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Food Security Profiling of Bethlehem Governorate

**Working Paper
Series No. 3 - 2009**

Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) Monitoring System in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

**Based on data produced by the
Palestinian Central Bureau of
Statistics**

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Methodology

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. In the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), food security is a direct consequence of access to income and employment. While food is available in the oPt, trade restrictions makes the oPt a net food importer of goods that are not locally produced. The Palestinian population are thus faced with a food system with which they have no sovereignty over and is currently fragile due to the political dimensions of the conflict. As such, the Socio-economic and Food Security survey was developed in order to capture, reliable and updated information on the living conditions of Palestinian households in a rapidly changing political context.

The Socio-Economic and Food Security survey, conducted in January/February 2009 in the West Bank, was designed to meet following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the socio-economic characteristics of households residing in the West Bank;
2. Differentiate among the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian households according to the criteria of geographic location, locality type, sex, refugee status, and livelihood group;
3. Assess the overall trends in income and expenditure of households in the West Bank over the past 6 months;
4. Assess the changes in food acquisition¹ patterns and coping mechanisms (including the assistance);
5. Measure the assistance received by households and household's evaluation of this assistance; and
6. Provide evidence-based recommendations for food security policy and programming purposes.

The methodology used for this survey is largely consistent with the methodology used in the May 2008 *Joint Rapid Food Security Survey in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA). Considering that the dataset is cross-sectional, the analysis is static as it uses income and consumption. A third variable reflecting the changing socio-economic impact of Israeli measures was added to make the model more dynamic. These variables were used to cluster the data into three clusters of households that are homogeneous with respect to how they were impacted during the past 6 months by the Israeli measures. The households within the clusters were then classified according to their consumption and income levels (3 way crosstabs) based on which the food insecurity levels were determined (for detailed procedures and methodology please see Annex I of the Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey of the West Bank, August 2009).

The following report is a part of the broader socio-economic and food security monitoring system conducted jointly by the World Food Programme and FAO in collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The Governorate Food Security Profiling provides a profile of the characteristics of food insecure households within a specific governorate. For further examination on specific issues, users are encouraged to contact the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics.

¹ Food acquisition: from purchase, self-production and gifts (both formal and informal assistance). In the oPt food acquisition mainly depends on household purchasing power, which in turn mainly depends on income (hence employment) and price levels. However, assistance plays a major role in food security and should be regularly monitored to infer impact on household socio-economic status.

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X. Bethlehem

A. Population and Demography

Table 1: Percentage of Registered Refugee out of Total Population

| | Registered Refugees | Other | Total |
|------------|---------------------|---------|----------------|
| Population | 46,539 | 129,696 | 176,235 |
| Percent | 26% | 74% | 100% |

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

Bethlehem governorate is situated south of Jerusalem and shares its southern boundary with Hebron governorate. The Bethlehem population constitutes 7.5 percent of the total population of the remaining West Bank or a total of 176,235 people. The average household size in Bethlehem is 5.4 members so that 32,636 households reside in Bethlehem governorate. Consistent with the remaining West Bank average, the ratio of male to female is 1 to 1.

Approximately 26 percent of the population in Bethlehem are registered refugees. Refugee households compose of 22 percent of households living in urban areas, 32 percent of households in rural areas and all households living in refugee camps.

Table 2: Distribution of Population By Locality

| | Urban | Rural | Refugee Camps | Total |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Number of Communities | 12 | 30 | 3 | 45 |
| Population | 123,639 | 39,700 | 12,896 | 176,235 |
| Percent | 70% | 23% | 7% | 100% |

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

B. Labour Force

In the second and third quarters of 2008, labour force participation decreased from 49.2 percent to 45.6 percent, but then increased again to 48.7 percent by the second quarter of 2009. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate increased from 16 percent to 28.9 percent between the second quarter and the fourth quarter 2008. By the first quarter of 2009, unemployment decreased to 24 percent and continued to decrease by the second quarter of 2009 to 17.9 percent.

Table 3: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rate

| | Q2 08 | Q3 08 | Q4 08 | Q1 09 | Q2 09 |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Labour Force Participation | 49.2% | 45.6% | 45.3% | 47.8% | 48.7% |
| Unemployment | 16.0% | 21.7% | 28.9% | 24.0% | 17.9% |

Source: PCBS Labour Force Surveys, 2nd Half 2008 to 1st of 2009

In absolute terms, in the second half of 2008, the population above 15 (working age population) grew by 1,521 individuals. At the same time, labour force participation dropped by 3,252 people while 8,726 jobs were lost, leaving 5,474 people unemployed. The drop in labour force participation in actuality is a result

of individuals who became discouraged workers. In the first half of 2009, the population above the age of 15 grew by another 1,544 individuals and labour force participation grew by 4,240 people. Additionally, 8592 new jobs were created which absorbed the new labour force participants with unemployment dropping by 4,352 individuals.

Table 42: Change in Population, Labour Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment

| | Q2 08 | Q3 08 | Q4 08 | Q1 09 | Q2 09 | Change 2 nd half 2008 | Change 1 st half 2009 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
| Population | 178,879 | 180,220 | 181,572 | 182,934 | 184,306 | 2,693 | 2,734 |
| above 15 | 101,051 | 101,809 | 102,573 | 103,342 | 104,117 | 1,521 | 1,544 |
| Labour Force participation | 49,717 | 46,425 | 46,465 | 49,398 | 50,705 | -3,252 | 4,240 |
| Unemployed | 7,955 | 10,074 | 13,429 | 11,855 | 9,076 | 5,474 | -4,352 |
| Employed | 41,763 | 36,351 | 33,037 | 37,542 | 41,629 | -8,726 | 8,592 |

C. Wages and Prices

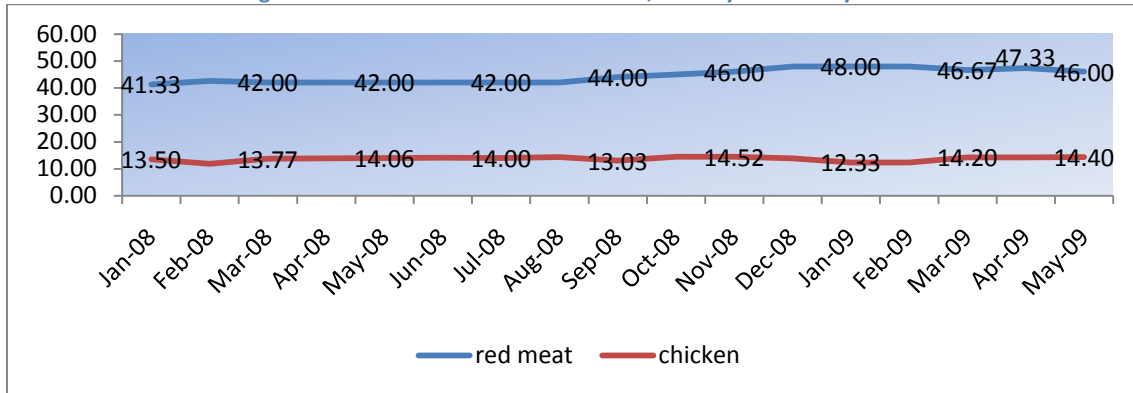
Nominal wages refers to money paid as opposed to real wages which is adjusted to price inflation and represents actual household purchasing power. In the second quarter of 2008, the nominal daily wage in Bethlehem was 94 New Israeli Shekels (NIS), while the real daily wage stood at 84.90 NIS. Real daily wage was 9.7 percent lower than nominal wages. In the third quarter of 2008, nominal wages increased to 91.50 NIS and real wages was 11 percent lower than the nominal wage. By the fourth quarter of 2008, the gap between nominal and real wages decreased by 1 percent so that real wages was 10 percent lower than nominal wages. In the first quarter of 2009, the nominal wage stood at 96.50 NIS while real wages stood at 88.50 NIS; real wages were 8.3% lower than nominal wages indicating a slight improvement in household purchasing power.

Table 5: Average Nominal Daily Wage vs. Average Real Daily Wage

| | Q2 08 | Q3 08 | Q4 08 | Q1 09 | Q2 09 |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Average nominal daily wage NIS | 94 | 91.5 | 95.1 | 96.5 | 95.8 |
| Average real daily wage NIS | 84.9 | 81.4 | 85.3 | 88.5 | 87.4 |

Since no consumer price index was collected at the Bethlehem governorate level, the prices of selected food items were observed to determine the socio-economic situation of households during the reporting period. The price per kilo of red meat stood at 41.33 NIS in January 2008 and rose slightly to 42 NIS by March remaining stable until August 2008. By September 2008, the price of red meat stood at 44 NIS per kilo and rose by 2 NIS every 2 months. By January 2009, the price of red meat peaked at 48 NIS per kilo and fluctuated during the first half of 2009 until it stood at 46 NIS per kilo by May 2009. In contrast, the price of chicken fluctuated but never exceeded 13 percent over the price of 13.50 NIS per kilo in January 2008.

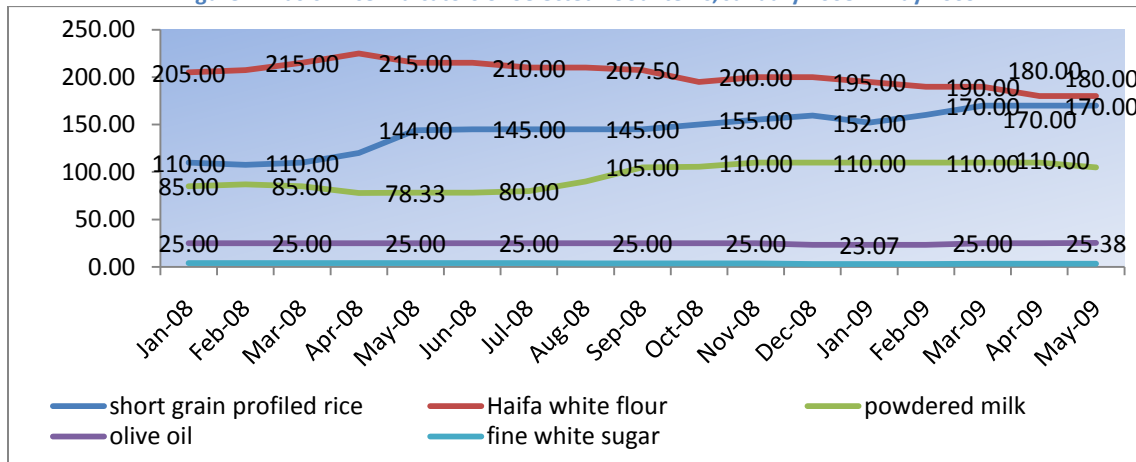
Figure 1: Prices of Red Meat and Chicken, January 2008 - May 2009



Source: PCBS Data

The price of Haifa white flour stood at 205 NIS in January, increased in April 2008 to decrease in prices again from May 2008 to May 2009. Price of flour decreased to 180 NIS by May 2009; 11 percent lower than the long term average. An opposite trend appears in the price of short grain profiled rice in which the price stood at 110 NIS in January 2008 and peaked at 170 NIS in March 2009 and remained stable through to May 2009. The price of powdered milk stood at 85 NIS in January 2008 and fluctuated until September 2008 when prices stood at 105 NIS and rose to 110 NIS remaining stable until May 2009. The price of olive oil and fine white sugar remained stable during the observed period.

Figure 2: Basic Price Indicators of Selected Food Items, January 2008 – May 2009



Source: PCBS Data

D. Food Insecurity Levels

The prevalence of food insecurity is higher amongst rural households in the Bethlehem governorate than the urban or refugee camps. Out of the total rural households, 32 percent are food insecure compared to 10 percent living in urban areas, and 19 percent living in refugee camps. Food security levels on the other hand are much higher in the urban areas, at 53 percent, than rural or refugee camps.

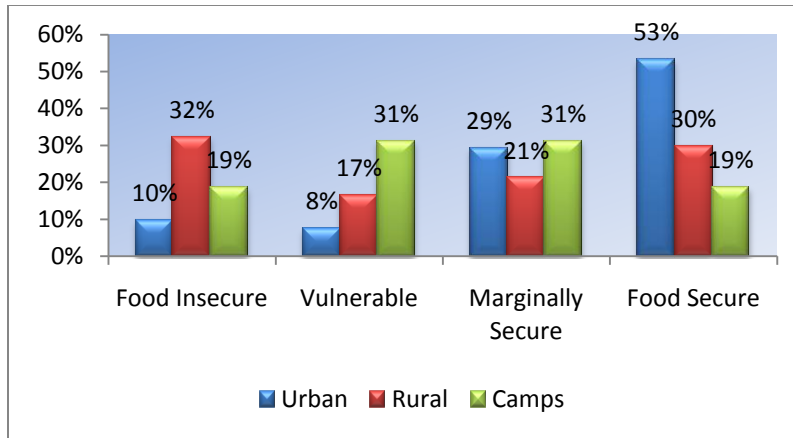


Figure 3: Food Security Levels By Locality

Food insecurity is 7 percent higher among refugee households compared to non refugee households. Refugee households also have a higher prevalence of households who are vulnerable to food insecurity at 20 percent compared to 7 percent of non refugee households. Alternatively, food security is 11 percent higher among non refugee households compared to refugee households.

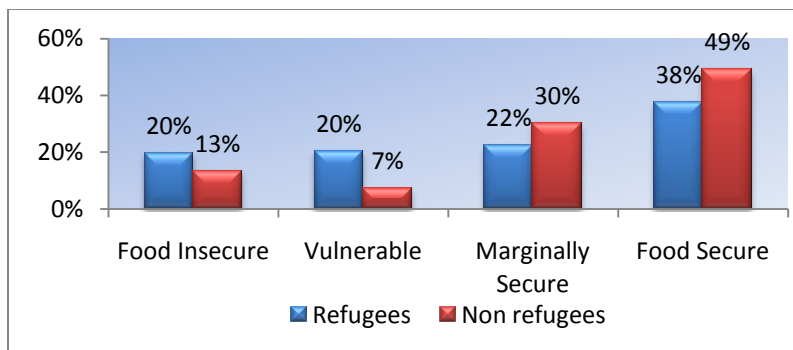


Figure 4: Food Security Levels By Refugee and Non Refugee Status

E. Gender of Head of Household and Food Security Levels

A total of 12 percent of households in the remaining West Bank is female headed with the remaining 88 percent of the households who are male headed. Of those, 10 percent of Bethlehem households are female headed and 90 percent of households are male headed.

Table 6: Heads of households by gender

| | Bethlehem | Remaining West Bank |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Male Headed Households | 90% | 88% |
| Female Headed Households | 10% | 12% |

Only slight higher in the prevalence of food security levels exist among female headed households compared to male headed households. Forty-eight percent of female headed households compared to 45 percent of male headed households are food secure. However, the prevalence of food insecurity is slightly higher among female headed households at 19 percent compared to male headed households at 15 percent.

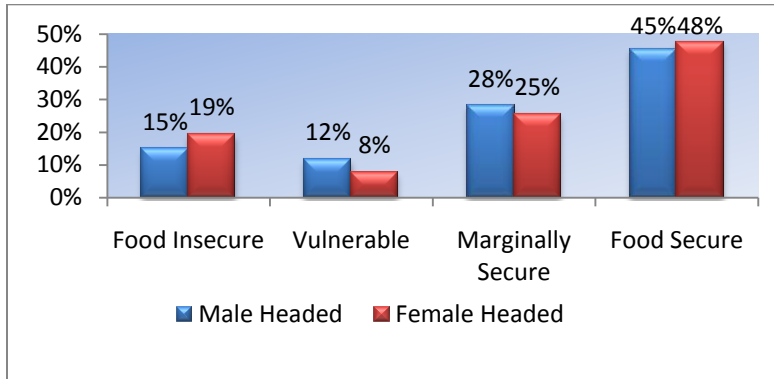


Figure 5: Food Security Levels by Gender of Head of Household

F. Education of Head of Household and Food Security Levels

In absolute terms, the vast majority of Bethlehem's heads of households have completed preparatory level education as their highest educational attainment. These heads of households are distributed across all the food security groups but are highest among those who are vulnerable at 44 percent and those who are food insecure at 40 percent. Additionally, 30 percent of the food secure and 22 percent of the marginally secure heads of households have only completed up to preparatory level. This means that preparatory level education is the minimum educational attainment needed for heads of households to attain employment that would provide them with food security. However, higher levels of educational attainment continues to correlate with higher food security levels. For example, those who have completed up to Master's Degree and PhD level education appear exclusively within the food secure categories.

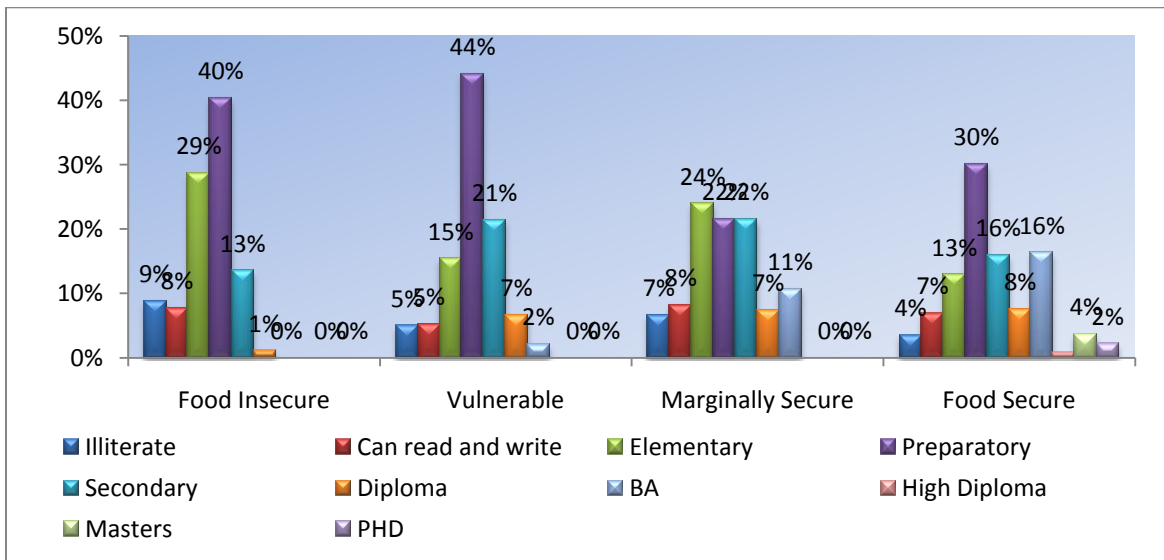


Figure 6: Educational Attainment of Head of Households by Food Security Levels

G. Food Consumption and Income levels

Across the food security levels with the exception of the food secure, the food consumption ratio exceeds the 44 percent set by PCBS to define the worse off households. Food secure household's food consumption ratio falls just below the PCBS threshold at 42 percent. When a greater proportion of household's income is on food expenditures, households have less disposable income to spend on non food items including education and health care which are also important in determining household's food security levels. The figure below indicates that the greater the proportion of household income is spent on food, the greater the likelihood of households to be food insecure.

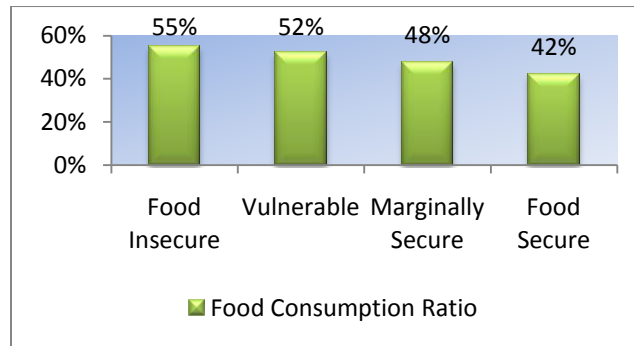


Figure 7: Food Consumption Ratio by Food Security Levels

Similar to previous trends, food secure households report lower levels of consumption compared to their income while the opposite is true of food insecure households. Food secure households report a monthly income of 1,280 NIS per adult and a monthly consumption per adult of 1,195 NIS. This indicates that food secure households are able to save income. In contrast, food insecure households report a monthly consumption of 446 NIS per adult and report a lower 346 NIS monthly income per adult. This may indicate that households are coping on credit to meet their consumption needs. An unmet consumption gap of 63 percent exists for food insecure households to move out of their food insecurity threshold towards food security.

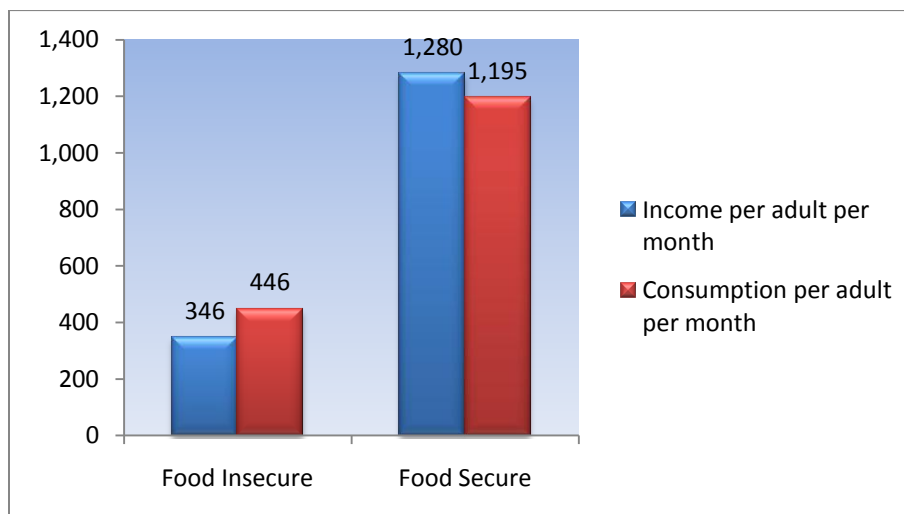


Figure 8: Income/Adult/Month vs. Consumption/Adult/Month in NIS

G. Employment, Occupation and Sector of Employment of Head of households

The percentage of those employed in Bethlehem is 88 percent with the remaining 22 percent unemployed. The following figure shows the correlation between the food security levels and unemployment. The highest level of unemployment is amongst the food insecure at 26 percent of the total food insecure heads of households. The unemployed is further distributed within the vulnerable at 8 percent and the marginally secure at 15 percent. Generally, unemployment levels positively correlates with food security levels; the higher the unemployment rate, the higher the likelihood of food insecurity. With the exception of the vulnerable group, this trend is generally true of Bethlehem households.

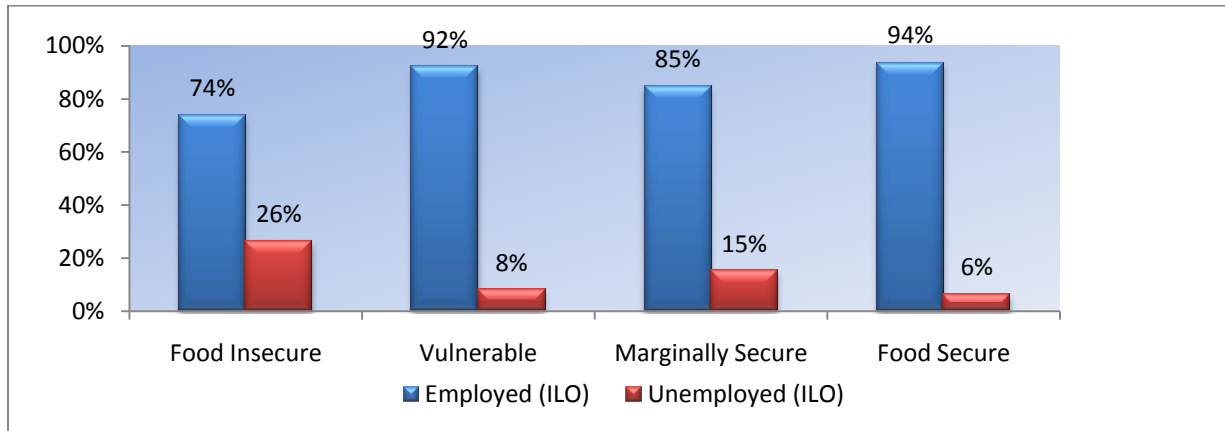


Figure 9: Food security levels by employment

Similar to other trends amongst governorates, approximately 34 percent of food insecure heads of households are employed in elementary occupations and 23 percent in crafts or related trade work. Those who work in elementary occupation and crafts or related trade work have higher chances of becoming food insecure. In comparison, 18 percent of food secure household heads are employed in elementary occupations and 18 percent in crafts or related trades. Those who work in professional or highly skilled professions include 13 percent employed as legislative or senior managers, 14 percent as specialists and 9 percent as professionals. Similar to other governorates it appears that having a profession or highly skilled job correlates with a higher level of food security. Services and sales appears to provide equal opportunities for households to become either food insecure or food secure.

Figure 10: Occupation of Food Insecure Heads of Households

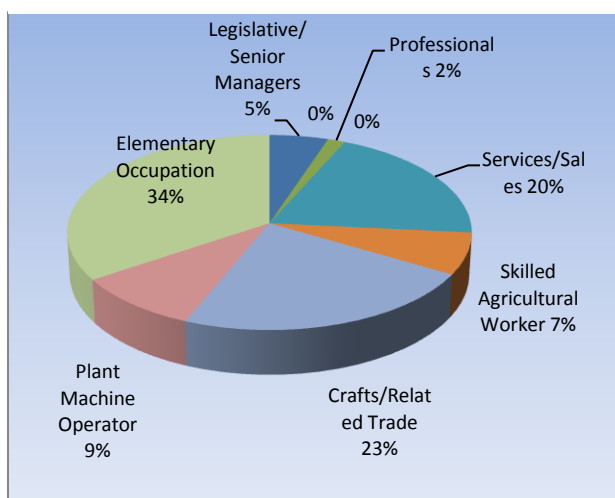
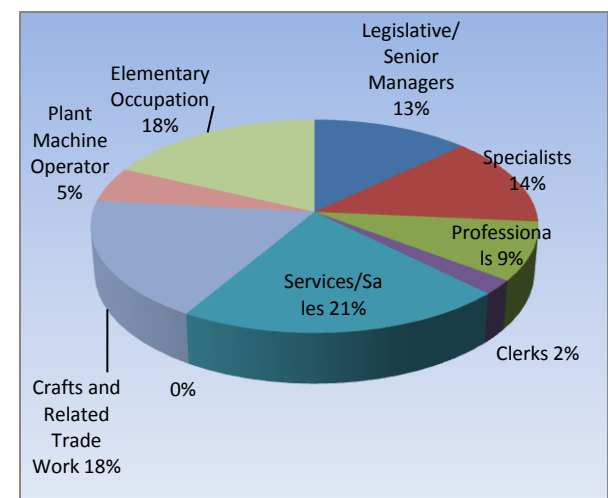


Figure 11: Occupation of Food Secure Heads of Households



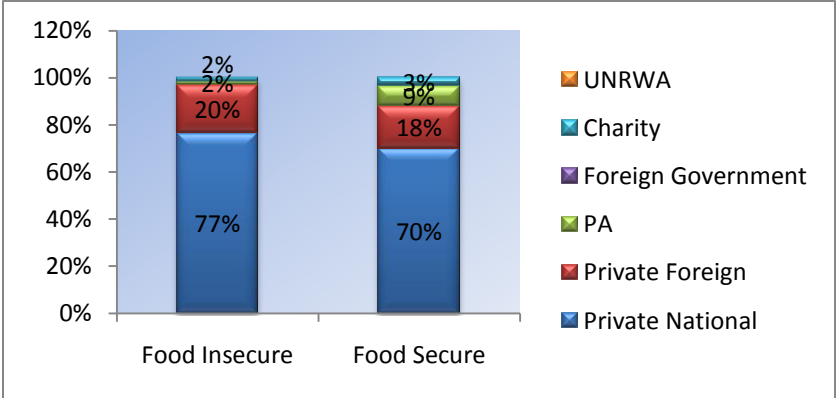
The vast majority of households are employed in the wholesale and retail trade. Thirty-six percent of food insecure households are employed in the wholesale and retail trade compared to 22 percent of food secure households. This suggests that the whole sale retail trade does not provide a greater opportunity for households to become food secure. Additionally, food insecure households are largely employed in agriculture/fishing, mining/manufacturing, transport/storage/communication, finance insurance and mediation. Employment in restaurants and hotels appears to provide a greater opportunity for households to become food secure.

Table 7: Occupation by Food Insecure and Food Secure Heads of Households

| | Food Insecure | Food Secure |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| Agriculture and fishing | 10% | 0% |
| Mining manufacturing | 16% | 14% |
| construction | 0% | 1% |
| wholesale retail trade | 36% | 22% |
| Restaurants and hotels | 15% | 25% |
| transport storage communication | 8% | 0% |
| finance insurance and mediation | 9% | 8% |
| properties, rents and commercial businesses | 0% | 2% |
| public administration and defense | 0% | 2% |
| education | 2% | 6% |
| health and social work | 0% | 4% |
| other social and personal care | 0% | 9% |
| international organization | 4% | 6% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Similar to other governorates, employment within the private national sector represents the vast majority of employment for Bethlehem heads of households. This sector offers slightly lower opportunity for household food security at 70 percent, compared to food insecurity at 77 percent. Again food security and insecurity appears to be spread almost equally between private foreign sector employees, with 20 percent registered as food insecure and 18 percent as food secure.

Figure 12: Sector of Employment by Food Insecure and Food Secure Heads of Households



The following figure 13 refers to the food insecure and food secure heads of households and the type of jobs in which they are employed. A total of 43 percent of heads of households in the Bethlehem governorate receive regular wages. Out of the food secure households, 42 percent receive regular wages compared to 48 percent of the food insecure households. Furthermore, 16 percent of the food secure heads of households are self employed and an additional 21 percent are irregular wage workers. A lower proportion of food insecure heads of households compared to food secure heads of households are self employed at 11 percent and 29 percent are irregular wage workers. In Bethlehem governorate, salary scale is greater determination of household food security rather than type of wages.

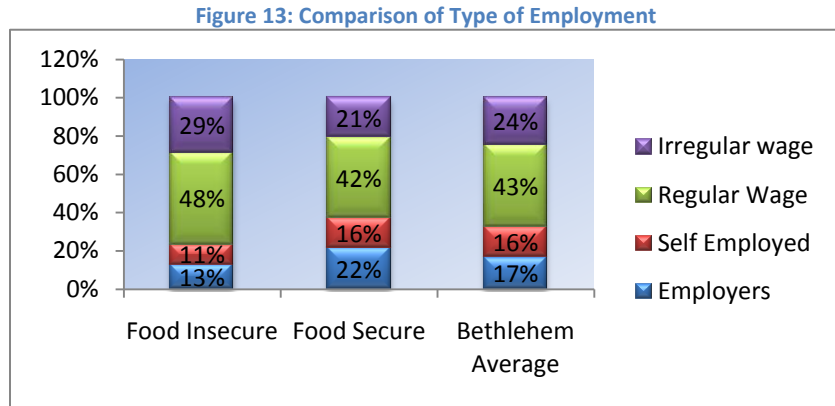


Figure 14 refers to the distribution of heads of households, their food security levels and the location of employment. All household who reported working within their own dwelling are food insecure. Employment within settlements offers greater opportunities for households to become food secure or marginally secure. Forty-one percent of households who reported employment within settlements are food secure and 56 percent are marginally secure. Generally, no conclusions can be made about the correlation between the location of employment of the head of household and their level of food security with the exception of those employed within their own dwelling and those employed within settlements. Most locations with the exception of within dwelling offers greater probability for households to be food secure.

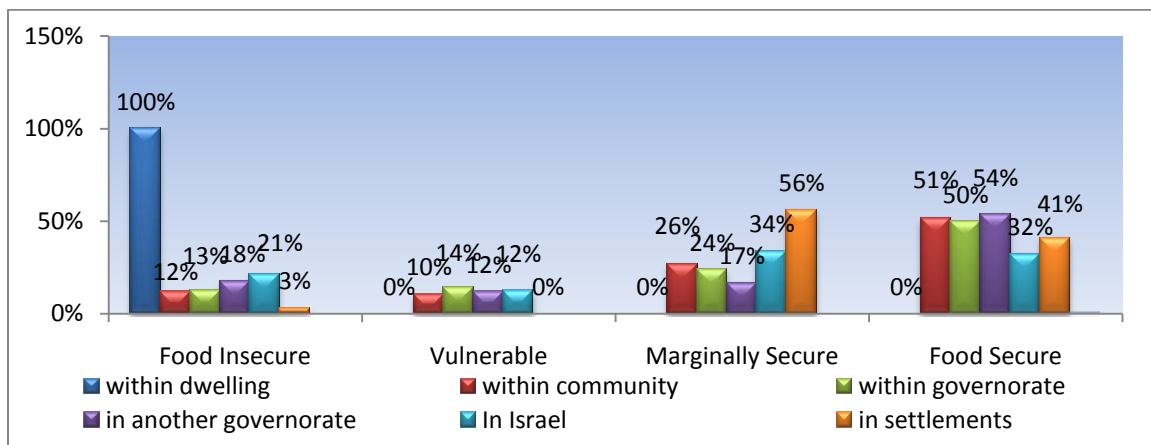


Figure 14: Food Security Levels of Heads of Households and Their Place of Employment

H. Assistance and targeting

Figure 15 indicates that a disproportion exists in the distribution of assistance received by the Bethlehem population. An even percentage of 31 percent of both food insecure households and food secure households reported receiving assistance. Thirteen percent of food insecure households reported they did not receive assistance. The combined total of food secure and the marginally secure households shows that 54 percent of them reported receiving assistance. In comparison a combined total of 46 percent of the food insecure and vulnerable households reported receiving assistance.

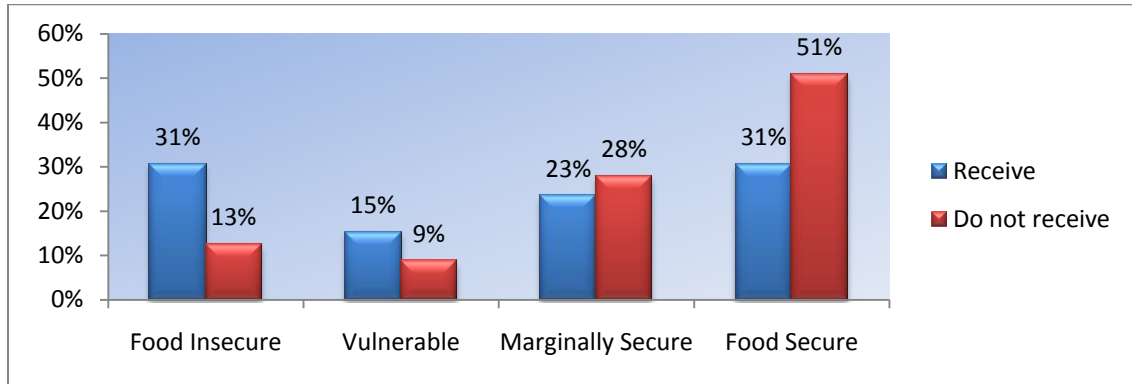


Figure 15: Household Food Security Levels and Reported Assistance Received

The comparison of food security levels by refugee status shows that a higher percentage of food insecure refugee households compared to food insecure non refugee households reported receiving assistance. Sixty-eight percent of refugee households compared to 32 percent of non refugee households who are food insecure reported receiving assistance and remained food insecure after receiving assistance. Additionally, 40 percent of refugee households and 18 percent of non refugee households who were food secure previous to receiving assistance reported receiving assistance despite being ineligible for receiving assistance.

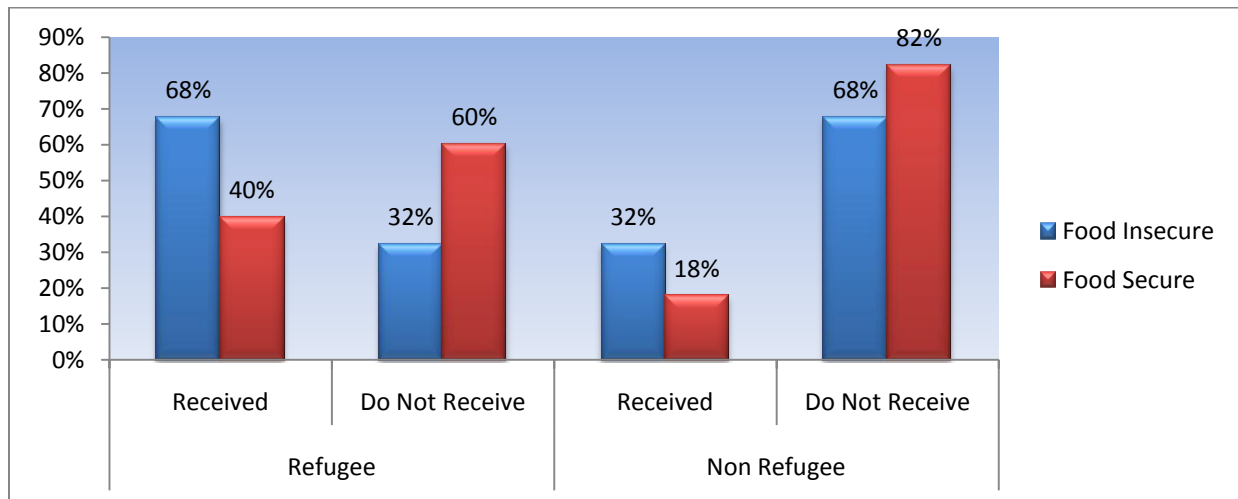


Figure 16: Food Security Levels by Refugee or Non Refugee Status

An examination of targeting by locality shows that all food insecure households residing in refugee camps who reported receiving assistance remained food insecure. Fifty-one percent of food insecure

rural households and 51 percent of food insecure urban households reported receiving assistance and remained food insecure.

Figure 17: Food Security Levels by Locality

