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# Food Security Profiling of Hebron Governorate

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Working Paper  
Series No. 3 - 2009

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

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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 acquisition<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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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**IV. Hebron Governorate**

**A. Population and Demography**

Hebron governorate is located south of the Remaining West Bank just below Bethlehem governorate. Hebron is the largest governorate in terms of population concentration. It is populated by 23 percent of the total West Bank population or an estimated 552,164 individuals. The average household size in Hebron is 6.1 members so that an estimated 90,519 households reside within the governorate.

**Table 1: Percentage of Registered Refugees out of the Total Population**

	Registered Refugees	Other	Total
Population	88,461	463,703	552,164
Percent	16%	84%	100%

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

The distribution of the population by locality is as follows: 85 percent of the Hebron population live in urban areas, 12 percent live in the rural areas and 3 percent live in refugee camps. The percentage of the population registered as refugees is 16 percent. Within the localities, refugees represent 20 percent of the urban households, 18 percent of rural households and 91 percent of the refugee camp households.

**Table 2: Distribution of Population by Locality**

	Urban	Rural	Refugee Camps	Total
Number of Communities	70	20	2	92
Population	471,161	66,518	14,485	552,164
Percent	85%	12%	3%	100%

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

**B. Labour Force**

The labour force participation rate in Hebron appears to have decreased between the second quarter and fourth quarter of 2008. At the same time the unemployment rate during the same period increased. In the second quarter of 2008 labour force participation rate was 48.4 percent while the unemployment rate was at 22.5%. By the end of fourth quarter of 2008, labour force participation rate decreased to 45.3 percent while the unemployment rate increased to 28.8 percent. However, during the first half and the second half of 2009 labour force participation rate increased from 46.5 percent to 48.3 percent. During the same period, the unemployment rate decreased from 25.6 percent to 17.6 percent.

**Table 3: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rate**

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Labour Force Participation participation %	48.4%	46.2%	45.3%	46.5%	48.3%
Unemployment %	22.5%	24.5%	28.8%	25.6%	17.6%

Source: PCBS Labour Force Surveys

The table below provides a closer examination of the socio-economic situation in Hebron. By the second half of 2008, the population above aged 15 increased in absolute numbers by 4,467 people with the number unemployed increasing to 6,981 individuals. Labour force participation dropped by 7,174 people whereby no jobs were available to absorb the new labour force and the newly unemployed. The drop in labour force participation is thus a result of discouraged workers who have given up looking for employment and are no longer counted as unemployed. By the end of the first half of 2009, the population above the age of 15 increased by 4,535 individuals. Additionally, the labour force participation grew to 11, 226 individuals while unemployment dropped to 13,305 individuals with the creation of 24, 531 new jobs absorbing the new labour force participants.

**Table 4: Change in Population, Labour Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment**

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09	Change 2nd half of 2008	Change 1st half of 2009
Population	560,446	564,650	568,885	573,151	577,450	8,438	8,565
above 15	296,715	298,940	301,182	303,441	305,717	4,467	4,535
Labour Force Participation #	143,610	138,110	136,436	141,100	147,661	-7,174	11,226
Unemployed	32,312	33,837	39,293	36,122	25,988	6,981	-13,305
Employed	111,298	104,273	97,142	104,979	121,673	-14,156	24,531

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007 and Labour Force Survey Rounds

### **C. Wages and Prices**

The average nominal daily wage consistently increased between the second quarter of 2008 from 80 NIS to 86.50 NIS by the second quarter of 2009. However, the net change between average nominal daily wage and real daily wage remained close to zero indicating no major price changes occurring during the observed period. At the same time, Average daily wages increased from 72.3 NIS in the second quarter of 2008 to 78.9 NIS. In the second quarter of 2008, the average daily wage was 11 percent lower than the average nominal daily wage and in the second quarter of 2009; real wages was 9 percent lower.

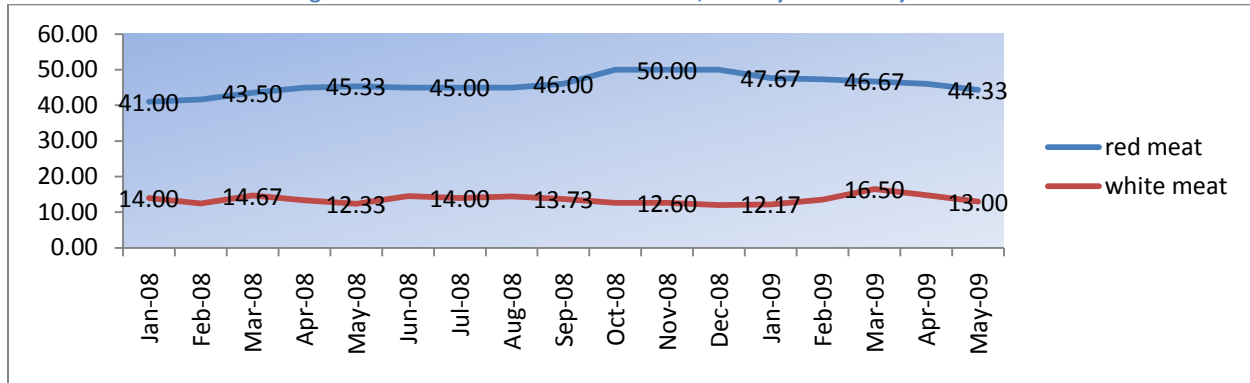
**Table 5: Average Nominal Daily Wage vs. Average Real Daily Wage**

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Average nominal daily wage NIS	80	86.1	86.4	83.8	86.5
Average real daily wage NIS	72.3	76.6	77.5	76.8	78.9

Source: PCBS Data

The following figures provide the prices of basic selected food commodities due to the lack of consumer price index collected at the governorate level. Between January and November 2008, the price of red meat gradually increased from 41 NIS per kilo to 50 NIS per kilo. Prices slowly decreased in the first half of 2009 to reach 44.33 NIS per kilo by end of May 2009; slightly lower than the long term average of 45.90 NIS. The price of chicken which was 14 NIS per kilo in the beginning of January fluctuated in price throughout 2008. In March 2009, the price reached a peak of 16.50 NIS per kilo to decrease again to 13 NIS by the end of May 2009; slightly lower than the long term average.

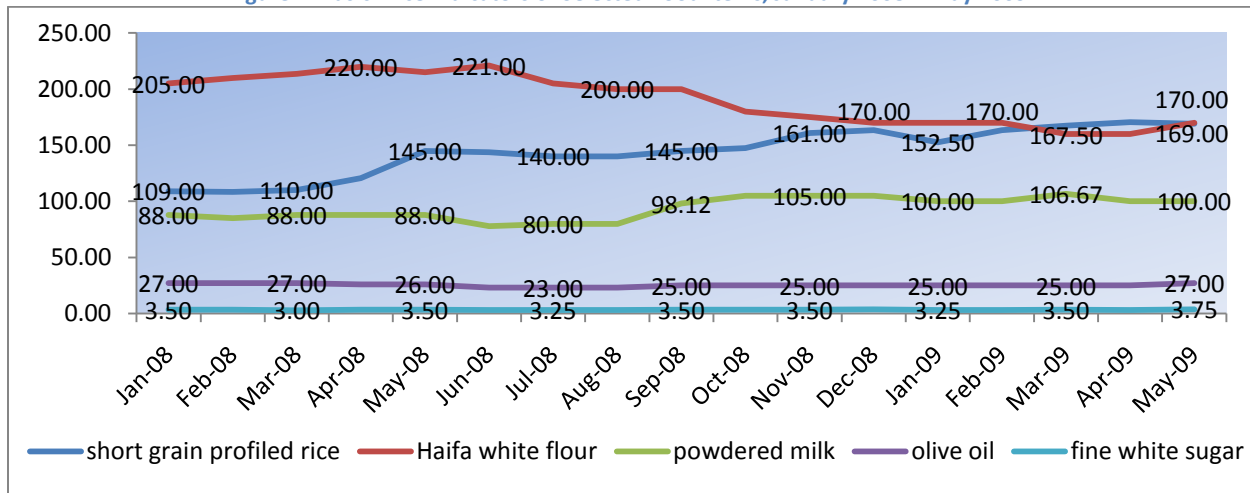
Figure 1: Prices of Red Meat and Chicken, January 2008 – May 2009



Source: PCBS Data

The price of short grain rice which stood at 205 NIS in January 2008 rose to 221 NIS by June 2008. The prices decreased again from June 2008 to 170 NIS by December of the same year. In the second half of 2009, the price of flour remained relatively stable. In contrast, prices of short grain rice have been on the increase. In January 2008, the price stood at 109 NIS and soared to 145 NIS by May 2008. The price of short grain rice continued to increase to reach 163 NIS in December 2008. In January 2009, the price of short grain rice dropped to 152.50 NIS but increased sharply to 169 NIS in May 2009. Prices of powdered milk remained stable in the first half of 2008 but decreased slowly in to reach 80 NIS by July 2008. From September 2008 and onwards, prices fluctuated to reach 100 NIS by May 2009.

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



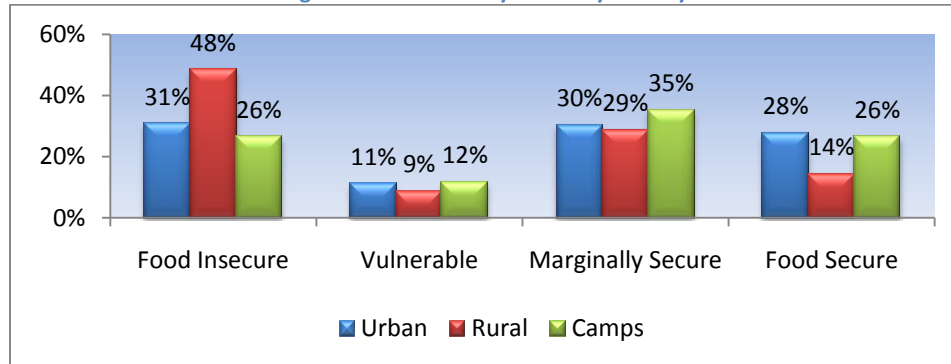
Source: PCBS Data

#### D. Food Insecurity Levels

The following figure indicates a higher prevalence of food insecurity among rural areas compared to urban or refugee camps. As shown, 28 percent of rural households are food insecure compared to 31 percent of urban and 26 percent of refugee camp households. Food security is slightly higher among urban households compared to refugee camp households; 28 percent of urban households compared to 26 percent of refugee camp households. However, when combining the food secure and marginally

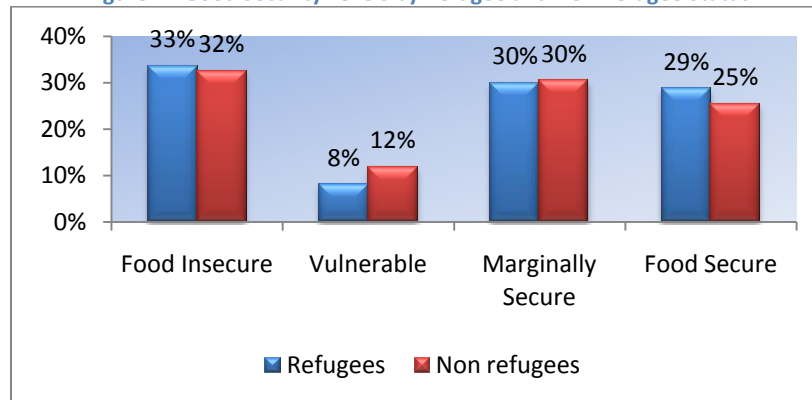
secure, a higher prevalence of food secure and marginally secure households can be found among refugee camp households compared to urban households.

**Figure 3: Food Security Levels By Locality**



A comparison of the findings between food insecure refugee and non refugee households show only slight variations between the two social categories. When combining the total of food insecure and marginal secure households, non refugee households have a higher prevalence at 44 percent compared to 41 percent of refugee households. Alternatively, refugee households have higher levels of food secure and marginally secure households at 59 percent compared to 55 percent of non refugee households.

**Figure 4: Good Security Levels by Refugee and Non Refugee Status**



**E. Gender of Head of Household and Food Security Levels**

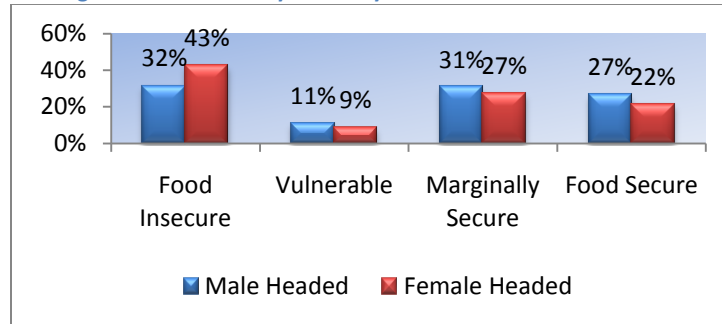
The percentage of male headed households compared to female headed households in Hebron is lower than those of the overall West Bank. A total of 88 percent of Remaining West Bank households are male headed while a total of 12 percent are female headed. Male headed households in Hebron take up a 90 percent proportion of the total number of households and female headed households make up 10 percent of the total.

**Table 6: Percentage of Male and Female Headed Households vs. Remaining West Bank**

	Hebron	Remaining West Bank
Male Headed Households	90%	88%
Female Headed Households	10%	12%

In terms of absolute numbers, female headed households are smaller in concentration than male headed households. However, similar to other governorates, female headed households have a higher prevalence of food insecurity than male headed households. Forty-three percent of female headed households compared to 32 percent of male headed households are food insecure. However, a slightly higher prevalence of households vulnerable to food insecurity are male headed at 11 percent, compared to 9 percent of female headed households.

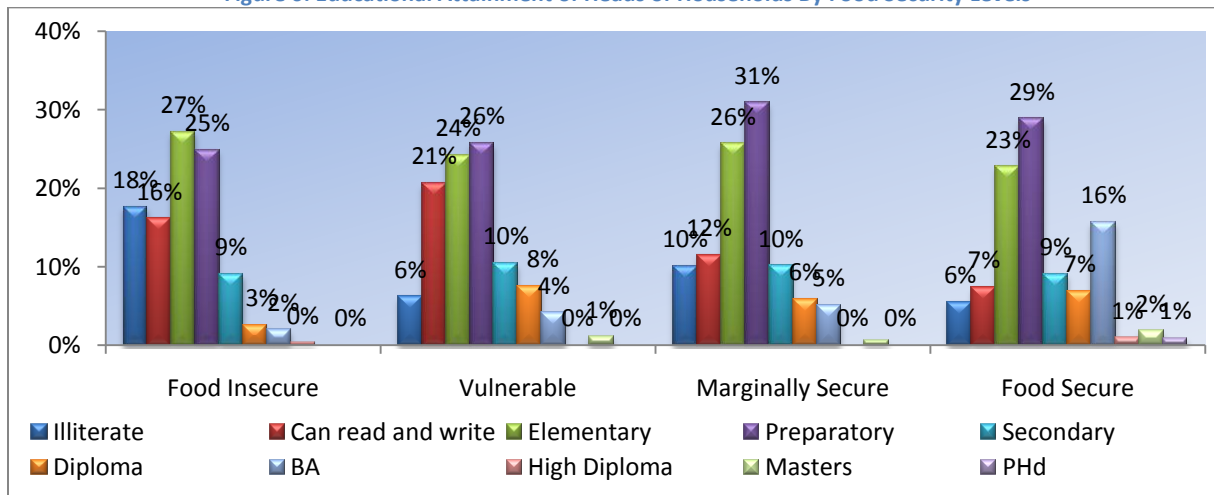
Figure 5: Food Security Levels by Gender of Head of Household



#### F. Education of Head of Household and Food Security Levels

The trend in educational attainment of food insecure and food secure heads of households are similar to the overall West Bank; levels of education attainment being lowest among the food insecure heads of households. Illiteracy rates are highest among the food insecure heads of households at 18 percent while the ability to read and write as the utmost educational attainment is higher among heads of households vulnerable to food insecurity. Education levels, while higher amongst the food secure heads of households show that only 16 percent of those who have achieved a B.A. degree are food secure. A vast majority of the food secure heads of households have only reached up to preparatory level education; an average of 10 years of schooling. While higher the levels of educational attainment increases the likelihood of households to be food secure, the trends also show that up to 10 years of educational attainment is also the minimum educational attainment one requires to achieve marginal or food security although dependent on the income.

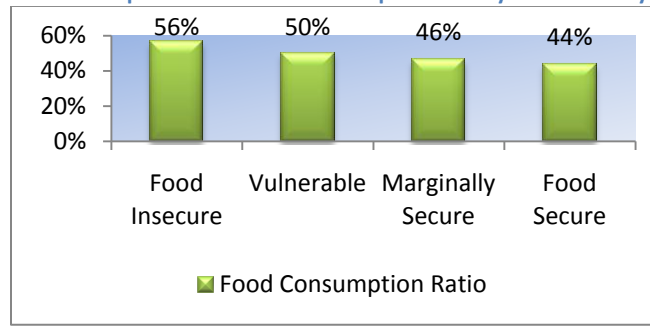
Figure 6: Educational Attainment of Heads of Households By Food Security Levels



### G. Food Consumption and Income Levels

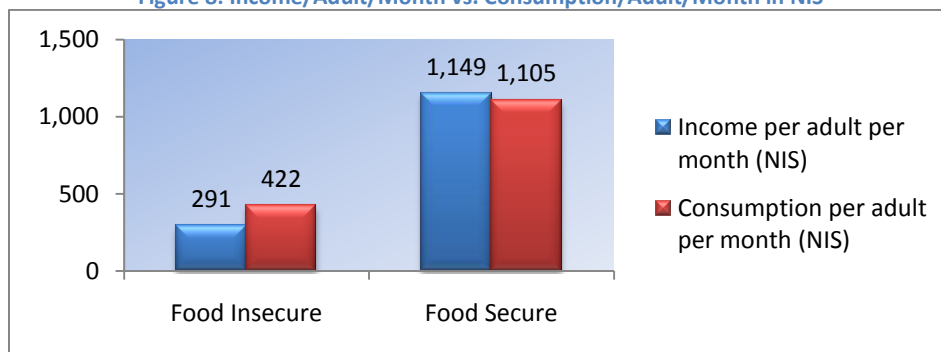
The proportion of food expenditure out of the total expenditure among the food insecure is highest than those of food secure households. Food insecure households in Hebron spend 56 cents of every dollar on food while food secure households spend 44 cents of every dollar. The PCBS threshold for worse off households is those spending 44 cent to every dollar on food expenditures.

Figure 7: Food Expenditure Out of Total Expenditure By Food Security Levels



The average monthly income per adult of food insecure households is 291 NIS. Food secure households report an average monthly income of 1,149 NIS. Similar to the trend amongst West Bank households, in Hebron, food secure households report higher income levels compared to consumption. This may indicate that food secure households are able to save income. In comparison, food insecure households tend to report lower levels of income compared to consumption. While there is a tendency for households to underreport income levels this may also indicate that food insecure households are actually indebt. The findings show that food secure households have an average monthly consumption of 1,105 NIS per adult. In comparison food insecure households show an average monthly consumption of 422 NIS per adult. This means that food insecure households in Hebron have to fill a 62 percent consumption gap to move out of their food insecurity threshold towards food security.

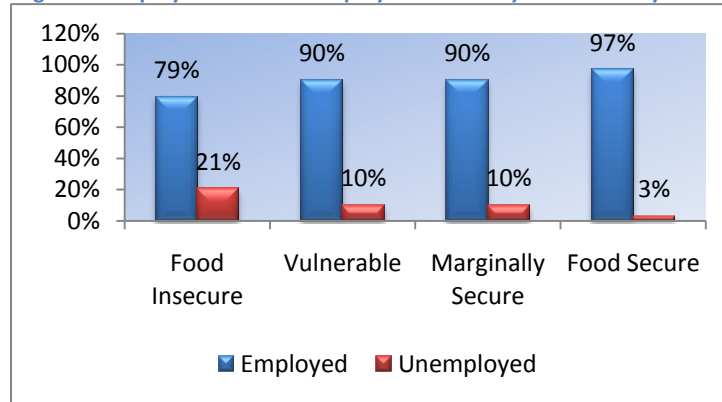
Figure 8: Income/Adult/Month vs. Consumption/Adult/Month in NIS



### H. Employment, Occupation, Sector and Place of Employment of Head of Households

The relationship between food security and employment follows the general trend that unemployment creates a greater likelihood for households to be food insecure. In Hebron governorate, 21 percent of heads of food insecure households reported being unemployed. Ten percent of vulnerable and an additional 10 percent of marginally secure heads of households are unemployed compared to only 3 percent of food secure heads of households.

Figure 9: Employment and Unemployment Rate By Food Security Levels



Elementary occupation and crafts related trade appears to be the mainstay for the vast majority of heads of households in Hebron. Food insecure households are employed mainly in crafts and related trade with 43 percent employed in this activity. Elementary occupation represents 21 percent of food insecure households. Additionally, 14 percent of food insecure households are employed as plant machine operators and 12 percent in services and sales. In contrast, 35 percent of food secure households are working in crafts/related trade, 18 percent in services and sales, 15 percent as specialists and 8 percent as legislative/senior managers.

Figure 10: Occupation of Food Insecure Heads of Households

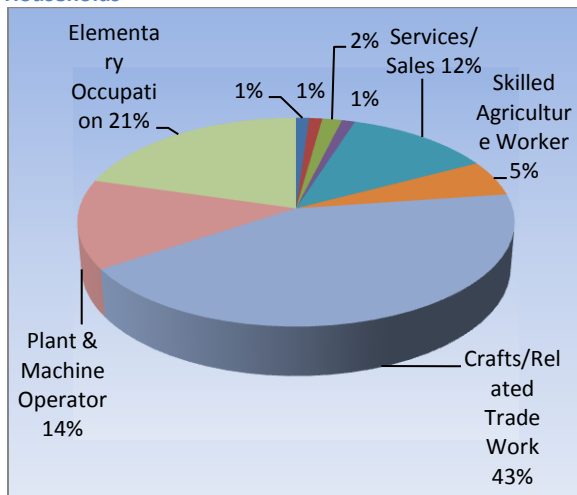
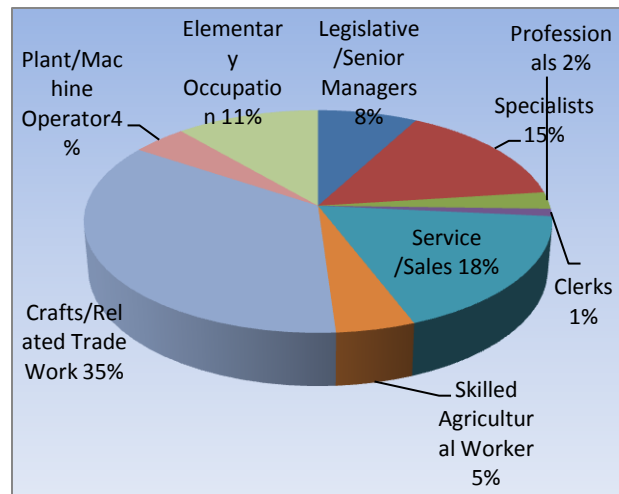


Figure 11: Occupation of Food Secure Heads of Households



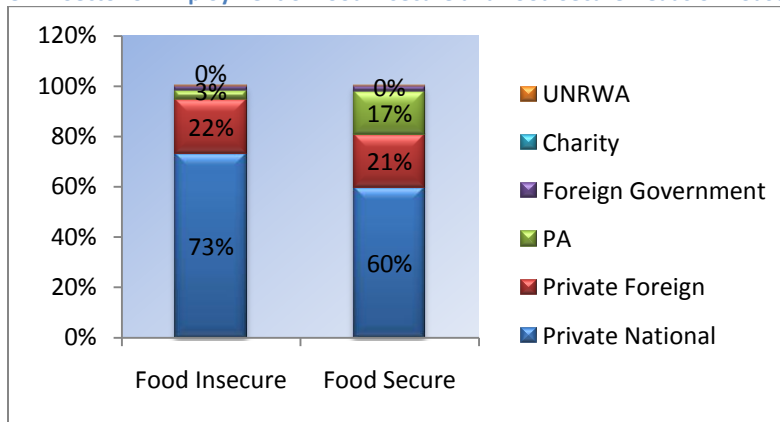
Closer inspection show that the whole sale and retail trade sector is the largest employer of food insecure and food secure households. Restaurants and hotels is the second largest employer for Hebron heads of households. Out of the total food insecure heads of households, 36 percent are employed in the wholesale retail trade, 21 percent in restaurants and hotels and lastly, 14 percent in mining and manufacturing. Out of the food secure heads of households, 30 percent are employed in the wholesale retail trade, 20 percent in restaurants and hotels and 10 percent in mining and manufacturing and education.

**Table 7: Area of Employment of Food Insecure and Food Secure Heads of Households**

	Food Insecure	Food Secure
Agriculture and fishing	10%	7%
Mining manufacturing	14%	10%
Construction	0%	1%
Wholesale retail trade	36%	30%
Restaurants and hotels	21%	20%
Transport, storage & communication	2%	2%
Finance insurance & mediation	7%	2%
Properties, rents & commercial businesses	0%	1%
Public administration & defense	2%	2%
Education	3%	10%
Health and social work	2%	8%
other social & personal care	1%	5%
International organisations	2%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

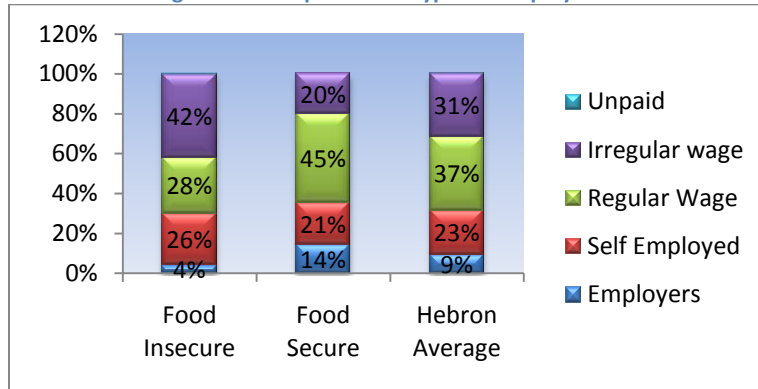
The private national sector provides the largest area of employment for both the food secure and food insecure heads of households. A total of 73 percent of food insecure households and 60 percent of food secure heads of households are employed in the private national sector. Additionally, 22 percent of households are employed within the private foreign sector and 21 percent of food secure heads of households. Employment within the Palestinian National Authority (PA) is composed of 17 percent of food secure households and only 3 percent of food insecure households.

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



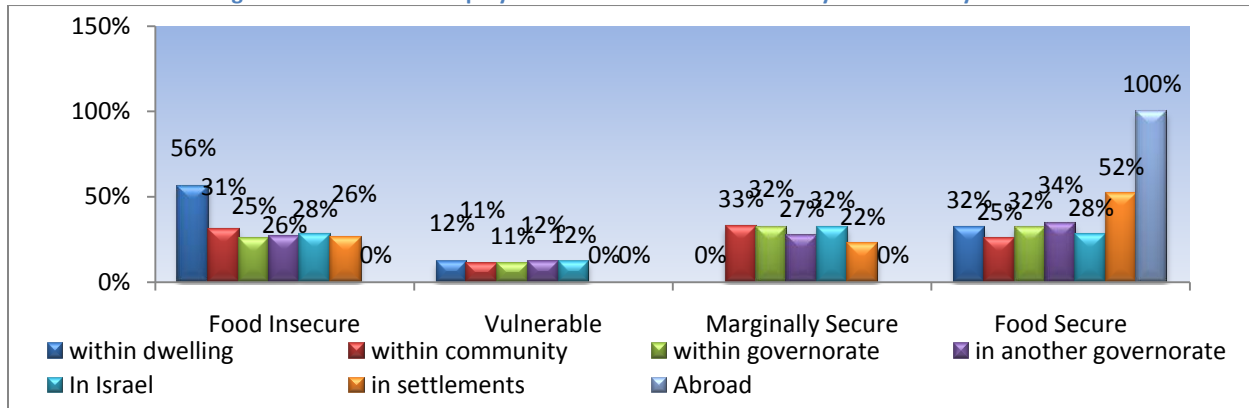
Following common trends, a vast majority of food insecure households are irregular wage workers (42%) while only 28 percent receive regular wage workers and 26 percent are self employed. Food secure households occupy a vast majority of those who are regular wage workers (45%). Additionally, 21 percent of them are self employed, 20 percent of irregular wage workers and 14 percent are employers.

Figure 13: Comparison of Types of Employment



Fifty-six percent of households who reported employment within their own dwelling are food insecure. Compared to 32 percent of heads of households who are food secure. Similar to previous trends, employment in settlements suggests a greater likelihood for households to be food secure at 52 percent compared to 26 percent who are food insecure households. Employment in Israel increases a household’s chances for food security or marginal security when examining the combined totals. Fifty percent of households who reported employment within Israel are food secure and marginally secure compared to 40 percent who are food insecure and vulnerable to food insecurity.

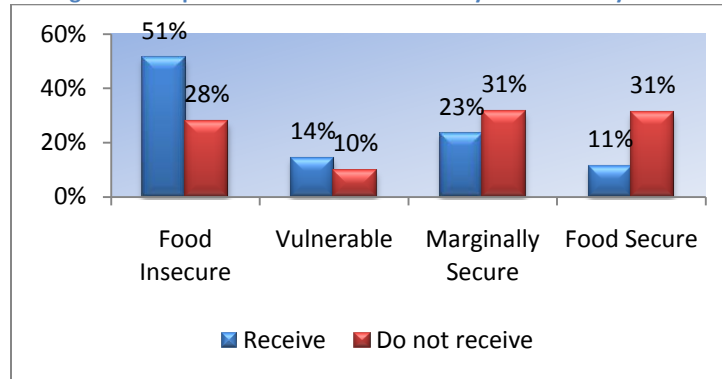
Figure 14: Location of Employment of Heads of Households by Food Security Levels



**I. Assistance and Targeting**

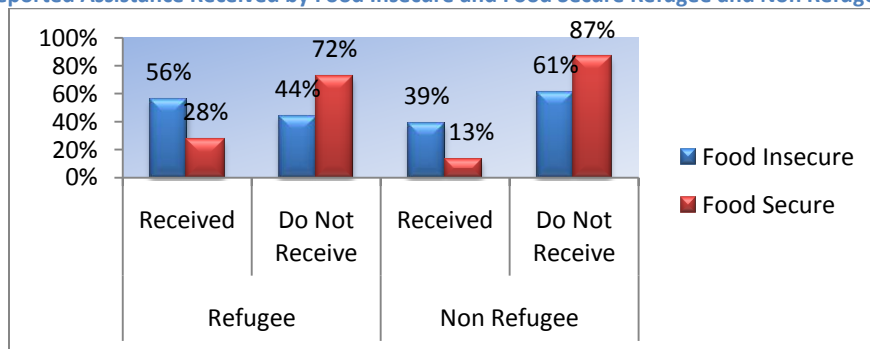
Food insecure households appear to be fairly well targeted in Hebron. Out of the total households who reported receiving assistance, 51 percent are food insecure compared to 28 percent who reported they do not receive assistance. Fourteen percent of those who reported receiving assistance are vulnerable to food insecurity. While food insecure households appear well targeted, despite this, a level of mistargeting is apparent with 11 percent of the food secure receiving assistance and a higher level of 23 percent of the marginally secure who reported receiving assistance.

Figure 15: Reported Assistance Received By Food Security Levels



Similar to previous findings, refugee households tend to be well targeted compared to non refugee households. Fifty-six percent of food insecure refugee households reported receiving assistance compared to 39 percent of non refugee households. The percentage of food secure refugee households who reported receiving assistance is 28 percent compared to 13 percent of food secure non refugee households.

Figure 16: Reported Assistance Received by Food Insecure and Food Secure Refugee and Non Refugee Households



Food insecure urban households show least levels of those receiving assistance while food insecure refugee camp households show the highest percentages of those receiving assistance. Seventy-eight percent of food insecure households living in refugee camps received assistance compared to 70 percent of food insecure rural households and 36 percent of food insecure urban households. This indicates that food insecure urban households have least access to social safety net schemes.

Figure 17: Reported Assistance Received by Locality and Food Security Levels

