Healthier Food Options in Bamenda City

159 réponses

Situational Analysis: Healthy Food Access Landscape in Bamenda City, Cameroon

Introduction:

70% of annual global deaths are due to non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases like stroke and hypertension, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases. 3rds of these deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, Cameroon inclusive, with 35% of annual deaths due to NCDs. 11,300 deaths in Cameroon are directly due to dietary risk factors. In 2016, unhealthy diets overtook tobacco use as the number one risk factor for developing NCDs. This means that there is no NCD prevention and control without regard to where our food comes from.

Any intervention related to food must consider farms and farmers, supply chain and access. This means that the awareness, availability and access to healthier food options (food security) is of prime importance for any developing country to progress in both health and development of the population. Current campaigns seek to reduce access to trans-fat and other harmful diets widely available in communities but without strengthening alternative sources of nutritive and healthier options. It is important to map out awareness, need and access landscape to design a program that strengthens production and distribution chain for population health.

The recommendations of this analysis, which constitute the Community Action Project (CAP) of the 2019 US Department of State Community Solutions Fellow, Ferdinant M. Sonyuy, will feed into the Green Connekt project, an initiative of the reconciliation and development Association – RADA for the Bamenda 1, 2 and 3 Council areas (Bamenda City Council).

Results Summary:

The survey was done among 159 residents of different professions from Bamenda city (Bamenda1, 2 and 3), who took both the online and offline survey voluntarily. Majority were young unmarried professionals. The survey indicated that majority of respondents buy their food.

RESULTS

Geographic Location :

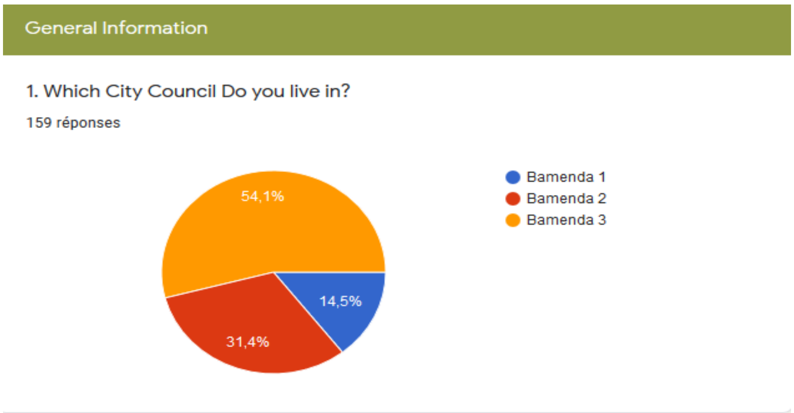


Figure 1

Majority of those who took the survey were from Bamenda 3

Age and gender:

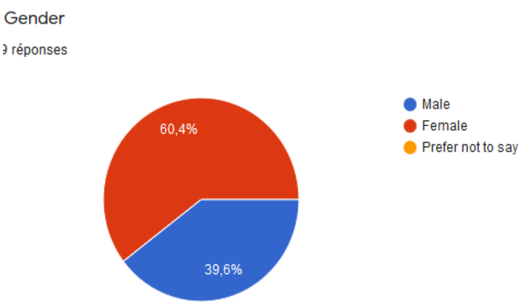


Figure 2

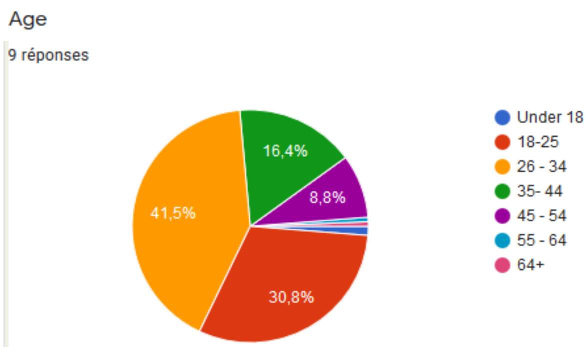


Figure 3

Majority of respondents were young Ladies. Most respondents were between the ages of 26 – 34, followed by those of age 18-25. Results therefore reflect what is happening on food access among the youth age and can indicate harbingers of future health and development benefits from the resulting project or impediments to the same benefits that must be averted for a healthy population to be guaranteed.

Marital status:

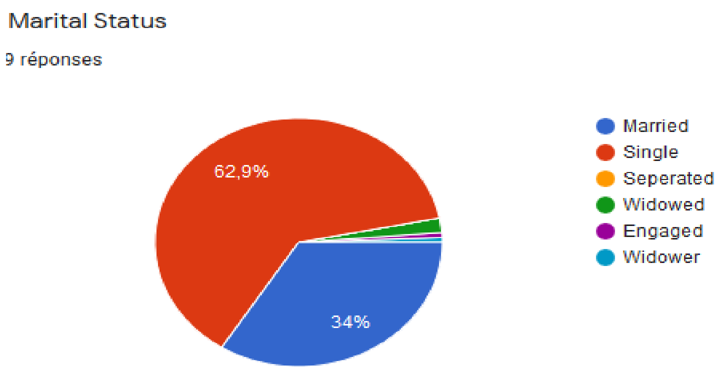


Figure 4

63% of those who took the survey where singles, while 34% where married.

Profession:

Respondents represented a vast number of professions active in the city. Highest were students.

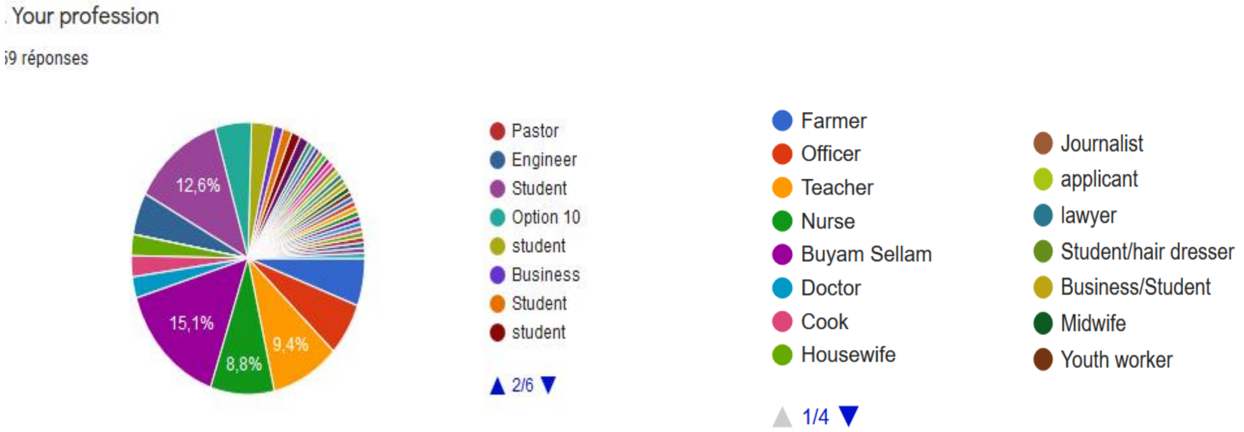
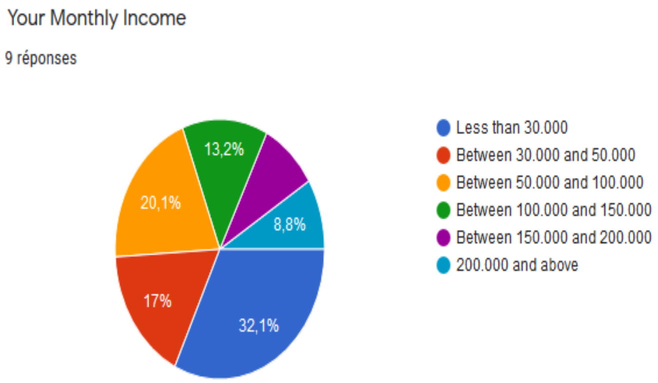


Figure 5

Income levels:



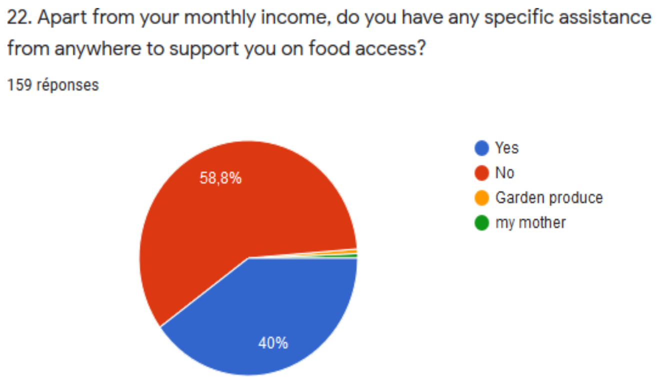


Figure 6

Figure 7

About 49% of respondents were earning less than or 50.000 F CFA. (100 USD) a month. This means that the context of the project is in an economically low-income population with 32% living below the poverty line. This might affect affordability of healthy foods as well as strategies for sustainability of initiatives increasing access for the same. Despite the low incomes, 60% respondents reported no other external food assistance was available. This means that specific equity measures will have to be identified, iterated and piloted.

Health status:

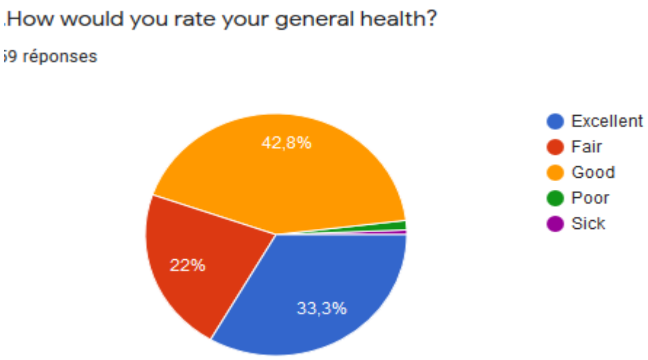


Figure 8

(22%) of respondents considered their general health as fair. This points to the fact that a considerable number of respondents feel less healthy than desired. While 33% of respondents (80%) considered their general health as excellent and this points to the fact that they are ignorant of the after effects of taking in of unhealthy feeding.

Source of Food.

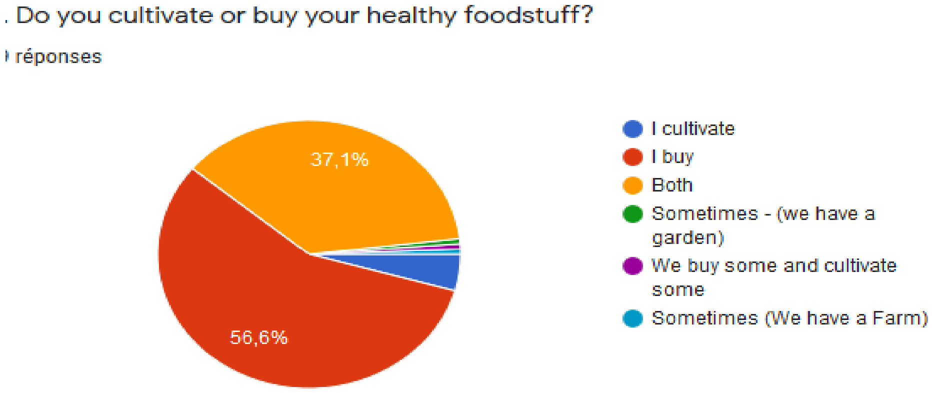


Figure 9

56.6% of respondents **buy** their food stuff as opposed to cultivating it themselves while a small fraction engages in both buying and cultivating. **This means that the health of the population may largely depend on what is sold in markets, imported or cultivated** by others whereby, they have no proof of health quality. Whether sold foods in markets or other sources is regulated for health quality and how this is done, is another question that seeks answers. This points to the need for certification programs.

Importance of Healthy Food and their Availability:

At least 74% of respondents indicate that it is extremely important for them to eat healthy foods. Hence, the need for healthier food options in Bamenda.

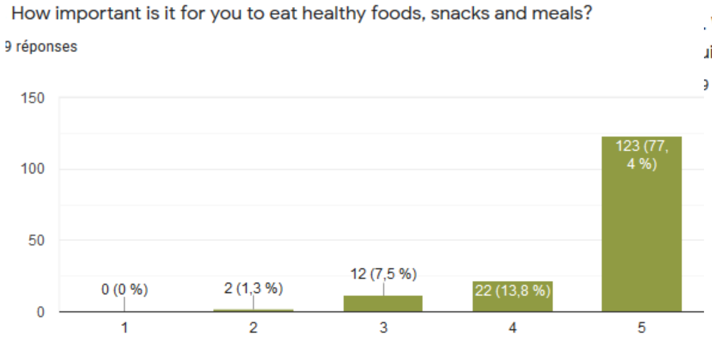


Figure 10

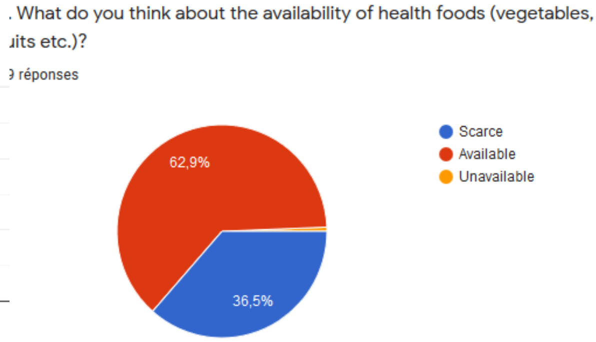


Figure 11

Majority of respondents feel that healthy foods are available in Bamenda City (left graph). How they know that current available foods are healthy is yet to be validated. Majority also feel that they have a choice over what they eat. That is, how healthy it is. This might point to potential lack of knowledge on how to identify what is healthy and what is not. 14.5% felt that they do not have control over how healthy what they eat is.

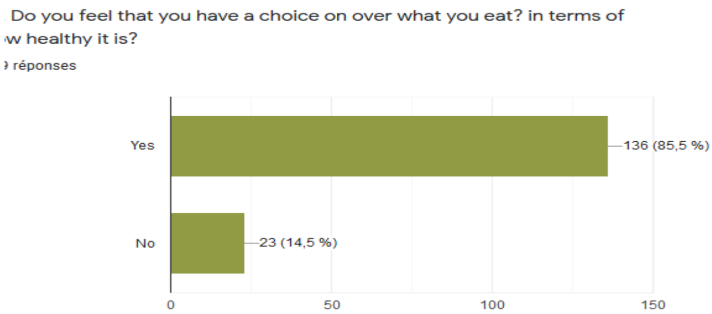


Figure 12

Where food is bought from in Bamenda City:

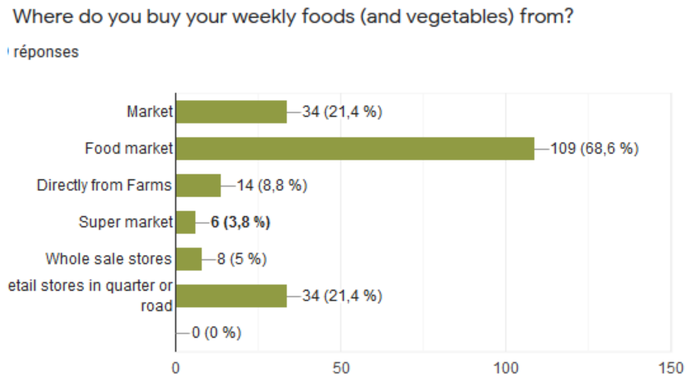


Figure 13

Most inhabitants may be buying food from the market/food markets. Also, from stores in the quarters. 3.8% of respondent bought foods from the supermarkets and non-by online means. Just 8.8% of respondents bought directly from farms. The reasons for these were not surveyed. What are the implications of these to GC in relation to increasing access to healthy options? For instance, these raise questions such as: What therefore do people buy from super markets? Also, does this mean that an online based marketing of food has low chances of succeeding?

Frequency of Purchases from source:

Most respondents buy food from their purchasing source once or twice a week. This means that GC Supplies can be made once or twice a week to subscribers of shares.

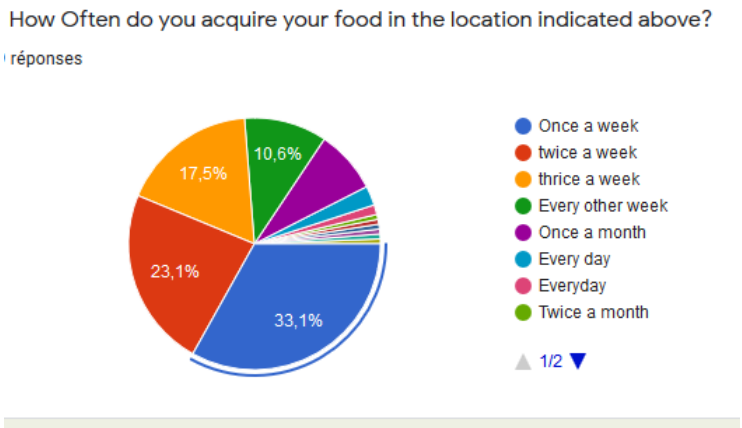


Figure 14

Reasons for buying from specific place:

Most respondents bought food from where they did for the following major three reasons:

1. It was closer to home
2. It was cheaper
3. There is variety

Other reasons were due to large quantities and easier transportation.

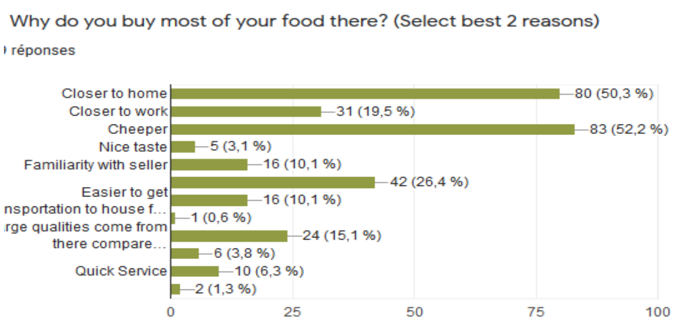


Figure 15

Means of Transportation to obtain food.

A significant majority of respondents walk/trek to get their food. Others use a taxi and a similar number of use motor bikes. Getting to buy food takes majority of respondents at least 10 -15 minutes. Up to 23% of respondents need up to 26 minutes to get to buy food. These distances mean that a well demarcated distribution network might serve the population in an innovative way within the

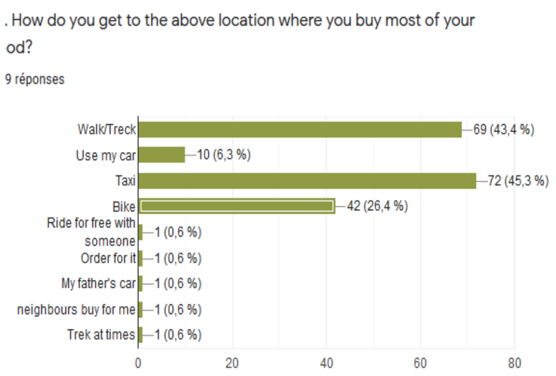


Figure 16

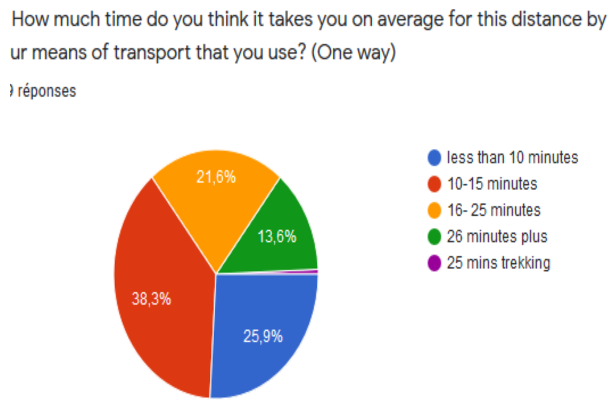


Figure 17

How many people respondents shop for?

Figure 18

More than 50% of respondents shopped for at least 5 persons in their household. This is characteristic of large family sizes in the context. Small, medium and large family sizes require quantities of sales most suitable for household size.

Times Healthy Snacks and meals are eaten per day:

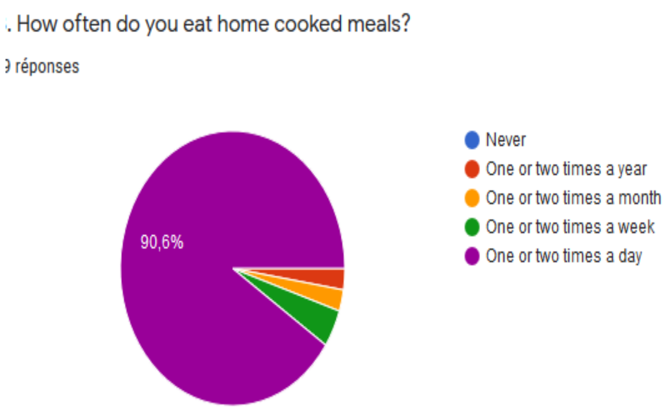


Figure 19

Figure 20

About 90.6% of respondents indicated eating healthy snacks/meals 1-2 times a day. The same percentage indicated eating home cooked meals. 40.3% of respondents eat at restaurants 1-2 times a month. Restaurants might constitute a major opportunity to strengthen population health via the encouragement in use of quality fresh produce as potentially desired by the population and as consistent with health benefits. Distance was considered not (too) far eating at restaurants, by those who do.

Reasons for not eating healthy snacks and meals:

A further probe into the reasons why respondents don't eat healthy snacks and meals indicated that Cost is a primary reason, seconded by the convenience of getting the healthy meal. Also, the time to get it is a hindrance, as well as distance to the store and, not having information on what/where to get it. These are the reasons around for which solutions need to be iterated and prototyped. Proximity and cost therefore stand out for access solutions. An information access point and, easy request and supply systems might satisfy the population´s healthy food access needs. These depend on an effective and efficient supply chain, which is trusted, together with a trusted produce that the population can go for. It is also understood that cost is an issue based on the economic situation of the region and country.

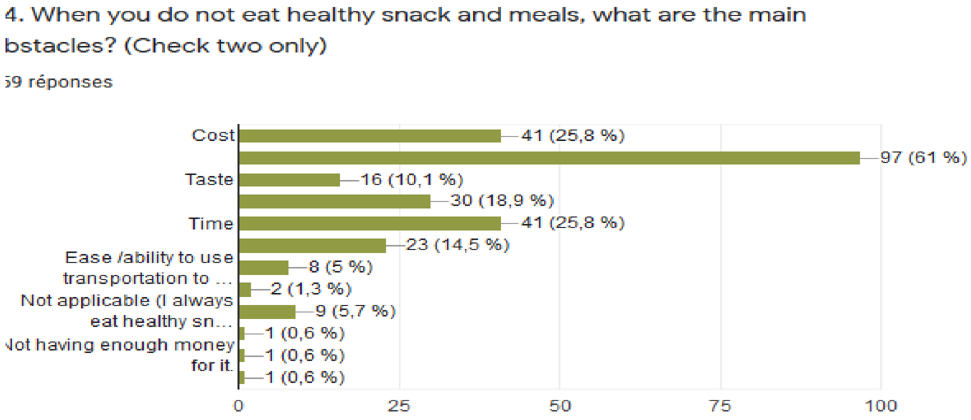


Figure 21

An individual analysis to further understand the choices of responses by respondents revealed a more interesting picture of reasons and priority of these reasons why respondents don't eat healthy foods and snacks as follows:

39% indicted that when they do not eat healthy snacks and food, cost is most important to them (see fig 22). 46.5% indicated that information is most important to them (Fig 24). 36.5% indicated that ease/ability to use transportation is most important to them (Fig 26). 22.6% indicated that market distance is most important to them. 28.3% indicated that convenience is most important to them (Fig 23). 27.7% also indicated that time is also most important to them (Fig 25). 37.7% indicated that taste is most important to them (Fig 28). 8.2% indicated that tradition was most important to them.

Figure 22

Figure 23

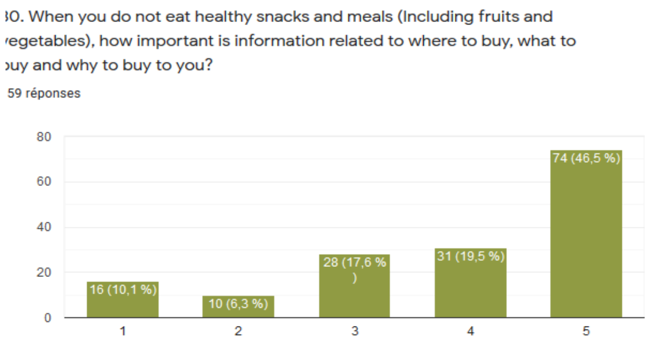


Figure 24

Figure 25

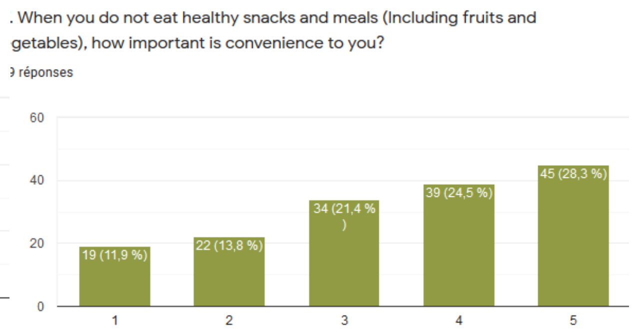


Figure 26

Figure 27

Figure 28

Fig. 29 below gives a summary of the difficulties the correspondents face in getting Healthy foods. From the figure it can be observed that lack of information on where to and what to buy that is healthy, is the most important factor with 18.9%. Seconded by the Cost factor of 15.8% and thirdly they worry about the taste of the product (15.3%).

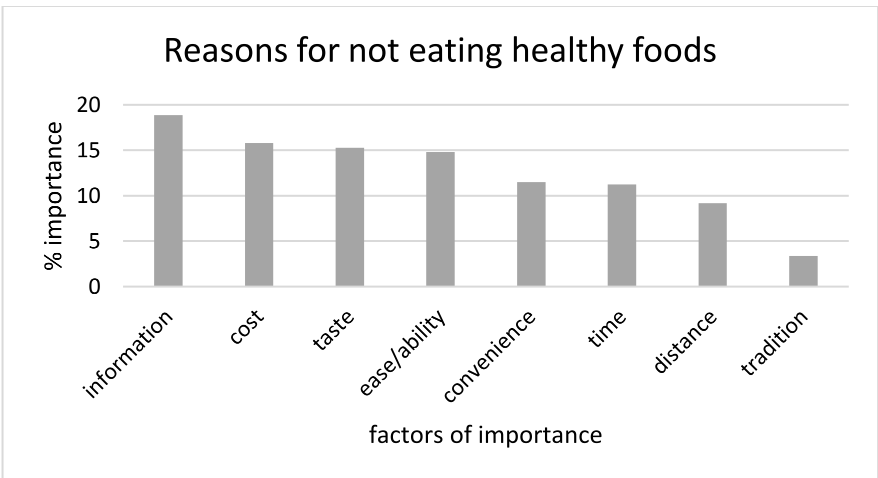


Figure 29

Consumption of SSB (Sugar sweetened beverages)/bear and Wine

Majority of respondents indicated that they take SSBs 1-2 times a week. Followed by a further less frequent taking of 1-2 times a month. Majority also indicated not taking beer (47.8%) at all

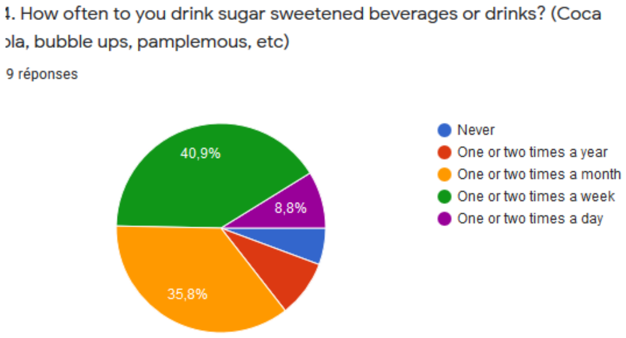


Figure 30

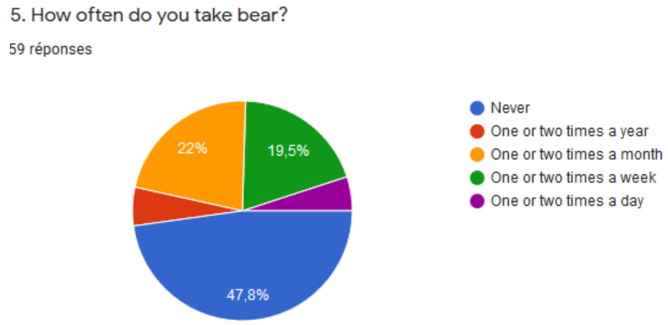


Figure 31

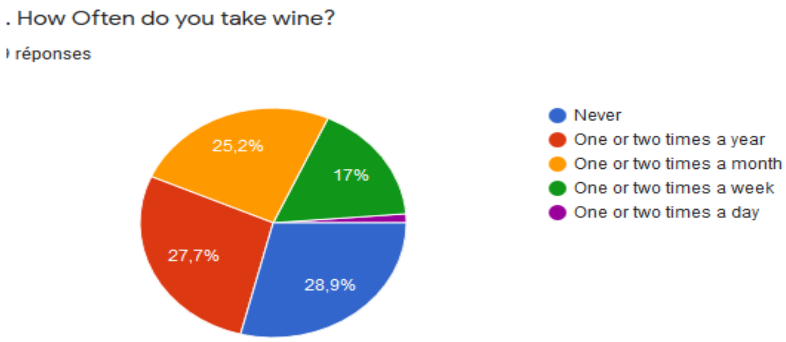


Figure 32

28.9% of the respondence reported not taking wine at all with 27.7% taking it 1-2 times a year,25.2% taking it 1-2 times a month.

Acceptability of electronic method of knowing availability and purchasing:

Majority (81.8% of respondents are ready to adopt an electronic method of knowing availability and purchasing healthy produce.

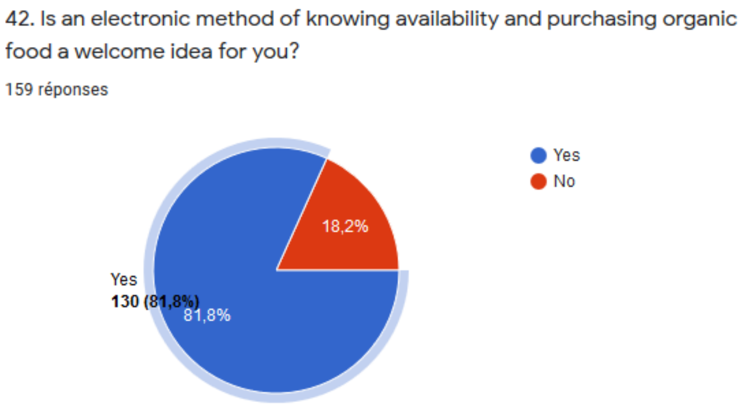


Figure 33

Pick up of Produce:

Asked where they will prefer to pick up produce, 56% indicated that they would like produce to be dropped at their door if the city had well labeled and orderly homes. A significant percentage indicated preference for getting the produce at the nearest pick up spot if there are many in the city that can serve them. Meanwhile 18.9% indicated preference for getting the produce at a farmer's market. These responses speak to key supply chain designs that GC can use for the supply of shares. There is a need to continue to advocate for housing and urban development to be improved so as to improve distribution chains for the City.

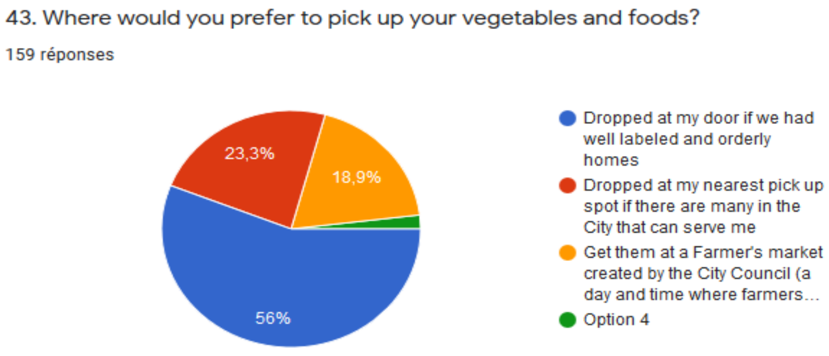


Figure 34

Potential Pick up Spots:

SN	Potential pick up points	Frequencies of responses
1	Mobile, Nkwen	23
2	Foncha junction	13
3	Farmers House	9
4	Mile 4 Junction	10
5	Mile 2, Junction	5
6	St Paul Junction	15
7	Governor`s junction	7
8	Finance junction	11
9	City chemist	5
10	Ntarinkon	1
11	Brasseries Junction	2
12	Food market	11
13	Sisia	8
14	Custom	5
15	Hospital round-about	5
16	Miss Ngeng	4
17	Door step (Home)	12

Majority of the respondents preferred mobile, Foncha junction and St Paul junction as their major pick up points while a good number prefer their produce drop at their door step.

Most Eaten Fruits, vegetables and staples:

The most eaten fruit is Water Melon. Seconded by Banana, pineapples, oranges and cucumber in that order.
The Most eaten vegetables include: Huckle berry, (88.1%), Bitter Leaf, Carrots, Cabbage,
For staples: fufu Corn, Plantains stood out, then Irish potatoes and Coco Yams.

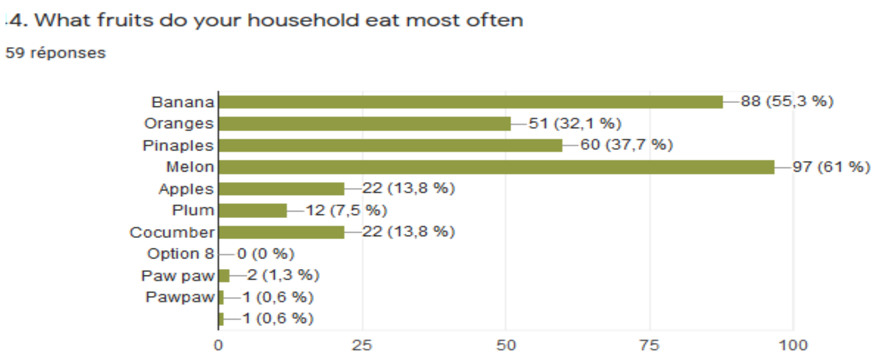


Figure 35

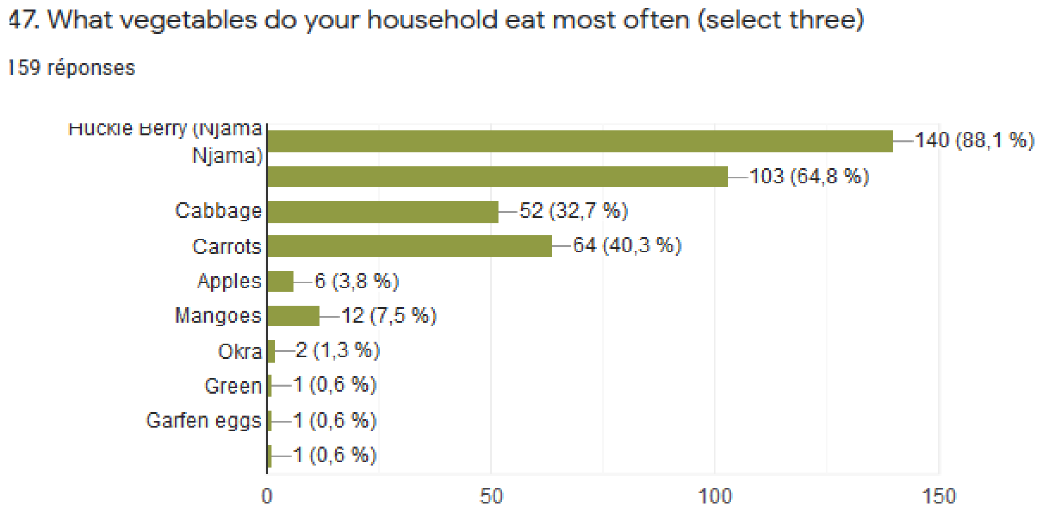


Figure 36

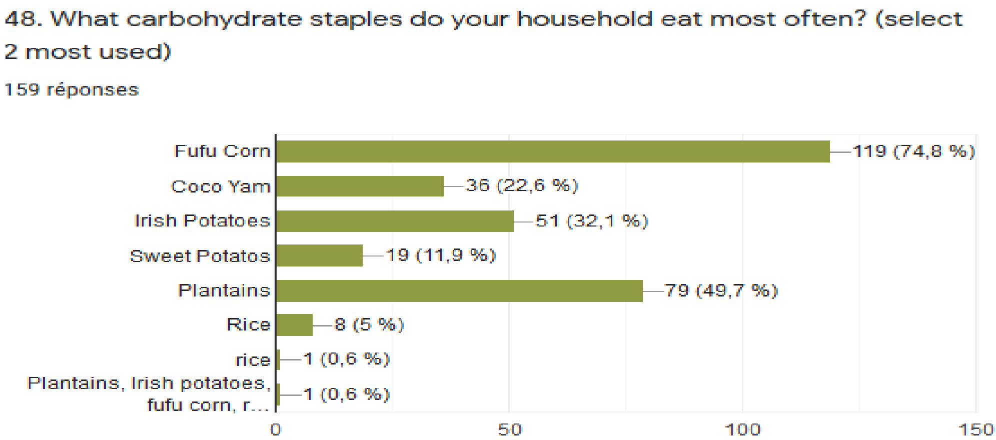


Figure 37

Preferred State of Bought Produce

Most respondents preferred their vegetables **fresh**. This means that any distribution system must ensure that the produce remains fresh and healthy via healthy preservation methods. Majority (87.3%) also preferred locally cultivated organic crops to imported food stuff.

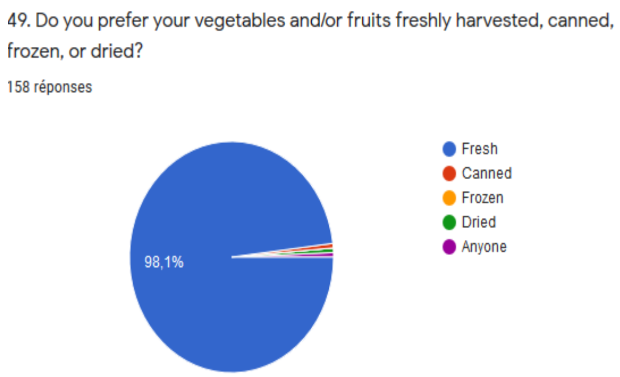


Figure 38

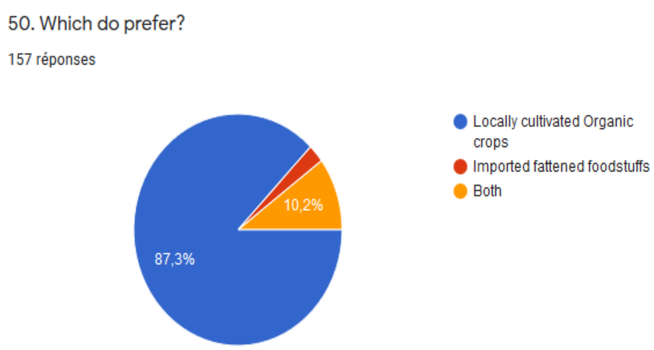


Figure 39

Support for City Food systems Improvement:

Majority (76%) of respondents like to support, advice and promote the Bamenda food systems collaborative to push for better healthy food access. While a 19.5% of respondents will consider supporting city food systems improvement collaborative only if GREEN Connekt Succeeds.

52. Would you like to support, advise and promote the Bamenda Food systems collaborative to push for a better city in terms of healthy food access?

159 réponses

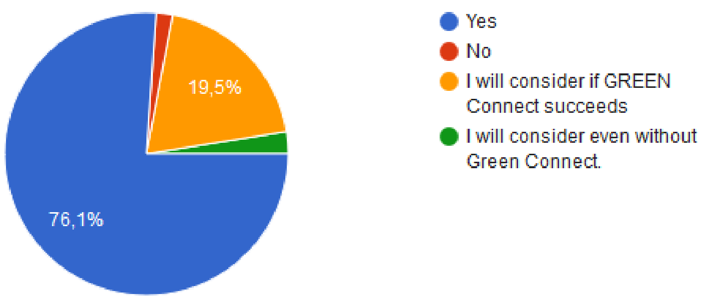


Figure 40

What would make healthier food choices easier for respondents?

41. Which of the following would make healthier food choices easier for you?

159 réponses

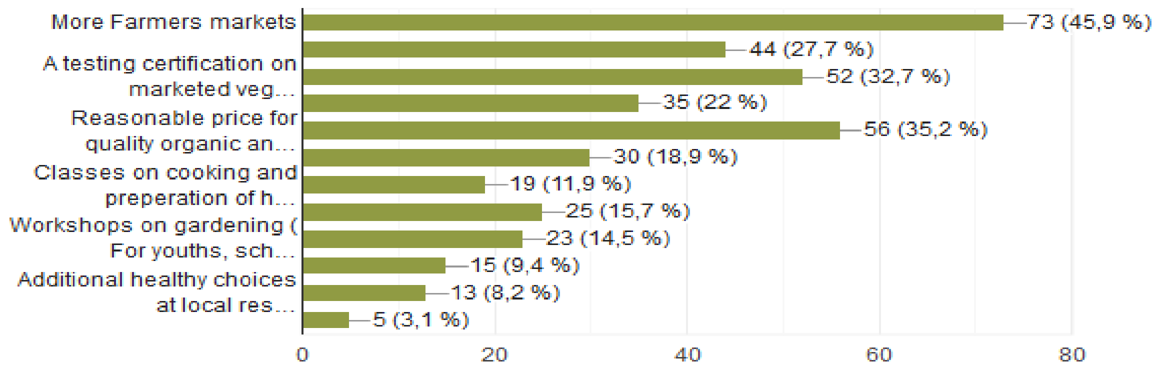


Figure 41

For most respondents, more farmers markets would make healthier food choices easier. This is because it is freshly harvested and to some extend they can be sure of the quality. 35.2% of respondents indicated that a reasonable price for quality will also make healthier food choices easier for them. This reflects the economic situation of most respondents and by deduction, the population. A testing certificate on marketed products interestingly stands out as one of the major aspects that will support healthier choices, followed by a good city transport system. What these recommendations mean is not entirely clear. However, they give clues to what the city's development might prioritize which can support healthy living and improve the living conditions of residents to the extent that these improvements support community development. A city distribution system with pick up spots that can be closer to the correspondent's houses or work places will also make healthier food choices easier. Classes on Preserving and maintaining food would also support respondents. More city based organic farmers, workshops and classes on gardening will support the city.

Member discounts, free healthy food distribution and additional healthy choices at restaurants were the least methods that will make choices easier for respondents. The later response might be due to the demography of the respondents whereby most do not use the restaurant and despite cost challenges, most rather would have a productive life than handouts.

Regulation Advice to City Council:

SN	REGULATION ADVICE TO THE CITY COUNCIL	Frequency
1	Nearer markets	7
2	Cost reduction on Healthier foods	14
3	Availability of information on where and how to get healthier foods	9
4	Increase availability of healthier food choices	5
5	Increase and improve on existing farm to market roads	10
6	More farmers	4
7	End to anglophone crisis	6
8	More organically cultivated foods	5
9	Food subsidies on healthy foods	3
10	Educate farmers on growing healthier foods	2
11	Sop the use of chemical fertilizers	2
12	Good transportation and supply systems	5
13	Follow-up of consumer´s right and protection	1
14	Food should not be displayed on grounds in the market but on shelves	1
15	Good packaging	1
16	Good preservation methods	2
17	Marketing agents	1
18	Each person should have a small organic garden	2
19	Government should reduce controls on the road so that transport fair can reduce	2
20	Sensitize Market women and farmers on the wrong use of fertilizers	3
21	Labelling of products including their prices should be encouraged	1

The one thing Respondents would like to improve about their Health:

The following indications of what respondents would like to improve about their health will constitute major topics to be considered for education that will go along side GC's services.

S/N	One thing respondents would like to improve about their health	Frequency of responses
1	Diet	9
2	Eat more fruits	7
3	Weight	3
4	Exercise more	5
5	Eat more fruits and vegetables	12
6	Better eating habits	6
7	Eating healthier foods	17
8	Reduce sugar and salt intake	6
9	Limit alcohol intake	3
10	Eat mostly organic foods	8
11	Reduce rate of eating unhealthy foods	4
12	Hygienic method of preparing food	1
13	Reduce stress	1
14	Sleep more	1
15	Drink more water	2
16	Boost immunity	1
17	Eat less fats and oil	1
18	Nothing	3

Other Comments/Recommendations

1. Improve the farm to market road for more accessibility for our products to reach us in time.
2. We don't only die of the ongoing crisis but of unhealthy diets
3. We really need access to healthier food options. Will be glad if Green Connekt succeeds
4. I love the idea that has been put in place because many of us don't know the importance of health and how we can get the healthy food and how to balance them.
5. I will be happy if this project is implemented
6. Healthy foods should be shared in all neighborhoods to make healthier foods available to all
7. Will Love to be part of the initiative
8. Avoid long questionnaires because they are discouraging
9. Make Bamenda city the place it used to be in terms of food sufficiency
10. Thank you, people, for this survey form. More wings to your elbows. If you need volunteers, I can do it in one way or the other.
11. Survey was too long. Need to make respondents know how long it will take before they start taking the survey.
12. Love to be part of the initiative
13. Make Bamenda city the place it used to be in terms of food sufficiency
14. Thanks for these initiative you guys have put up which makes life easier for one to be in the house and still make an impact in the community.
15. Appreciate your efforts more strength
16. Appreciate the initiative and hope the outcome of this survey will improve our health.
17. Very interesting: Thank You for this
18. We need Green Connekt in our community soonest
19. More on natural fruits and vegetables needed
20. All the best and hope your research gets executed someday
21. This project should really yield good fruits because projects like these need to be carried out often and implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be key. More power.
22. I think this is a welcomed initiative that will yield positive results

Limitations of Study and mitigations:

1) The survey was too long and as such, some people did not have the time to reason out questions before answering. Some did not even accept taking the survey while others did not refund it.
2) Due to Covid 19, we were not welcomed by some persons
3) Also, the anglophone crises prevented us from reaching some areas due to insecurity.

Conclusion:

Healthier Food options in the city of Bamenda is a highly welcomed idea by the city duelers. The survey successfully brought out the potential public's view as concerns healthier food choices in the city. Overall, the results suggest that people are becoming increasingly aware of the need to eat healthy foods (fruits and vegetables) and are seriously in need of the same. The results also suggest that though people want to eat healthy foods, majority are unable to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy foods and that information on where, when and how to obtain healthy foods will go a long way to increase access. In addition, economic hardship is a major pointer to their inability to obtain healthier foods, thus there is need for subsidies and other innovative mechanisms of increasing access. The responses suggest that the public is open to the use of technology, local certification and innovations in supply chain, such as pick up spots, farmers markets, packaging variety and phone applications with information for their healthy choices.