A good practice model of an inclusive kindergarten for children with impaired vision and additional disabilities was piloted by BASR in cooperation with the Latin patriarchate school in Beit-Jala through the generous support of CBM EMR.

The new inclusive kindergarten opened at the beginning of the new school year on September 5th, 2011 welcoming students with visual impairment and additional disabilities for the first time. Upon signing the memorandum of understanding between Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation (BASR) and the Latin Patriarchate School in Beit-Jala, the kindergarten's physical and learning environment was modified and made accessible for preschool children with impaired vision and additional disabilities.
The kindergarten was equipped with suitable and age appropriate teaching materials and toys. Besides, the preschool teachers were provided with relevant training and teaching techniques that would enable them to meet the specific learning needs of young children with visual impairment. Adaptations to the preschool curriculum and teaching methods were also made to better suit those children’s learning needs and help enhance their vision and developmental skills.

Upon assessing the functional vision and developmental skills of children with impaired vision and additional disabilities (cognition, self-care, sensory and motor orientation and mobility) and providing them with the appropriate intervention by BASR’s vision rehabilitation team and multi-disciplinary team, referral arrangements to the inclusive kindergarten are made for those who are well prepared for inclusion in the regular preschool education system. An individual intervention plan is then provided to parents and preschool teachers to follow while working with the children to promote their optimal development.

The inclusive education model at the Latin Patriarchate kindergarten is designed to provide a fully inclusive environment that meets the learning needs of children with impaired vision and additional disabilities, ages 3-6 years. It enables students, teachers and parents to benefit from extended instructions and specialized training and support based on individual needs. In addition, it gives the targeted children access to quality education tailored to meet their specific needs to significantly improve their chances for successful inclusion into mainstream education beyond the preschool level, while empowering parents to support their children’s education and optimal development and also to advocate their right to education on equal par with their sighted peers.