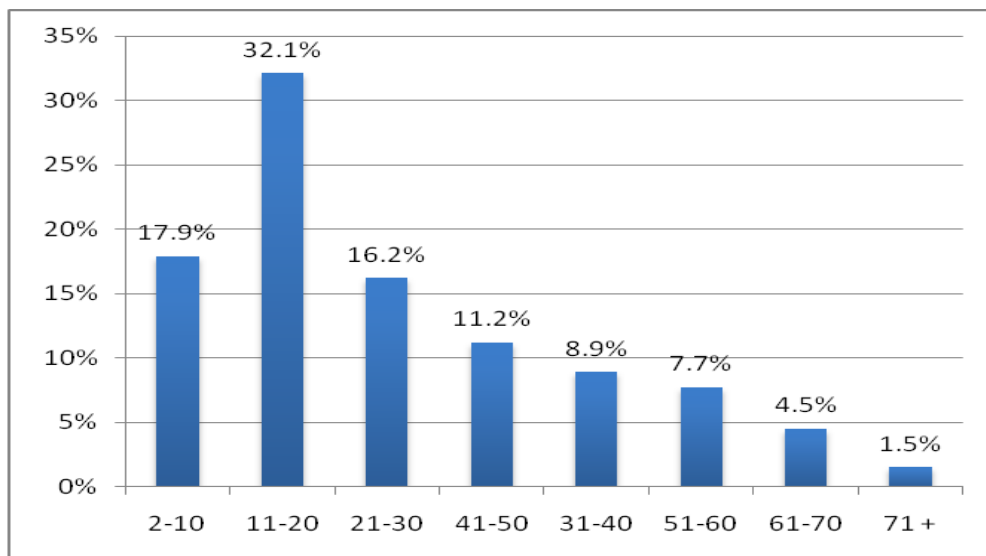
Figure 1: Sample Distribution per Region, PWDs



5.1.2 Age Distribution:

As depicted below, half of the disabled people represented in the survey (50%) are between the ages 2 and 20. About one third of the respondents 32.1% are between 11 and 20 years old. In Gaza, 38.8% of respondents were under the age of 15. Only those PWDs who were able to answer the questionnaires were interviewed face-to-face by the researchers to answer their questionnaires. For those who were too young or their condition would not allow to answer for themselves, parents or caretakers were asked to fill in the questionnaires representing their children.

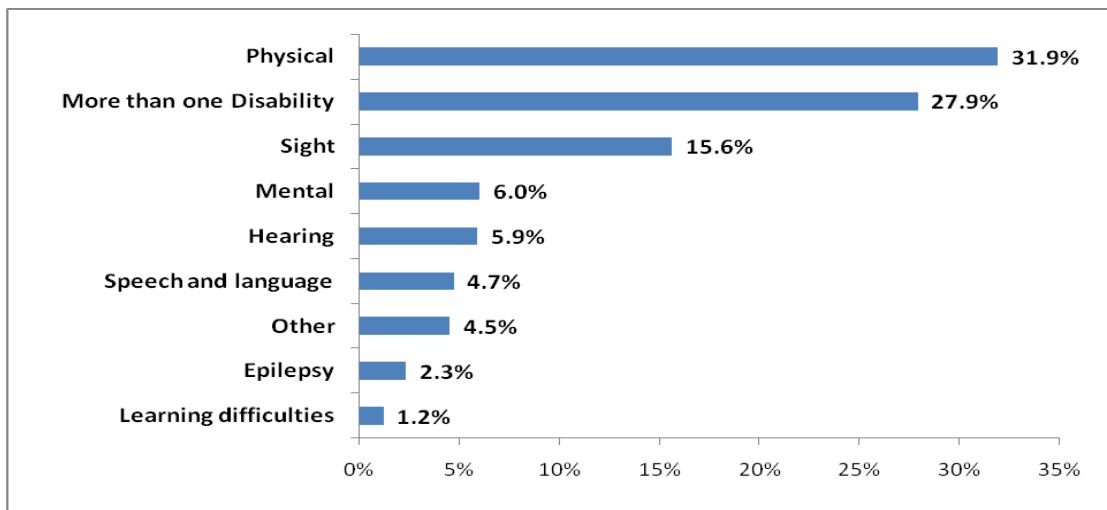
Figure 2: Distribution per Age



5.1.3 Type of Disability:

The three main types of disability included (31.9%) physical disability, followed by multiple disabilities (27.9%) and about (15.6%) indicated problems with their sight. The remainder indicated other disabilities, including mental, hearing, epilepsy and learning difficulties. (62%) of the respondents were born with their disability whereas (25%) found their disability caused by an accident².

Figure 3: Distribution per Disability (PWDs):



² According to the WHO definition, which is applied here, learning difficulties/disabilities are defined as “a state of arrested or incomplete development of the mind”. Fundamental criteria used here are intellectual impairment and social dysfunction.

Other causes for disability described by respondents were as follows:

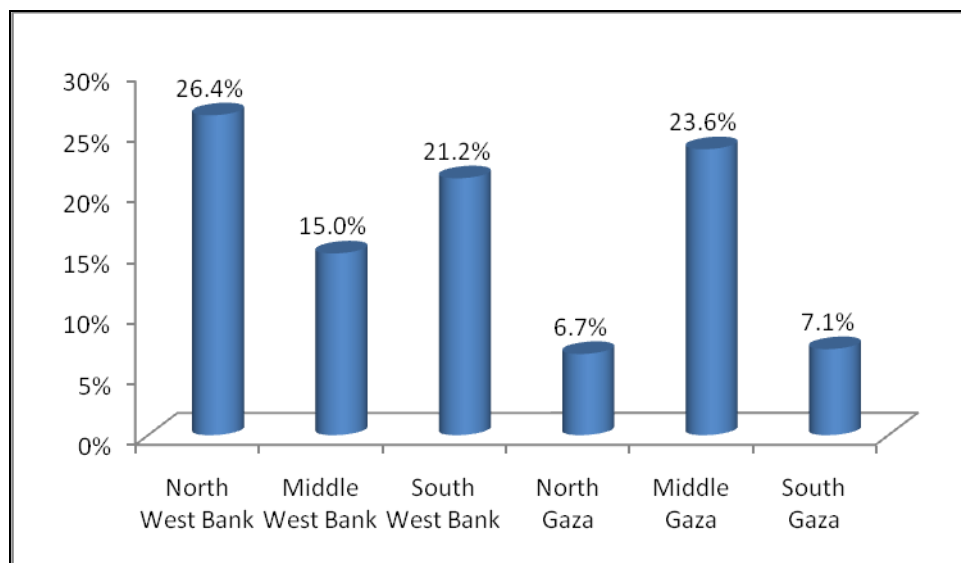
- Wrong medications;
- Illness such as heart diseases, diabetes, and blood pressure;
- High temperature.

5.2 General Background of the Surveyed: Parents:

5.2.1 Sample Distribution:

This section aims at providing some background information on the parents surveyed. Almost two thirds coming from the West Bank, one third from Gaza, and a slightly higher representation of respondents coming from the Northern West Bank 26.4%. In Gaza, most respondents came from middle Gaza 23.6%.

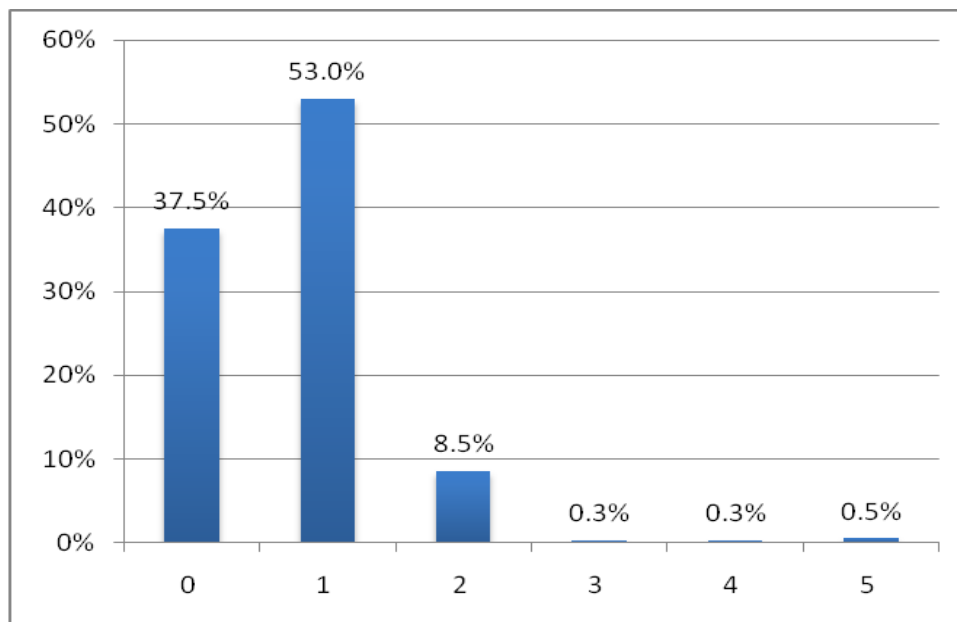
Figure 4: Sample Distribution per Region, Parents



5.2.2 Income and Employment Status:

The level of employment in surveyed families seems remarkably low, as 37.5 % of the respondents stated to not have any family members who are currently employed whereas 53% of respondents have only one family member currently employed. In summary, this indicates that 90% of parents have between 0 to 1 family member currently employed. This indicates economic hardship of the families of PWDs that is expected to influence the parents abilities to fulfill all the needs of their disabled children including access to education.

Figure 5: Number of Family Members in the West Bank and Gaza that are Employed



Most of surveyed parents (67.8%) described their income as low while the remaining (32.2%) considered their income to be average. None of the parents considered their income to be high.

5.2.3 Number of Disabled Persons in the Family:

The majority of the respondents (70%) have one family member with a disability, while a fifth of families indicated to have two family members with a disability (20.9%). Given the economic hardship indicated above, having more than one disabled person on the family makes it even more difficult for the parents to attend for the needs of their disabled children.

5.3 Personal Experience with Educational Opportunities:

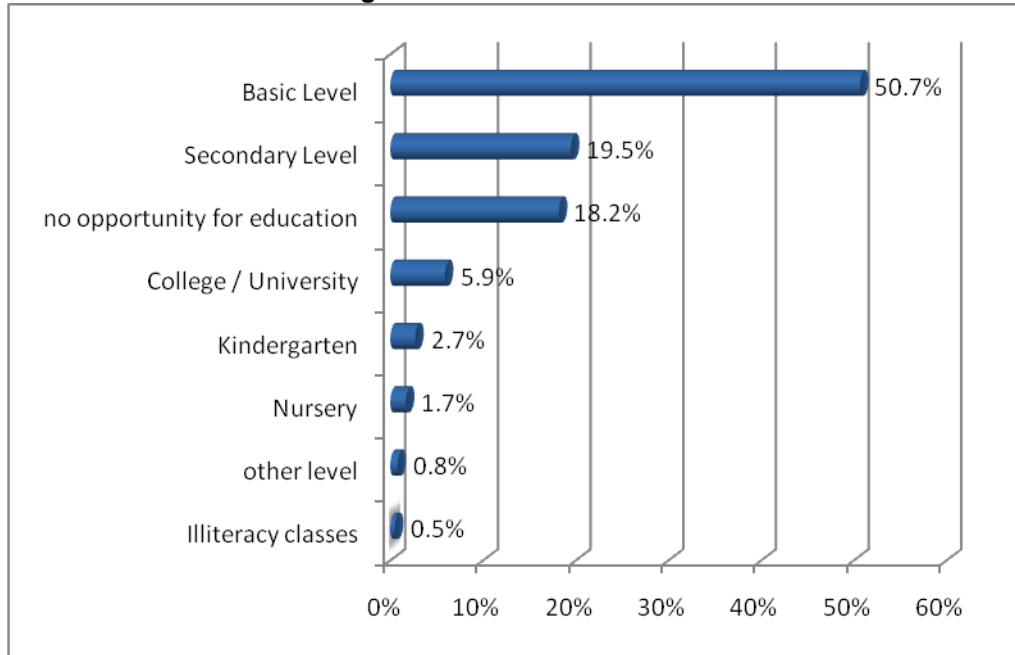
5.3.1 General Output – PWDs and Parents:

Even though 97.2% of the respondents (PWDs as well as their parents) believe that it is their right to attain education, it is remarkable that (18.5%) of the respondents stated to never have had the opportunity to education 18.5% of the respondents stated to never have had the opportunity to education, a remarkably high number compared to the national literacy rate in Palestine 92%³. In Gaza 22.5% of the respondents say they never had the opportunity to education compared to 15.5% in the West Bank. Girls are much more likely not to attend school 29% compared to 19% of the boys.

In addition, 19.5% of all respondents attended secondary school and only 5.9% went to college or university.

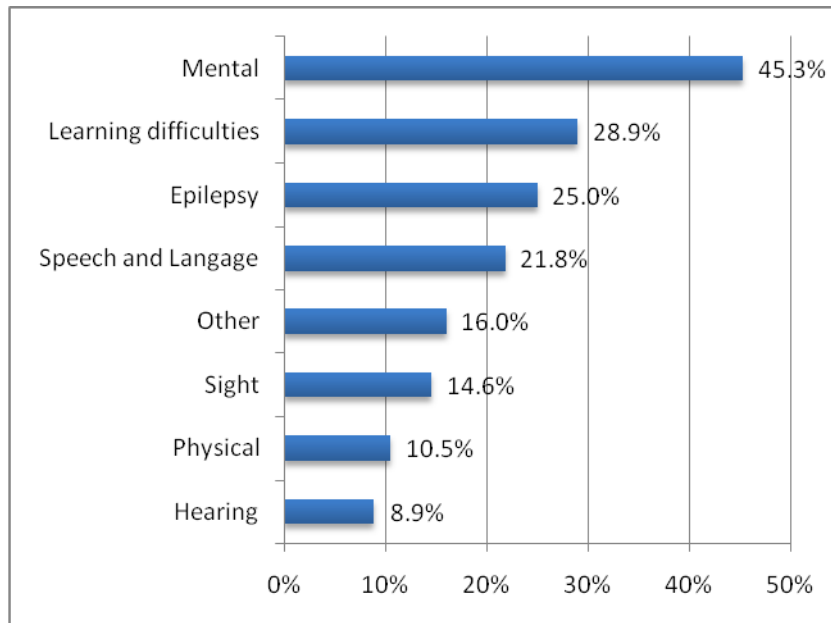
³ CIA World Fact book. 2010.

Figure 6: Level of Education



Of all those suffering from different disabilities, people with a mental disability seem to have the most problems accessing education. 45.3% of those suffering from a mental disability never had the opportunity to formal education and their parents did not indicate other forms of non formal education opportunities. This group is remarkably followed by those with learning difficulties, however (65.8%) of people with learning difficulties do attend primary school, which is the highest number compared to other PWDs.

Figure 7: PWDs who never had the opportunity to education according to disability

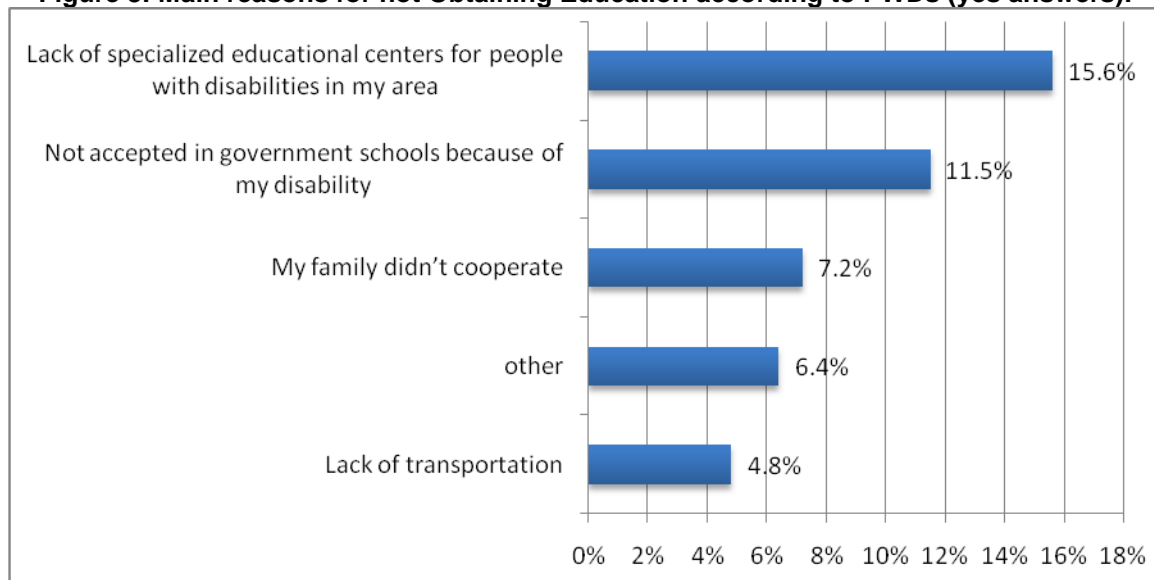


5.3.2 Access to Education: PWDs and Parents:

The PWDs survey results show that 18.5% of the respondents stated that they did not attend any form of education. When asked about the reasons, respondents were more likely to find the lack of specialized educational centers 15.6% and them not being accepted in government schools 11.5% as reason for not attaining education. Notably, the lack of specialized educational centers seems to be much more an issue in West Bank than in Gaza, as in Gaza only 8.4% stated this as a reason, while one fifth 19.9% of the respondents in West Bank considered it to be important. It needs to be mentioned that very few of the PWDs considered the reasons quoted in the questionnaire as valid. Other reasons such as safety or priority of education for the non-disabled children might contribute to the low level of education. "Other" reasons indicated by PWDs were:

- Unwillingness to study
- No suitable education for PWDs; meaning that the educational system is not adjusted to the needs of PWDs and therefore it would be of no use to them to attend, as they would not be learning anything.
- Poor economic conditions
- Disease or disability they suffered from
- Parents do not care
- Habits and traditions, particularly for females
- Working is a priority

Figure 8: Main reasons for not Obtaining Education according to PWDs (yes answers):



Only 7.2% of PWDs said that their family didn't support them, while 30.7% of parents admit that they didn't encourage the access to education of family members with a disability. This might be due to social pressure, as 62% of parents agree that social pressure has an influence on their

children's access to education.

The parents that did encourage their children, mostly inquired for information at official institutions (MOEHE or Ministry of Social Affairs) (66.3%) or specialized educational institutions (20.7%). Only 8% of the parents encouraged their children by contacting CBR programs and only 1.4% referred them to DPOs. It seems that there is a need to raise more awareness about the existence of CBR, and the possibilities and programs it has to offer regarding access to education.

Figure 9: Preferred Institutions by Parents for Seeking Information on Educational Opportunities

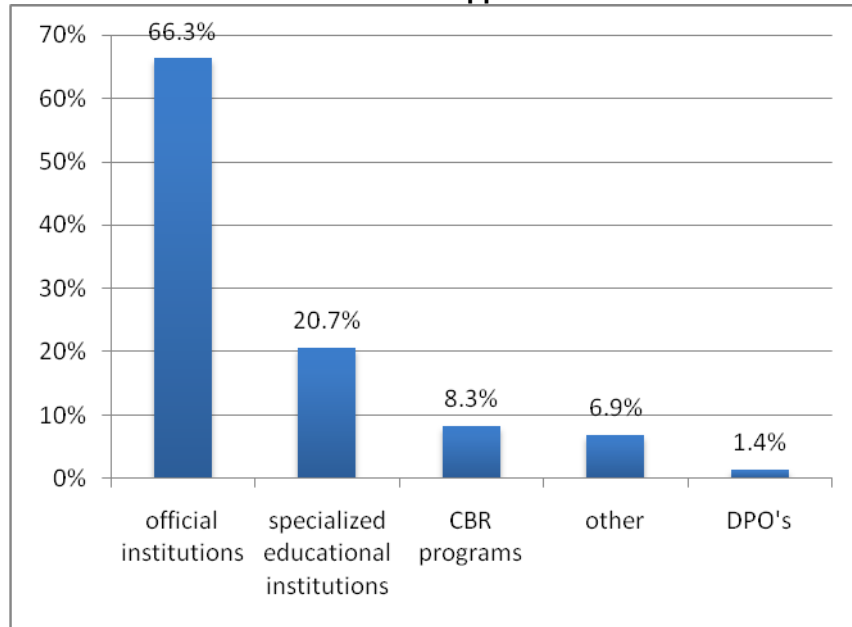
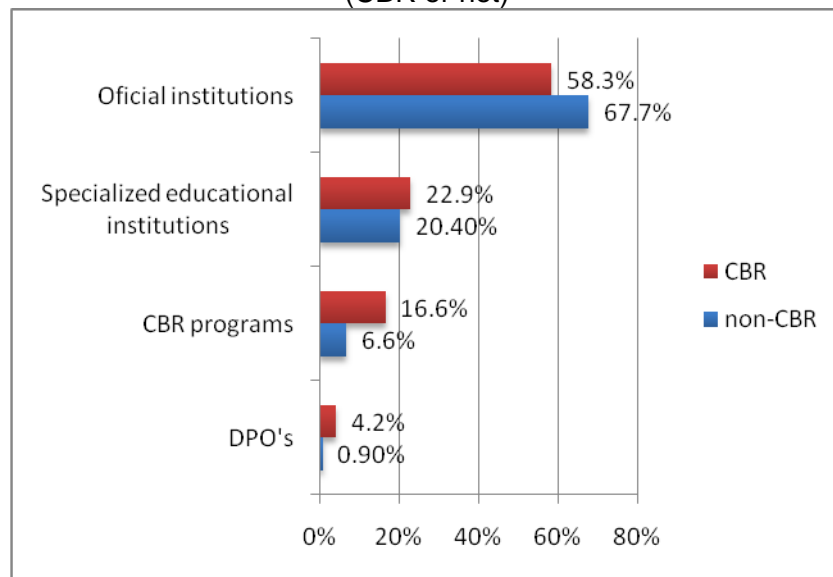


Figure 10: Preferred Institutions for Seeking Information on Educational Opportunities (CBR or not)

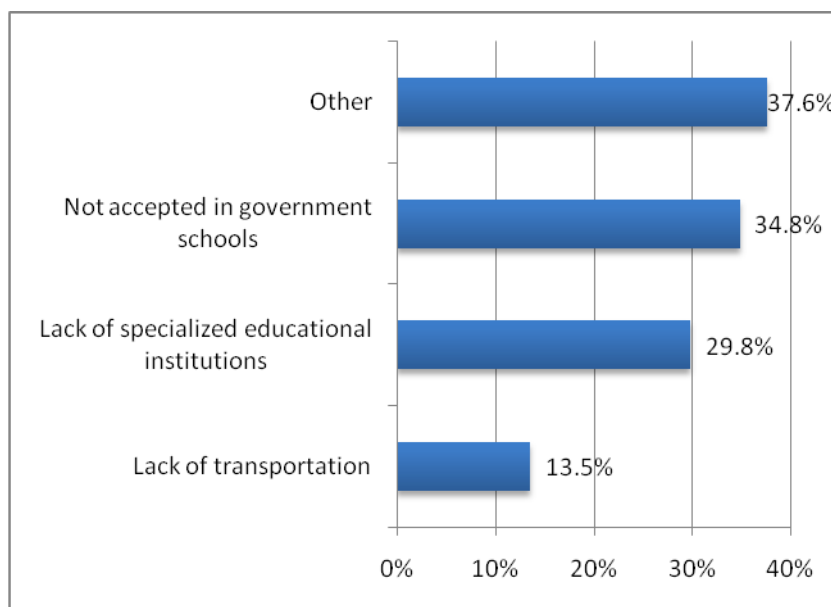


Of the parents who encouraged their children to attain education, more than half 55.10% chose to send them to government schools, followed by 21.3% who sent them to specialized educational institutions.

Table 4: Preferred Educational Institutions:	
Government schools	55.10%
Specialized educational institutions for the people with disabilities	21.30%
Nursery and kindergartens	12.90%
Other	8.10%
Vocational education centers for PWDs	1.80%
Vocational education centers	0.70%

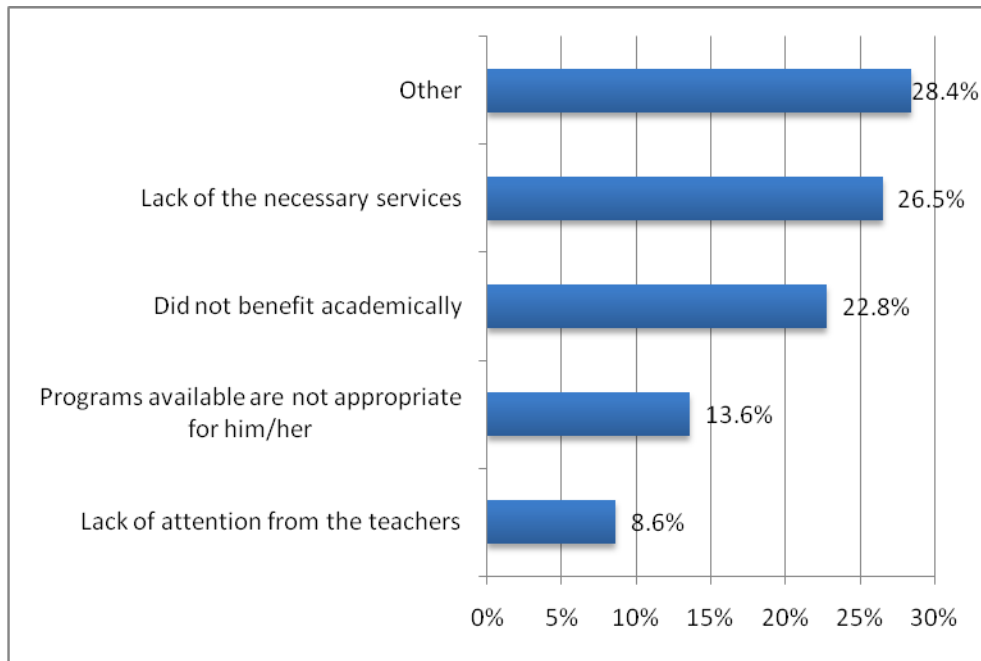
When it came to indicating reasons why their children didn't attend school, the parents seemed to refer more to the reasons mentioned in the questionnaire. 34.8% of the parents mentioned the fact that their children didn't get accepted in public schools together with the lack of specialized institutions 29.8% as main reasons for not obtaining education.

Figure 11: Reasons for not Obtaining Education according to Parents



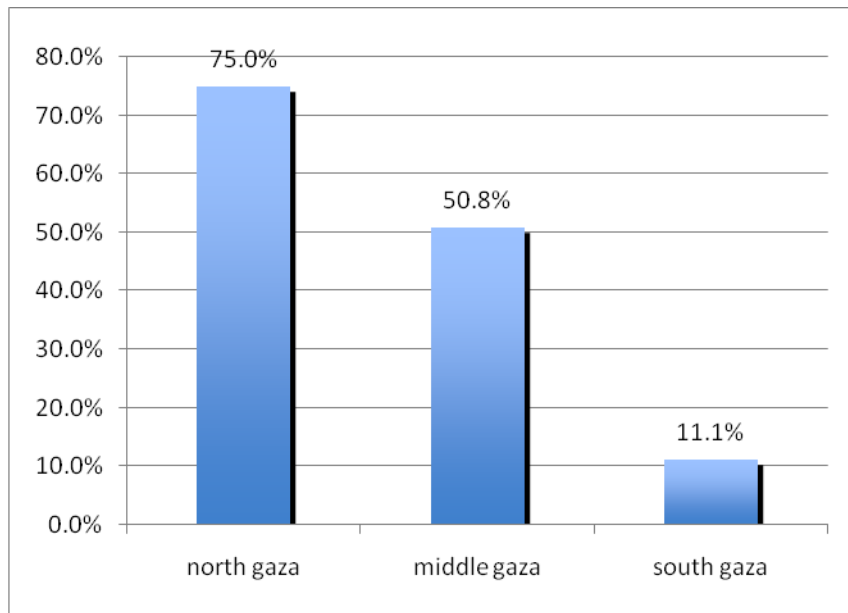
Exploring drop-out rates, a big part of PWDs admit in the survey to have dropped out of school 37.9%. Around 44% of the male respondents dropped out of school, as opposed to 28.1% of the women. Collectively, the main reasons for dropping out were the lack of necessary services 26.5%; no benefit of academic education 22.8%, the lack of appropriate programs 13.5% and the lack of attention from teachers 8.6%.

Figure 12: Reasons for Drop-Out according to PWDs:



For women, 38.3% stated the absence of necessary services as an important reason to drop out of school, while for men the fact that they did not benefit academically is the most important reason 27%. While the school drop-out rates were almost evenly distributed in the West Bank, there was a remarkable difference to be noted between the South, Center and North of Gaza when it comes to drop-out rates, while 75% in the North dropped out early, this was the case for 50.8% in the center and only 11.8% in the south.

Figure 13: School Drop Out in Gaza according to Location



As per locations, (58%) of Gazans indicated “other reasons”, referring to other reasons than those that were mentioned in the questionnaire.

Other reasons referred to were:

- Unwillingness to study
- No quality of education
- Poor economic conditions
- Disease or disability they suffered from
- Parents do not care
- Habits and traditions
- Working is priority

Responses by parents were much in line with those of PWDs, especially on the drop-out rate 36.3% and reasons for dropping out.

When trying to look into some of the causes of the low level of education, several reasons came to the surface. 78% of the PWDs said that teachers and curricula were not responsive to their needs. Lacking infrastructure in public schools is another important reason, as 77% thought public schools were not adequately equipped and that there was limited opportunity to socially integrate. Other reasons indicated were the lack of infrastructure in public places 76%, unsuitable educational environment 72%, and the lack of properly equipped vocational centers 66%.

Indicator	(%)
Inadequate curricula/qualified teachers	77.8
Public schools don't put efforts to meet needs	77.2
Limited social outlook public schools	76.6
Unsuitable environment public places/facilities	76.2
Unsuitable educational environment	72.1
Unsuitable environment specialized TVET centres	68.7
Unsuitable environment TVET centres	68.3
Unsuitable environment specialized educational centers	65.6
No skills/training available	57.6
Type of disability	53.6
No formal education available	39.0
Role of public schools important	34.1
Role of family important	21.8
Family should put more efforts	21.8

Gazans more often quote the lack of quality educational services as 81.5% of Gazans think that curricula are not responsive to needs of PWDs and teachers are not trained. 74% think that educational centers do not provide a good environment for PWDs compared to 60% in the West Bank and 83% think that vocational centers offer an unsuitable environment, as opposed to 58% in West Bank.

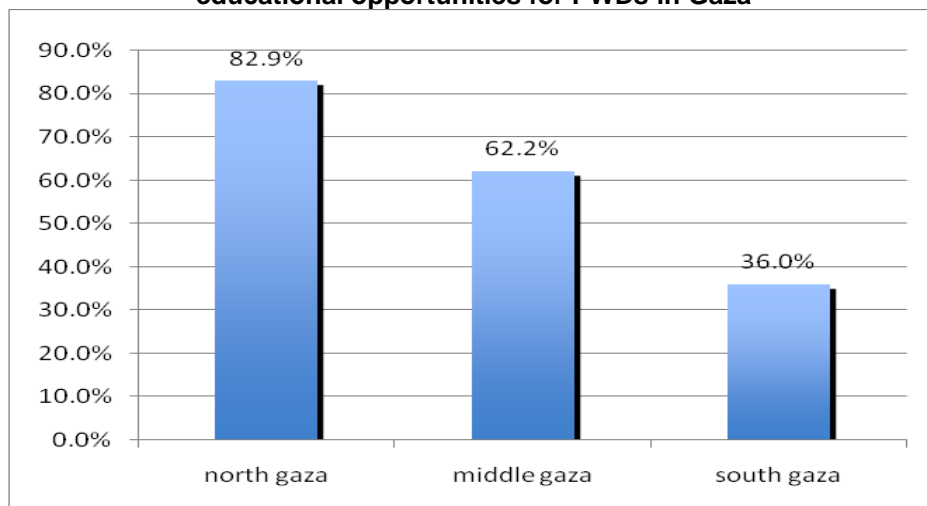
PWDs consider their family as the most important factor to guide and encourage them in their search for educational opportunities 78.2%, followed by public schools 65.9%. Most of PWD respondents 78.2% think that their parents should make a bigger effort to provide for their needs. Parents agree with this, as 81.3% think alike PWDs. Parents also find public schools do not offer

a qualitative educational environment for their children even though they do believe that public schools play an important role in their children’s access to education 65.2%. Parents as well as PWDs have very similar opinions regarding this topic.

Table 7: Quality of Education (PWDs):		
Question	Gaza Strip	West Bank
Is formal education made available to you	63.4%	59.6%
Are programs for training/skills made available to you	39.8%	46.7%
Is your type of disability a reason for not obtaining education	37%	52.2%
Is there a suitable educational environment for PWDs in public schools	22.5%	31.3%
Is the educational environment in public schools adapted to socially integrate PWDs	21.6%	24.5%
Are there appropriate curricula and qualified teachers	18.5%	24.5%
Are specialized educational centers an appropriate environment for PWDs	25.6%	39.9%
Are vocational centers adapted to PWDs	16.3%	41.6%
Are specialized vocational centers adapted to PWDs	17.2%	40.4%
Are public places/facilities customized for PWDs	20.7%	25.7%
Do public schools make enough effort to integrate PWDs	13.2%	28.7%
Are public schools the most important factor contributing to the education of PWDs	57.3%	71.3%
Is family the most important factor contributing to the education of PWDs	76.7%	79.2%
Should families make more effort to attend to the needs of PWDs	78%	78.4%

Again, there seems to be a remarkable difference in perceptions between the North, Center and South of Gaza, when it comes to the role of public schools. While in the North of Gaza 82.9% of the PWDs considered public schools to play the most important role in providing educational opportunities for PWDs, this was only the case for 36% in the South. The same trend could be observed with the parents.

Figure 14: Public schools play the most important role in providing educational opportunities for PWDs in Gaza

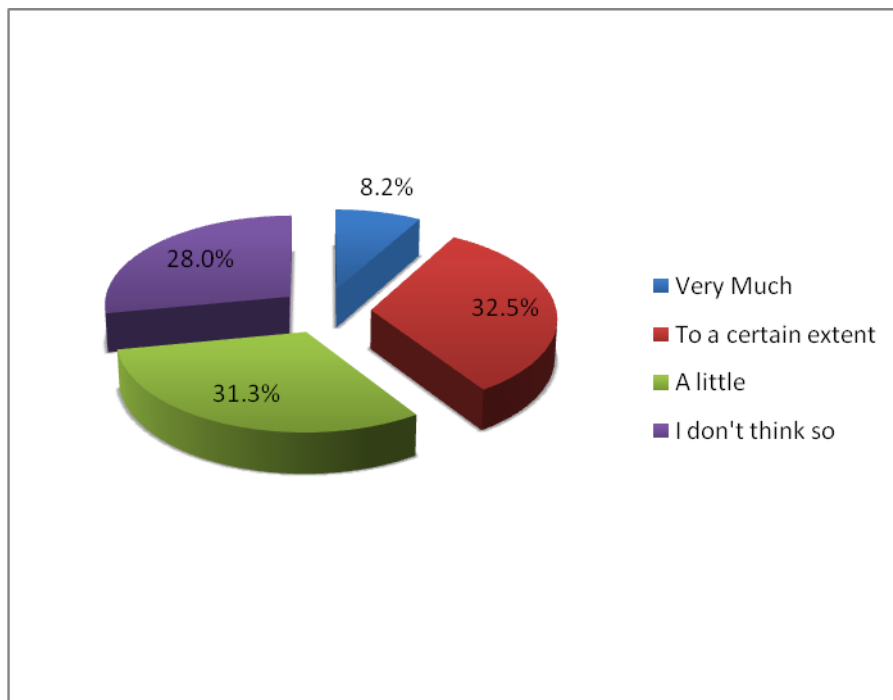


With regard to social stereotypes, 62.1% of the parents think that social pressure plays an important role in the access to education for their family members.

5.4 Legal Framework:

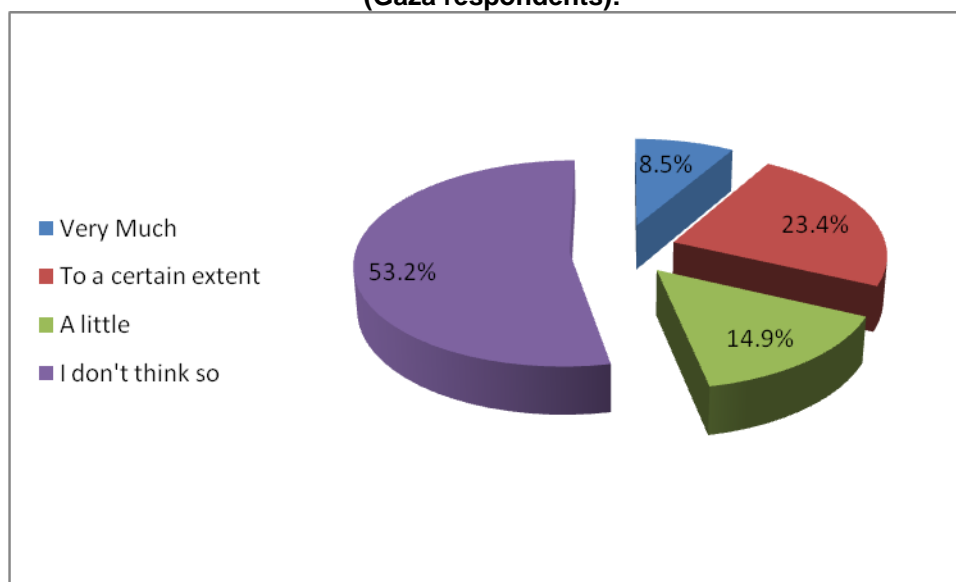
Many PWDs respondents 60% don't believe their parents have the knowledge and awareness of applicable laws on the rights of the people with disabilities. 53% of the parents agree with that. When asked if the applicable laws provide people with disabilities with their right to integration and inclusion in the society, only 5.3% thinks they don't (parents are a bit more skeptical: 11.4% don't believe laws are very helpful). This implies that 94.7% think that applicable laws grant certain rights and value the importance of the rights of PWDs. This point to a general awareness of their rights. However, only 8.2% think that the government is committed to the right to education for PWDs. Over a quarter 28% thinks they're not committed at all, whereas almost 65% thinks there's a certain level of commitment.

Figure 15: Commitment of the Government to the Right to Education of PWDs (general results):



Gazans seem to have less faith in government policies, as 53.4% indicated to not see much commitment on behalf of the government as opposed to 12.1% in West Bank.

Figure 16: Commitment of the Government to the Right to Education of PWDs (Gaza respondents):



More than half of PWDs (54.1%) think that there are obstacles preventing the implementation of the right to education for PWDs and a remarkable 96.3% think that current laws should be amended to improve the opportunities of PWDs in the field of education. 90.7% of the parents think the same.

5.6 Community Based Rehabilitation Programs (CBR):

From the focus groups conducted with CBR workers, it can be understood that CBR programs constitute a resource for guidance to PWDs and their parents on opportunities to formal and non formal education. They train parents on how to assist their children and provide them with aid equipment (such as wheelchairs). They refer PWDs to the educational environment that is most suitable to them; meaning that they are adjusted to their disability and age, and organize educational activities such as summer camps where they attend workshops on farming, art, drama etc. Especially in Gaza the summer camps appear to be successful, with about 1000 participants of which 35% were disabled.

Focus group participants acknowledge a difference in treatment between male and female PWDs, as women are discriminated against and they have less access to education. This is often caused by cultural dispositions and parents fear that exposing their disabled daughters will prevent their other daughters from getting married. Focus group participants also quoted the lack of cooperation from schools, municipalities and Inclusive Education employees when implementing CBR policies. They emphasize the need for proper training for Inclusive Education employees and teaching staff, especially when it comes to the negative perceptions they have towards PWDs.

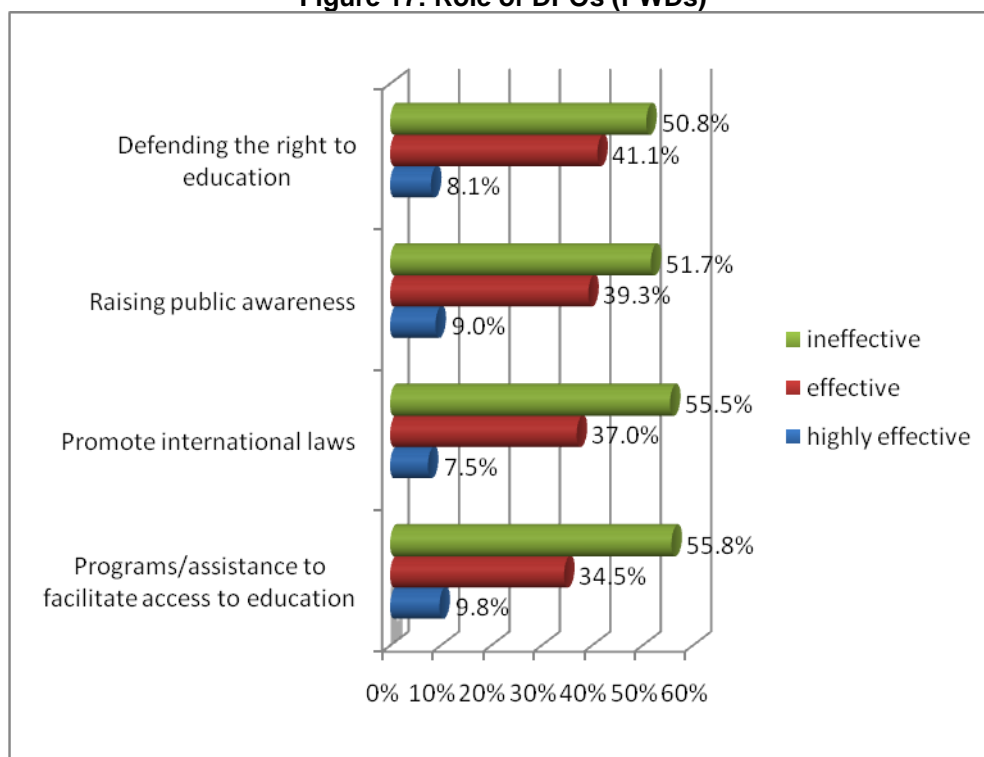
Unlike public schools, which are likely to be found in most communities, there are only a limited number of vocational centers. Especially for rural communities, these centers are often far away and they require special arrangements for transportation. The cost of transportation and the fear that something might happen along the way, withhold a lot of parents from sending their children to a vocational institution. Private schools are another option, but they often have limited curricula, they are expensive and they lack provisions for some types of disabilities.

When asked about the role of CBR programs in facilitating access to education for people with disabilities, 22.4% considered it to be highly effective and almost 60% thought it was somewhat effective. 18.4% found them to be ineffective in facilitating their entry to a school.

5.7 Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs):

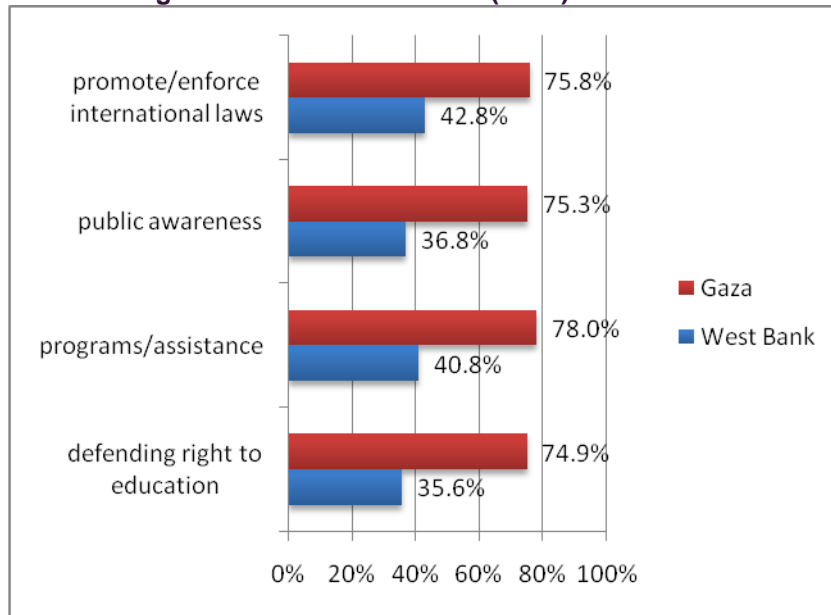
The research study collected indicators on the perceptions of PWDs and their parents on DPOs, regardless if they are members or active participants in such organizations or not. More than half of the respondents 50.8% think the role of DPOs for advocating for the right to education is ineffective. 41.1% think it’s effective to a certain extent, whereas only 9.8% describe it highly effective. When it comes to programs or assistance provided by DPO’s to enable access to education 55% think they’re ineffective and only 9% find them to be effective. In Gaza even almost 75% think they’re ineffective. When PWDs were asked about the role of DPOs in raising public awareness on the right to education of people with disabilities 55.8% found them to be ineffective and only 9.8% thought they were highly effective.

Figure 17: Role of DPOs (PWDs)



There is a big discrepancy in this section between Gaza and West Bank respondents. Overall Gaza respondents (PWDs as well as parents) seem to think DPO programs are unsuccessful. On average 75% of Gazans called DPO programs (advocacy, awareness-raising, assistance and defending the right to education) ineffective, which has a big influence of the general outcome of the survey. The majority of West Bank inhabitants think that DPO programs are somewhat or highly effective.

Figure 18: The role of DPOs (PWD): ineffective

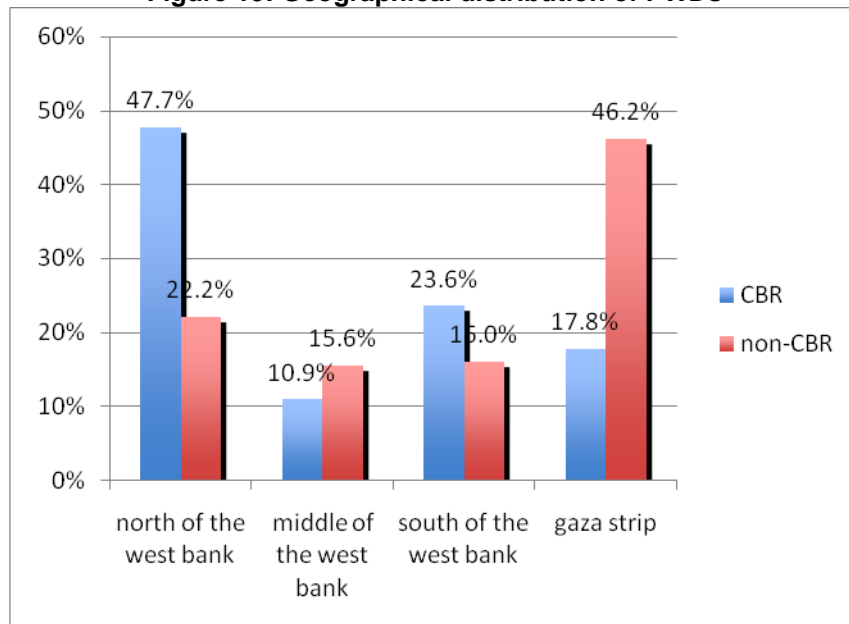


5.8 Analysis of CBR and non-CBR Respondents: Main Differences:

5.8.1 Geographical Distribution and Coverage:

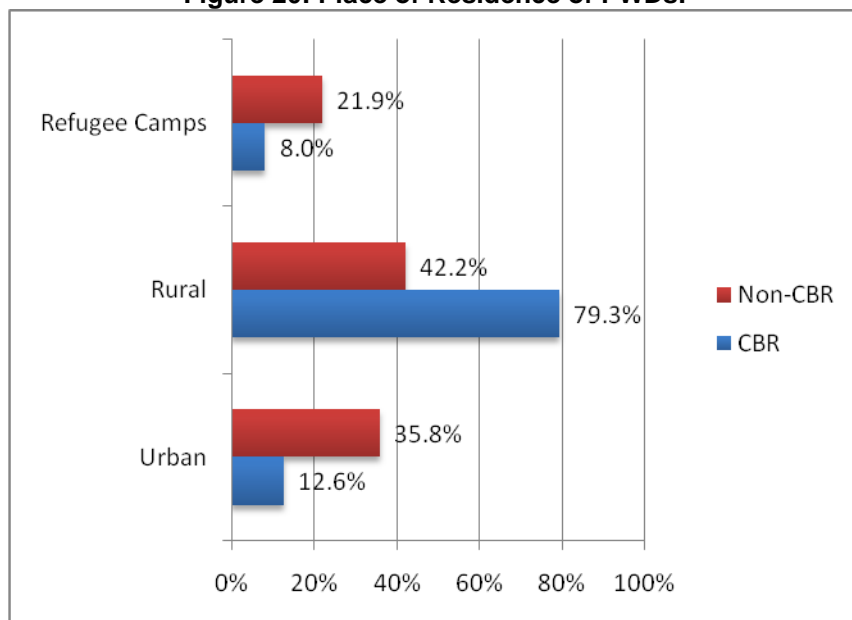
When it comes to geographical distribution, CBR-respondents generally come from the Northern West-Bank 47.7%, the Southern West Bank 23.6% and Gaza 17.8%. This means that almost three quarters 71.3% of the CBR respondents are from either the Southern or the Northern West Bank. This is different from non-CBR respondents, where 46.2% of the respondents come from Gaza, followed by 22.2% from the Northern West Bank, and 16% of the Southern West Bank. Gaza respondents seem to have little access to CBR programs.

Figure 19: Geographical distribution of PWDs



PWDs participating in CBR programs are much more likely to come from rural areas. 79.3% of CBR respondents reside in rural area as opposed to 42.2% non-CBR respondents.

Figure 20: Place of Residence of PWDs:



5.8.2 Age:

It seems that younger respondents are more likely to participate in CBR efforts. The survey concluded that over (50%) of CBR participants are between 11 and 20. In contrast, less than ¼ (24.5%) of non CBR-participants are in this age category.

Table 8: Age Group for CBR and Non-CBR Beneficiaries:		
Age Group	CBR	Non-CBR
2-10	19.5%	17.2%
11-20	50.6%	24.5%
21-30	11.5%	18.2%
31-40	9.2%	8.7%
41-50	4%	14.2%
51-60	2.40%	9.9%
61-70	1.20%	5.9%
71+	1.80%	1.40%

5.8.3. CBR beneficiaries' perceptions on access to education:

CBR respondents seem to be more positive when it comes to evaluating the use of vocational institutions. 43.4% believes that specialized vocational training centers are a suitable environment for PWDs, while only 26.5% of non-CBR respondents share this opinion.

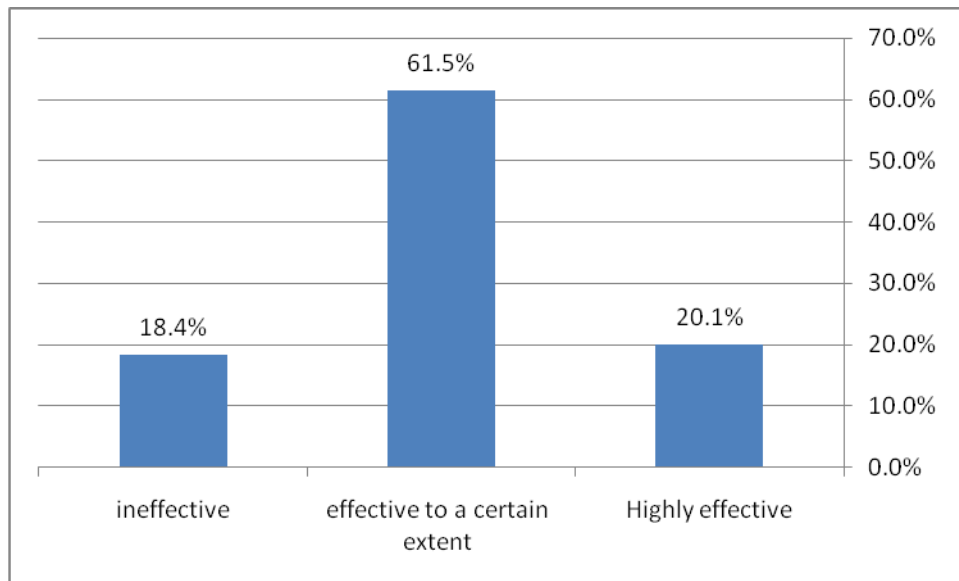
5.8.4 Benefiting from Government Programs:

A clear conclusion can be drawn in respect to government programs. More CBR respondents 66.1% benefitted from government programs than non-CBR respondents 45.8%. 74.2% of CBR respondents benefitted from programs regarding access to education compared to only 33.3% of non-CBR respondents. Although this might seem contradictory with earlier percentages that showed little impact of CBR on the lives of PWDs, it can be explained that in the earlier findings it was the overall perception compared to actual benefit and thus more publicity and awareness about CBR activities would be needed.

5.8.5 Role of CBR Programs in Influencing Policy and Facilitating Access to Education:

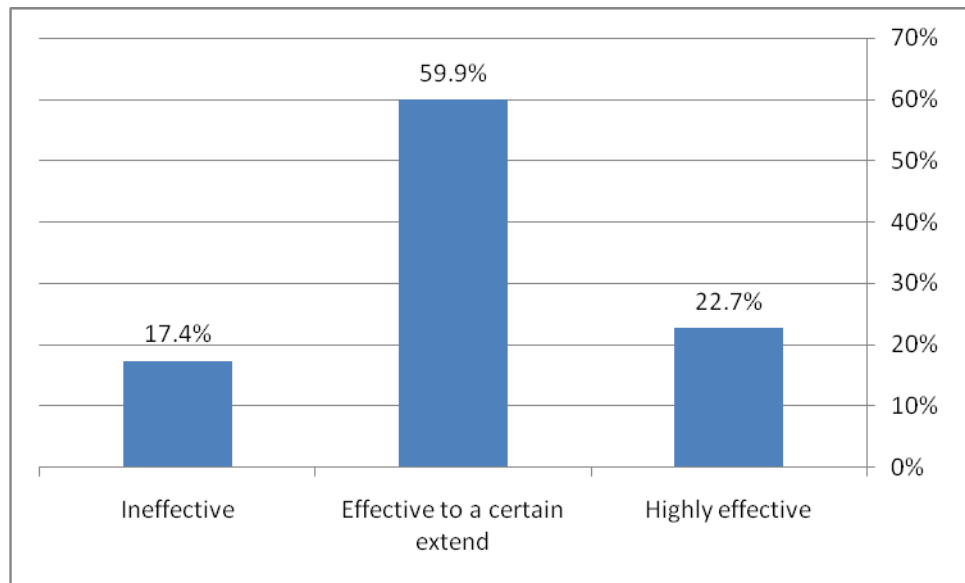
As depicted below CBR participants are generally more positive towards the influence of CBR programs on the policy level. 61.5% thinks they're effective to a certain extent, while only 18.4% considers them to be ineffective.

Figure 21: Influence of CBR Programs at a Policy/Decision-Making Level (CBR)



Differences become even more apparent when assessing the role of CBR programs in facilitating access to education. Non-CBR participants believe that CBR programs play no role in facilitating access to education while those participating in CBR programs are much more positive. It is not surprising that CBR participants seem to evaluate the influence of CBR programs more positively. However, this might indicate that CBR programs are not well known among non-CBR participants, and that non-CBR participants need to be made aware of CBR programs and their effects.

Figure 22: Role of CBR Programs in Facilitating Access to Education according to CBR Beneficiaries



6. Conclusions:

6.1 General Conclusions:

- (96.3%) of the respondents think that the current laws in the field of education need to be amended, which indicates a significant shortcoming in government policies.
- Employment is a very big issue among PWDs, almost (90%) are unemployed. In Gaza up to (96.4%) are unemployed. There is a positive relationship between education and employment.
- (73%) of PWDs is currently working in the private sector.
- The focus groups showed that parents generally don't know how to defend their children and their rights. They need to be made more aware of this.

6.2 Conclusions Regarding the Right to Education for PWDs:

- Only half of the PWDs attended primary school, and the percentage of those getting higher education is very low.
- Parents and children attach great importance to the role of public schools in the education of PWDs; 77.2% thinks public schools are not making an effort to integrate PWDs.
- Almost 40% of PWDs drop out of school. The main reasons they indicated for this are the lack of necessary services, no benefit of academic education and the lack of appropriate programs.
- Parents play an important role in the guidance and education according to 78.2% of the PWDs.
- There is an obvious need for more government programs targeting PWDs in the field of education. Especially in Gaza this is an issue, as only 20.9% of Gazans benefit from government programs.
- Regarding education, remarkably more women benefit from government programs than men 69.4% as opposed to 38.3% of the men. This might be caused by pressure on men to enter the labor market at an early age.
- Public schools are often not equipped to deal with PWDs, teachers and inclusive education employees are not sufficiently qualified and curricula are not adapted to the needs of PWDs. They need to receive proper training on how to work with PWDs and on how to create more social acceptance towards PWDs. Especially in Gaza, where a lot of schools are overcrowded it might be difficult to integrate PWDs in the regular educational system. The quality of education and services offered in public school appears to be very poor, especially in Gaza, where 74% of PWDs think that educational centers are not a good environment for them.
- Social norms and cultural attitudes have a big influence on parents' behavior and the willingness to educate their children.
- As there are only a few vocational and specialized educational centers, the long distance causes problems for the parents to send their children to school. Transportation is often not present, too costly or too dangerous.
- Women have less access to education than men.
- Schools and public buildings lack appropriate infrastructure.
- Laws exist, but are not appropriately implemented or enforced.

6.3 Conclusions Regarding the CBR Programs:

- Respondents seem to evaluate CBR programs positively, as most of them thought they were effective to a certain extent. About 80% of the respondents say CBR programs are influential at a policy level and that they facilitate access to education.
- In Gaza, there needs to be more attention by CBR programs, as very few of the CBR-respondents (18.8% of PWDs) came from Gaza.
- According to the focus group discussions, schools are often not willing to cooperate with CBR programs in Gaza.

6.4 Conclusions Regarding the DPO's:

More than half of the respondents 50.8% think the role of DPOs for advocating for the right to education is ineffective.

- Inhabitants of Gaza do not consider DPOs to be every effective. PWDs as well as parents have little faith in their efforts to advocate for the right to education, to provide assistance facilitating access to education, or to raise public awareness. In West Bank a majority thinks they are effective to a certain extent.
- According to the focus group discussion, there is a lack of coordination within and between DPOs. In addition, the DPOs are perceived to be weak and not organized.

7. Recommendations:

7.1 General Recommendations:

- Awareness raising is a priority. Parents and PWDs should be made aware of the right to education of PWDs, existing educational opportunities and the general value education can add to their lives. More effort needs to be done in this field, not only towards PWDs and their parents, but also targeting the society as a whole, to change attitudes and cultural dispositions towards PWDs.
- Informative campaigns need to be developed to make PWDs and parents aware of their rights and how they can exercise them.
- Government programs need to be improved by efficient targeting of PWDs and parents, regular follow-up with PWDs and by ensuring continuous coordination between government agencies.
- Laws should be revisited to ensure the inclusion of PWDs.
- The government can decrease the current unemployment rate among PWDs by providing incentives for employers who employ PWDs or by implementing the laws enforcing the (5%) quota system.
- The government could set a right example by employing more PWDs. Especially in the West Bank this deserves more attention.
- PWDs and their advocates should be involved at a decision-making level. They should be encouraged to enter politics, as they are best qualified to identify their needs.
- The government and particularly Ministry of Local Government should consult experts when developing new construction projects to make buildings accessible to PWDs.
- The government should take up its responsibility and provide for kindergartens that are equipped to receive PWDs.
- More cooperation with the municipalities is needed. This can be done through expanding the current efforts of CBR in that regard.

7.2 Recommendations Regarding the Right to Education for PWDs:

- Ensure adequate infrastructure of educational institutions.
- Support of the parents and adequately equipped public schools seem to be the most important factors contributing to access to education. Parents need to be made aware of the role they play and they should receive assistance in dealing with their disabled children, especially in Gaza, where civil society is underdeveloped when it comes to PWDs.
- At the educational level many more initiatives are needed from schools and the government to facilitate the integration of PWDs in the regular formal educational system. Lack of teacher training on how to generally deal with PWDs in the classroom (77.8% of PWDs), inadequate infrastructure (77.2% of PWDs) and poor social integration of PWDs (76.6% of PWDs) were most mentioned when exploring the causes of the low educational levels among PWDs.
- Qualified human resources, better and tailor-made curricula depending on the needs of the students could help increase the level of education.
- Regarding government programs that facilitate access to education, remarkably more disabled women benefit from government programs than disabled men (69.4% as opposed to 38.3% of the men). This might be caused by pressure on men to enter the labor market at an early age.
- Awareness raising:

- Public schools: ensure social integration,
- Tackle social stigma that prevents PWDs and parents to participate in public life.

7.3 Recommendations Regarding the CBR:

- A CBR approach should be much more embedded in the strategies used by all governmental and non-governmental institutions trying to enhance access to education of PWDs. Focus should be increased on parents and public schools regarding awareness raising, their role in assisting PWDs and the opportunities offered.
- CBR programs should predominantly target government schools and develop inclusive projects within the schools, as parents usually send their disabled children to government schools
- Re-evaluate best methods of CBR in the Palestinian context, while focusing on the local mentality and increasing coordination with the PA.

7.4 Recommendations Regarding the DPOs:

- Improve advocacy for PWDs and their rights.
- Awareness raising in communities.
- Facilitate access to labor market:
 - Provide training and relevant skills to graduates,
 - Work directly with employers (traineeships).
- Facilitate access to education:
 - Enter partnerships with district public and private school,
 - Offer regular information sessions for parents of PWDs,
 - Offer (legal or informative) guidance to parents of PWDs,
 - Provide trainings to educators.
- In Gaza there was a special mentioning of the UNRWA programs. As UNRWA is the second largest provider of services to the Palestinian people, they should apply more inclusive education programs and a clear policy regarding PWDs.
- Strengthen role of existing DPOs
- Centralize DPOs advocacy efforts through umbrella organizations, this would lead to strengthened advocacy efforts and improved information-sharing.

Additional Recommendations:

At the end of the survey, PWDs and parents were asked for recommendations. Economic empowerment seems to be priority for PWDs 91.1%, followed by equal opportunities, a decent life and human rights (both 89.7%) Medical services and integration in society also seem to be important.

For parents a decent life/human rights is the most important 92.1%, followed by access to services 91.9%, equal opportunities 91.6%, economic empowerment 89.9% and integration of PWDs in the community 89.6%. Next were medical services 88.1%, education 87.5% and aids assistance 82%.

Both parents and PWDs attach a lot of importance to their rights. Equal opportunities, human rights and a decent life both have higher scores than education. Economic empowerment is another important priority, which leads to the conclusion that more capacity building programs

aimed at developing skills and integrating PWDs in the regular labor market could provide for some leverage to decrease the high unemployment numbers among PWDs.

Table 9: Recommendations PWDs (according to importance):

Table 9: Recommendations PWDs (according to importance):	Not important (at all)	Neutral	(most) important
Economic empowerment	2.9%	5.2%	91.9%
Decent life/human rights	2.7%	7.6%	89.7%
Equal opportunities	3.7%	6.6%	89.7%
Equal Access to services	3%	7.4%	89.5%
medical services	6.6%	8%	85.4%
Integrate PWDs in community	6.5%	8.5%	85.1%
Suitable educational environment	9%	8.8%	82.3%
provide an appropriate environment in public places/facilities for PWDs	5.3%	12.8%	82%
Raising parents' awareness	7.3%	11.6%	81.1%
Raising community awareness	6.6%	12.7%	80.7%
Implementation of laws applicable to PWDs	5.4%	14.8%	79.8%
Aids assistance	7.9%	13.3%	78.8%
provide capacity building programs/training courses for PWDs	11.3%	15%	73.7%
Access to sports	19.3%	14.5%	66.3%

