

Persons with disabilities: Labour market perceptions survey Jordan



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



E/ESCWA/CL2.GPID/2022/Policy Brief.9



Introduction

Persons with disabilities are employed at lower rates than the general population in Arab countries. Most Arab countries have made efforts to include persons with disabilities in their labour markets, however, the gap persists and employers still have negative attitudes towards them. This cannot be explained by persons with disabilities being unable or unwilling to work. Rather, there are several barriers that prevent them from accessing employment opportunities. To study these barriers, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) conducted a survey, in 2021, of 69 public and private sector employers of varying sizes and from different sectors in Jordan to identify their perceptions of the factors that hinder the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

The present policy brief provides an outlook of employers' perceptions of employing persons with disabilities in Jordan.



It reveals that employers have attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from participating equally in the labour market.

Employers’ perceptions and misconceptions

Responses regarding employing persons with disabilities varied between the public and private sectors. As shown in table 1, more than half of public sector employers believed

that persons with disabilities were more susceptible to accidents and injuries, as did more than three quarters of respondents from the private sector. More than half of respondents from both the public and private sectors thought that persons with disabilities were not as productive as other employees. One quarter of respondents from the private sector assumed that customers would feel uncomfortable around persons with disabilities. Respondents also expressed concerns that accommodations for persons with disabilities would be too expensive; they would not be able to communicate with them; health insurance would be too expensive; and they would not be able to work normal hours.

Table 1. Concerns expressed by public and private sector respondents regarding employing persons with disabilities

Challenge	Private sector	Public sector
	Yes	Yes
They are not as productive as other employees.	52.4	54.5
Accommodations would be too costly.	9.5	9.1
Health insurance would be too expensive.	9.5	0.0
They are more likely to have accidents or injuries.	81.0	63.6
They would not be able to work normal hours.	9.5	9.1
Customers would feel uncomfortable because of them.	23.8	0.0
Employees would feel uncomfortable because of them.	4.8	0.0
They do not know how to communicate with them.	4.8	9.1



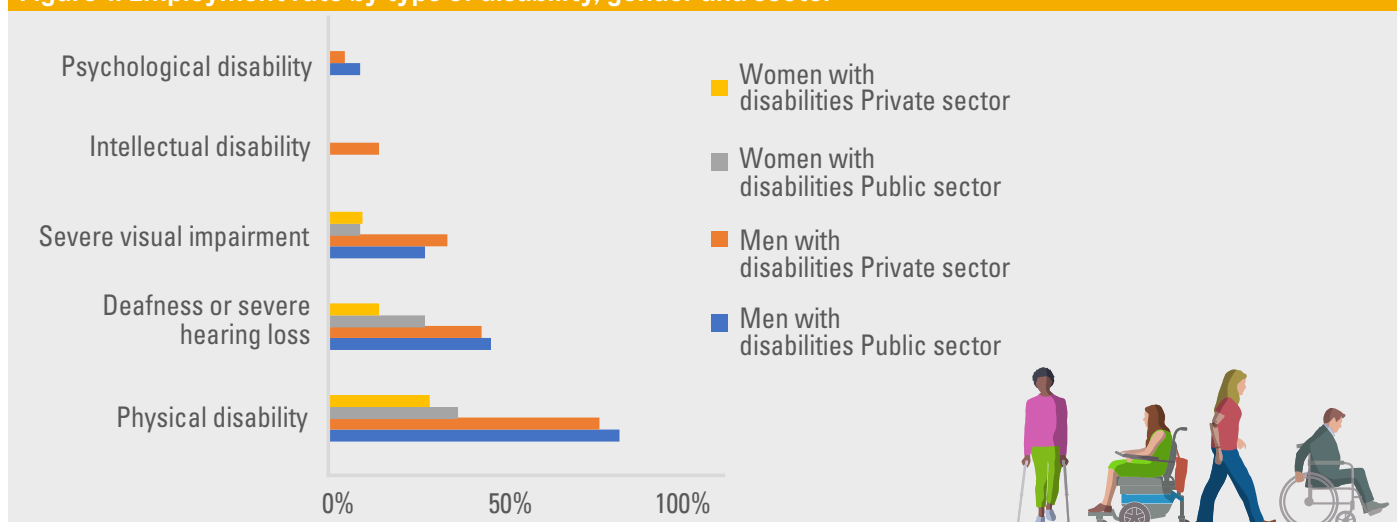
Employment rate by type of disability

A clear difference was found between the employment rates of persons with different kinds of disabilities (figure 1). Persons with deafness, severe hearing impairments and blindness-related or severe visual disabilities were more likely to be employed in both the public and private sectors than persons with intellectual and psychological disabilities, who were employed at very low rates. The situation is intersectional and women with disabilities experience a double discrimination, being employed at even lower rates in both the public and private sectors and across different types of disabilities.

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Article 27(1) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obligates States Parties to recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. It guides the States Parties in the implementation of the article by setting forth some basic rules, namely: (a) nondiscrimination; (b) accessibility; (c) reasonable accommodation; (d) besides a duty to impose on private-sector employers, States should adopt positive measures to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Figure 1. Employment rate by type of disability, gender and sector



Reasonable accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are essential for an inclusive workplace, and the lack of them remains a key barrier to the employment of persons with disabilities. They include adjustments of tools and equipment, job duties, and working arrangements and environments.

On the average cost of reasonable accommodations, 33.3 per cent of public sector employers reported that there was no cost, another 55.6 per cent reported that they did not know the cost and the remaining 11.1 per cent said that the cost was between \$100 and \$500.

sector respondents indicating that there was no cost for reasonable accommodations, while only a minority of public sector respondents reported the same.

Regarding the capacity to provide workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities, approximately 45.5 per cent of public sector employers reported that they did not agree that employers are unable to bear the costs of providing such accommodations, while 57.1 per cent of private sector employers reported the same. The gap between the public and private sectors on this issue is not large and reflects similar beliefs about the capacity to provide accommodations.



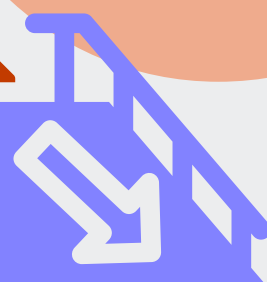
CRPD defines reasonable accommodation as:

“Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Among private sector employers, 65 per cent said that there was no cost for reasonable accommodations, 5 per cent said that the cost was between \$100 and \$500 and another 25 per cent said that they did not know the cost of reasonable accommodations. There is a gap between the opinions expressed by the two sectors, with the majority of private

Cost of accommodations

100\$-
500\$



Policy recommendations

Adopt positive and appropriate measures to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, particularly among private sector employers. These measures include laws, regulations and administrative rules to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment and the workplace. It is highly desirable that policymakers in Jordan enact and enforce effective anti-discrimination legislation.

Promote the rights of persons with disabilities by ensuring that they are included in national strategies, programmes and plans. Jordan has been recognized as one of the countries in the region that is most committed to promoting disability rights. Sufficient resources and technical expertise need to be allocated for the implementation of Law No. 20 of 2017 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan. In line with article 4 of CRPD, the Law calls for equal rights for persons with disabilities in all aspects.

Invest in awareness programmes to strengthen employers' knowledge about persons with disabilities and address the negative myths and stereotypes held by some employers about them. It is important for employers to become more aware of the productive potential of persons with disabilities and to design and implement disability-inclusive employment policies and strategies, including the provision of reasonable accommodations.

Promote inclusive employment by revising existing policies in Jordan, including all activities that enable an individual with disabilities to gain access to decent work.



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22-00992