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Food Security Profiling of Ramallah & Al Bireh 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.

Working Paper Series 3
Governorate Food Security Profiling WBS
VIII. Ramallah and Al Bireh Governorate

A. Population and Demography

Table 1: Percentage of Registered Refugee out of Total Population

	Registered Refugees	Other	Total
Population	73,189	189,371	262,560
Percent	28%	72%	100%

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

Ramallah and Al Bireh is the second largest governorate in the West Bank in terms of population size, accounting for 11 percent of the total population or an estimated 262,560 people. The average household size in Ramallah and Al Bireh is 4.5 members and 58,347 households reside in Ramallah and Al Bireh governorate. Consistent with the remaining West Bank average, the ratio of male to female is 1:1.

Approximately 28 percent of the Ramallah and Al Bireh population are registered refugees. They compose of 42 percent of the urban population, 14 percent of the rural and 100 percent of the refugee camp population. The distribution of the total Ramallah and Al Bireh population by localities show that 52 percent of the Ramallah population are living in the urban area, 42 percent live in the rural area and 6 percent live in refugee camps.

Table 2: Distribution of Population By Locality

	Urban	Rural	Refugee Camps	Total
Number of Communities	14	56	5	75
Population	145,114	118,365	16,251	279,730
Percent	52%	42%	6%	100%

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

B. Labour Force

Between the second quarter and the third quarter of 2008, the labour force participation rate increased from 44.6 percent to 45 percent. By the fourth quarter of 2008, the labour force participation rate dropped to 40.4 percent and increased again in the first quarter and second quarter of 2009 to 43.7 percent. The unemployment rate which stood at 13.2 percent in the second quarter of 2008 increased to 19.1 percent in the third quarter before slowly decreasing consistently to 15.5 percent by the second quarter of 2009.

Table 31: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rate

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Labour Force Participation %	44.6%	45.0%	40.4%	41.1%	43.7%
Unemployment %	13.2%	19.1%	18.7%	18.3%	15.5%

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

In absolute terms, during the last two quarters of 2008, the population above 15 years old (working age population) increased by 2,386 persons. During the same period, the number of jobs lost was 8,514 people leaving 2,823 individuals unemployed and labour force participation dropping by 5,691 individuals as they joined the discouraged population. In the first half of 2009, the population above the age of 15 increased to 2,422 persons with the number of labour force participants growing to 6,366. Additionally, unemployment dropped by 1,093 individuals with the creation of 7,459 jobs absorbing the number of individuals unemployed and the new labour force participants. This signifies an improvement in the socio-economic conditions of Ramallah and Al Bireh governorate.

Table 4: 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	266,498	268,497	270,511	272,540	274,584	4,012	4,073
above 15	158,452	159,640	160,837	162,044	163,259	2,386	2,422
Labour Force participation #	70,669	71,838	64,978	66,600	71,344	-5,691	6,366
Unemployed	9,328	13,721	12,151	12,188	11,058	2,823	-1,093
Employed	61,341	58,117	52,827	54,412	60,286	-8,514	7,459

Source: PCBS Census 2007 and Labour Force Survey Rounds

C. Wages and Prices

In the second quarter of 2008, the nominal daily wage in Ramallah was 90.20 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) while the real daily wage stood at 81.50 NIS. Real daily wage was 10 percent lower than nominal wages. In the third quarter of 2008, nominal wages increased to 93 NIS as real wages stood at 11 percent lower than the nominal wage at 82.70 NIS. In the fourth quarter of 2008, real wages returned to 10 percent lower than nominal wages. By the first quarter of 2009, the nominal wage stood at 99.5 NIS while real wages stood at 91.2 NIS; real wages were 8.4% lower than nominal wages indicating an improvement in household purchasing power.

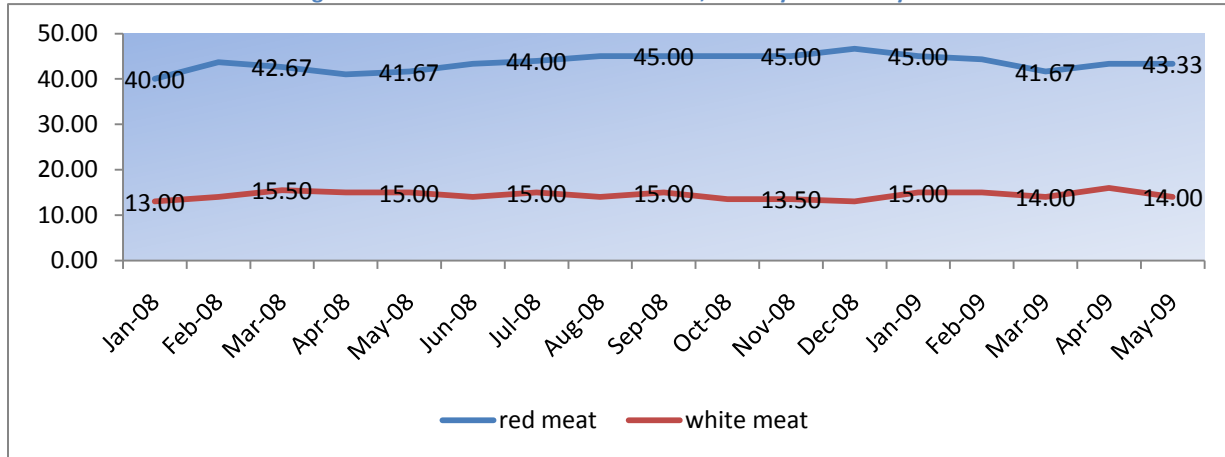
Table 5: Change in Population, Labour Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Average nominal daily wage NIS	90.2	93	90.8	99.5	101.4
Average real daily wage NIS	81.5	82.7	81.5	91.2	92.5

Since no consumer price index was collected at the governorate level, the prices of basic food commodities were selected to indicate socio-economic conditions of households within the governorate. As shown in figure 1, the prices of both red and white meat (chicken) fluctuated between January 2008 and May 2009. In January 2008 the cost per kilo of red meat was 40 NIS and by August 2008 to January 2009, the price remained stable at 45 NIS per kilo.

Following similar trends to the cost of red meat, in January 2008 the cost per kilo of white meat was 13 NIS and rose to 15.50 NIS in March, remaining stable at 15 NIS until December 2008. In the second half of 2009, prices decreased slightly from 15 NIS per kilo to 14 NIS/kilo by May 2009.

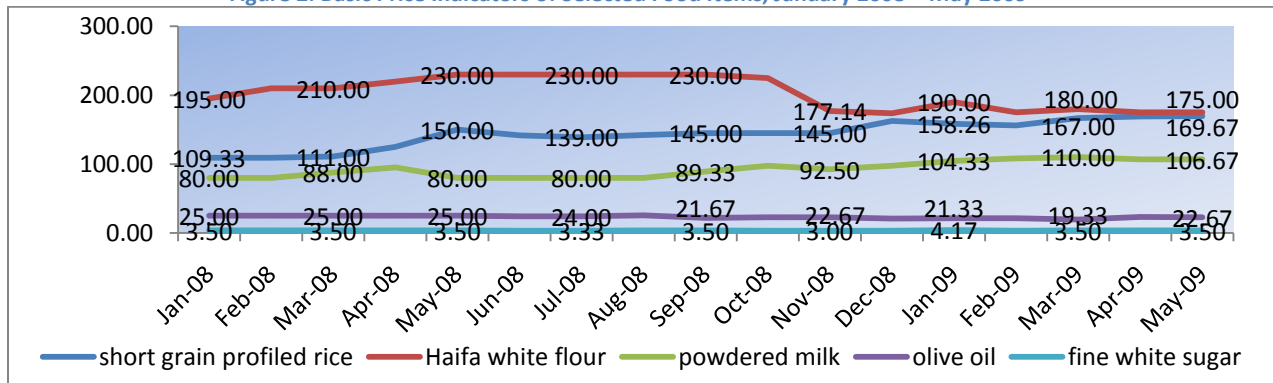
Figure 1: Prices of Red Meat and Chicken, January 2008 - May 2009



Source: PCBS Data

During the period between January 2008 and October 2008, the price of Haifa white flour increased dramatically from 195 NIS to 230 NIS, before falling sharply to 173.57 NIS in December. From January to May 2009, prices of flour continued to fluctuate reaching 175 NIS; lower than the long term average of 203.28 NIS. The reverse trend can be seen in short grain rice, which began in January 2008, at 109.33 NIS, rising constantly and consistently month by month to stand at 169.67 NIS by the end of May 2009. The price of powdered milk rose slowly but constantly from 80 NIS in January 2008 to 106.6 NIS in May 2009. During the same period, olive oil and fine white sugar prices remained relatively stable.

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 almost equal among refugee camps, urban and rural households. Twenty percent among urban and rural households and 19 percent among refugee camp households are food insecure. Food security levels are higher in the refugee camps compared to urban areas and rural areas, indicating better access to social assistance schemes in refugee camps (56 percent of refugees are food secure).

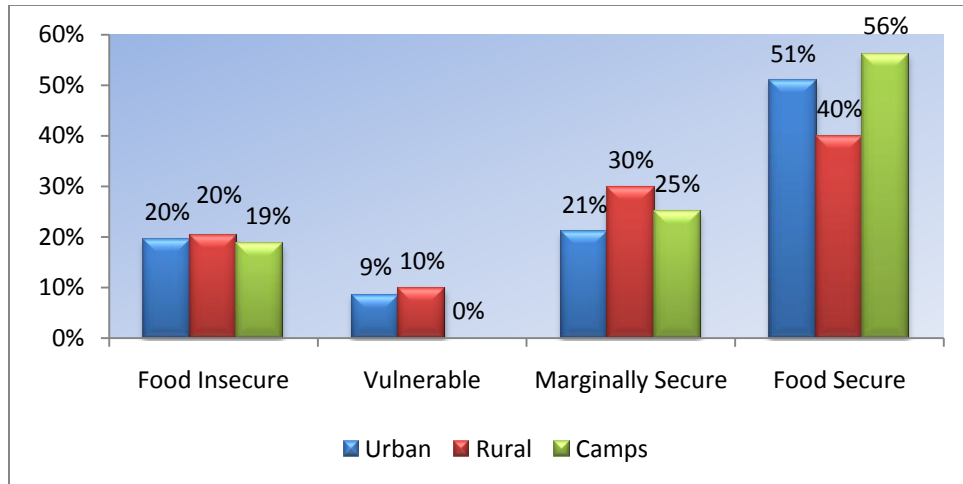


Figure 3: Food Security Levels by Locality

The comparison of food security levels between refugee and non refugee households are almost equal across all the food security groups. Thus, the prevalence of food insecurity is similar between refugee and non refugee households.

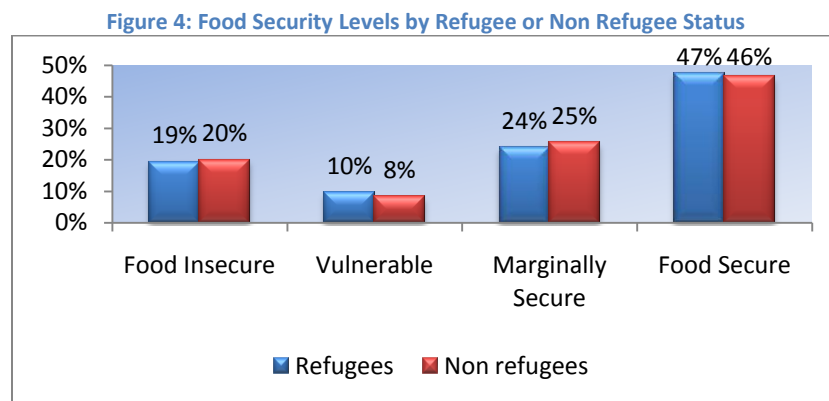


Figure 4: Food Security Levels by Refugee or Non Refugee Status

E. Gender of Head of Household and Food Security Levels

The percentage of female headed households in Ramallah are slightly higher than the average remaining West Bank. Fifteen percent of Ramallah households are female headed while 85 percent of households are male headed. This is compared to 12 percent of the remaining West Bank households which are female headed and 88 percent which are male headed.

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

	Ramallah	Remaining West Bank
Male Headed Households	85%	88%
Female Headed Households	15%	12%

Figure 5 indicates that a greater prevalence of food insecurity exists amongst female headed households; 24 percent of female headed households compared to 19 percent of male headed households. In comparison, the combined totals of households that are food secure and marginally

secure is higher amongst female headed households than male headed households and a higher prevalence of food secure households are headed by women (51%) than by men (46%).

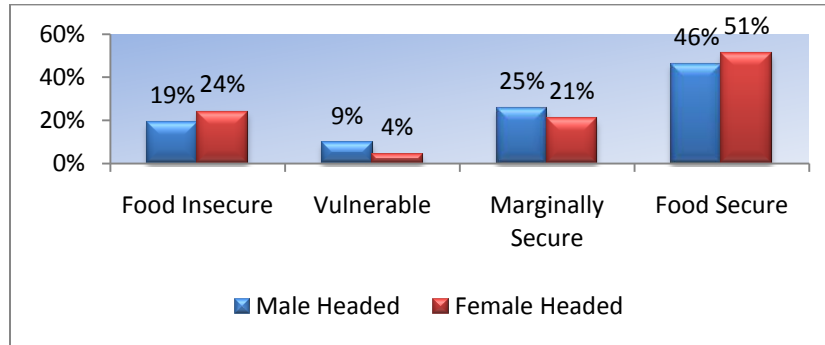
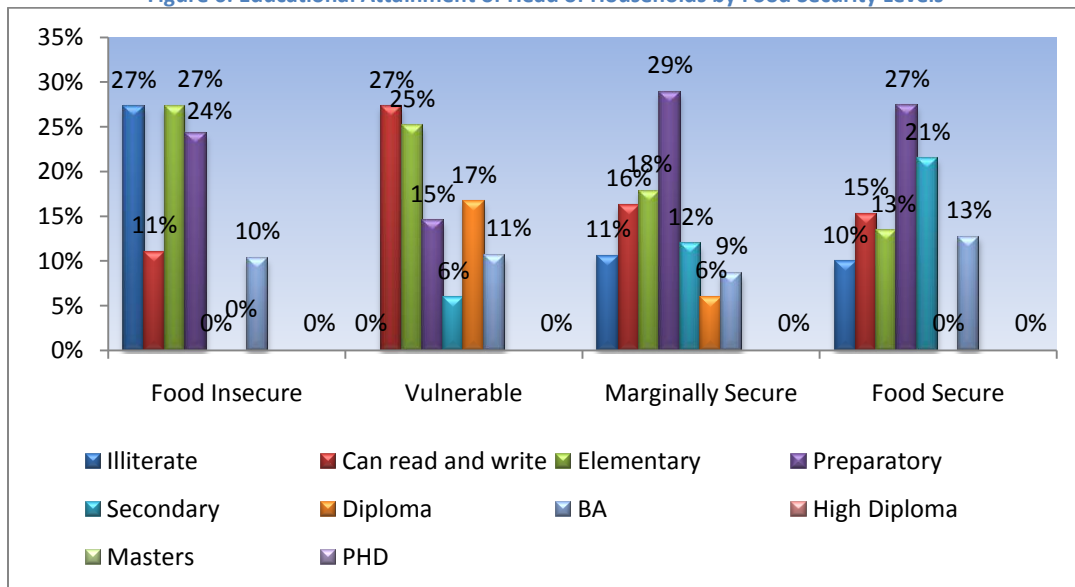


Figure 5: Food Security Levels by Gender of Head of Household

F. Education of Head of Household and Food Security Levels

A total of 5.8 percent of heads of households is illiterate. The majority of illiterate heads of households are food insecure (27 percent), whereas just 10 percent of food secure people are illiterate. The general trends show that those with a lower education have a higher risk of being food insecure. However those with preparatory education appear to be equally represented across all levels of food security suggesting that preparatory level education is the minimum level of educational attainment required to become food secure. Furthermore, those with B.A. degrees appear almost as likely to be food insecure (10 percent) as those who are food secure (13 percent).

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 defined as worse off households. Food secure household's food

consumption ratio fall at 43 percent just below the PCBS threshold of 44 percent. The marginally secure, vulnerable and food insecure households all fall above the PCBS threshold and can thus be considered worse off households. The figure below shows a correlation that the higher the level of food expenditure out of the total expenditure, the worse of households appear. This means that households with higher levels of food expenditure out of the total expenditure have less disposable income for non-food items which directly influences their food security levels.

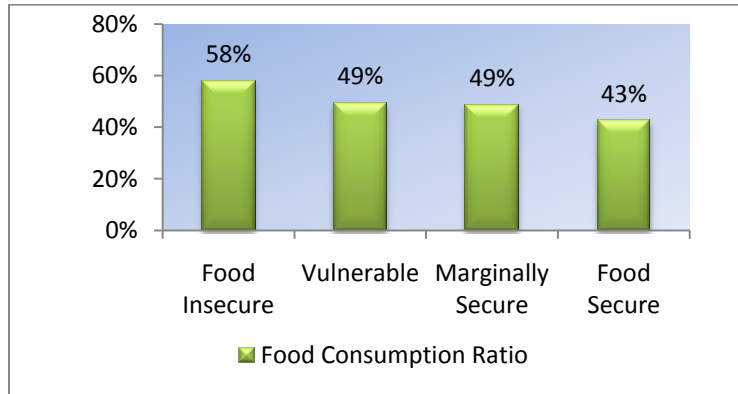


Figure 7: Food Consumption Ratio by Food Security Levels

Similar to trends of other governorates, food secure households reported greater monthly income levels per adult compared to consumption levels, while food insecure households reported the opposite. Compared to the food secure households, food insecure households have significantly lower monthly consumption levels per adult and appear to be consuming more than their reported income. This may suggest that food insecure households are coping on credit. In contrast, food secure households report a monthly consumption of 1,324 NIS per adult and a higher income of 1,823 NIS indicating their ability to save. Furthermore, food insecure households are required to meet a 69 percent consumption gap in order to become food secure.

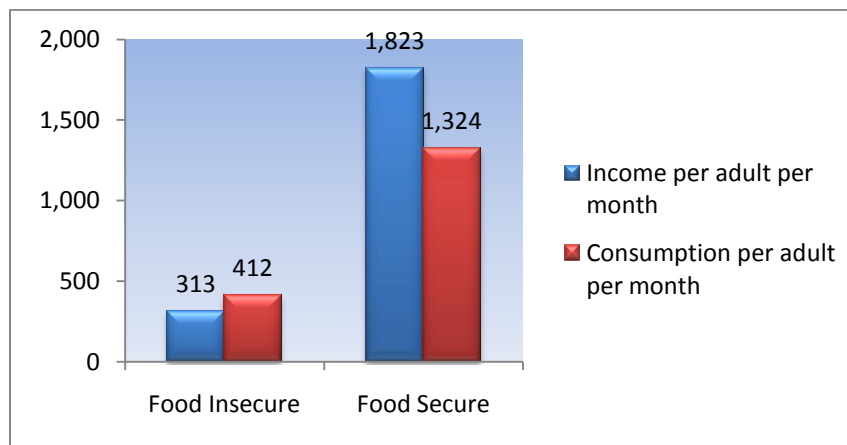


Figure 8: Income/Adult/Month vs. Consumption/Adult/Month in NIS

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

The following figure illustrates the correlation between food security and employment. The highest level of unemployment is amongst the food insecure heads of households at 24 percent followed by

vulnerable heads of households at 13 percent and the marginally secure at 10 percent. The unemployment level is lowest amongst the food secure at 2 percent.

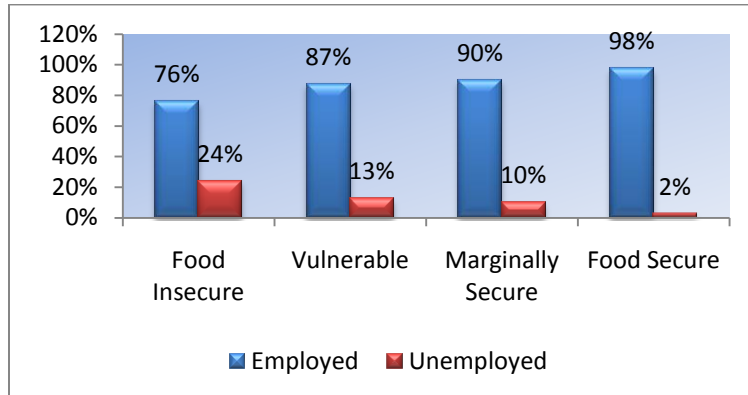


Figure 9: Employment and Unemployment Levels by Food Security Levels

Food insecure heads of households appear to be employed in low skilled forms of employment. The vast majority of food insecure heads of households (59 percent) are employed in elementary occupations. This is followed by 18 percent of food insecure heads who are employed in crafts or related trade work and 12 percent in sales or services.

In comparison a smaller number (21 percent) of food secure heads of households are employed in elementary occupation and 17 percent in sales or services. A much larger proportion of food secure heads of households compared to food insecure heads of households, are employed in highly skilled occupations such as professionals (10 percent), specialists (18 percent) and as legislative / senior managers (14 percent).

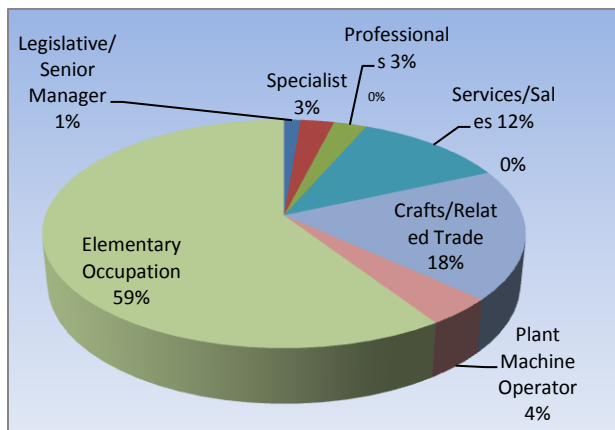


Figure 10: Occupation of Food Insecure Heads of Households

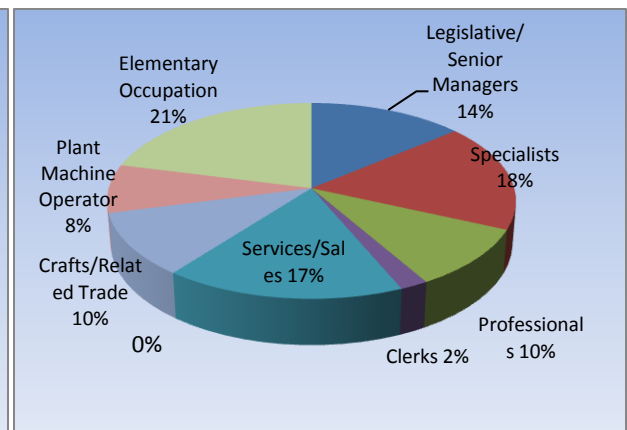


Figure 11: Occupation of Food Secure Heads of Households

Table 8 shows that more than half of food insecure heads of households (53 percent) work in construction and 20 percent in the wholesale and retail trade. Jobs in agriculture and fishing and in properties and commercial businesses appear to provide equal opportunities for households to become food secure or food insecure. Public service work and mining manufacturing appear to provide greater opportunities 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	1%	1%
Mining manufacturing	8%	16%
Electricity, gas, water supplies	0%	2%
Construction	53%	14%
Wholesale and retail trade	20%	16%
Restaurants and hotels	0%	6%
Transport storage communication	3%	6%
Finance insurance and mediation	0%	4%
Properties, rents and commercial businesses	5%	4%
Public administration and defense	5%	16%
Education	3%	10%
Health and social work	1%	2%
Other social and personal care	1%	3%
International organizations	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Figure 12 below refers to the sector of employment of food insecure and food secure heads of households. Employment within the private sector is the major source of employment for both the food secure and food insecure heads of households (60 percent and 75 percent respectively). The figure below also illustrates that a regular, reliable government income correlates with a better level of food security. For example, twenty-one percent of food secure households are employed in the PA compared to only 5 percent of food insecure households.

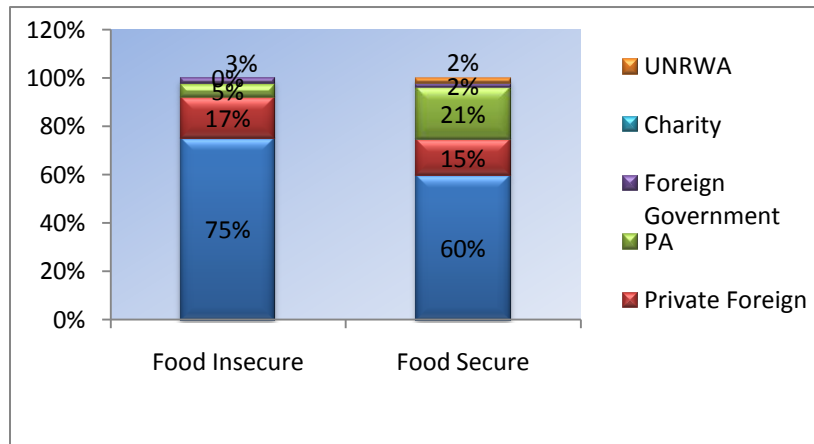


Figure 12: Sector of Employment by Food Insecure and Food Secure Heads of Households

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 56 percent of heads of households receive regular wages while 19 percent are receiving irregular wages. Additionally, 15 percent of the heads of households are self employed and 11 percent are employers. Sixty-five percent of food secure persons receive regular wages compared to 39 percent of the food insecure. A further 14 percent of food secure households are

employers and only 8 percent are irregular wage workers. In comparison, the vast majority of food insecure households are irregular wage workers (42%).

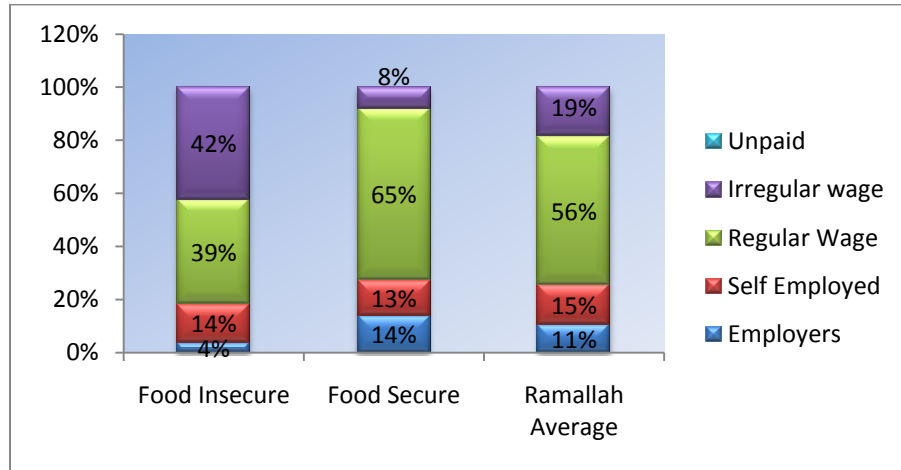
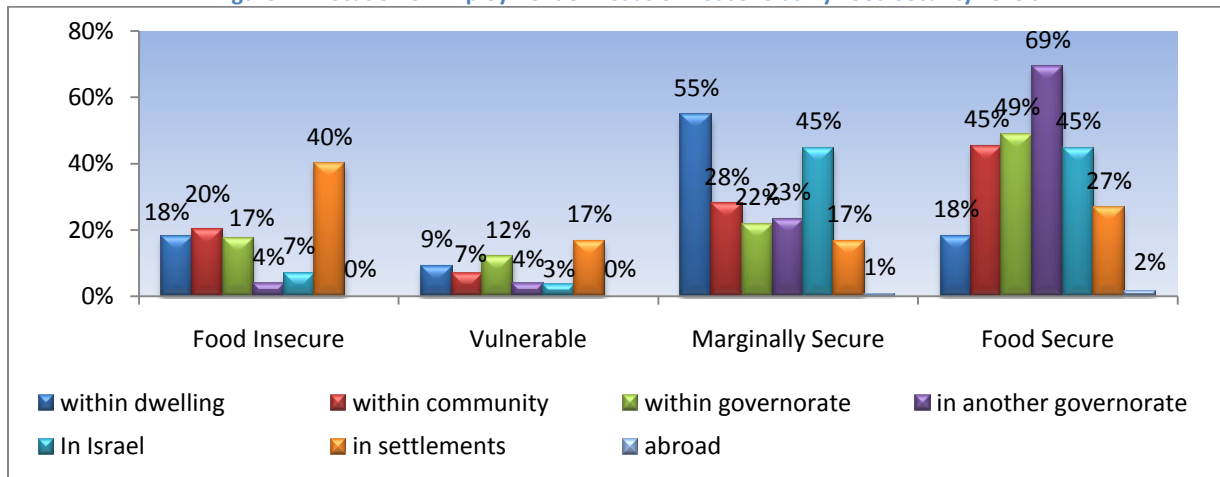


Figure 13: Comparison of Type of Employment

Figure 14 demonstrates that for the Ramallah and Al Bireh heads of households, working within the settlements provides the greatest opportunity for households to become food insecure. Alternatively, employment in another governorate provides households with greater potential to be food secure at 69 percent of them reporting employment in another governorate.

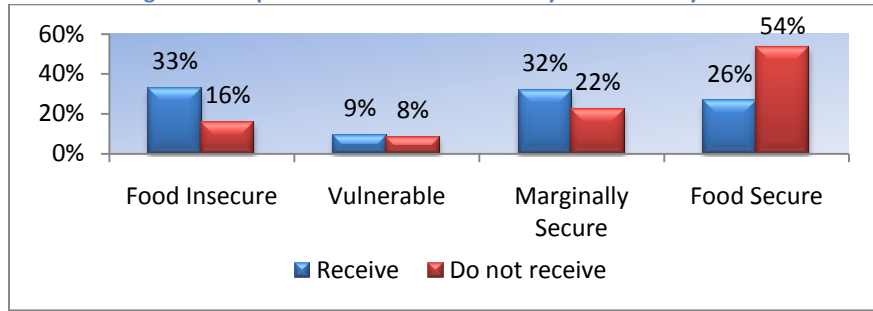
Figure 14: Location of Employment of Heads of Households By Food Security Levels



I. Assistance and targeting

Figure 15 below shows a disproportionate distribution of assistance. Thirty-three percent of food insecure households reported receiving assistance compared to 32 percent of the marginally secure and 26 percent of the food secure.

Figure 15: Reported Assistance Received by Food Security Levels



The following figure indicates that refugees compared to non refugees are better targeted with assistance schemes. A higher percentage of food insecure refugees (63%) reported receiving assistance compared to 38 percent of food insecure non refugees who reported receiving assistance.

Figure 16: Reported Assistance Received by Refugee and Non Refugee Status

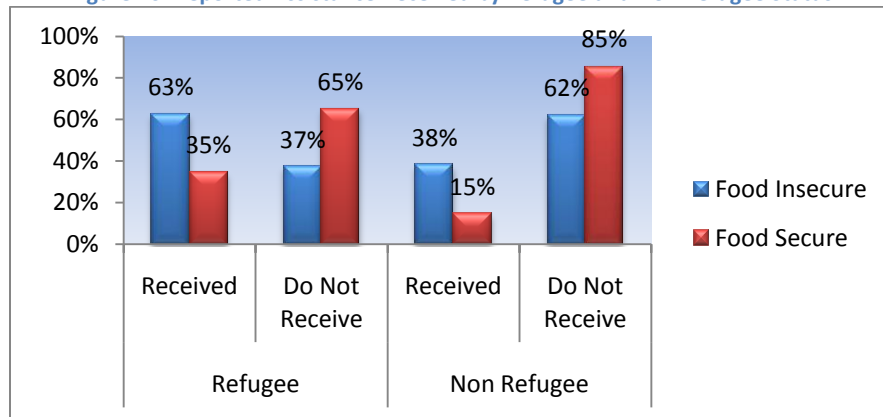


Figure 17 indicates the percentage of households who report or do not report assistance by their locality. Households living in refugee camps are better targeted compared to households living in urban and rural areas. Just under half of both the rural and urban food insecure households reported receiving assistance while 15 percent of the food secure in both urban and rural areas reported receiving assistance.

Figure 17: Reported Assistance Received by Locality

