

**OFFICE OF
THE PUBLIC INDEPENDENT CONCILIATOR (PIC)
NORTH-WEST REGION**



**ANNUAL ACTIVITY
REPORT 2023**

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RÉSUMÉ	9
INTRODUCTION	15
PART ONE	16
I. ADMINISTRATION AND FUNCTIONING	16
A. Staff Recruitment and Development	16
B. Publication of 2022 Activity Report	17
C. Participation of the Public Independent Conciliator in National Days, and other Public Events	17
D. Acquisition of land to construct the Head-Office building of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, North West Region	18
E. Benchmarking visit of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South-West regions to the City Ombudsman of Cape Town, South Africa	18
F. Relationship between the Public Independent Conciliator and Regional and Council authorities and other key stakeholders	19
G. High Profile Working Visits at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator	20
H. High Level meetings of the Public Independent Conciliator	20
I. Empowerment of PIC Community-Based Assistants (CBAs)	22
J. Participation in Capacity-Building Workshops	23
K. Other administrative-related activities	23
II. SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC INDEPENDENT CONCILIATOR NORTH WEST REGION FOR THE 2023 FINANCIAL YEAR	23
III. APPRAISAL OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE IN 2023	26
PART TWO	27
I. PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES	27
A. PRINCIPAL ORIENTATIONS	27
B. OBJECTIVES	28
C. EXPECTED OUTCOMES	28
II. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES	29
A. Mass Media Sensitisation Campaign	29
B. Organisation of Information and Education Seminars	30
C. Organisation of Capacity Building Workshops for Regional and Council Stakeholders	33
D. Campaign to promote Free Civil Status Registration organised by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator	35
E. Organisation of the 2023 Survey on the Functioning of Regional and Local Authorities	36
III. PROTECTION ACTIVITIES	36
A. CBA monitoring, advocacy and denunciation activities	37
B. Complaints Management and Treatment	37
C. Statistical Presentation of Complaints Treatment	37
D. Commentaries / Observations	40

E. Case Studies	40
F. Appraisal Of The Programme Activities Office of the Public Independent Conciliator Of The North-West Region	42
PART THREE	44
I. BACKGROUND	44
A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	44
B.SCOPE OF STUDIES	44
C.METHODOLOGY	45
II. FINDINGS	45
A. THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL/HOUSE OF CHIEFS/HOUSE OF DIVISIONAL REPRESENTATIVES)	46
1.Administration	46
2.Financial Resources and Budget Implementation	47
B. LOCAL DECENTRALISED AUTHORITIES (Sub-divisional, and Local Councils)	49
1. Organisation of Perception Survey on the Functioning of Regional and Council Authorities	49
2.Findings on Citizens’ Perception of the Functioning of Local Councils in various areas of their missions and analysis	51
3.Relationship with citizens and beneficiary populations	77
III.APPRAISAL OF CITIZENS’ PERCEPTIONS OF HOW COUNCILS PERFORMED IN 2023	116
PART FOUR	118
GENERAL APPRAISAL	118
I. DIFFICULTIES, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT	118
A. Difficulties and Challenges Faced by Regional and Local Authorities	118
B. Challenges and Difficulties Specific to the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region	119
II. LESSONS LEARNT	120
PART FIVE	121
A. RECOMMENDATIONS	121
1. The Regional and local Authorities	121
2. The Public Independent Conciliator should	121
3. Government	122
B. PERSPECTIVES	123

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The legal framework creating and organising the functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator requires the Public Independent Conciliator to submit to the President of the Republic an annual report on its activities, and on the functioning and the relations between regional and local authorities and their citizens.

Presentation of the Report

Captured under five rubrics, the report highlights the activities of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region from January to December 2023. It narrates key activities carried out, examines the functioning of regional and local authorities and their relations with citizens, underscores major challenges faced, and presents perspectives and recommendations for better performance in 2024.

1. Regarding the activities which were guided by the objective to make itself known and build trust and confidence in the people, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised mass media sensitisation campaigns, information, education seminars and workshops for municipal treasurers, secretaries-general, mayors, regional delegates, national language broadcasters and community-based assistants. The Public Independent Conciliator conducted visits to councils located in Divisional headquarters of five (5) out of the seven (7) Divisions comprising the North-West Region. These included Wum Council (Menchum Division); Mbengwi Council (Momo Division); Fundong Council (Boyo Division); Ndop Council (Ngoketunjia Division); and the Bamenda City Council for Mezam Division. The Public Independent Conciliator received and treated 48 complaints in 2023.
2. Following the increasing complaints by the population of extortion that have infested the civil status registration process rendering the obtaining of civil status documents difficult without paying, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised the campaign to promote the free establishment of Civil Status Documents (Birth, and Marriage certificates as well as Certificates of Death) by Council Authorities as stipulated in the Law.
3. As concerns the functioning of regional and council services and their relations with their citizens, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator undertook information gathering on the functioning as well as the perception of the population of these decentralised services. The analysis and interpretation led to the following key findings:
 - the population still held that most decentralised entities are managed as a one-man business;
 - the devolution of powers is slow and accompanied by inadequate resources;
 - the delay in the disbursement of the annual subventions deferred the execution of some critical council activities which affected the realisation of council development plans;
 - regional and council services are plagued with ethical issues including, but not limited to, accountability and transparency in council management;
 - the population is yet to be completely involved in council activities.

The findings also revealed that regional and council services encounter many challenges and difficulties in the exercise of their functioning including, but not limited to:

- i. The high risks and insecurity which regional and council staff are exposed to in their operations in the region, many of whom have been subjects of kidnappings, ransom taking, and exposure to physical harm.
- ii. The slow execution of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue which ushered in

the Special Status for the North-West and South-West regions. This is a weakness to the effectiveness of regional and local decentralised entities on the ground.

- iii. The attitude of some supervisory authorities who would only accompany mayors when they have an interest in an operation. Many mayors are reportedly caught between aligning with their ethical responsibilities and yielding to the demands of their supervisory authorities without which they cannot execute council resolutions. This attitude has been condemned by many.
- iv. Regional and local decentralised entities lack the manpower, technical know-how and necessary expertise to realise some of their missions.
- v. The absence of a local civil service code, as well as other instruments of decentralisation is an obstacle to the effective functioning of regional and local decentralised entities. This situation was further compounded, for the Regional Assembly, by the unavailability of a salary scale, a personnel statute and an organisational chart for staff management.
- vi. The inadequate information and education of the masses on the decentralisation concept and project is a serious drawback to their effective and productive participation and support of regional and council services.
- vii. Councils in the region are not able to generate income from other sources because of the crisis. As such, they face challenges in the payment of the National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) dues of their personnel, a situation that has brought huge penalties to many councils.

Difficulties and Challenges

Apart from regional and local authorities, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator also encountered difficulties and challenges notably:

1. The high insecurity characteristic of the prevailing context of work also affected the functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator as has been the case with councils. However, the situation did not stop the Public Independent Conciliator from carrying on with field visits of some councils at their bases, thanks to military escorts.
2. While being thankful for providing the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator with the much-awaited salary scale, the absence of an approved organisational chart and a personnel statute for staff of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator remains a major drawback in the functioning of the Office.
3. The late disbursement of the subvention of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator slowed down the timely execution of planned activities. The budget was approved on 15 May 2023 and disbursed on 19 June 2023.

The difficulties and challenges enumerated above and many others are not without very serious consequences on the effective functioning of regional and local decentralized entities as well as the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in the North-West Region. They also constitute obstacles to the effective materialization of the Special Status on the ground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After examining the functioning of regional and local council services and their relations with citizens, and considering the difficulties and challenges faced in 2023, the following recommendations are proposed to various authorities at various levels of competence for the concerned institutions to realize optimum performance in 2024.

Considering that there has been little change from the functioning of 2022, these recommendations are for the most part re-emphasizing recommendations that were made for consideration in 2023,

many of which are pending realisation.

1. The Regional and Council Services

- i. Continuous emphasis on more consultation of citizens and Divisional Representatives in the decision-making processes of the Regional Assembly. The involvement of users and beneficiary populations in the activities and projects of the Regional Assembly should also be increased. An unbiased and constructive approach towards the population will prompt their cooperation and actions in their communities.
- ii. Regional and council authorities should fully comply with all regulations organising their functioning, particularly the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities to create harmony at work. This will also imply putting in place internal dispute-resolution mechanisms to address internal discontent and oversight.
- iii. Integrate fully the respect of ethical standards and compliance with existing legislation governing the functioning of regional and local decentralised entities; local public service rules and regulations.
- iv. Continue to raise awareness and sensitise the population on the missions, roles and functioning of regional and council authorities, notably on the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities.
- v. Continue to enforce spatial distribution of employment opportunities at all levels including the Regional Assembly and local decentralised entities to ensure equitable representation of all 34 council areas in the region. Regional and decentralised entities should capture the specificities of the region in their staffing, organisation and functioning. They should ensure that all socio-political as well as tribal, gender, minority, religious and other components are equally represented at all levels inclusively.
- vi. Councils should prioritize the creation of income-generating opportunities for the council to boost its financial resources, as well as for the population to improve on their welfare and living standards.
- vii. Create consultative platforms at all level of council functioning to engage the participation of all sectors of the community in council activities and decision-making processes inclusively. This will also require that councils should institute an effective information and communication system that reaches out promptly to all communities through which citizens should constantly be put abreast with the activities of councils.
- viii. Councils should mainstream the rights-based and gender-based approaches in their functioning. The effective integration of these concepts will also demand the creation of effective focal points to monitor and ensure the enforcement of the required standards.

2. The Public Independent Conciliator should:

- i. Continue to monitor regional and council functioning as per the law. This will require multiplying activities that will enable the tracking of the functioning of regional and council services and their relations with citizens.
- ii. Work within the concept of good governance in councils with village development and other grassroots organisations to monitor council functioning and actions in the communities. Traditional and village authorities should also be empowered to monitor as well as get involved in the management of council projects.
- iii. Step up sensitisation of the masses on the missions and functioning of the councils, Regional

Assembly and the Public Independent Conciliator. Intensify campaigns on the role and involvement of citizens and community structures to enhance their effective participation in regional and council affairs.

- iv. Be endowed with independent financing to ensure timely execution of its projects.

3. Government

- i. Ensure the timely disbursement of State subventions for the effective functioning of regional and council services to enable the full implementation of programmed activities and projects; (MINFI/ MINDDEVEL).
 - ii. Integrate the budget of the Public Independent Conciliator in a separate budgetary line in the State budget otherwise, ensure the timely disbursement of State subvention (Presidency/PM/MINFI).
 - iii. Ensure effective devolution of powers and resources to the region and councils by finalising the necessary administrative processes and procedures to enable the smooth functioning of the Regional Assembly (PM/MINDDEVEL/MINSANTE/MINT/MINESEC/MINTOURL/MINHDU).
 - iv. Ensure timely approval of council deliberations by supervisory authorities (MINDDEVEL/ Representative of the State (Governor)/ Senior Divisional Officers).
 - v. Accord more autonomy to councils to ensure flexibility in their actions and response to situations (MINDDEVEL/Governor/Senior Divisional Officers/Divisional Officers).
 - vi. Accelerate the elaboration of the Local Public Service Code for regional and council services (Presidency/Prime Minister's Office/MINDDEVEL/Concerned ministries).
 - vii. Redefine the prerogatives of the Regional Assembly in alignment with the Special Status of the region.
 - viii. Accelerate finalization of Personnel Policy (Statute de Personnel) and Organisational Chart of regional and local decentralised entities as well as that of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to enable effective and rational management of personnel.
 - ix. Ensure an enabling security environment for all council operations to return to their council areas to serve the population better as per Section 144 of Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities.
 - x. Ensure that the National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) considers setting aside the penalties levied on councils of the North-West and South-West regions for delays in the payment of contributions until a period when their resources would be regular and permit.
 - xi. Clarify the roles and competences of regional and council services, as well as the city and sub-divisional councils, especially in the areas of waste management, and issuing of building permits. In the same light, integrate sub-divisional and local councils in the Land Consultative Boards.
 - xii. Ensure the timely production and distribution of civil status registration booklets to councils (PM/MINDDEVEL/BUNEC).
 - xiii. Harmonize workers' conditions, especially in relation to salaries (PM/MINDDEVEL).
- In 2024, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator intends to:
- i. Begin construction of the Head Office Building of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator for the North-West Region in Bamenda.
 - ii. Visit Nkambe in Donga Mantung Division and Kumbo in Bui Division as part of his sensitisation mission to councils located in Divisional headquarters.

- iii. Intensify the organisation of more mass media campaigns targeting remote and grassroots populations in hard-to-reach areas of the region. This also includes translating messages into audio and video spots and pidgin English, as well as selected national languages for broadcast over community radios. This will entail devising other means of reaching communities unreachable by radio or TV signals, especially working with community-based assistants temporarily engaged by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North West Region.
- iv. Continue with the education and sensitization of council stakeholders on the missions and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator and the search for common grounds for partnerships. This will entail prioritising councils that have not yet had the sensitisation visit of the Public Independent Conciliator.
- v. Intensify the organisation of awareness-raising and outreach programmes to bring information about the Public Independent Conciliator to the doorsteps of citizens in the region. This will entail expanding activities and devising the means of reaching the hard-to-reach communities.
- vi. Continue to systematically monitor regional and local council functioning on the ground to ensure the active and effective participation of citizens.
- vii. Continue to nurture a collaborative rapport with council stakeholders, as well as accompany and strengthen them to be able to deliver on their missions.
- viii. Expand the presence of the Public Independent Conciliator on the ground by developing the capacities and equipping community-based assistants pending the possible creation of divisional representations and sub-divisional satellite offices of the institution.

The work of the Public Independent Conciliator has given us the unique opportunity of observing council workers, recognising and respecting their incredible work and the endless challenge of decentralisation as well as the influence that government entities have on citizens. The Public Independent Conciliator will continue to play its role in promoting local good governance, fairness, and accountability in the delivery of local development and services by decentralised entities of the Region to the population.

*TAMFU Simon FAI,
Public Independent Conciliator,
North-West Region.*

RÉSUMÉ

Le cadre juridique créant et déterminant les modalités d'exercice des fonctions de Public Independent Conciliator prescrit au Public Independent Conciliator de soumettre au Président de la République un rapport annuel sur l'état des relations entre les citoyens et les services régionaux et communaux, ainsi que le bilan des activités mener au cours de l'année.

Présentation du Rapport

Le rapport, qui s'articule autour de cinq rubriques, met en lumière les activités du Public Independent Conciliator de la Région du Nord-Ouest de janvier à décembre 2023. Il fait état des principales activités menées, examine le fonctionnement des collectivités territoriales décentralisées et leurs relations avec les citoyens, souligne les principaux défis rencontrés, présente des perspectives et fait des recommandations pour une meilleure performance en 2024.

1. En ce qui concerne les activités guidées par l'objectif de se faire connaître et d'instaurer la confiance au sein de la population, l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator a organisé des campagnes de sensibilisation dans les médias, des séminaires d'information et d'éducation, ainsi que des ateliers pour les receveurs municipaux, les secrétaires généraux, les maires, les délégués régionaux, les communicateurs en langues nationales et les assistants communautaires. Le Public Independent Conciliator a effectué des visites auprès des communes dans les chefs-lieux de cinq (5) départements sur les sept (7) que compte la Région du Nord-Ouest. Il s'agit des communes de Wum (département de la Menchum), de Mbengwi (département de Momo), de Fundong (département de Boyo), de Ndop (département de Ngoketunjia) et de Bamenda, département de la Mezam. Le Public Independent Conciliator a reçu et traité 48 requêtes en 2023.
2. Suite à l'accroissement des requêtes de la population concernant les extorsions d'argent qui ont entaché le processus d'enregistrement à l'état civil, rendant difficile l'obtention gratuite de documents d'état civil, l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator a organisé une campagne pour promouvoir l'établissement gratuit des documents d'état civil (actes de naissance, de mariage et de décès) par les autorités communales comme cela est stipulé dans la loi.
3. En ce qui concerne le fonctionnement des services régionaux et communaux et leurs relations avec les citoyens, l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator a entrepris de recueillir des informations sur le fonctionnement de ces services décentralisés ainsi que sur la perception que la population a sur ces services. L'analyse et l'interprétation de ces données ont abouti aux principaux conclusions suivants :
 - la population continue de penser que la plupart des entités décentralisées sont gérées comme des entreprises individuelles;
 - le transfert des compétences est lent et s'accompagne de ressources insuffisantes;
 - le retard dans le versement des subventions annuelles a retardé l'exécution de certaines activités communales essentielles, ce qui a affecté la mise en œuvre des plans de développement communaux;
 - les services régionaux et communaux sont confrontés à des problèmes éthiques, entre autres, la responsabilité et la transparence en matière de la gestion régionale et communale;

- la population n'est pas encore totalement impliquée dans les activités communales.

Les résultats ont également révélé que les services régionaux et communaux font face à de nombreux défis et difficultés dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions, notamment, mais pas exclusivement, les suivants:

- i. Les risques élevés et l'insécurité auxquels le personnel régional et communal est exposé dans le cadre de ses activités dans la région, nombre d'entre eux ayant fait l'objet d'enlèvements, de demandes de rançon et d'atteintes à leur intégrité physique ;
- ii. La lenteur dans la mise en œuvre des recommandations du Grand Dialogue National qui a abouti au Statut Spécial des régions du Nord-Ouest et du Sud-Ouest. Il s'agit d'une faiblesse qui entrave l'efficacité des collectivités territoriales décentralisées sur le terrain ;
- iii. L'attitude de certaines autorités de tutelle qui n'accompagnent les maires que lorsqu'elles trouvent un intérêt dans une opération. De nombreux maires seraient pris en étau entre le respect de leurs responsabilités éthiques et les exigences de leurs autorités de tutelle sans lesquelles ils ne peuvent pas exécuter les résolutions du conseil municipal. Cette attitude a été condamnée par bon nombre de personnes ;
- iv. Les collectivités territoriales décentralisées manquent de main-d'œuvre, de savoir-faire technique et d'expertise leur permettant de réaliser certaines de leurs missions ;
- v. L'absence d'un code de la fonction publique locale, ainsi que d'autres instruments de la décentralisation, constitue un obstacle au fonctionnement efficace des collectivités territoriales décentralisées. Cette situation a été aggravée, s'agissant de l'Assemblée régionale, par l'absence d'une grille des salaires, d'un statut du personnel et d'un organigramme pour la gestion du personnel ;
- vi. Le manque d'information et d'éducation des populations sur le concept et le projet de décentralisation est un sérieux obstacle à leur participation et à leur soutien effectifs et productifs aux services régionaux et communaux ;
- vii. Les communes de la région ne sont pas en mesure de générer des recettes à partir d'autres sources en raison de la crise. Elles sont donc confrontées à des difficultés pour payer les cotisations de leur personnel à la Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale (CNPS), une situation qui a entraîné d'énormes pénalités pour bon nombre de communes.

Difficultés et défis

Outre les collectivités territoriales décentralisées, l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator a également rencontré des difficultés et des défis, notamment les suivants :

1. La grande insécurité qui caractérise le contexte de travail actuel a également affecté le fonctionnement de l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator, comme cela a été le cas avec les communes. Cependant, la situation n'a pas empêché le Public Independent Conciliator de poursuivre ses visites de terrain auprès de certaines communes dans leurs bases, avec l'appui des escortes militaires.
2. Tout en exprimant sa gratitude aux autorités compétentes qui ont fourni à l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator un barème des salaires tant attendu, l'absence d'un organigramme approuvé et d'un statut du personnel pour l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator demeure un inconvénient majeur pour son fonctionnement.
3. Le décaissement tardif de la subvention affectée à l'administration du Public Independent

Conciliator a ralenti l'exécution en temps voulu des activités prévues. Le budget a été approuvé le 15 mai 2023 et le décaissement a été effectué le 19 juin 2023.

Les difficultés et défis énumérés ci-dessus et bien d'autres ne sont pas sans conséquences très graves sur le fonctionnement efficace des collectivités territoriales décentralisées ainsi que de l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator dans la Région du Nord-Ouest. Ils constituent également des obstacles à la concrétisation effective du Statut spécial sur le terrain.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Après avoir passé en revue le fonctionnement des services régionaux et communaux ainsi que leurs relations avec les citoyens et compte tenu des difficultés et des défis rencontrés en 2023, les recommandations suivantes sont formulées à l'endroit des autorités à divers niveaux de compétence afin de permettre aux institutions concernées de réaliser des performances optimales en 2024.

Étant donné que le fonctionnement en 2023, n'a pas considérablement évolué par rapport à la situation qui prévalait en 2022, ces recommandations réitèrent dans une large mesure celles qui ont été faites en 2022 et dont la plupart attendant toujours d'être mises en œuvre.

1. À l'endroit des services régionaux et communaux

- i. Continuer à mettre l'accent sur une plus grande concertation avec les citoyens et des représentants départementaux dans les processus de prise de décision de l'Assemblée régionale. L'implication des usagers et des populations bénéficiaires dans les activités et les projets de l'Assemblée régionale devrait également être accrue. Une approche impartiale et constructive à l'égard des populations les incitera à coopérer et à agir au sein de leurs communautés.
- ii. Les collectivités territoriales décentralisées doivent se conformer pleinement à toutes les réglementations qui organisent leur fonctionnement, en particulier le Code général des collectivités territoriales décentralisées, afin de créer une harmonie au travail. Cela implique également la mise en place de mécanismes internes de résolution des conflits de manière à faire face aux mécontentements internes et au contrôle.
- iii. Intégrer pleinement le respect des normes éthiques et des lois en vigueur régissant le fonctionnement des collectivités territoriales décentralisées et les règles et règlements de la fonction publique locale.
- iv. Continuer à sensibiliser la population aux missions, aux rôles et au fonctionnement des collectivités territoriales décentralisées, notamment au Code général des collectivités territoriales décentralisées.
- v. Continuer à faire respecter la répartition spatiale des possibilités d'emploi à tous les niveaux, notamment à l'Assemblée régionale et dans les entités locales décentralisées, afin de garantir une représentation équitable de l'ensemble des 34 communes de la région. Les entités régionales et décentralisées doivent tenir compte des spécificités de la région dans leurs effectifs, leur organisation et leur fonctionnement. Elles doivent veiller à ce que toutes les composantes sociopolitiques, tribales, sexospécifiques, minoritaires, religieuses et autres soient représentées de manière équitable à tous les niveaux et de manière inclusive.
- vi. Les communes doivent prioriser la création d'opportunités génératrices de revenus afin de permettre à la commune d'augmenter ses ressources financières, et aux populations d'améliorer leur bien-être et leur niveau de vie.

- vii. Créer des plateformes de concertation à tous les niveaux de fonctionnement des communes, afin d'encourager la participation de tous les secteurs de la communauté aux activités des communes et aux processus de prise de décision de manière inclusive. Pour ce faire, les communes doivent également mettre en place un système d'information et de communication efficace qui puisse rapidement atteindre toutes les communautés et à travers lequel les citoyens sont constamment tenus au courant des activités communales.
- viii. Les communes doivent intégrer dans leur fonctionnement les approches fondées sur les droits de l'homme et sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes. L'intégration effective de ces concepts passe également par la création de points focaux efficaces chargés de suivre et de garantir l'application des normes requises.

2. À l'endroit du Public Independent Conciliator qui doit:

- i. Continuer à suivre le fonctionnement des régions et des communes conformément à la loi. À cet égard, Il doit multiplier les activités qui lui permettront de suivre le fonctionnement des services régionaux et communaux et leurs relations avec les citoyens.
- ii. Continuer à travailler à renforcer le concept de bonne gouvernance au sein des communes avec l'implication des organisations de développement des villages et d'autres organisations de la base pour assurer le bon fonctionnement et les l'efficacité des actions des communes au sein des communautés. Les autorités traditionnelles et villageoises doivent également être en mesure de contrôler la gestion des projets des communes et de s'y impliquer.
- iii. Intensifier la sensibilisation des populations aux missions et au fonctionnement des communes, de l'assemblée régionale et du Public Independent Conciliator.
- iv. Intensifier les campagnes sur le rôle et l'implication des citoyens et des structures communautaires afin de renforcer leur participation effective aux affaires de la région et des communes.
- v. Disposer d'un financement indépendant afin de lui permettre l'exécution de ses projets dans les délais impartis.

3. À l'endroit du Gouvernement qui doit:

- i. Assurer le décaissement à temps des subventions de l'Etat pour le fonctionnement efficace des services régionaux et communaux, ainsi que l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator, afin de permettre la mise en œuvre complète des activités et projets programmés (PRC/MINFI/ MINDDEVEL).
- ii. Insérer le budget du Public Independent Conciliator dans une ligne budgétaire distincte du budget de l'État, sinon assurer le décaissement à temps de la subvention de l'État (PRC/PM/MINFI).
- iii. Assurer le transfert effectif des compétences et des ressources à la région et aux communes en finalisant les processus et procédures administratifs nécessaires au bon fonctionnement de l'Assemblée régionale (PM/MINDDEVEL/MINSANTE/MINT/MINESEC/MINTOURL/MINHDU).
- iv. Veiller à ce que les délibérations du conseil municipal soient approuvées à temps par les autorités de tutelle (MINDDEVEL/ Représentant de l'État (Gouverneur)/ Préfets).
- v. Accorder davantage d'autonomie aux communes afin de leur assurer la flexibilité dans leurs

- actions et dans leurs réponses aux situations (MINDDEVEL/Gouverneur/Préfets/Sous-préfets).
- vi. Accélérer l'élaboration du Code de la fonction publique locale pour les services régionaux et communaux (Présidence/Services du Premier ministre/MINDDEVEL/Ministères concernés).
 - vii. Redéfinir les prérogatives de l'Assemblée régionale en fonction du statut spécial de la région.
 - viii. Accélérer la finalisation de la politique du personnel (statut du personnel) et de l'organigramme des collectivités territoriales décentralisées, ainsi que celui de l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator, afin de permettre une gestion efficace et rationnelle du personnel.
 - ix. Garantir un environnement sécuritaire favorable pour que toutes les opérations communales retournent dans leurs circonscriptions communales pour mieux servir la population, conformément à l'article 144 de la Loi n° 2019/24 du 24 décembre 2019 portant Code général des collectivités territoriales décentralisées.
 - x. Veiller à ce que la Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale (CNPS) envisage de geler les pénalités imposées aux communes des régions du Nord-Ouest et du Sud-Ouest pour les retards enregistrés dans le paiement des cotisations en attendant le retour de leurs ressources à un niveau régulier.
 - xi. Clarifier les rôles et les compétences des services régionaux et communaux, ainsi que des villes et des arrondissements, en particulier dans les domaines de la gestion des déchets et de la délivrance des permis de bâtir. Dans le même ordre d'idées, intégrer les communes d'arrondissement et les conseils locaux dans les commissions consultatives foncières.
 - xii. Assurer la production et la distribution à temps des registres d'état civil aux communes (PM/MINDDEVEL/BUNEC).
 - xiii. Harmoniser les conditions des travailleurs des communes, en particulier en ce qui concerne les salaires (PM/MINDDEVEL).

En 2024, l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator envisage:

- i. De commencer la construction du bâtiment du siège du Public Independent Conciliator de la région du Nord-Ouest à Bamenda.
- ii. D'effectuer des visites à Nkambe, département du Donga Mantung et à Kumbo, département de Bui, dans le cadre de sa mission de sensibilisation aux communes situées dans les chefs-lieux des départements.
- iii. D'intensifier l'organisation de campagnes médiatiques de masse ciblant les populations isolées et de la base vivant dans des zones difficiles d'accès de la région. Il s'agit également de traduire les messages en spots audio et vidéo en langues nationale et en pidgin, pour les diffuser sur les radios communautaires. Il s'agira de concevoir d'autres moyens d'atteindre les communautés inaccessibles par les signaux radio ou télévisés, notamment en travaillant avec des assistants communautaires (volontaire) de l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator de la région du Nord-Ouest.
- iv. Poursuivre l'éducation et la sensibilisation des parties prenantes communales sur les missions et le fonctionnement de l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator. Il s'agira de donner la priorité aux communes qui n'ont pas encore reçu la visite de sensibilisation de

l'administration du Public Independent Conciliator.

- v. Continuer à surveiller systématiquement le fonctionnement des collectivités territoriales décentralisées sur le terrain afin de garantir la participation active et efficace des citoyens.
- vi. Renforcer la présence du Public Independent Conciliator sur le terrain en développant les capacités et en équipant des assistants communautaires en attendant la création éventuelle de représentations départementales de l'institution et de bureaux satellites au niveau des arrondissements.

Le travail du Public Independent Conciliator nous a donné l'occasion unique d'observer les agents communaux, de reconnaître et de respecter leur travail incroyable et le défi sans fin de la décentralisation ainsi que l'influence que les entités gouvernementales ont sur les citoyens. Le Public Independent Conciliator continuera à jouer son rôle dans la promotion de la bonne gouvernance locale, les respects des droits des citoyens, de l'équité et de la responsabilité dans la fourniture du développement local et des services par les entités décentralisées de la région à la population.

*TAMFU Simon FAI,
Public Independent Conciliator,
Région du Nord-Ouest .*

INTRODUCTION

Following the establishment of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator (PIC) by Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, and Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020 which laid down the conditions for the discharge of the duties of the Public Independent Conciliator, the swearing into office of Mr. TAMFU Simon FAI on July 8, 2021, as the pioneer Public Independent Conciliator for the North-West Region marked the start of activities of the Office. These enabling instruments also make it statutory that the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator shall submit to the President of the Republic an annual report on its activities and the state of relations between regional and council services and the citizens:

- **Section 367 (3) paragraph 6:** *Report on the functioning of council services (General Code of Regional and Local Authorities).*
- **Article 4(1) paragraph 6:** *Annual report on the state of relations between citizens and regional and council services (Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020).*
- **Article 25 paragraph 1:** *The Public Independent Conciliator shall submit to the President of the Republic an annual report on the state of relations between citizens and regional and council services. The report shall present the balance sheet of his activities. (Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020).*

Hence, this Annual Activity Report presents the balance sheet of activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in 2023, as well as a report on the functioning of regional and local council services and evaluates the state of relations with citizens during the reporting period. It also highlights major difficulties and challenges faced and makes recommendations to enhance the functioning of both the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, as well as regional and local authorities in the year 2024.

The report is presented under five major rubrics namely:

Part One: Administration and Functioning

Part Two: Programme Activities

Part Three: Functioning of Regional and Local Authorities and their Relations with Citizens

Part Four: Challenges and Difficulties

Part Five: Recommendations and Perspectives

PART ONE

I. ADMINISTRATION AND FUNCTIONING

The administration and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator during the period January – December 2023 was marked principally by the following key activities:

- A. Staff Recruitment and Development;
- B. Publication of the 2022 Activity Report;
- C. Participation of the Public Independent Conciliator in Public Events, meetings and Workshops;
- D. Acquisition of land to construct the Head office building of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, North West Region;
- E. Benchmarking visit of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South–West regions to the City Ombudsman of Cape Town, South Africa;
- F. Relationship between the Public Independent Conciliator and Regional and Council authorities and other key stakeholders;
- G. High Profile visits at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- H. High Level meetings of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- I. Capacity Building Workshop for Community-Based Assistants of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- J. Participation in Capacity-Building Workshops;
- K. Other administrative-related activities.

A. Staff Recruitment and Development

1. *Staff Recruitment*

To enable the Public Independent Conciliator North-West, realise its ambitious programme of activities for the years ahead, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator strengthened his staffing in 2023 with the confirmation of eight (8) staff recruited in 2022 and the recruitment of seven more staff moving the number from nine (09) to seventeen (17).

The recruitment of the seven staff went in two waves, beginning first with the recruitment of four staff namely: a Finance officer, a Front desk officer, an administrative secretary and a Communication Officer, followed later by the second wave comprising three Complaint Management Officers. Whereas the first set of four staff has recently been confirmed after the successful completion of their probation, the second set is still undergoing probation. It is important to note that these recruitments were carried out through a transparent public and open process ensuring equal opportunity to all candidates and a representation of all seven divisions of the region.

While waiting for the approval of the organisational chart of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, the staff have been temporarily organised into five (5) units and two (2) services following the proposed organisational chart that is pending approval.

2. *Staff Development*

Staff development on its part consisted of three main activities namely:

- Induction and on boarding of new recruits,
- Staff mentorship and coaching, and
- Staff training.

Whereas induction and on-boarding concerned only the new recruits, mentorship and training con-

cerned all staff considering the youthfulness of the institution. Regarding staff mentorship, the Public Independent Conciliator has instituted a system of mentorship where young staff work under the guidance and orientation of more experienced staff and learn from their experiences in the performance of their duty.

Concerning staff training, a workshop to reinforce the capacities of staff of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator was organized from 28 to 30 August 2023 in Limbe, South-West Region. The three-day intensive workshop had as its objectives to equip staff with skills in Information Gathering and Management necessary in the processes of amicable settlement of disputes, investigation, fact-finding, conducting interviews, verification and confirmation of issues, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Strategic Communication.

The following themes were exploited:

- Techniques of Information Gathering and Management in the Human Rights Context facilitated by Mr. Christopher Tiku Tambe, South-West Regional Branch Head of Cameroon Human Rights Commission,
- Alternative Disputes Resolution with a focus on Conciliation, facilitated by Professor Irene Dione Numun Fokum, Head of Department Public Law and Public Administration, University of Buea, and,
- Strategic Communication facilitated by Professor Kingsley L. NGANGE, Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Research and Relations with the Business World, University of Buea, Cameroon.

3. Appointment of a new Accounting Officer.

On the 25th October 2023, a new Accounting Officer, Mr. BILA Derrick SUH was appointed to the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in replacement of Mrs. BAME Lilian NSOWIYNIA TIMAH.

B. Publication of 2022 Activity Report

Following Presidential Decree No.2020/773 of 24 December 2020 to lay down the conditions for discharge of the duties of the Public Independent Conciliator for North-West and South-West Regions which stipulates in Art. 25(1) that: "The Public Independent Conciliator shall submit to the President of the Republic an annual report on the state of relations between citizens and regional and council services. The report shall present the balance sheet of his activities," the 2022 Annual Activity Report was submitted to the President of the Republic on 20 February, 2023.

In strict respect of Art. 2 of the Decree supra, copies of the Report were forwarded to the Representative of the State (Governor of North West Region) and the President of the Regional Executive Council of the North-West Regional Assembly within ten days from the date of submission to the President of the Republic. The Public Independent Conciliator proceeded then with the publication of the 2022 Annual Report on 21 March, 2023, in a ceremony attended by media professionals and regional delegates of the North-West Region amongst a host of others.

C. Participation of the Public Independent Conciliator in National Days, and other Public Events

In 2023, the Public Independent Conciliator was party to the celebration of national and international days respected in Cameroon, as well as in other public events including:

- 1) 11th February 2023, National Youth Day,
- 2) 08th March 2023, International Women’s Day,
- 3) 1st May 2023, Labour Day,
- 4) 20th May 2023, National Day.

During these events, the Public Independent Conciliator and his staff were conspicuously present at the Bamenda Commercial Avenue grandstand, gracing the event among other regional dignitaries.

Other events that received the participation of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator North-West in 2023 were:

- 1) The signing of the Contract by Regional Assembly with Smile Train Company on 26 January 2023;
- 2) The celebration of 13 years of partnership of the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services in promoting Disability Inclusive Development on 16 February 2023;
- 3) The graduation ceremony of 12 beneficiaries under “The girl child shall rise program” of Bright Light Project Cameroon (BLPC) on 25 February 2023;
- 4) The 11th Edition of African Day of Decentralisation and Local Development and 5th Edition of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day on 11 August 2023;
- 5) The Public Debate on “7-Year Violent Conflict in the North-West and South-West regions”, on 10 August 2023;
- 6) Participation in the Sector Conference of all Appointed Officials and Stakeholders of MINEDUB in the North West Region on 22 August 2023;
- 7) Participation at Senator/Professor NEBAH nee NDO SIRI BRIDGET NDOYE’s Academic Excellence Award to Young Girls of Mezam Division on 1st September 2023;
- 8) Participation in the Celebration of World Tourism Day on 25 September 2023;
- 9) Participation in four Regional Coordination and Security meetings of 2023 organised and chaired by the North-West Governor. The meetings brought together regional security and administrative authorities and other key stakeholders of the region who brainstormed on the security and functioning of state entities in the region.

D. Acquisition of land to construct the Head-Office building of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, North West Region

The search for land to construct the PIC North-West Head Office Building continued in earnest in 2023 considering that the land prospection process failed to materialise in 2022. Following challenges encountered in the course of the prospection, the Public Independent Conciliator on the 20th of April through Decision No.0021/2023/OPIC/FFY/AFO of 20th April 2023 created the Head Office Project Committee for the prospection and acquisition of land for the construction of the Head Office of the Public Independent Conciliator.

In June 2023, the Committee identified and secured a 4,749m² piece of land for the construction of the Head-Office building of the Public Independent Conciliator. The process to finalise transfer of ownership is in progress. The Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West hopes to begin construction in 2024 following the completion of preliminary studies.

E. Benchmarking visit of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South–West regions to the City Ombudsman of Cape Town, South Africa

On the invitation of Mr. Ald Geordin Hill-Lewis, the Executive Mayor of Cape Town, South Africa, the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South-West regions undertook a bench-

marking and networking visit to the City Ombudsman of Cape town in South Africa from 19 -26 November 2023.

The visit, had as objective to foster relations through knowledge and experience sharing between the Offices of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon and the City Ombudsman of Cape Town, South Africa.

During the visit, the Public Independent Conciliators held several meetings and working sessions with their host, during which they discussed about their missions and functioning and shared information and knowledge on complaint management and treatment. Though the jurisdiction of the Public Independent Conciliators and the City Ombudsman differ, the latter's missions are limited to the City of Cape Town while the former have regional jurisdictions. However, they have much in common in terms of mandate which is basically to protect citizens by ensuring fairness in their relationships and dealings with municipal authorities and settling disputes amicably.

Amongst the outcome of the visit was knowledge gained, particularly the need to,

- work with IT tools (software) and data banks to fast track complaints handling and treatment to meet regulatory timelines;

- Track and monitor historical facts which are important to resolve certain types of conflicts.

The crucial importance of the respect of values and principles of neutrality, impartiality, non-partisan politicking, objectivity, and confidentiality necessary for the credibility and independence of the Ombudsman institution was also highlighted.

F. Relationship between the Public Independent Conciliator and Regional and Council authorities and other key stakeholders

In order to nurture good working relationships between the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and regional and council stakeholders necessary to enhance their effective functioning, the Public Independent Conciliator proceeded in 2023 with the visits of councils at the divisional headquarters. These visits were important to inform and educate councils on the missions and roles of the Public Independent Conciliator, and also to raise the awareness of councils and their executives on the need to function in compliance with the law. In addition, the visits also offered the opportunity for the Public Independent Conciliator to understand how councils function to provide services to the beneficiary population, especially in the challenging context of the ongoing security crisis in the North-West region that has seriously affected their sources of income and presence on the ground. These visits also provided the signal for council authorities to go back to their municipalities.

During the visits, the Public Independent Conciliator and his team held town hall meetings with the mayors and their deputies, secretaries-general and municipal treasurers, councillors, local elite, traditional authorities and community groups of the councils. Presentations were made on the missions, role and the organisation and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, and the complaint management procedure in the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator.

These presentations were followed by questions and answers on issues that needed clarification. Ideas were also shared on how the Public Independent Conciliator could best relate with and serve the interests of councils and the councils pledged their availability and readiness to cooperate with the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator. The Public Independent Conciliator appreciated the efforts of councils and reminded them that as duty-bearers towards the population, they should work in respect of the laws governing councils and for the interest of the population.

As a peace crusader, the Public Independent Conciliator's message to participants were also

interposed by messages of peace and social dialogue and calls for all to work for a return to normalcy.

The council contact visits took the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to seven councils, the Public Independent Conciliator personally leading his team to the five (5) councils in divisional headquarters namely Wum in Menchum, Mbengwi in Momo, Ndop in Ngoketunjia, Fundong in Boyo and the Bamenda City Council for the Mezam Division.

G. High Profile Working Visits at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator

During the period under review, the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West granted audience to the following:

- i. The Community of Peace (COP), an informal group of free-minded personalities from all walks of life in the North-West and South-West regions sharing a common interest in peace-building on the 20th of August 2023. The three guests included Madam Sally MBOUMIEN of COMAGEND, Rev. NCHAM Godwill CHIATOH, (former Executive President of the Cameroon Baptist Convention), and Prince YEYUNG GHOGOMU MBIMINAH (Chartered Engineer). The objective of the visit was to explore ways and means of working together for sustainable peace in the Region.
- ii. The North-West Regional Chief of the National Civil Status Registration Office (BUNEC). The object of the visit was to seek partnership and support from the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to promote the free establishment of civil status registration documents in the region.
- iii. The North-West Regional Representative of the National Institute of Statistics. The visit discussed the survey on functioning of councils conducted by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and made proposals towards standardising the conduct of future surveys with the support of the National Institute of Statistics.

H. High Level meetings of the Public Independent Conciliator

In 2023, the Public Independent Conciliator took part in several high-level meetings and working sessions both at the levels of the region and the central administration including at the Presidency and the Prime Minister's Office in line with furthering the work of the Office. These included:

- i. *Meeting with Officials at the Presidency of the Republic.* Top on their discussion was the salary scale of workers, the Personnel Statute, the Organizational Chart and Internal Rules and Regulations of the offices of the Public Independent Conciliators still pending approval.
- ii. *Meeting with the Prime Minister, Head of Government:* As outcome of the meeting, the Prime Minister, Head of Government promised to ensure that MINDDEVEL elaborates an ethical code of conduct for councils, as well as engage to cause the early disbursement of the 2024 budgets of the offices of the Public Independent Conciliators.
- iii. *The meeting of staff of the offices of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South-West regions to harmonise the Draft Annual Budgets for 2024*

The staff of the offices of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South-West regions met in Douala from 19 to 22 November to harmonise the draft budgets of both Offices. Meeting at Hotel Prince De Galles, the exercise consisted in identifying the disparities and gaps in the 2024 budgets of both institutions to ensure that they present a harmonious budget for the financial year 2024 to the Ministry in charge of Finance.

The work session focused on comparing the draft budgets of the offices of the Public Independent Conciliators of the North-West and South-West regions for the purpose of identifying the disparities and gaps, and discussing the need for a common format of the budget presentation.

At the end of the two-day brainstorming, participants noted the disparities and gaps, as well as adopted a common nomenclature for the presentation of the budgets. Participants resolved that the harmonisation should be completed at the internal levels of the offices bearing in mind the areas of disparity and the gaps noted. Participating in the meeting were the Administration and Finance Officers, the Research Officers No. 1 and the Specialised Finance Controllers of the offices of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West and South West regions.

iv. Participation in the multi-stakeholder consultation meeting on combating disinformation in the North-West region, organised in Bafoussam on 12 May 2023:

The regional Multi-stakeholder meeting was organized by Ndefcam Radio, Bamenda, in collaboration with ADISI-Cameroon as part of the “Talk Peace” project implemented in Cameroon by ADISI-Cameroon with the support of the French media development agency, CFI-Medias.

The objective of the “Talk Peace” program is to support the mass media to provide the population with reliable, depolarized, and nuanced information in order to fight hate speech. The participants included members of civil society and local authorities of the North-West Region.

The multi-stakeholder meeting also presented an opportunity to discuss the issues of social dialogue within the community, the respective roles of each stakeholder in the process of pacification and stabilization, including that of journalists who, through their daily practice of news processing, can promote a dynamics of appeasement.

Spiced by three presentations, the meeting ended with the recognition of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region as a reliable source of information journalists could consult, thus, the Public Independent Conciliator was urged to continue with its open-door policy and should involve the media at various levels of its activities.

v. Participation in the meeting to create the North-West Regional Platform for Civil Status Stakeholders

The meeting was convened by the North-West Regional Chief of the National Civil Status Registration Office (Bureau National de l'Etat Civil, BUNEC), in line with decision No.004/D/BUNEC/CAJC of 30 November 2021 to eradicate difficulties hindering the smooth functioning of the civil status registration process in the region. As outcome of the meeting, platform was created, with the Public Independent Conciliator as a member, to handle civil status registration matters in the region.

vi. Participation in the October ordinary session of the North-West Regional Assembly

The Public Independent Conciliator attended the 12th Ordinary Session of the North-West Regional Assembly from Monday, 16th October 2023 to Thursday, 18 October 2023 under the theme: “Building Clean, Secure, Safe and Healthy Communities”. The very rich agenda of the four-day session was punctuated by the following highlights:

1. Presentations and discussions on back-to-school with highlights on violence in the school milieu during which the President advised to take advantage of the gradual return to normalcy to rebuild education, construct and equip schools that have suffered arson attacks and rebuilding palaces

so that traditional rulers themselves could return to their palaces. The President requesting all to join the sensitisation of parents to send children to school.

2. Other activities included presentation of consolidated projects of the North-West Regional Executive Council for 2024; the Bamenda inland port project; the North-West Development Investment Funds (NOWEDIF) and updates on the North-West Peace and Development Initiatives (PDI) project of the Regional Assembly.

The 12th Session was also marked by the visit of H.E. ELANGA OBAM Géorges, Minister of Decentralisation and Local Development to the North-West Region during which he visited the Regional Assembly building project sites and laid the foundation stones for the construction of the North West Regional Assembly and the Regional Lodge.

I. Empowerment of PIC Community-Based Assistants (CBAs)

To empower the newly constituted Community-based Assistant of the PIC, the Office organised a two-day Capacity Building Workshop to equip them with tools necessary to play their key role as community relay agents of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator. This workshop that held from 27 to 28 September 2023 had in attendance 70 Community-Based Assistants selected from 34 council areas of the North West Region in addition to the Bamenda City Council. This included 35 CBAs selected in 2022 and 35 new volunteers engaged in 2023.

The aim of this workshop was to equip participants with the necessary skills and tools for monitoring, investigating, documenting, and reporting on council functioning and respect of rights and freedoms, non-discrimination, and the enforcement of good governance and ethical standards by regional and local councils as duty bearers.

The two-day workshop was animated by the following modules:

- The mission and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- Working in a security challenging environment,
- Techniques of information gathering and treatment;
- Monitoring and reporting violations of rights and freedom, inclusiveness, and respect for ethical conduct by council services;
- Advocacy techniques for victims and marginalized persons;
- Working with the PIC.

It is important to mention that CBAs are volunteers in the communities who have been engaged to assist the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to relay its activities in their communities, as well as track council activities and functioning on the ground, pending the establishment of Office of the Public Independent Conciliator's antennas and satellite offices in the divisions and subdivisions respectively.



Community Based-Assistants at end of workshop with Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region, Mr. TAMFU Simon FAI

J. Participation in Capacity-Building Workshops

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator did not miss out on any opportunity to interact with the public, share and learn from the experiences of others. Accordingly, the Public Independent Conciliator answered present in every capacity building event to which it was invited including the following:

- i. Participation in the workshop of the 5th session of the Committee to Follow up on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Major National Dialogue that took place in Buea on the 11 of August 2023 alongside other state institutions and personalities;
- ii. Participation in the Workshop organised by NASLA on, “Accountability and Good Governance”, which held from 20-24 of February 2023 at the National School of Local Administration (NASLA).
- iii. Participation in the workshop organised by NASLA from 21 to 23 June 2023: Four staff from the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator attended the first ever scientific colloquium organized by the National School of Local Administrators (NASLA) on the theme: “*Crisis management within the decentralization context in Cameroon: challenges and prospects for regional and local authorities*”.

Present at the 3-day colloquium were political and administrative personalities including the Minister of Decentralization, the Governor of South West Region, the President of the Regional Assemblies and the Public Independent Conciliators for the North-West and South-West regions amongst other personalities.

Presided at by the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development (MINDDEVEL), the highlights of the colloquium were the official opening ceremony, the activities proper and the official closing ceremony. The opening ceremony included a welcome address by the Director General of NASLA, an opening speech by H.E. ELANGA OBAM Georges, Minister of Decentralisation and Local Development and an inaugural lecture from Former Minister Phillip NGOLE NGWESE.

The activities proper included three presentations all underscoring the role regional and local authorities play as frontline actors in the search for solutions in the current crises that are plaguing the country. Others were four plenary sessions, parallel sessions, discussions and question and answers with the active involvement of the staff of the Public Independent Conciliators of the

North-West Region as participants.

The colloquium ended with recommendations, some extended to Public Independent Conciliators to:

- promote capacity building of their staff and organize more education and sensitization seminars for its stakeholders on preventing conflicts;
- take a critical look at the law on regional and local authorities, and come out with areas that hamper the effective functioning of these councils and make proposals for statutory and legislative amendments to ensure smooth functioning.
- set up mediating committees and focal persons in councils to help prevent future crises.
- practice inclusive management of the crisis by integrating the needs of the vulnerable such as refugees, disabled, women, old and internally displaced persons.

Other events in which the Public Independent Conciliator participated included:

- i. Participation in the Official launching of the Strategic Partnership between the North-West Regional Assembly and Smile Train on Friday January 26th 2023 during which both institutions entered a Memorandum of Understanding on the free treatment of cleft lips;
- ii. The Workshop on Promoting Decentralization in North-West and South-West Regions, organized by the African Leadership Centre, Nairobi in collaboration with the British High Commission in Yaounde on 16 March, 2023;
- iii. Participation in the workshop organised by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) on Housing, Land, and Property rights from 26 to 27 September 2023.
- iv. Participation in the quarterly regional coordination meetings for the maintenance of law and order, chaired by H.E. the Governor, North-West Region. These meetings took stock of the security and state of affairs in the region following the ongoing crises and how it affects life in the region.

K. Other administrative-related activities

Additional administration-related activities of the Public Independent Conciliator were the setting up of the office to accommodate the newly recruited staff. With the increase in staff strength, there was the need to create more working space and better working conditions for staff. This involved equipping more offices for the recruited staff; furnishing the offices especially the medical consultant's office, the secretariat pool, the reception desk and the security posts.

II. SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC INDEPENDENT CONCILIATOR NORTH WEST REGION FOR THE 2023 FINANCIAL YEAR

A. STATE SUBVENTION

STATE SUBVENTION			
S/N	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT (in FCFA)	DATE
1.	Budget Approved by MINFI	824,917,337	15 MAY 2023
2.	EDOT issued at Paierie General du Tresor	824,917,337	19 JUN 2023
3.	2022 Carryover	275,082,663	
4.	Total Revenue for the 2023 Financial year	1,100,000,000	

B. EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

S/N	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT BUDGETED (in FCFA)	AMOUNT COMMITTED (in FCFA)	AMOUNT AUTHORISED FOR PAYMENT (in FCFA)	BALANCE (in FCFA)	PERCENTAGE REALISED (%)
1.	INVESTMENT EXPENDITURES	247,615,000	243,203,678	243,203,678	4,411,322	98.22
2.	FUNCTIONING EXPENDITURES	852,385,000	803,831,277	803,831,277	48,553,723	94.30
	GRAND TOTAL	1,100,000,000	1,047,034,955	1,047,034,955	52,965,045	95.18%

C. REALISATIONS

The activities of the Public Independent Conciliator for the 2023 Financial Year triggered a corresponding expenditure of 1,047,034,955 FCFA of the annual budget of 1,100,000,000 for the year, representing a percentage execution of 95.18% of the budget detailed in the financial tables above.

The realization of 95.18% was as a result of the early disbursement of state subvention (June 2023) compared to August in 2022 and in November 2021 financial years.

Also, the approved salary scale of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator permitted the absorption and classification of the already recruited ten (10) staff of 2021 and 2022, and the recruitment of eight (8) new staff, which further accounted for the realisation.

D. REVIEW OF EXPENSES

The review of Expenses and remarks on some captivating accounts are as below:

- Account 612021: Mission allowances for international missions was executed at 24.50%. This is so because the programmed trips for the Public Independent Conciliator did not materialise, particularly the envisaged participation at the 42nd Annual Conference of the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) in the United States which the Public Independent Conciliator is a member.
- Account 671500: Expenses for judicial and extra-judicial acts was executed at 0.00%. This is the case because the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator had no extra-judicial acts for the 2023 financial year.
- Account 670110: Sporting and cultural activities was executed at 0.00%. This is because plans for the staff of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to engage in weekly sporting and upkeep activities are yet to materialise.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the subvention of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region for 2023 witnessed a net increase of 23.775% compared to that of 2022, it still fell short of the budgeted estimate for the year which was driven by the urgent need to ensure the active presence of the Public Independent Conciliator on the ground. Consequently, the Public Independent Conciliator had to defer some activities to 2024 and put others on hold such as providing the much-needed support to Community-based Assistants of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator for the voluntary

services they have been rendering on behalf of the Public Independent Conciliator in their communities.

To ensure the proper functioning of the institution, the following recommendations are necessary:

- 1) Early approval and disbursement of the budget of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator for the 2024 Financial Year, possibly, rendering it operational at the same time as the annual budget of other state entities to allow appropriate time for execution of planned activities, especially as we have the head office building project at hand.
- 2) Preferably, the inclusion of the budget of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in the National budget to materialize its independence and financial autonomy as accorded by Article 2 (2) of Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020 laying conditions for the discharge of the function of Public Independent conciliator for the North-West and South-West regions.
- 3) Approval of the personnel statute and organigram for the Office to permit the official organisation of already recruited staff.

III. APPRAISAL OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE IN 2023

The Public Independent Conciliator in 2023 continued to face challenges and difficulties in its functioning as was the case in 2022, linked to its maiden character.

The principal challenges faced included:

- i. Staffing inadequacies both in numbers and quality: Though the staff strength has improved from nine (09) to seventeen (17), it suffices to say this number is largely insufficient compared to the work required covering the entire region. This situation is also compounded by the inexperience of the staff in this type of job and given their youthfulness the majority being young school leavers.
- ii. The Public Independent Conciliator has a regional mandate and the law limiting its staffing strength to 20 only makes it difficult for the Public Independent Conciliator to effectively serve the population in distant corners of the region. The dire need for the Public Independent Conciliator's presence in every council area shall have to wait for long to realise.
- iii. Though the salary scale has already been approved, the unavailability of an organisational chart and personnel statute remain drawbacks to be addressed.
- iv. The relatively late release of the 2023 budget was a cause for delay in the execution of planned activities.
- v. Concerning the management and treatment of complaints, the Public Independent Conciliator continued to encounter delays in the treatment of complaints due to difficulties in compelling the parties to respond to invitations to answer to issues largely due to the crises context of the region.
- vi. Though the Public Independent Conciliator is gradually bringing his authority to bear on many municipal authorities, there were still a handful of mayors who continued to shun cooperation with the Office.
- vii. The lack of understanding of the missions, roles and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator by many stakeholders and parties in dispute partly accounted for the limited cooperation it received from some mayors.

PART TWO

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

The Public Independent Conciliator's programme activities are those related to the core missions of the Public Independent Conciliator. These activities are divided into promotional activities which are those that go to make the Public Independent Conciliator known to the population and stakeholders in general. They are related to the information, education, sensitisation of the population and stakeholders on the missions, role and functions of the Public Independent Conciliator, regional and local authorities, the rights of the population and users of council services, as well as activities related to building and reinforcing the capacities of regional and council stakeholders to effectively fulfil their missions towards the people in their roles as duty bearers to citizens who are rights holders.

Protection activities on its part are those concerning complaint handling, protection of victims of violations, monitoring and advocating respect of rights and freedoms and enforcing ethical standards, preventing discrimination by regional and council services, investigating cases and amicably settling disputes and ensuring the effective functioning of regional and local councils.

I. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The 2023 programme of activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator was elaborated with the focus to consolidate the wins of 2022 and intensify activities directed towards the fulfilment of its missions. After a year of functioning, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, in 2023, was able to size its mandate and was poised to weigh on the demands of the ever-expecting population to realise its missions.

A. PRINCIPAL ORIENTATIONS

Bearing the foregoing in mind, the Public Independent Conciliator's programme activities in 2023 focused principally on the following:

- Intensifying the information, education and awareness raising of the masses to enhance their understanding of the missions, roles and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- Building rapport, nurturing cooperation partnerships, search for common grounds and collaboration with key stakeholders in the field;
- Exploiting opportunities for joint action with stakeholders to enrich the understanding of one another's roles and challenges faced in the performance of their duties;
- Multiplying and exploiting all avenues to reach out to the population especially people in remote and marginal communities with messages about the Public Independent Conciliator, its missions and functioning, and on their rights;
- Building the capacities of key stakeholders in areas of governance to enable them identify citizens' needs and strengthen their delivery of rights and freedoms as duty bearers, sharpening or providing them with soft skills, accompanying councils in mainstreaming rights, freedoms, inclusiveness and ethical standards in their programming and processes;
- Strengthening the capacities of communities to fully engage with councils through participation in local development and governance;
- Monitoring to ensure inclusiveness, involvement and consultation by councils of all persons without distinction and including marginal communities in governance and all decision-making processes concerning their welfare;
- Ensuring that the population have access to better and user-friendly services from the councils;
- Building greater synergy between councils and citizens, especially through the amicable settlement of disputes.

Hence, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in 2023, continued with the following:

- i. Organising more mass media campaigns with strategies to reach remote and grassroots populations in hard-to-reach areas of the region. This also included creating audio and video content for relay on

partner community radios to inform and educate the masses on the ground particularly in remote and far off communities.

- ii. Working with volunteers identified and trained as Community-Based Assistants of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator.
- iii. Organising education and sensitization seminars for other council stakeholders to inform them on the missions and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator and the search for common grounds for partnerships. This entailed reaching out to councils that were yet to receive the Public Independent Conciliator's sensitisation visits.
- iv. Receiving and addressing complaints ensuring that petitions were treated within the 60-day deadline.
- v. Organising more awareness-raising campaigns and outreach activities to bring information to the doorsteps of citizens.
- vi. Systematically monitoring and following the functioning of regional and council authorities on the ground and their relationship with citizens.
- vii. Strengthening rapport with regional and council stakeholders, as well as accompanying them to be able to deliver on their missions.
- viii. Expanding the presence of the Public Independent Conciliator on the ground by engaging and equipping more Community-Based Assistants pending the possible creation of the institution's divisional representations and sub-divisional satellite offices.

B. OBJECTIVES

The following are the general objectives pursued by the promotion activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator:

1. inform and educate key stakeholders on the missions and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator and its role in the current political dispensation;
2. enhance the understanding of the masses on the role and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator and its relationship with regional, city and local council authorities;
3. identify common grounds for collaboration and setting up consultation platforms with stakeholders;
4. develop stakeholder capacity to ensure the effective functioning of regional and council services.

C. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The general expectations were that, understanding the missions of the Public Independent Conciliator:

- All stakeholders of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and citizens in general, would have access to its services, and work with the Public Independent Conciliator to ensure a better functioning of regional and council services;
- Regional and local councils and decentralised authorities would become more performant in their functioning and the exercise of their roles to better enforce respect of rights and freedoms of users of their services, and fight discrimination and marginalisation by practising acceptable ethical standards and compliance with the relevant legal texts;
- Greater satisfaction would be generated amongst users and beneficiary populations which would lead to fewer disputes and contestations amongst the people, who, pleased with their participation in governance and decision-making processes, would canalize their energies and efforts to enhance their development;
- The population, aware of their rights and freedoms and the high standard of conduct expected from regional and local authorities, would be less likely to indulge in violations, abuses and contentious actions and by doing this would reduce disputes and conflicts;
- Equally, a better understanding of the functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator would lead to greater collaboration, public trust and acceptance, and greater support in the realisation of its missions;
- Engagement platforms would be established with key stakeholders which would hopefully result in better services to the population.

The expected outcomes of the identified activities were to consolidate grounds already covered by the 2022 activities and maintain the ripple effect of activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in all communities in 2023. This included:

- Deepening the knowledge and understanding of the work of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator as well as the duties of regional and local authorities;
- Strengthening the bond of cooperation between the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and citizens;
- Enhancing the credibility and support of the population in the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- Informing and sensitising further the populations, and particularly those of marginal and remote communities yet to be reached by the Public Independent Conciliator's communication;
- Strengthening further the capacity of stakeholders to mainstream the concepts of rights and freedoms, inclusiveness and ethical values in their work;
- Continuing to weigh on regional and council authorities to be more transparent and accountable tasking them to deliver services that are satisfactory and are concretely meeting the expectations of the population;
- Improving the monitoring of the quality of respect of rights and freedoms by regional and local authorities to ensure compliance with the law and legislations;
- Accelerating complaint treatment and cut down on delays bringing complaint treatment within the 60 days' statutory deadline;
- Further boost the population's participation in regional and council activities.

II. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

The 2023 promotion activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator revolved around the following:

- A. Mass media sensitisation of the population;
- B. Organisation of information and education seminars;
- C. Capacity building workshops for Council Stakeholders;
- D. Organisation of campaigns and other outreach activities;
- E. Organisation of the 2023 Survey on functioning of regional and local authorities;
- F. Sensitisation visits of councils.

A. MASS MEDIA SENSITISATION CAMPAIGN

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator continued with the sensitization of the population via various media outlets throughout 2023. The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator engaged in informing and educating the population by a number of activities including:

- covering and publishing activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator on radios, newspapers, local and national television stations;
- holding live / special programmes over popular radio stations including continuous broadcast and rebroadcast of the programmes of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator: "My Council, My Rights" over Radio Abakwa FM and the "Conciliator" over CRTV North-West;
- recording and broadcasting Public Independent Conciliator's content on urban and local/community radios and other social media handles like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram;
- relaying programmes recorded for rebroadcast/relays over community radios of the region.

In 2023, the Public Independent Conciliator North-West also ran a mass media campaign from July – September 2023 to continue informing and educating the masses on its missions and activities. Activities carried out during the mass media campaign included the following:

- Regular broadcast of "Conciliator" on CRTV North-West every Wednesday at 6:15 PM and "My Council, My Right" on Thursday at 9:30 AM on Abakwa FM radio.
- Rebroadcast of recorded programmes on nine (9) local and community radios. The Boyo

Community Radio in Fundong was added to the list of functioning proximity radio stations partnering with the Office with effect from 1st August 2023.

- Media organs invited to cover events organised by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator which they effectively published.

In 2023, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator worked with eleven (11) radio stations, six (6) TV stations, ten (10) print media and was present on six (6) social media outlets in addition to the website (www.opic-cam.org). Meanwhile, the good relationship between the Public Independent Conciliator and the media has led to spontaneous coverage by some organs even if not formally invited.



Launching of the campaign to promote the free establishment of civil status registration documents, Abakwa Fm 21 September 2023

At the end of September, the launching of the campaign to promote the free establishment of civil status registration documents by municipal authorities led to the involvement of other radio stations like Dream FM, and Radio Hot Cocoa.

NO.	RADIO	TV	PRINT MEDIA	Social MEDIA OUTLET
1	CRTV North-West	CRTV	Cameroon Tribune	Facebook
2	Abakwa FM	My Media Prime	The Guardian Post	YouTube
3	Ndu Council Radio	Hi TV	The Post	Instagram
4	Boyo Community Radio	Canal 2	The Herald Tribune	X (Twitter)
5	Elak Council Radio	Eagle Eye	The Voice	WhatsApp
6	DMCR Nkambe	Vision 4	Municipal Updates	TikTok
7	Radio Dudum Andek		Cameroon Insider	
8	Dream FM		The NEWS	
9	Radio Hot Cocoa		The Pilot	
10	Oku Rural Radio		The SUN	
11.	Foundation Radio			

It suffices to say that the growing interest in the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator was sensed via increasing requests by media organs to do special reports or exclusives.

B. ORGANISATION OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION SEMINARS

i. Information and Education Seminar for the Newly Elected and Appointed Senators of the North-West Region on 14 July 2023.

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator North-West Region organised an information and edu-

cation seminar for the newly elected and appointed Senators of the North-West Region on July 14, 2023. The objective of the seminar was to inform Senators on the missions and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator and how they can blend efforts with the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to ensure that the local population in different council areas is well served by the local councils. It was also an opportunity to share ideas and chart a working platform of collaboration between the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and Senators of the North-West region in their capacities as elite and citizens of the councils of the region to ensure that regional and council services function effectively.

The seminar was punctuated by three presentations followed by discussions and a question and answer session during which the Senators made valuable proposals on how the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator could become more performant in exercising its roles of watchdog, advocate, pacificator and peace crusader.



The Public Independent Conciliator, North-West Region, Mr. TAMFU Simon FAI speaking to Senators during the Information and Education Seminar for Senators of the Region on 14 July 2023

ii. Contact and Sensitisation Visits of the Public Independent Conciliator to Councils in Divisional Headquarters of the region

The Public Independent Conciliator conducted visits to councils located in Divisional headquarters of five (5) out of the seven (7) Divisions comprising the North-West Region. These included Wum Council (Menchum Division); Mbengwi Council (Momo Division); Fundong Council (Boyo Division); Ndop Council (Ngoketunjia Division); and the Bamenda City Council for Mezam Division. The visits to the Divisional headquarters were led personally by the Public Independent Conciliator, accompanied by two of his staff. The visits were aimed at informing and educating the council executives (the Mayor and deputies), personnel, councillors, local elites, administrative and traditional authorities. These visits were highlighted by three presentations namely:

- ♣ The creation of the Public Independent Conciliator focusing on his missions, organisation and functioning;
- ♣ The functioning of councils in the North West Region: the Law and Practice;
- ♣ The Complaint Management Mechanism at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator.

During these visits, the Public Independent Conciliator advised council executives and workers on their role as duty bearers and which puts on them the obligation to serve the population of their council area, and urged them to comply with the laws and regulations on council functioning and to practice inclusiveness and the notion of **leave no one behind**. The principal message was that councils should work to avoid conflicts and to always strive to resolve disputes at their levels to avoid them escalating to require the attention of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator.

In addition to the visits to divisional headquarters led by the Public Independent Conciliator in person, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator also carried out information and education visits to municipal councils not situated in divisional headquarters, led by the staff of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator namely, to Bamenda II and the Nkor councils. During the visits with the municipal

authorities, staff and councillors, traditional authorities and local elite in attendance, participants were drilled on the missions and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and how complaints are lodged and treated by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region.



The Public Independent Conciliator, North-West Region, Mr. TAMFU Simon FAI, and his team on Sensitisation visit to Ndog on 20th July 2023

iii. Information Seminar for Regional Delegates

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator on 7th December 2023 organised a one-day information and education seminar for North-West Regional delegates and persons ranking as such. The purpose of the seminar was to inform and educate Regional Delegates of the North West Region on the missions, role and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, being a new dispensation in the political and administrative landscape of the North-West Region. Understanding the role regional delegates could play not only in respect to their functions, given that some of them actively work with councils, they are also citizens of councils and elite of their communities capable of positively impacting the functioning of their councils.

The information session was animated by three presentations on the missions, role and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, and its mandate and the complaint management procedure. It was followed by discussions and a question/answer session during which the role of the Public Independent Conciliator was clarified vis-à-vis other actors of the decentralisation process. It also presented an opportunity for information sharing and a search for common grounds for concertation and collaboration to enhance the functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and the effectiveness of councils.

The seminar ended on a note of satisfaction expressed by the fifty-three (53) persons in attendance and the hope that the information shared shall rekindle a more active cooperation and collaboration between regional delegates and the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region.



Pic poses with Participants during the Information Seminar for Regional delegates and Persons ranking as such, December 7th, 2023

iv. *Information and Education Seminar for Local Language Broadcasters of the North-West*

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator on 8th December 2023, organised a one-day seminar for National Language Broadcasters of the North-West region. The purpose of the seminar was to inform and educate broadcasters in widely used national languages of the North West Region on the missions, role and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator. The expectation was that, informed of the missions and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator, national language broadcasters would be able to inform and sensitise their listeners better on the missions and role of the Public Independent Conciliator in the local language.

The seminar was animated by four presentations on the following topics:

- i. The organisation and functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- ii. The Substantive and Functional Mandates of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- iii. The Complaint Management Procedure at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
- iv. Tips on Communicating Effectively through Broadcasting.

The presentations were followed by general discussions and a question-and-answer session. The workshop brought together over 50 participants representing thirty-four (34) national languages broadcasting on nine (9) radio stations across the region.

Participants appreciated the organisation of the seminar and pleaded for more of such information sessions, wishing that the Public Independent Conciliator had more compelling powers to bring recalcitrant mayors to order.



A pose for the Press of Participants at the Information and Education Seminar for National Language Broadcaster of the North-West Region on 8th December 2023

C. Organisation of Capacity Building Workshops for Regional and Council Stakeholders

i. *Capacity Building Workshop for Mayors on Rights-Based Approach to Regional and Council Programming*

The Public Independent Conciliator organised a capacity Building workshop on Human Rights-Based Approach to programming for Mayors and members of the North-West Regional Executive Council on 26 & 27 October 2023 at the Auditorium of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, Bamenda. The workshop was aimed at enhancing the capacities of mayors to protect and prevent violations of rights and freedoms, discrimination and unethical conduct in their affairs by integrating the concepts of rights and freedoms, participation and inclusiveness and respect for ethical values in their programming.

The workshop brought together forty-two (42) participants: thirty-five mayors, and seven (7) participants of the North-West Regional Executive Council, (The Vice President, three (3) Commissioners, the Secretary General, and two (2) Secretaries of the house).

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised a two-day Capacity Building Workshop for its Community-Based Assistants (CBAs) on the 27 and 28 of September 2023. The objective was to train them on skills to better monitor and report violations of rights and freedoms by councils. The results of the training are evident in the increasing number of complaints received and amicably solved by the Public Independent Conciliator.



The Public Independent Conciliator poses with Mayors during the Workshop on Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming for Councils of the North-West Region, 26-27 October 2023 v. Information Seminar for Municipal Treasurers

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised an information session on 6th December 2023 for Treasurers of decentralised entities of the North-West Region in line with the Public Independent Conciliator’s mandate to *ensure that persons serving in the regional or council administration fulfil their ethical obligations* (Article 4 of Decree No 2020/773 of 24 December 2020). The one-day information seminar brought together thirty-six (36) participants from thirty-four (34) councils, the Bamenda City Council and the Regional Assembly. The activity was animated by three presentations on the following themes:

1. Missions, Roles and Functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator;
2. Local Public Administration and Governance: Administrative Deontology;
3. Management of Public Finance: The Case of Local Decentralized Authorities.

The presenters stressed on the relevance and importance of adopting ethical conduct by persons serving in regional and council administration and how it could positively impact their work and the image of the council. The presentations were followed by discussions and a question/answer session.

At the end of the workshop, municipal treasurers appreciated the knowledge impacted and pledged to uphold high ethical standards in the discharge of their duties. They expressed their gratitude to the Public Independent Conciliator for organising the seminar and pleaded for the Public Independent Conciliator to organise a joint seminar of mayors, secretaries-general of councils and municipal treasurers to enable them clarify roles for an effective functioning of councils. This plea was accepted and taken on board by the Public Independent Conciliator in its 2024 programme.



Participant’s interaction during the Capacity building Workshop for Municipal Treasurer of the North-West region on 6th December 2023

D. Campaign to promote Free Civil Status Registration organised by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator

Following the increasing complaints by the population of extortion that have infested the civil status registration process rendering the obtaining of civil status documents difficult without paying, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised the campaign to promote the free establishment of Civil Status Documents (Birth, and Marriage certificates as well as Certificates of Death) by Council Authorities. Launched in September 2023, the campaign ran for three months up to the end of November 2023. The Campaign covered the entire North West Region comprising 35 Councils with Bamenda City Council inclusive and was directed at the entire population of the North West Region and particularly key stakeholders (Council Executives, Civil Status Officers, and Judicial Officers) involved in the process of delivery of civil status documents.

The aim of the campaign was to ensure that the population enjoys their rights to free civil status registration as provided by law. The principal objective of the campaign was to inform and educate the population that the establishment of civil status registration documents as intended by the law to be free as provided by Art. 17 of the 1981 Civil Status Registration Ordinance as amended by Law No.2011/011 of 26 May 2011, and to empower the population to enable them claim these rights in case of extortion or violation by Civil Status Registrars. These messages were carried on posters, billboards, flyers and brochures.



Staff display gadgets for Campaign to Promote the Free Establishment of Civil Status Documents

The campaign included the following activities:

- Mass-media sensitisation on key media outlets of the region;
- Display of posters, billboards and dissemination of flyers and brochures;
- caravan broadcast along major streets of Bamenda;
- Door to door information by Community-Based Assistants (CBAs) of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator.

During the campaign period, campaign messages resonated throughout all activities organised by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator and campaign broadcast on major radios and television stations were rebroadcast by ten (10) partner community radios and televisions across the region.

The 70 trained Community-Based Assistants (two per council area, including the Bamenda City Council) also relayed the campaign messages to the population through door-to-door visits, group meeting in health centres and during various gatherings and meetings. The CBAs were also engaged in the display and dissemination of campaign gadgets in their council areas.



Caravan agent explaining message and distributing flyers on the Campaign to Promote Free Civil Status Documents, to the population at the Bamenda Central Market

E. Organisation of the 2023 Survey on the Functioning of Regional and Local Authorities

Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 and Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020 state that the Public Independent Conciliator shall annually submit to the President of the Republic a report on the state of relations between citizens and regional and council authorities as well as a balance sheet of its activities (Article 4(1) paragraph 6 and Article 25 (1) of Decree No.2020/773 and Section 367 (3) paragraph 6 of law No. 2019/024). In order to produce the aforementioned report, the Public Independent Conciliator carried out a survey to collect information on the perception of the population regarding the activities and functioning of regional and council authorities.

Unlike in 2022, the 2023 survey, with the assistance of Community-Based Assistants, covered the entire region involving all thirty-four (34) local councils, the Bamenda city council and the Regional Assembly. Data solicited were related to the performances of regional and council services in the following areas:

- the administration and management of councils including staff recruitment and management;
- good governance, ethics and compliance, particularly on issues related to staff conduct and service delivery to the users and the population;
- involvement of the population in council activities including in project planning, implementation and monitoring;
- inclusiveness and participation of the population in council activities and local governance;
- respect of rights and freedoms of beneficiary population.

Basically, the survey was to find out how regional and local authorities were doing in their relationship with citizens and how they were functioning in the context of the crises rocking the region. To do this, 7,842 targeted questionnaires were produced and administered by seventy (70) Community-Based-Assistants properly briefed for the exercise. The administered questionnaires were analysed and the findings are constituted in the 2023 annual report on council functioning.

II. PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

The protection activities of the Public Independent Conciliator, as already stated, are those activities that go to strengthen the citizen's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms, prevent discrimination and unethical conduct by regional and municipal authorities against users of council services. Protection activities relate to the reception, handling and management of complaints and the settlement of disputes.

Same as in the previous years, protection activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in 2023 involved the following:

- Monitoring activities of CBAs and ensuring that citizen's rights and freedoms were respected through regular visits of council services, interactions and exchanges with users and beneficiaries of council services;
- Practising an open-door policy to all persons, groups or communities interested in lodging complaints against regional and municipal services;

- Welcoming and addressing petitions on regional and council wrong doings and ensuring their amicable settlement.

A. CBA monitoring, advocacy and denunciation activities

The Public Independent Conciliator’s protective actions on the field could best be seen through the activities of Community-Based Assistants. Through their voluntary actions on the ground, CBAs provide direct protection to citizens through direct intervention, denunciation and advocacy on behalf of victims to enable them claim their rights. This was very glaring following the campaign for the promotion of free establishment of civil status registration documents.

In many circumstances, persons obliged by council services to pay exorbitant charges for the establishment of birth or marriage documents, which are supposed to be free in accordance with Articles 17 of the 1981 Ordinance on Civil Status Registration as amended by law No. 2011 supra, were accompanied by our CBAs to ensure these documents were issued at no extra cost. The interventions and advocacy, including denouncing (naming and shaming) perpetrators of extortion and violations and the sensitisation CBA’s carried out in their communities added great value to the work of the Public Independent Conciliator on the ground.

B. Complaints Management and Treatment

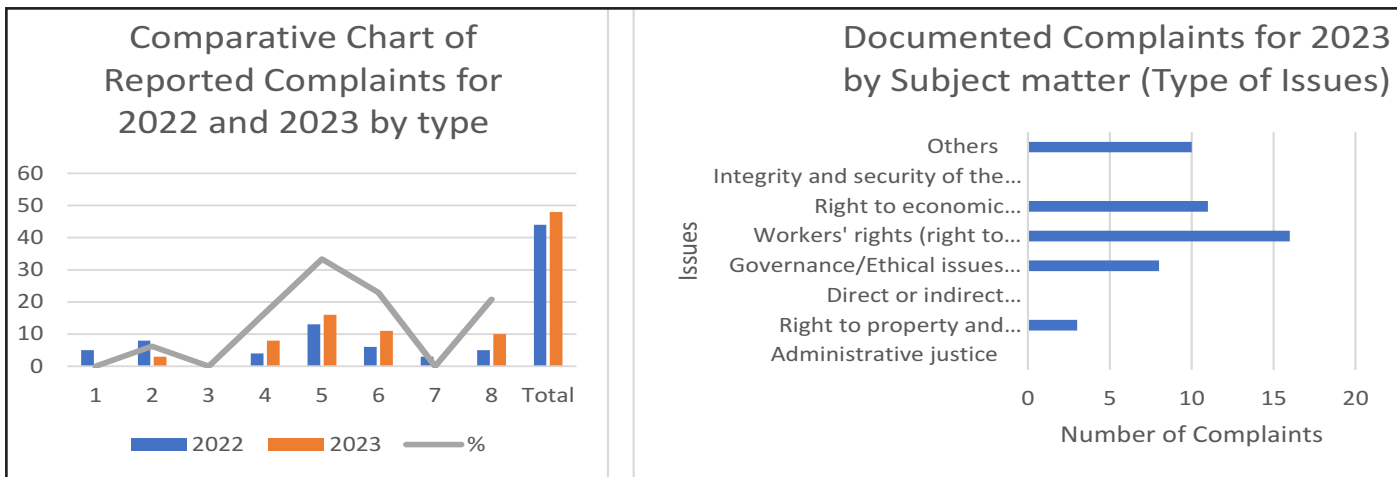
During the year 2023, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator received and documented forty-eight (48) complaints against the actions or inactions of municipal authorities as against forty-four (44) in 2022. The forty-eight (48) complaints, additional to the pending complaints of 2022, systematically received the attention of the Public Independent Conciliator. Their treatment was either a full examination on the merit, reorientation and/or advise to the complainant, or referral and follow-up with the competent authorities as the case might be, for complaints not falling within the ambit of the Public Independent Conciliator’s missions.

C. Statistical Presentation of Complaints Treatment

Following the examination and treatment of the reported complaints, documented complaints could be categorised according to subject matter type, the origin of the complaint, reporting month and status of treatment as follows:

By subject matter (type):

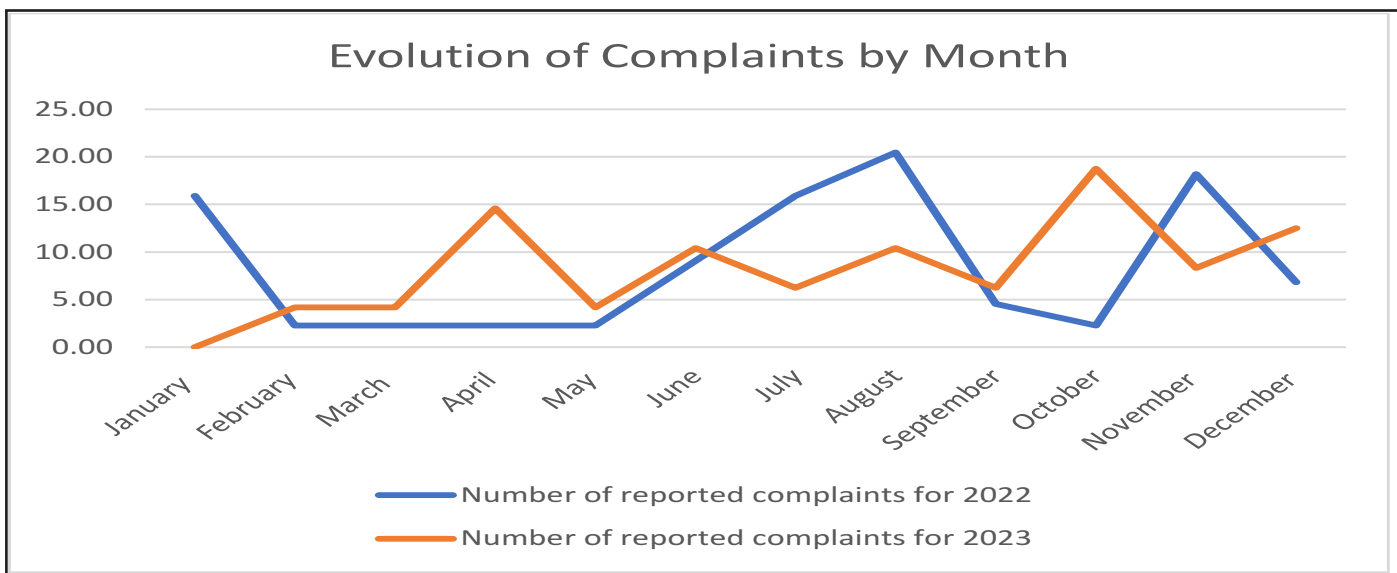
No.	Subject-Matter (Type of Issues)	2022	%	2023	%
1	Administrative justice	5	11.36	0	0.00
2	Right to property and ownership / Trespass	8	18.18	3	6.25
3	Direct or indirect discrimination	0	0.00		0.00
4	Governance/Ethical issues (allegations of corruption, embezzlement, mismanagement)	4	9.09	8	16.67
5	Workers' rights (right to work and equitable remuneration, wrongful termination, unjust retirement, non-payment of dues and allowances, right to social insurance/pension/ family allowance)	13	29.55	16	33.33
6	Right to economic development/Breach of Contracts	6	13.64	11	22.92
7	Integrity and security of the human person	3	6.82	0	0.00
8	Others	5	11.36	10	20.83
Total		44		48	



Documented complaints in 2023 showed a much similar trend as in 2022 with worker’s rights related issues (33.33%) toping the chart right in front of right to economic development (22.92%) and governance/ethical issues (16.67%). However, unlike in 2022, no cases of violation of the integrity and worth of the person or abuse of administrative justice were reported in 2023. Cases violation of the Right to property and ownership and Trespass dropped significantly by over 50%. Much as in 2022, there was no formal case of discrimination reported in 2023, though the Office continues to receive informal denunciations of inequalities, exclusion and favouritism in the councils. There is still a remarkable number of cases not falling within the jurisdiction of the Public Independent Conciliator amounting to 20.83% in 2023.

By month:

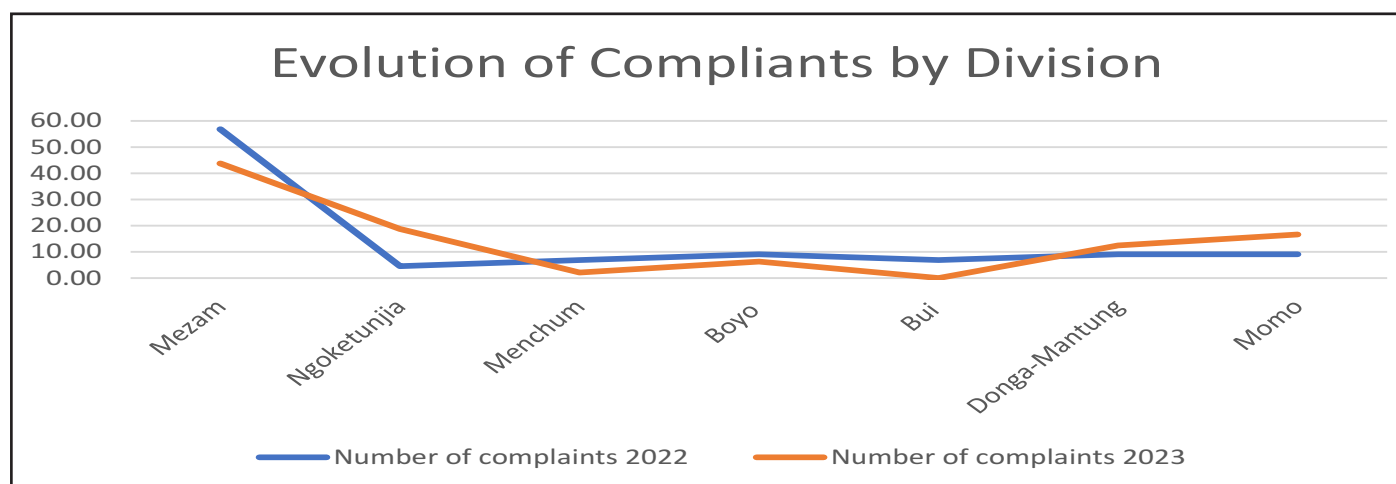
No.	Month	Number of reported complaints for 2022	Number of reported complaints for 2023	Percentage of reported complaints for 2022	Percentage of reported complaints for 2023
1.	January	7	0	15.91	0.000
2.	February	1	2	2.27	4.167
3.	March	1	2	2.27	4.167
4.	April	1	7	2.27	14.583
5.	May	1	2	2.27	4.167
6.	June	4	5	9.09	10.417
7.	July	7	3	15.91	6.250
8.	August	9	5	20.45	10.417
9.	September	2	3	4.55	6.250
10.	October	1	9	2.27	18.750
11.	November	8	4	18.18	8.333
12.	December	3	6	6.82	12.500
	Total	44	48		



Analysing complaints at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator by monthly reception, it was visible that the peak months that registered the highest number of complaints for 2023 was April and October compared to August and November in 2022. Much as in 2022, these highs correspond to months during which Public Independent Conciliator's media campaigns were ongoing. However, we can say in 2023, the Public Independent Conciliator received averagely four (4) complaints per month.

By Division of origin:

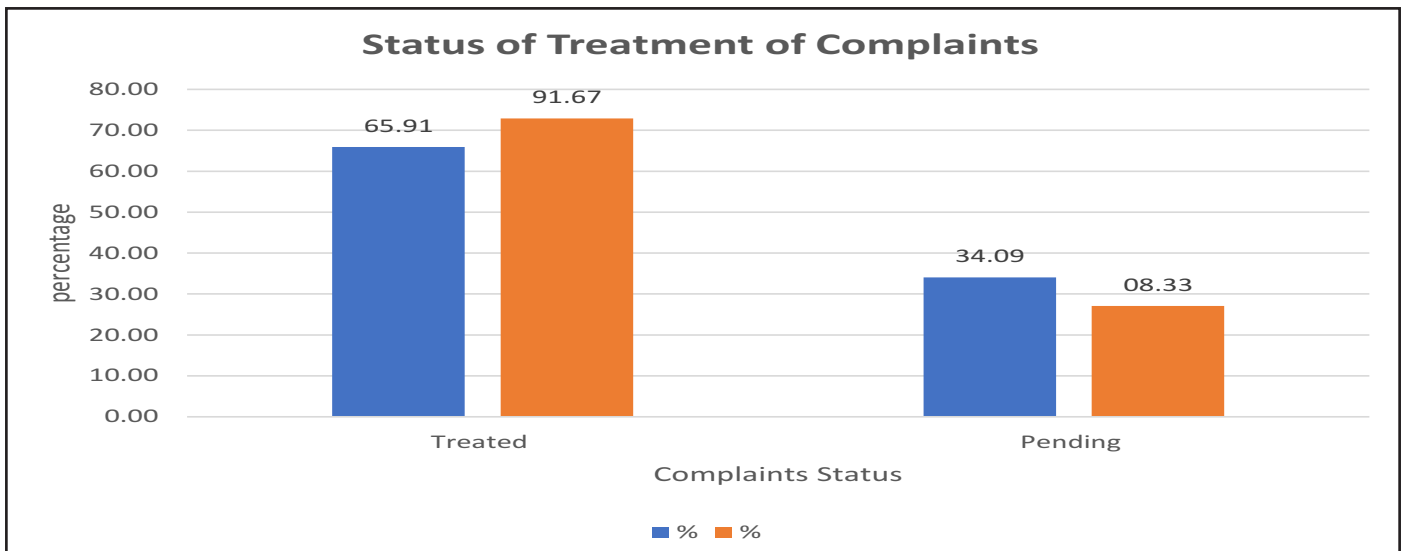
No.	Division	Number of complaints	Number of complaints	Percentage of complaints	Percentage of complaints
		2022	2023	2022	2023
1	Mezam	25	21	56.82	43.75
2	Ngoketunjia	2	9	4.55	18.75
3	Menchum	3	1	6.82	2.08
4	Boyo	4	3	9.09	6.25
5	Bui	3	0	6.82	0.00
6	Donga-Mantung	4	6	9.09	12.50
7	Momo	4	8	9.09	16.67
	Total	44	48		



Considering petitions submitted at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator by division of origin, Mezam Division remains on the top with 43.75% of all complaints in 2023 against 56.82% in 2022, largely due to the proximity and accessibility to the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator. However, we can notice that with the ongoing sensitisation, more and more complaints were coming from the divisions of the region particularly from Ngoketunjia, Momo and Donga-Mantung that witnessed some net increases in 2023.

Status of treatment of complaints

No.	Status	2022	%	2023	%
1	Treated (Treatment was concluded either by the Public Independent Conciliator or the competent authority to whom the matter was referred – matter no longer needing the attention of the Public Independent Conciliator)	29	65.91	44	91.67
2	Pending (treatment is ongoing – matter not yet concluded, still receiving the attention of the Public Independent Conciliator)	15	34.09	04	08.33
	Total	44		48	



The status of treatment of complaints shows that 91.67% of documented complaints in 2023 were treated to completion against 65.91% in 2022.

D. Commentaries / Observations

- a. Compared to 2022, there was a net increase in the number of complaints received from 44 to 48 representing a percentage increase of 8.33%.
- b. In the complaint’s treatment process, over a hundred auditioning sessions were held with complainants and respondents in line with the adversarial principle, and no fewer than 150 correspondences were dispatched to parties in conflict acknowledging receipt of complaints and inviting parties to auditioning.
- c. As was in 2022, in 2023, actions on complaints were not limited to those falling within the competence of the Public Independent Conciliator. All complaints were received and given due attention. While those falling within the ambit of the Public Independent Conciliator received its full attention, those outside its competence were either referred to the competent authorities or given other orientations for solutions.
- d. Complaint treatment continued to witness delays in their treatment largely due to the uncooperative attitude of some mayors who continue to drag their feet when responding to invitations from the Public Independent Conciliator.
- e. That the growing number of informal and anonymous denunciations of council malpractices were on the increase in 2023, is also worth mentioning. These complainants have often hidden their identities and have been reticent to commit their complaint into writing.
- f. Since its inception in 2021 till December 2023, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, North-West Region has received a total of One Hundred and Twenty-Two (122) complaints and One Hundred and Eighteen (118) were treated to completion making a treatment rate of 96.72%.

E. Case Studies

Some of the resolved complaints are here presented as case studies:

COMPLAINT NO.009/2023: Mr. A.B. (Complainant) against the Mbengwi Council (Respondent)

On the 13 of April 2023, Mr. A. B. (Complainant) petitioned against the Mbengwi Council (Respondent) wherein she alleged the non-payment of salary and allowances amounting to the sum of four hundred and five thousand (405,000) francs by the Mbengwi Council.

Following the examination of the complaint, it was found admissible given that the complainant had sought redress with the mayor to no avail. Entertaining the matter, the Public Independent Conciliator held several auditioning sessions with the complainant and respondent resulting in a conciliatory agreement in which the Mbengwi Council agreed to pay to the complainant the sum of two hundred and five thousand (205,000) francs CFA.

The matter was laid to rest following the council’s payment of the agreed sum in honour of its commitment.

COMPLAINT NO.029/2023: M. Enterprise against the Bafut Council

On 27 September 2023, M. Enterprise (Complainant) filed in a complaint against the Bafut Council (Respondent) where in the complainant petitioned the unwillingness of the Bafut Council to reimburse the retention guarantee worth One Million Three Hundred and Forty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Seven (1,349,777) francs CFA for maintenance work which was done on the road segment Njinteh-Bafut Narket-Nsanimunwi, Bafut Market Mankwi in 2019.

Examining the complaint, it was found admissible as the issues concerned the Council's failure to honour a contractual agreement for services rendered by a service provider. Following successive auditioning and review of evidence provided, the parties settled on a mutual agreement that was endorsed in a conciliatory agreement in which the Bafut Council pledged to reimburse the 10% guarantee of One Million Three Hundred and Forty-Nine Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy-Seven (1,349,777) Francs CFA owed M. Enterprise for the execution of contract N0.006/ONIT/BCITB/PIB/2019 of 10/09/2019.

The complainant was very satisfied that the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator could entertain and find a possible solution to the matter he had struggled to resolve since 2019 to no avail.

COMPLAINT NO.024/2022: Mr. F.S.F. (Complainant) against the Mbengwi Council (Respondent).

The complainant in a complaint dated 18 August 2022 alleged that the respondent continuously refused to pay the balance of Nine Million, One Hundred and Ninety-Three Thousand, Four Hundred and Twenty-Two (9,193,422) francs CFA plus Six Hundred Thousand (600,000) francs CFA charges for the construction of three (3) water supply schemes in Tugi, Tuochop and Chup villages in the year 2010.

Finding the complaint admissible, the PIC examined the complaint and organised separate and joint auditioning of the parties in respect of the adversarial principle, which ended in a conciliatory agreement wherein the Mbengwi Council agreed to pay the sum of Nine Million, One Hundred and Ninety-Three Thousand, Four Hundred and Twenty-Two (9,193,422) francs CFA to the complainant within 20 months beginning from January 2024. The Public Independent Conciliator shall be monitoring the execution of the agreement.

In signing this agreement, the parties mutually agreed to end their nine-year-old differences that had lasted since 2015.

COMPLAINT No. 010/2023: The Complaint of Deputy Mayors of Ndog Council against the Ndog Council

On 18 April 2023, Deputy Mayors of the Ndog Council (complainants) lodged a petition at the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator for the North-West Region against the Mayor of the Ndog Council (Respondent). The allegations included the following deeds by the Mayor:

- running the council alone and not associating his deputies;
- employing only his family members and political friends;
- violating the rights of workers;
- holding only two sessions since 2020;
- concentrating poorly executed projects in his Bamunka village;
- awarding council contracts solely to his company.

Finding that the issues raised had to do with the dysfunction of the Council, the petition was admitted for treatment. The issues were examined in three auditioning sessions held with the parties at the end of which they resolved to enter an amicable settlement wherein the mayor agreed to:

- *share power with his deputies and allow the Secretary-General, Municipal Treasurer to perform their duties without encroachments;*
- *hold all statutory meetings, council sessions and executive coordination meetings with his deputies and collaborators to enable collegial decision making in the council;*
- *put general interest above his personal interest and manage the council in collaboration with his deputies and the Council Board;*
- *adopt a participatory and transparent management style especially regarding recruitment, award of contracts and equitable distribution of projects in the communities;*
- *rid the Ndog Council workers' roll of all ghost workers and regularize the situation of workers in accordance with the Labour Code.*

The Public Independent Conciliator endorsed the Conciliatory Agreement between the complainants and respondent and the execution is being monitored.

COMPLAINT No. 020/2023: The Complaint of HGS against the Bafut Council

On 07 July 2023, the Public Independent Conciliator received a complaint from Mr. M.S.C, representing HGS wherein it was alleged that the Bafut Council had refused to pay for rural electrification works executed at Njibang, Mankaha in Bafut Subdivision.

Being a matter concerning the relationship between the Bafut Council and a legal person (HGS), and therefore admissible, the Public Independent Conciliator proceeded to treat the petition as well as auditioned the parties at the end of which the parties agreed to enter an amicable settlement of their differences.

The Bafut Council agreed to pay to the complainant the entirety of his claims amounting to the sum of Four Million Eight Hundred and Thirty-Four thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety-Five (4,834,395) Francs CFA, as soon as the council received its subvention from the State. The recommendation was scrupulously respected under the watchful eye of the Public Independent Conciliator.

F. APPRAISAL OF THE PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC INDEPENDENT CONCILIATOR OF THE NORTH-WEST REGION

Reviewing the goals outlined and activities carried out by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in 2023, it will be relevant to ask if the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator met its objective and the answer is YES! and largely so, considering the realisations of the Office given the constraints of functioning.

Through the mass media sensitisation and campaigns, seminars and capacity building workshops and their ripple effect in all communities, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator consolidated grounds covered by 2022 activities;

- Through its over 200 media outings, it engaged and deepened the understanding of the masses of its missions and functioning, and soften the ground for cooperation and support of the population for the work of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator, the regional and local councils;
- By relaying with community radio partners and Community-Based Assistants, it increased the awareness of hard-to-reach populations of marginal and remote communities concretely meeting their expectations;
- Through its capacity-building workshops, it sharpened the skills of council stakeholders (Mayors, Secretaries-General and Municipal Treasurers) on rights-based programming, to enable them to translate words into action on the ground;
- Its monitoring and advocacy on rights, freedoms, inclusiveness and ethical values ensured that councils provide transparent and accountable services that are satisfactory to the population they serve. Hence, there is growing respect of rights and freedoms by regional and council services and their compliance with the law, and more awareness by councils on the need to watch out against violations.;
- The extortion of money from the masses, especially regarding illegal collection of money for the establishment of civil status registration documents which by law should be free, is a glaring example of the impact of promotional and protection activities of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator on the ground;
- The pattern is a positive paradigm shift as a large number of municipal authorities have issued directives for the FREE establishment of civil status registration documents and this is spreading across the board;
- With the increased softening of the ground the initial resistance observed amongst some council authorities is gradually being weakened and eroded in favour of greater collaboration. This also contributed to cut down treatment time for complaints as mayors now readily respond to Public Independent Conciliator's invitations to resolve matters;
- The satisfaction of the population with the activities of the Public Independent Conciliator is visible. They think the Public Independent Conciliator is doing a great job. Their worry is that the Public Independent Conciliator's missions is limited stopping him from dealing with other issues they would have loved him to handle including the area of administrative justice.

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator has therefore been able to realise its planned activities

to a satisfactory level as a result of the fulfilment of some of its expectations namely:

- The release of the 2023 budget of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator that came in June, earlier than in the previous year;
- The increase of the staff strength of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator from nine in 2022 to 17 at the close of 2023;
- As well as greater cooperation and collaboration with the Public Independent Conciliator's stakeholders.

However, this success story is slightly mitigated by a few drawbacks:

1. As already mentioned, some areas of the region remain enclave and hard to reach by radio waves and road communication;
2. The security context did not permit an even coverage of the region. There still exist many red zones the PIC cannot frequent and the yellow zones can only be accessed with the aid of military escort.
3. Some planned activities could not be realised due to practical difficulties encountered. For instance, only seven (7) of the seventeen (17) council visits took place due to security constraints.
4. The technical breakdown of radio equipment by lightning, coupled with frequent blackouts, affected the regular broadcast of radio programmes.

The Office of the Public Independent Conciliator would only be able to maximise its realisations if these shortcomings are addressed. The impact of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator's promotional activities is the increased awareness of the population of their rights and duties as citizens, as well as of the existence of the Public Independent Conciliator they could run to in case they encounter any issues with regional and local authorities.

The regional and local authorities are becoming more and more conscious of their role and responsibility towards citizens as duty bearers and guarantors of quality services to the population. Unlike in 2022, the resistance witnessed from some of them in 2023 is gradually dissipating.

PART THREE

FUNCTIONING OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH CITIZENS

I. BACKGROUND

The Public Independent Conciliator is mandated to report on the functioning of regional and local authorities. Section 367 (3) paragraph 6 of Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, and Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020 to lay down conditions for the discharge of the duties of the Public Independent Conciliator, stipulate that the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator shall:

“Prepare an annual report on the state of relations between citizens and regional and council services” Article 4(1) paragraph 6, and shall “submit to the President of the Republic an annual report on the state of relations between citizens and regional and council services. The report shall present the balance sheet of his activities”. (Article 25 paragraph (1) of Decree No. 2020/773 of 24 December 2020).

To enable the preparation of the report in accordance with the above provisions, the Public Independent Conciliator undertook a study on the functioning of regional and council services and their relations with citizens. The survey set out to collect information that would help the PIC know how regional and local authorities’ function and how they relate with citizens in the North-West Region:

- i. What does the Public Independent Conciliator need to know about the functioning of regional and council services and their relations with citizens?
- ii. What has changed since the last report to the President of the Republic?
- iii. What should the Public Independent Conciliator tell the Head of State about the functioning of regional and council services and their relations with citizens?

In 2023, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator confirmed the trend identified in the 2022 report on regional and council authorities. This segment of the report is presented under the following rubrics:

- Statement of the problem
- Scope of the studies
- Methodology
- Findings

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The decentralisation project ushered in by Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 on the Constitution of Cameroon, amended and supplemented by Law No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008, notably Sections 1(2), 55 to 62, lays down the decentralisation process in Cameroon. In line with this goal, Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities materialises the process to devolve powers and resources to regional and local authorities for them to realise the missions of bringing development and good governance to the people. Regional and council authorities are expected by law to use the powers and resources devolved to them to further the enjoyment of rights and freedoms without discrimination in compliance with their missions but this has not always been the case.

To ensure that regional and council authorities fulfil their responsibilities, the Law to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities has mandated the Public Independent Conciliator to report to the President of the Republic on the functioning of regional and council authorities and their relations with citizens.

B. SCOPE OF STUDIES

This report covers the functioning of the Regional Assembly, the Bamenda City Council, the three sub-divisional councils and the thirty-one local councils in the North-West Region in 2023. The report is an evaluation of their performances in various areas of their missions as laid down in Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to Institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities.

Basically, it focuses on the following:

- The administration and management of regional and council services;

- The protection of rights and freedoms of users and beneficiaries and particularly the right of citizens to participate in decision making processes of the council;
- The practice of inclusiveness and non-discrimination in the treatment of all categories of service users and beneficiary population by regional and council authorities;
- The fulfilment of their ethical obligations in their conduct and service delivery to their users and population.

C. METHODOLOGY

To elaborate the report on the functioning of regional and council services and the relations with citizens, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator carried out surveys, administered questionnaires to stakeholders, conducted interviews and organised focus group discussions with various council stakeholders. Information gathered covered all areas regarding council functioning in accordance with their missions as specified in the law to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities.

Information constituting this report were gathered from sources that included:

- The administration of 7,842 questionnaires to users and beneficiary populations of all thirty-four local councils, the Bamenda City Council and the Regional Executive Council;
- Monitoring of regional and council functioning including the Regional Assembly, Regional Executive Council, the House of Chiefs and House of Divisional Representatives, the Bamenda City Council and the 34 councils of the region;
- Discussions and exchanges with council executives, councillors and council workers during visits to councils;
- Focus group discussions with council executives and staff during contact visits to councils;
- Administration of 7,842 customised questionnaires to council executives and councillors during seminars and council sessions;
- Discussion sessions with mayors and other stakeholders during seminars and capacity building sessions;
- Exploitation of complaints reported to the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator petitioning the conduct of regional and local authorities.

This report was also enriched by information from interested persons and users of council services, and made use of complaints reported to the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in disputes with regional and council services.

The questionnaires carried general as well as specific questions directed to four targeted groups namely regional and council executives, councillors, workers and the population of councils, and relating to the performances of regional and council services in various areas of their missions, notably:

- enforcement of ethical standards;
- prevention of direct and indirect discrimination and promotion of inclusiveness;
- provision of basic services (health, water, road and other infrastructure, education, housing and others) in adequate supply and acceptable quality, and income-generating opportunities;
- participation of the population in council affairs and decision-making processes;
- respect of rights and freedoms, the practice of non-discrimination and inclusiveness;
- respect of ethics and compliance in the delivery of services to the population;
- credibility, transparency, accountability, relevance of regional and council services.

The responses to these questions provided elements and informed the Public Independent Conciliator to better understand the functioning of regional and local authorities. It enabled the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to evaluate the performances of regional and local authorities and the realisation of their missions which is to deliver development and good local governance to their citizens. It also helped the Public Independent Conciliator to understand their challenges and difficulties faced in the realisation of these missions.

II. FINDINGS

A look at the functioning of the Regional Assembly, its administration, the management of its resources and the state of its relations with citizens could be presented thus:

A. The Regional Assembly (The Regional Executive Council/House of Chiefs/House of Divisional Representatives)

Looking at the functioning of regional services, the administration, management of resources and state of relationships between the Regional Executive Council and the workers could be presented thus:

1. Administration

(a) Sessions

In 2023, the Regional Assembly held four Ordinary sessions and one extra ordinary session. During these sessions, resolutions were taken regularising various areas of functioning of the Regional Assembly. Some of these resolutions were to authorise the President to source funding for some earmarked projects and to strengthen the functioning of organs of the Regional Assembly and the realisation of planned projects.

(b) Staff matters

The Regional Assembly has a staff strength of 18 permanent staff and 20 temporal staff (volunteers) on its roll, as opposed to 40 permanent staff and 25 temporal staff reported in 2022. Of the 18 permanent staff, 11 are formally engaged with Decisions and contracts of employment.

Following the survey conducted by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator on the functioning of the Regional Assembly, the following challenges were raised regarding personnel management:

- Absence of standard working procedures,
- Apart from the permanent or staff with Decisions and Contracts of Employment who receive their monthly salaries, some staff on secondment are yet to start receiving their monthly salaries. Other categories of workers like volunteers reportedly receive irregular remuneration.
- Prohibition by MINDDEVEL/MINFI joint circular No. 00000025/JUMINFI/MINDDEVEL of 3rd October 2023 relating to the preparation of budgets of Regional and Local Authorities for the 2024 financial year section 24(7) for Regions to recruit staff.
- Absence of a law on local public service and ethics.

This situation was further compounded by the absence of a personnel statute to guide the treatment of employment files.

2. Resources Management

(a) Devolution of Powers and Resources

Sections 267 – 273 of Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 on the General Code of Regional and Local authorities, devolves powers to regions in the areas of economic development, environment and natural resource management, regional planning, development and public works, health and social development, education, sports and cultural development.

Accordingly, the survey of functioning of the Regional Assembly sought to know if all the powers and resources devolved to the Regional Assembly were fully operational in 2023 and the response was negative.

Regarding challenges faced in the management of the powers and resources devolved to the Regional Assembly, the following were reported:

- MINSANTE (Ministry of Public Health): human resources not transferred in 2023.
- MINT (Ministry of Transport): financial and human resources not transferred.
- MINESEC (Ministry of Secondary Education): human resources not transferred.
- MINTOURL (Ministry of Tourism and Leisure): human resources not transferred.
- MINHDU (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development): both financial and human resources not transferred.
- MINEPDED (Ministry of the Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development): Competences transferred.

However, the region is yet to be seen exercising in these areas for reasons largely blamed on the following:

- i. The slow nature of the devolution process in practice;
- ii. Inadequate resources as devolved powers are not accompanied by the expected resources;
- iii. Late disbursement of state subvention to enable effective implementation of planned activities.

iv. The devolution of power is de jure following the signing of the decrees sharing powers with regional and local decentralised entities. However, the effective implementation of those powers on the ground was pending the following:

- Prime Ministerial Decree to lay down the conditions for the implementation of powers devolved;
- the Presidential Decree setting out the terms and conditions for the transfer of powers (complete or partial);
- Of the twenty ministries, only six have had texts of application devolving powers on regions and councils.

Additionally, members reported that the decree sharing tax revenue between local councils, regions and national government was being awaited.

The effect of this drawback is that the effective functioning of the Regional Executive Council is stalled by the delay in the devolution process. Additionally, the devolved powers are not accompanied by the necessary resources especially giving the demands imposed by the need to reconstruct and to roll out the special status granted the North-West and South-West regions.

Concerning the devolution of powers and resources, critics hold that the process is slow.

(b). Financial Resources and Budget Implementation

The Regional Executive Council finances for 2023 stood at a sum total of 6,770,015,290 FCFA:

- revenue generated from tender files (5,000,000FCFA);
- subvention from FEICOM (2,000,000,000FCFA).

Other sources include:

- road fund (750,000,000FCFA);
- Smile train (23,000,000FCFA),
- MINPROFF (4,000,000FCFA).

This amount was intended for functioning and financing projects earmarked for the year.

(c) Execution of Projects

According to its President, the North-West Regional Assembly in 2023 earmarked 33 Public Investment Projects (BIP), 04 FEICOM projects and other 04 projects in its Annual Activity Plan 2023. Of these 41 projects, none was carried over for 2024.

Following the findings of the Public Independent Conciliator on the reported projects, information gathered from the communities is that while some projects are reportedly executed, others are either partially or poorly executed.

3 Relationship between the Regional Executive Council and workers

Regarding the relationship between the Regional Executive Council and workers of Regional Assembly, concerning the respect of rights and freedoms of workers, direct or indirect discrimination and respect of ethical conduct by the Regional Executive Council, the President held that there are no cases of discrimination, violation of rights or maladministration in the Regional Assembly. However, the staff declared the following:

- That some workers have been victims of discrimination by the REC which included acts of unfair payment of motivational fees, hate speech, ethnic slangs, favouritism and other aspects of unfair treatment.
- Non-respect of workers' rights as some stated that they have been victims of late-night closing without payment of overtime, no payment of salaries, discrimination in trainings and lack of information.
- Poor working conditions including non-existence of job descriptions.
- Some reported cases of unethical conduct notably in recruitments and staff treatment.

4. Appraisal

Despite the relative improvement on the working environment of the Regional Assembly in 2023, as com-

pared to 2022, especially with the approval of a salary scale for the personnel, it is still observed that the Regional Assembly faces enormous challenges with regards to staff management and field operations. In other words, the missions of the Regional Assembly are not accompanied by the necessary financial resources, especially given that the institution is yet to generate its own income.

Some of the challenges hampering its smooth functioning include the following:

- Persistent high level of insecurity that hampered access to some parts of the region;
- Reluctance of contractors to bid for contracts due to the crises;
- Absence of internal working procedures including organigram, personnel statute and internal regulation to guide functioning;
- Inadequate flow of information between staff and the management of the Regional Assembly;
- Reported practices of discrimination and unequal treatment of persons;
- Delays in the implementation of resolutions emanating from session deliberations;
- The non-availability of working texts including texts of application, the majority of which exists in French and needs translation in compliance with the law on bilingualism;
- Working with volunteers instead of duly recruited staff due to the joint Ministerial prohibition of recruitment by regions, regardless of Special Status.
- Lack of skilled personnel in specific areas.

Members of the Regional Assembly complained that they are yet to see the entitlements accompanying the Special Status granted to the region. They lack the instruments to permit them:

- Participate in the formulation of national public policies relating to the Anglophone educational sub-system;
- Participate in defining the status of traditional authorities;
- Formulate justice policies within the Common Law legal sub-system;
- Set-up and manage Regional Development Authorities; and
- Be involved in the management of public services established in the region.

Some key recommendations to consider that could improve the performance of the Regional Assembly will include the following:

- Acceleration of the elaboration of law on local public service;
- Lifting the prohibition on staff recruitment by regions enacted by the joint circular No. 00000025/JUMINFI/MINDDEVEL of 3rd October 2023 relating to the preparation of budgets of Regional and Local Authorities for the 2024 financial year section 24(7);
- Acceleration of the elaboration of the law on local and regional revenue collection to enable decentralised entities source for extra resources to address their financial challenges;
- Elaboration of internal working procedures to guide the smooth functioning of its services including personnel statute, internal rules and regulations, the organisational chart as well as clarify other administrative processes;
- Collaboration between State deconcentrated services and Regional Assembly structures;
- Effective release of resources from the central administration;
- Training and Capacity development of the personnel of the Regional Assembly in areas of identified needs;
- Teamwork and involvement of all Regional Executive Council team members including members of House of Chiefs, Divisional Representatives and staff in the management and functioning of the Regional Assembly;
- Inclusion of Divisional Representatives, local councils and local communities in execution and follow-up of projects by the Regional Assembly in their areas.
- Clarification of Section 76 of Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, given the ambiguity in the interpretation of this provision that makes room for conflict of views between the Representative of the State and the Minister of Decentralisation and Local Development regarding the approval of deliberations.

Considering the above-mentioned situation, it can be concluded that after three years of existence, the

Regional Assembly is yet to make its full mark on the ground.

B. LOCAL DECENTRALISED AUTHORITIES (Sub-divisional, and Local Councils)

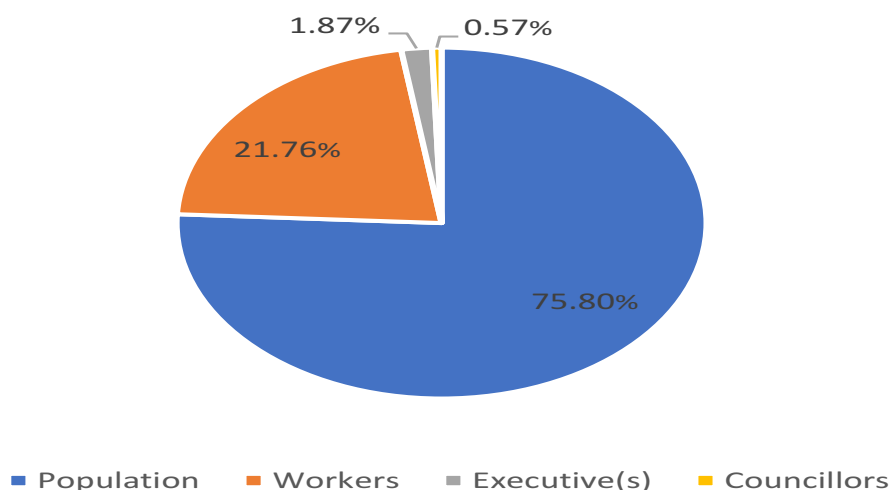
1. Organisation of Perception Survey on the Functioning of Regional and Council Authorities

To report on the functioning of regional, city, sub-divisional and local councils, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised a survey during which citizens of thirty-four (34) Local Councils, the Bamenda City Council and the Regional Assembly were required to answer questions covering various aspects of the functioning of these entities.

The Office sent out 7,842 questionnaires for information gathering. Four categories of questionnaires were designed targeting the population, council executives, council workers and councillors. Of the 7,842 questionnaires sent out, 3,484 returned making 44.43% of the respondents. The survey registered an appreciable return rate per council except for Bali where administered questionnaires never returned, Mbiame with (15), Santa (50) Furu-Awa (56) and Nkor (67).

S/N	Council	Population	Workers	Council Executives	Councillors	total
1	Bamenda City	124	14	2	0	140
2	Bafut	97	0	0	0	97
3	Bali	0	0	0	0	0
4	Bamenda I	76	35	3	0	114
5	Bamenda II	68	27	0	0	95
6	Bamenda III	83	26	2	0	111
7	Santa	39	11	0	0	50
8	Tubah	78	24	0	0	102
9	Belo	77	13	3	0	93
10	Fonfuka (Bum)	59	19	0	0	78
11	Fundong	95	30	1	6	132
12	Njinikom	69	13	2	0	84
13	Elak (Oku)	70	33	2	0	105
14	Jakiri	94	9	2	0	105
15	Kumbo	67	26	4	0	97
16	Mbiame	15	0	0	0	15
17	Nkor	61	6	0	0	67
18	Nkum	85	27	3	0	115
19	Ako	100	24	3	0	127
20	Misaje	82	21	2	0	105
21	Ndu	89	33	4	0	126
22	Nkambe	93	10	0	0	103
23	Nwa	75	59	5	0	139
24	Benakuma	103	42	1	0	146
25	Furu-Awa	45	9	2	0	56
26	Wum	123	24	1	11	159
27	Zhoa	64	20	0	0	84
28	Andek (Ngie)	73	29	3	0	105
29	Batibo	72	0	0	0	72
30	Mbengwi	102	29	4	0	135
31	Njikwa	49	33	3	0	85
32	Widikum	85	17	2	0	104
33	Babessi	106	39	6	0	151
34	Balikumbat	61	20	1	0	82
35	Ndop	61	36	4	3	104
TOTAL		2641	758	65	20	3484

Total Questionnaires Administered by Category of Respondents



2. Findings on Citizens' Perception of the Functioning of Local Councils in various areas of their missions and analysis

i. Organisation of Perception Survey on the Functioning of Local Council Authorities

To report on the functioning of city, municipal and sub-divisional councils, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator organised a survey during which citizens, councillors, council workers and council executives of the Bamenda City Council and thirty-four (34) local councils were required to answer, the following questions covering various aspects of the functioning of these entities.

The population was required to answer, among others, the following questions:

- 1) *Do you go to the council for services? Yes or No? If no, why? If yes, how are you treated by the Mayor or staff?*
- 2) *Have you noticed any of the following practices in your council? If yes, describe the form of discrimination.*
- 3) *Have you known or do you know someone who has been a victim of violation of their rights or freedom by a regional or council authority or service? Yes or No? If yes, what form of violation?*
- 4) *Have you known or do you know someone who has been a victim of unethical conduct by a worker of a regional or local authority? Yes or No? If yes, what form?*
- 5) *How accessible is your Mayor to the population?*
- 6) *Are you or the population consulted by the council before taking decisions? Yes or No?*
- 7) *Do the following categories of persons – women, persons with disabilities, youth, persons in distant/remote rural communities – participate in council activities? Yes or No?*
- 8) *Do you know your councillor? Yes or No?*
- 9) *Do you support council activities? If yes, how? If no, why?*
- 10) *Does your council involve you or your community in the identification of council projects in your area? Yes or No? If no, why? If yes, how?*
- 11) *Does your council involve you or your community in the implementation of council projects in your area? Yes or No? If no, why? If yes, how?*
- 12) *Do you know of any council development project carried out in your area in the last three years? Yes or No? If yes, which projects?*
- 13) *Does your council provide income-generating and/or employment opportunities to the population? Yes or No? If yes, state the kind of activity/employment opportunity.*
- 14) *Does the council provide you with information and education about council activities and projects? Yes or No? If yes, by what means? If no, why?*
- 15) *On a scale of 1-10, how do you assess your council's treatment of council workers?*
- 16) *On a scale of 1-10, how do you assess your council's management of projects/contracts?*
- 17) *On a scale of 1-10, how do you assess your council's management of resources?*
- 18) *Score your confidence and/or satisfaction in council administration and staff on a scale of 1-10.*
- 19) *Score your satisfaction with the performance of your councillor on a scale of 1-10.*
- 20) *How could your council become more useful to you?*

Council Workers responded to the following questions:

- 1) *What is your sex, age, service, educational qualification and village of origin?*
- 2) *For how long have you been working with the council?*
- 3) *Do you have a signed contract with the council? Yes or No? If no, why?*
- 4) *Do you have a regular salary from the council? Yes or No? If no, how many months does the council owe you?*
- 5) *How is the payment done? In what intervals?*
- 6) *Are you satisfied with the working conditions in the council? Yes or No? If no, why?*
- 7) *What are the main challenges you face at work?*
- 8) *What do you propose to improve on your conditions of work?*
- 9) *Are you satisfied working with your council executive? Yes or No? If no, why?*
- 10) *How does your council handle staff problems?*
- 11) *Are workers' rights respected in your council? Yes or No? If no, which rights are not respected?*

- 12) *Have you noticed any discriminatory practices in your council? Yes or No? If yes, what form of discrimination?*
- 13) *On a scale of 1-10, how do you assess council management of projects/contracts?*
- 14) *Rate on a scale of 1-10 your council's management of resources.*
- 15) *Score on a scale of 1-10 your confidence/satisfaction in your council administration.*
- 16) *On a scale of 1-10, score your satisfaction with the performance of your councillors.*
- 17) *How could your council become more useful to you?*

On their part, Mayors and Deputy Mayors were called to answer to the following questions:

- 1) *How is the relationship between the mayor and deputy mayors? Explain.*
- 2) *How is the council managed? Explain.*
- 3) *Are your quarterly subventions regular? Yes or No? If No, how does it affect your management?*
- 4) *What is the impact of the supervisory authority on the functioning of your council? Negative or positive? Explain.*
- 5) *What are your principal sources of revenue? Subvention from the State (state in %); Revenue generated by the council (state in %); FEICOM (state in %) and other sources of revenue (state in %)*
- 6) *What are the specific challenges your council faces with its personnel?*
- 7) *What is the cost of establishing civil status documents in your council? Birth Certificate? Marriage Certificate? Certificate of Death?*
- 8) *What are the challenges faced by the council in the establishment of civil status documents to the beneficiary population?*
- 9) *How are your councillors involved in council management?*
- 10) *How does your population participate in council activities?*
- 11) *What aspects of the legislation governing Council work would you like changed or amended? State your proposal(s).*

Request for additional information:

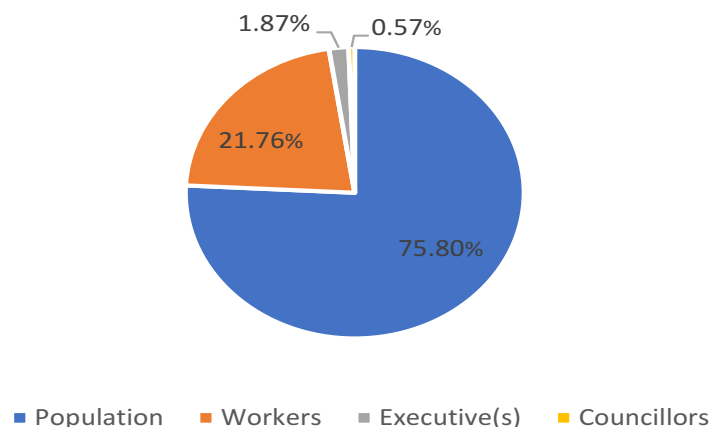
- a) *Total Number of council personnel*
- b) *Number of females _____ number of males _____ number of temporal staff _____ number of permanent staff _____ number of staff with no decision or contract _____ number of persons with disabilities (workers or councillors) _____ (annex the list of the personnel) as thus: names, sex, function, status and village of origin.*
- c) *A copy of your draft annual performance report for 2022.*

Councillors responded to the following questions:

- 1) *What is your sex, age and village of origin?*
- 2) *How is your relationship with the Council Executive? Explain.*
- 3) *How is your council managed?*
- 4) *What is the impact of the supervisory authority on the functioning of your council?*
- 5) *Are councillors involved in council management? Yes or No? If yes, how? If No, why?*
- 6) *How do you relate with your community?*
- 7) *Do you or your community participate in the elaboration/implementation of council projects? YES or NO? If yes, how? If No, why?*
- 8) *How are development projects carried out in your council area?*
- 9) *Are you satisfied with your role as a Councillor? Yes or No? If No, why?*
- 10) *How does your Council handle staff problems?*
- 11) *Are workers' rights respected in your council? Yes or No? If No, which rights are not respected?*
- 12) *Have you noticed any discriminatory practices in your council? Yes or No? If Yes, what form of discrimination?*

S/N	Council	Population	Workers	Council Executives	Councillors	total
1	Bamenda City	124	14	2	0	140
2	Bafut	97	0	0	0	97
3	Bali	0	0	0	0	0
4	Bamenda I	76	35	3	0	114
5	Bamenda II	68	27	0	0	95
6	Bamenda III	83	26	2	0	111
7	Santa	39	11	0	0	50
8	Tubah	78	24	0	0	102
9	Belo	77	13	3	0	93
10	Fonfuka (Bum)	59	19	0	0	78
11	Fundong	95	30	1	6	132
12	Njinikom	69	13	2	0	84
13	Elak (Oku)	70	33	2	0	105
14	Jakiri	94	9	2	0	105
15	Kumbo	67	26	4	0	97
16	Mbiame	15	0	0	0	15
17	Nkor	61	6	0	0	67
18	Nkum	85	27	3	0	115
19	Ako	100	24	3	0	127
20	Misaje	82	21	2	0	105
21	Ndu	89	33	4	0	126
22	Nkambe	93	10	0	0	103
23	Nwa	75	59	5	0	139
24	Benakuma	103	42	1	0	146
25	Furu-Awa	45	9	2	0	56
26	Wum	123	24	1	11	159
27	Zhoa	64	20	0	0	84
28	Andek (Ngie)	73	29	3	0	105
29	Batibo	72	0	0	0	72
30	Mbengwi	102	29	4	0	135
31	Njikwa	49	33	3	0	85
32	Widikum	85	17	2	0	104
33	Babessi	106	39	6	0	151
34	Balikumbat	61	20	1	0	82
35	Ndop	61	36	4	3	104
TOTAL		2641	758	65	20	3484

Total Questionnaires Administered by Category of Respondents



ii. Presentation of findings on Citizens' Perception of the Functioning of Councils in various areas of their missions

Much as with the functioning of the Regional Assembly, the functioning of local authorities shall be discussed under the following rubrics:

- a. Administration and Management of Councils
- b. Relationship with citizens and beneficiary populations
- c. Direct and Indirect Discrimination
- d. Enforcement of Ethical Conduct
- e. Respect of Rights and Freedoms of Citizens
- f. Citizens' Participation in Council Activities
- g. Management of council resources and projects
- h. Information and education about council activities
- i. Credibility of Councils
- j. Interpretation and Appraisal of Citizens' perception on how councils performed in 2023

a) Administration and Functioning

Question: How is the relationship between the mayor and the deputies?

From the survey, 74.41% of Mayors and Deputies said their relationship is friendly and welcoming. The friendliness could be seen in the distribution of roles and responsibilities between Mayors and their Deputies, consideration of opinions and consent, and collegial management of council business.

However, 25.58% of respondents (council executives) said the relationship is unfriendly and even hostile in some cases. Council executives, who considered the relationship between mayors and deputies as hostile, said decision-making is centred around the mayors with the said mayors managing the council as their private estate.

Question: How is the council managed?

Responding to how the council is managed, 61.70% of the mayors and deputy mayors who responded to the perception survey said it was both collaborative and inclusive. While 19.15% emphasized on inclusiveness, 42.55% underlined the existence of collaboration among them.

On the contrary, 38.30% of the respondents maintained that the Mayors are restrictive in council management. The deputy mayors of Njinikom, Andek, Ndop, Babessi and Tubah councils described the leadership style of their mayors as restrictive. The same was said of the Mbengwi Council and the Bamenda City Council. They said projects are planned, and executed without their knowledge.

Question: Are your quarterly subventions from FEICOM regular? If no, how does it affect your management of council business?

From the survey, 19.15% of council executives said subventions from the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (Le Fonds Spécial d'Equipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale, FEICOM) are regular. However, 80.85% of respondents said the Council Additional Taxes subvention from FEICOM are irregular. This affects councils in various ways including:

- Irregular payment of salaries and CNPS dues, leading to the demotivation of workers,
- Planning is made difficult,
- Delays in project execution.

Question: What are your principal sources of revenue?

With the crises situation in the Region, most mayors and their deputies say they depend on state subvention and subvention from FEICOM. Only Fundong (64.9%), and Ndu (36.5%) could boast of being able to generate revenue through local tax collection among others.

Question: What are the challenges faced in establishing civil status documents?

All respondents said they now establish civil status documents for free following the campaign on free establishment of civil status documents by the Public Independent Conciliator for the North West Region.

The council executive index the National Civil Status Registration Office (BUNEC) for not making available civil status booklets. They also expressed difficulties faced by service users in acquiring declaratory judgments for children older than ninety (90) days.

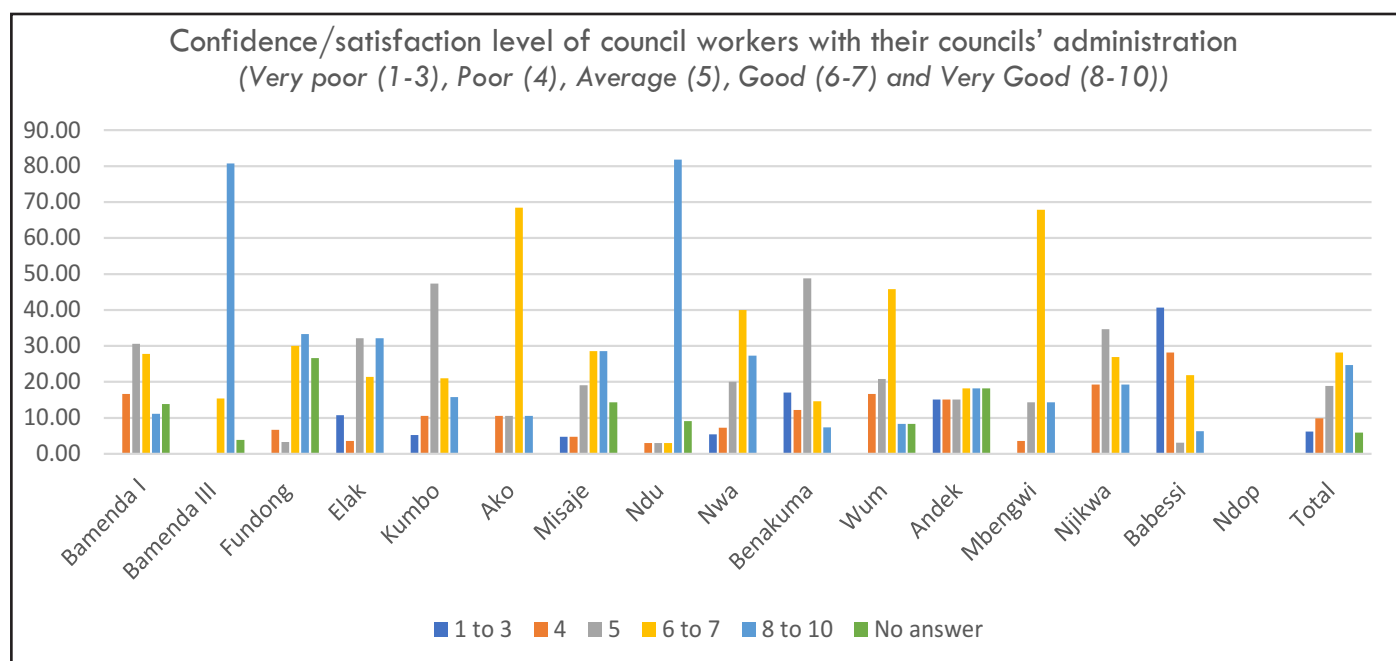
Question: How are your councillors involved in council management?

Respondents said the role of councillors is limited to attending council sessions and voting deliberations. Councillors were faulted for not following up the execution of projects, nor helping in the prioritisation of projects.

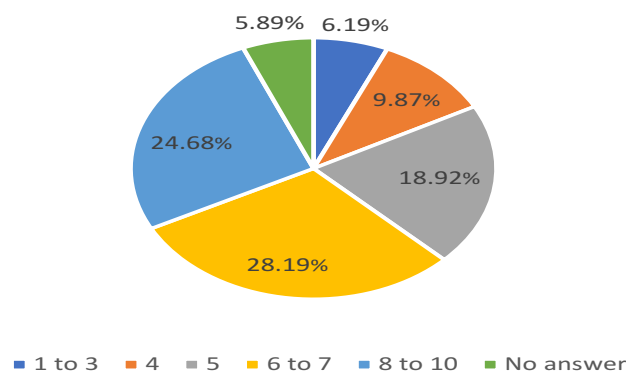
Question: How confident/satisfied are workers with their councils' administration on a scale of 1 to 10? Very poor (1-3), Poor (4), Average (5), Good (6-7) and Very Good (8-10).

Council	1 to 3	4	5	6 to 7	8 to 10	No answer
Bamenda I	0.00	16.67	30.56	27.78	11.11	13.89
Bamenda III	0.00	0.00	0.00	15.38	80.77	3.85
Fundong	0.00	6.67	3.33	30.00	33.33	26.67
Elak	10.71	3.57	32.14	21.43	32.14	0.00
Kumbo	5.26	10.53	47.37	21.05	15.79	0.00
Ako	0.00	10.53	10.53	68.42	10.53	0.00
Misaje	4.76	4.76	19.05	28.57	28.57	14.29
Ndu	0.00	3.03	3.03	3.03	81.82	9.09
Nwa	5.45	7.27	20.00	40.00	27.27	0.00
Benakuma	17.07	12.20	48.78	14.63	7.32	0.00
Wum	0.00	16.67	20.83	45.83	8.33	8.33
Andek	15.15	15.15	15.15	18.18	18.18	18.18
Mbengwi	0.00	3.57	14.29	67.86	14.29	0.00
Njikwa	0.00	19.23	34.62	26.92	19.23	0.00
Babessi	40.63	28.13	3.13	21.88	6.25	0.00
Ndop	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	6.19	9.87	18.92	28.19	24.68	5.89

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Confidence/satisfaction level of council workers with their councils' administration



It emerged from the survey that 52.87% of council workers said they were confident and/or satisfied with their councils' administration. Councils in this category include: Bamenda III (96.15), Ndu (84.85%), and Mbengwi (82.15%).

From the survey, 18.92% of the respondents gave an average score to their councils' administration while 16.06% of respondents gave a poor score. Councils perceived as average in their administration were Kumbo (47.37%), and Benakuma (48.78%). Councils perceived as falling below average in their administration were Babessi (68.76%), and Andek (30.30%).

b) Session meetings

In 2023, most local authorities were unable to hold their statutory ordinary sessions. For those who did, the sessions were held out of their municipalities.

However, many councillors complained of the non-respect of timeframe for the convening of sessions. Others added that they were only invited to sessions to rubberstamp pre-conceived decisions of the Mayor.

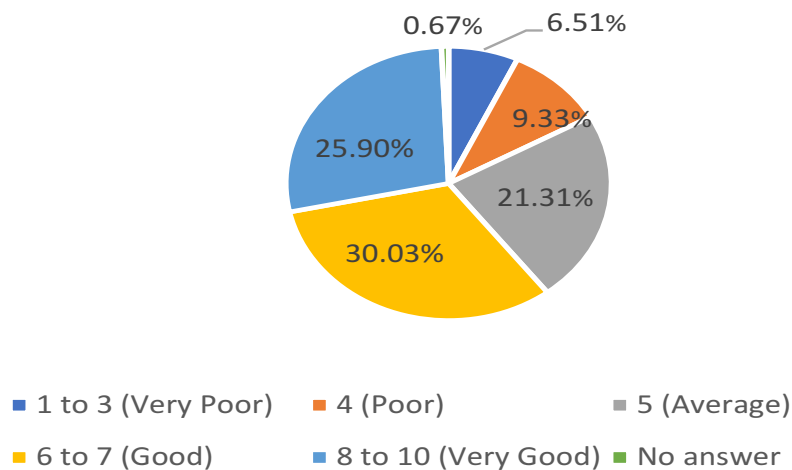
c) Management of Projects and Resources

Question: How do workers assess councils' management of projects/contracts?

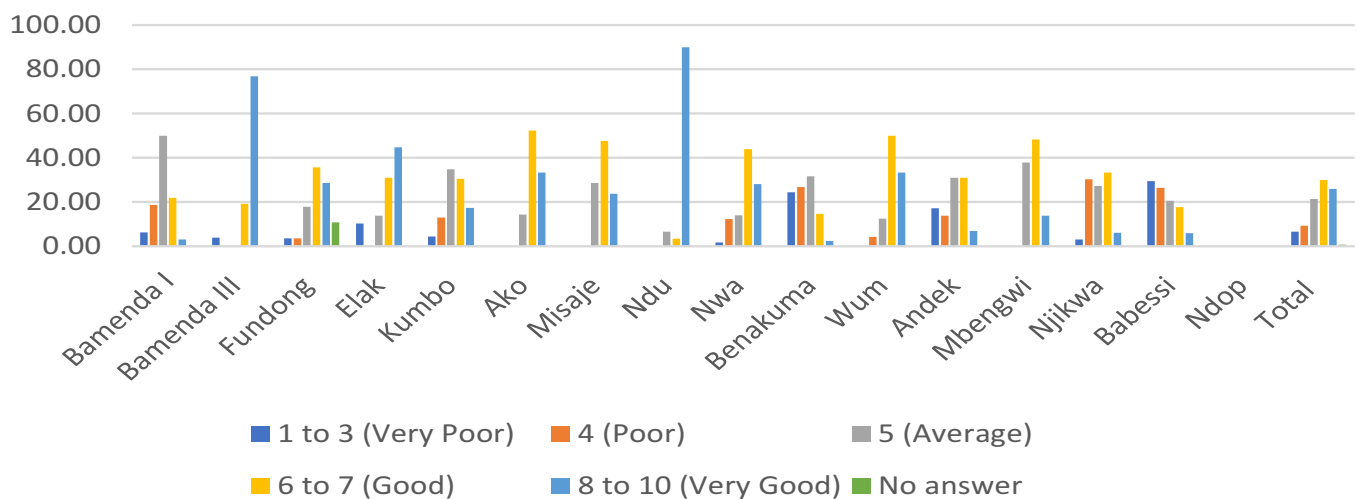
Council	1 to 3 (Very Poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6 to 7 (Good)	8 to 10 (Very Good)	No answer
Bamenda I	6.25	18.75	50.00	21.88	3.13	0.00
Bamenda III	3.85	0.00	0.00	19.23	76.92	0.00
Fundong	3.57	3.57	17.86	35.71	28.57	10.71
Elak	10.34	0.00	13.79	31.03	44.83	0.00
Kumbo	4.35	13.04	34.78	30.43	17.39	0.00
Ako	0.00	0.00	14.29	52.38	33.33	0.00
Misaje	0.00	0.00	28.57	47.62	23.81	0.00
Ndu	0.00	0.00	6.67	3.33	90.00	0.00
Nwa	1.75	12.28	14.04	43.86	28.07	0.00
Benakuma	24.39	26.83	31.71	14.63	2.44	0.00
Wum	0.00	4.17	12.50	50.00	33.33	0.00
Andek	17.24	13.79	31.03	31.03	6.90	0.00
Mbengwi	0.00	0.00	37.93	48.28	13.79	0.00
Njikwa	3.03	30.30	27.27	33.33	6.06	0.00
Babessi	29.41	26.47	20.59	17.65	5.88	0.00
Ndop	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	6.51	9.33	21.31	30.03	25.90	0.67

The figures in the table above are in percentages

Workers' assessment of councils' management of projects/contracts



Workers' assessment of councils' management of projects/contracts



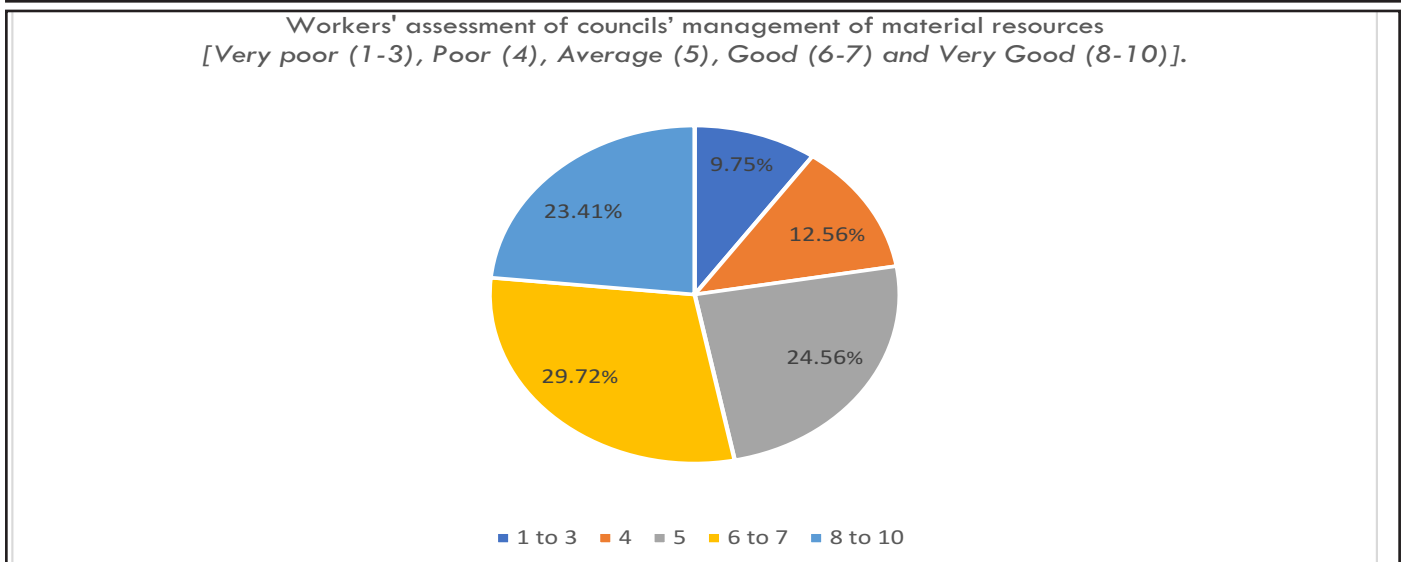
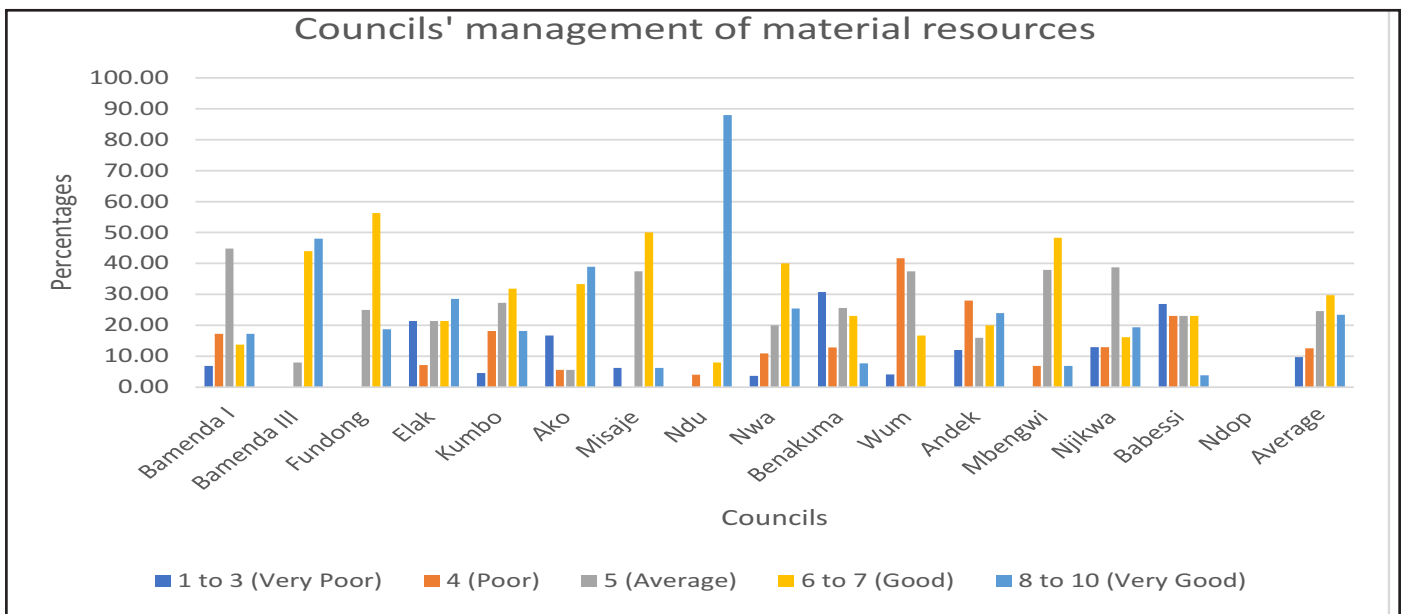
Respondents in scaling their councils' management of projects/contracts revealed that councils are making great efforts to properly manage their projects though others are still lagging behind. The perception survey revealed Ndu Council as making commendable strides with a percentage of 90 and the Bamenda III Council with a 76.92%. However, Nwa (1.75%) and Njikwa (3.03%) are perceived to poorly manage projects and contracts.

Question: How do workers assess councils' management of resources?

Council workers were asked to score their councils' management of material, financial and infrastructural resources on a scale of 1-10. [Very poor (1-3), Poor (4), Average (5), Good (6-7) and Very Good (8-10)].

Council	Material resources						Percentage score				
	1 to 3	4	5	6 to 7	8 to 10	Total	1 to 3	4	5	6 to 7	8 to 10
Bamenda I	2	5	13	4	5	29	6.90	17.24	44.83	13.79	17.24
Bamenda III	0	0	2	11	12	25	0.00	0.00	8.00	44.00	48.00
Fundong	0	0	4	9	3	16	0.00	0.00	25.00	56.25	18.75
Elak	6	2	6	6	8	28	21.43	7.14	21.43	21.43	28.57
Kumbo	1	4	6	7	4	22	4.55	18.18	27.27	31.82	18.18
Ako	3	1	1	6	7	18	16.67	5.56	5.56	33.33	38.89
Misaje	1	0	6	8	1	16	6.25	0.00	37.50	50.00	6.25
Ndu	0	1	0	2	22	25	0.00	4.00	0.00	8.00	88.00
Nwa	2	6	11	22	14	55	3.64	10.91	20.00	40.00	25.45
Benakuma	12	5	10	9	3	39	30.77	12.82	25.64	23.08	7.69
Wum	1	10	9	4	0	24	4.17	41.67	37.50	16.67	0.00
Andek	3	7	4	5	6	25	12.00	28.00	16.00	20.00	24.00
Mbengwi	0	2	11	14	2	29	0.00	6.90	37.93	48.28	6.90
Njikwa	4	4	12	5	6	31	12.90	12.90	38.71	16.13	19.35
Babessi	7	6	6	6	1	26	26.92	23.08	23.08	23.08	3.85
Ndop	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	42	53	101	118	94	Average	9.75	12.56	24.56	29.72	23.41

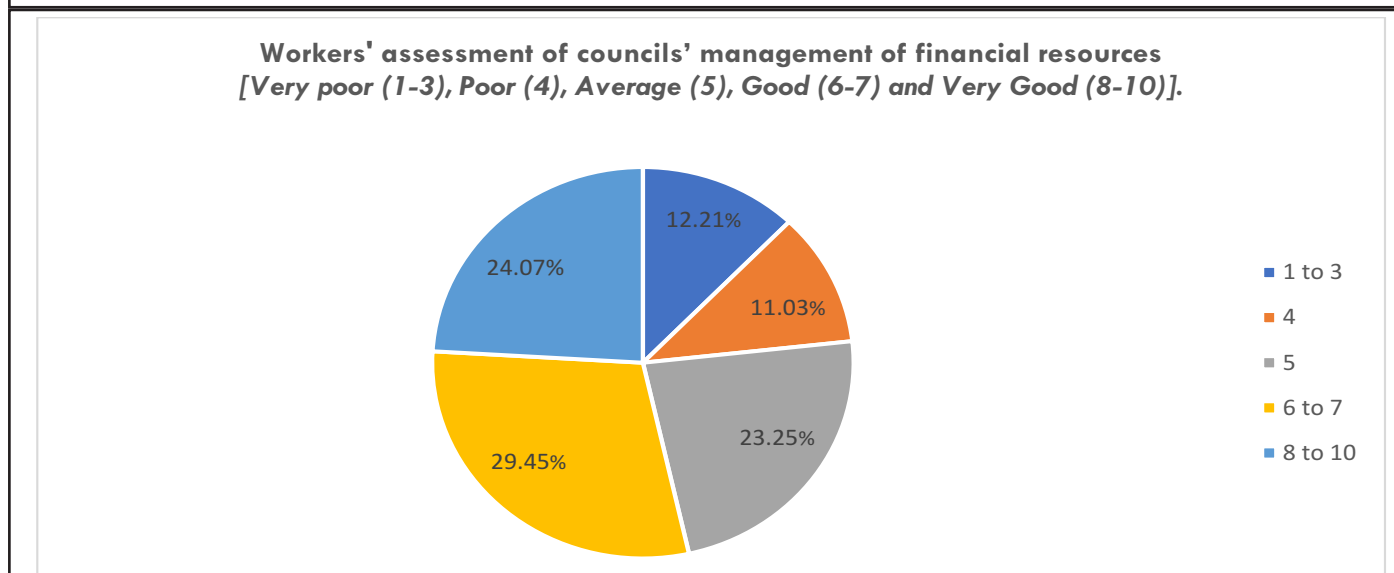
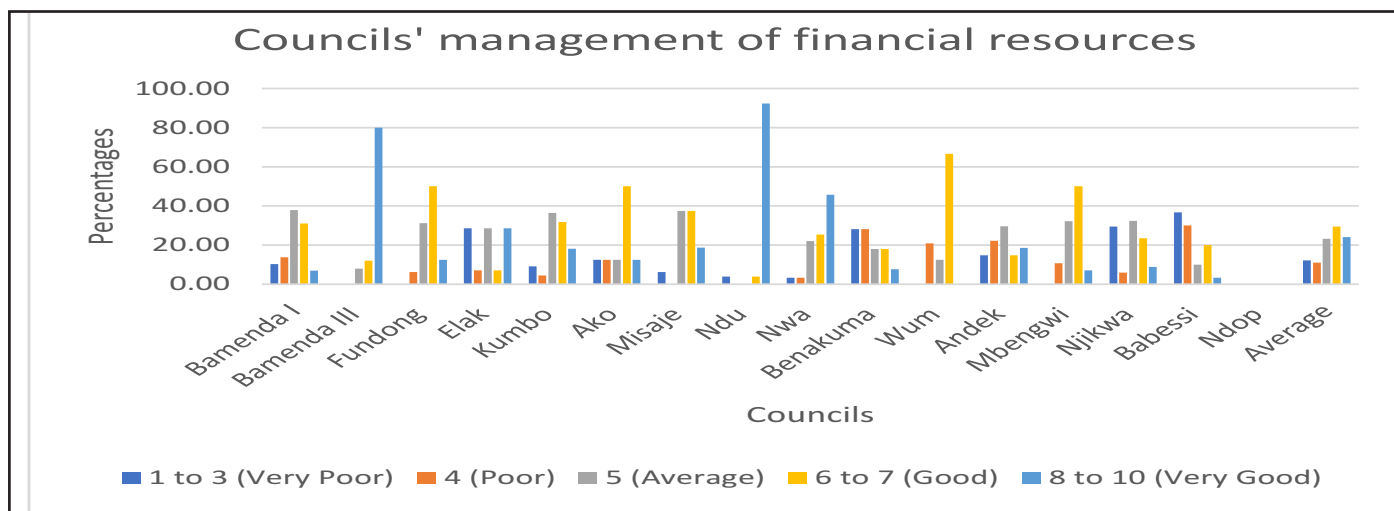
The figures in the table above are in percentages



To begin with material resources, 9.75% of respondents scored their council on a scale of 1-3, indicating very poor management of material resources. 12.56% scored their councils on a scale of 4, indicating a poor management. 24.56% scored their councils at 5, indicating average. 29.72% of workers rated their council on a scale of 6-7, indicating good management. Lastly, 23.41% of workers rated their council on a scale of 8-10, indicating that their councils properly managed material resources.

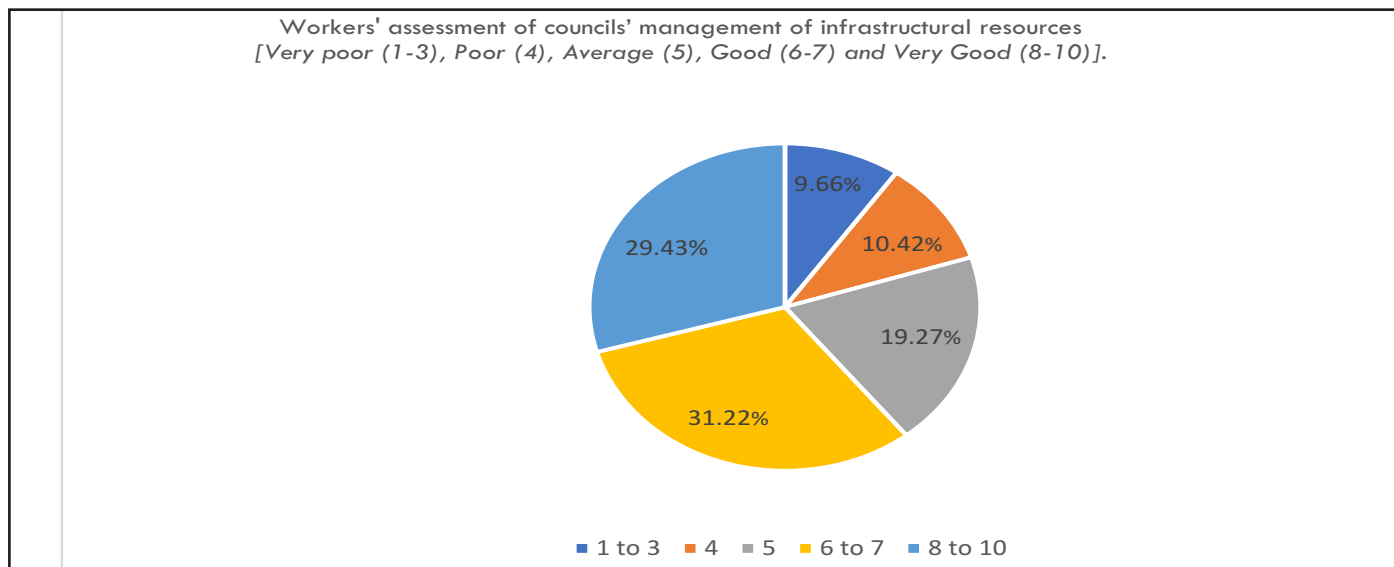
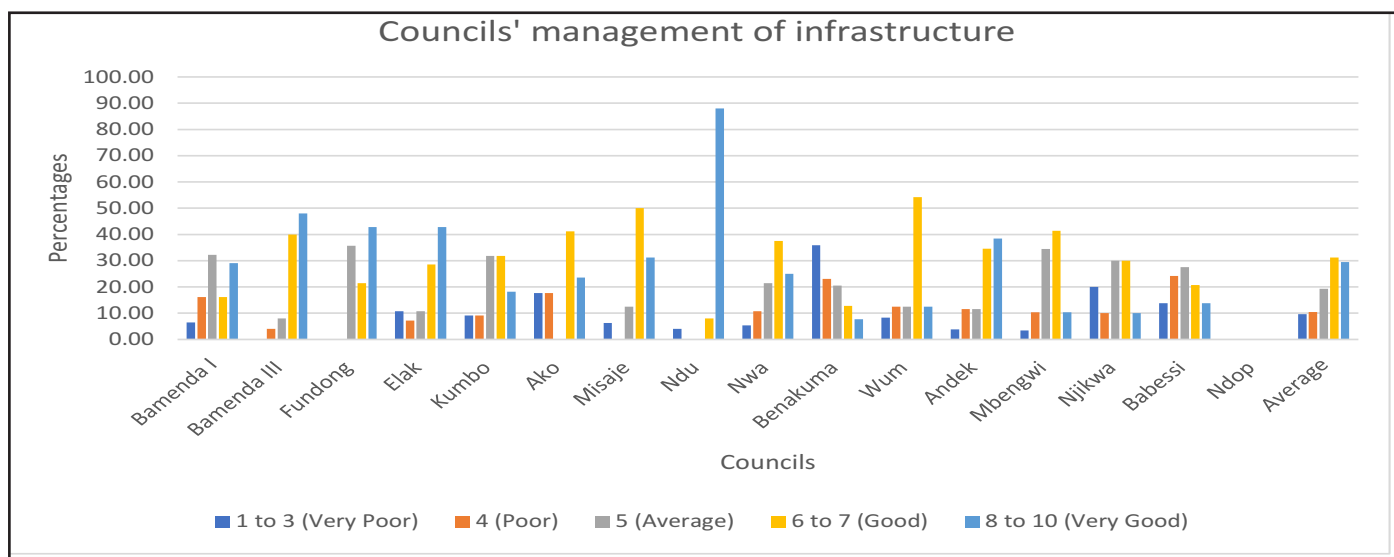
While councils like Benakuma and Wum fell below average, others like Ndu (96%), Bamenda III (92%), and Fundong (75%) scored above average.

Council	Finance					Percentage scores					
	1 to 3	4	5	6 to 7	8 to 10	1 to 3	4	5	6 to 7	8 to 10	
Bamenda I	3	4	11	9	2	10.34	13.79	37.93	31.03	6.90	
Bamenda III	0	0	2	3	20	0.00	0.00	8.00	12.00	80.00	
Fundong	0	1	5	8	2	0.00	6.25	31.25	50.00	12.50	
Elak	8	2	8	2	8	28.57	7.14	28.57	7.14	28.57	
Kumbo	2	1	8	7	4	9.09	4.55	36.36	31.82	18.18	
Ako	2	2	2	8	2	12.50	12.50	12.50	50.00	12.50	
Misaje	1	0	6	6	3	6.25	0.00	37.50	37.50	18.75	
Ndu	1	0	0	1	24	3.85	0.00	0.00	3.85	92.31	
Nwa	2	2	13	15	27	3.39	3.39	22.03	25.42	45.76	
Benakuma	11	11	7	7	3	28.21	28.21	17.95	17.95	7.69	
Wum	0	5	3	16	0	0.00	20.83	12.50	66.67	0.00	
Andek	4	6	8	4	5	14.81	22.22	29.63	14.81	18.52	
Mbengwi	0	3	9	14	2	0.00	10.71	32.14	50.00	7.14	
Njikwa	10	2	11	8	3	29.41	5.88	32.35	23.53	8.82	
Babessi	11	9	3	6	1	Average	36.67	30.00	10.00	20.00	3.33
Ndop	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total	55	48	96	114	106	12.21	11.03	23.25	29.45	24.07	



Regarding worker's perception on the management of financial resources in councils, 23.24% of respondents scored their councils below average, indicating poor management of financial resources. 23.25% of respondents gave their councils an average score. 53.52% of respondents gave their councils an above average score, indicating a perception of good management of financial resources. From the findings of the survey, some councils are making commendable strides in the management of financial resources. Councils which stand out include Ndu (96.16%), Bamenda III (92%), and Nwa (71.18%).

Council	Percentage scores for the management of Council Infrastructure				
	1 to 3	4	5	6 to 7	8 to 10
Bamenda I	6.45	16.13	32.26	16.13	29.03
Bamenda III	0.00	4.00	8.00	40.00	48.00
Fundong	0.00	0.00	35.71	21.43	42.86
Elak	10.71	7.14	10.71	28.57	42.86
Kumbo	9.09	9.09	31.82	31.82	18.18
Ako	17.65	17.65	0.00	41.18	23.53
Misaje	6.25	0.00	12.50	50.00	31.25
Ndu	4.00	0.00	0.00	8.00	88.00
Nwa	5.36	10.71	21.43	37.50	25.00
Benakuma	35.90	23.08	20.51	12.82	7.69
Wum	8.33	12.50	12.50	54.17	12.50
Andek	3.85	11.54	11.54	34.62	38.46
Mbengwi	3.45	10.34	34.48	41.38	10.34
Njikwa	20.00	10.00	30.00	30.00	10.00
Babessi	13.79	24.14	27.59	20.69	13.79
Ndop	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	9.66	10.42	19.27	31.22	29.43



Regarding the management of infrastructural resources, 20.08% of council workers who participated in the survey scored their councils below average while 19.27% of respondents gave an average score. 60.65% of respondents perceived as good their councils' management of infrastructural resources.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that councils are perceived to properly manage infrastructural resources. Councils that stand out include: Misaje (81.25%), Bamenda III (88%), and Ndu (96%).

d) Staff matters

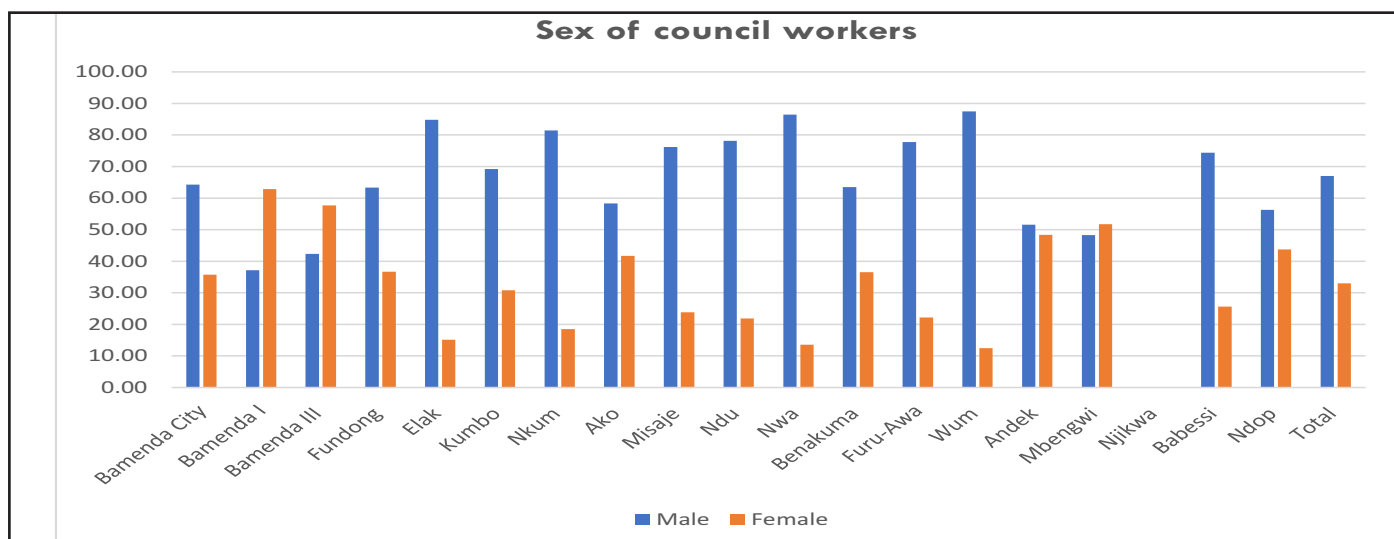
Given the crises in the Region, most councils are grappling with staff problems including accrued salaries, absenteeism and abandonment of work. Most councils in the Region depend on the council additional taxes from the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (*Le Fonds Spécial d'Equipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale, FEICOM*).

Regarding the situation of council personnel, council executive (mayors and deputies) cited challenges which include:

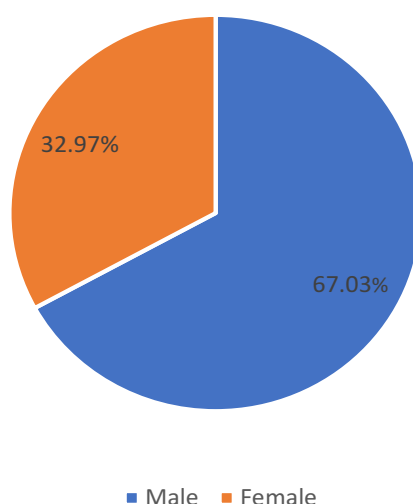
- Irregular payment of salaries and allowances given that most councils depend on state subvention. Revenue collection is almost impossible within the ongoing crises situation.
- Inadequate collaboration among staff, Laziness and the effects of the crises in the region.
- Low level of technical know-how, necessitating capacity building to be more productive.
- Instability due to crisis which affects the smooth functioning of the council (absenteeism).
- They lack some specific technical knowledge especially in the area of civil engineering.

Gender representations of councils workers

Council	Sex		Total	Sex By %	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Bamenda City	9	5	14	64.29	35.71
Bamenda I	13	22	35	37.14	62.86
Bamenda III	11	15	26	42.31	57.69
Fundong	19	11	30	63.33	36.67
Elak	28	5	33	84.85	15.15
Kumbo	18	8	26	69.23	30.77
Nkum	22	5	27	81.48	18.52
Ako	14	10	24	58.33	41.67
Misaje	16	5	21	76.19	23.81
Ndu	25	7	32	78.13	21.88
Nwa	51	8	59	86.44	13.56
Benakuma	33	19	52	63.46	36.54
Furu-Awa	7	2	9	77.78	22.22
Wum	21	3	24	87.50	12.50
Andek	16	15	31	51.61	48.39
Mbengwi	14	15	29	48.28	51.72
Njikwa	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Babessi	29	10	39	74.36	25.64
Ndop	18	14	32	56.25	43.75
Total	364	179	543	67.03	32.97



Sex of council workers

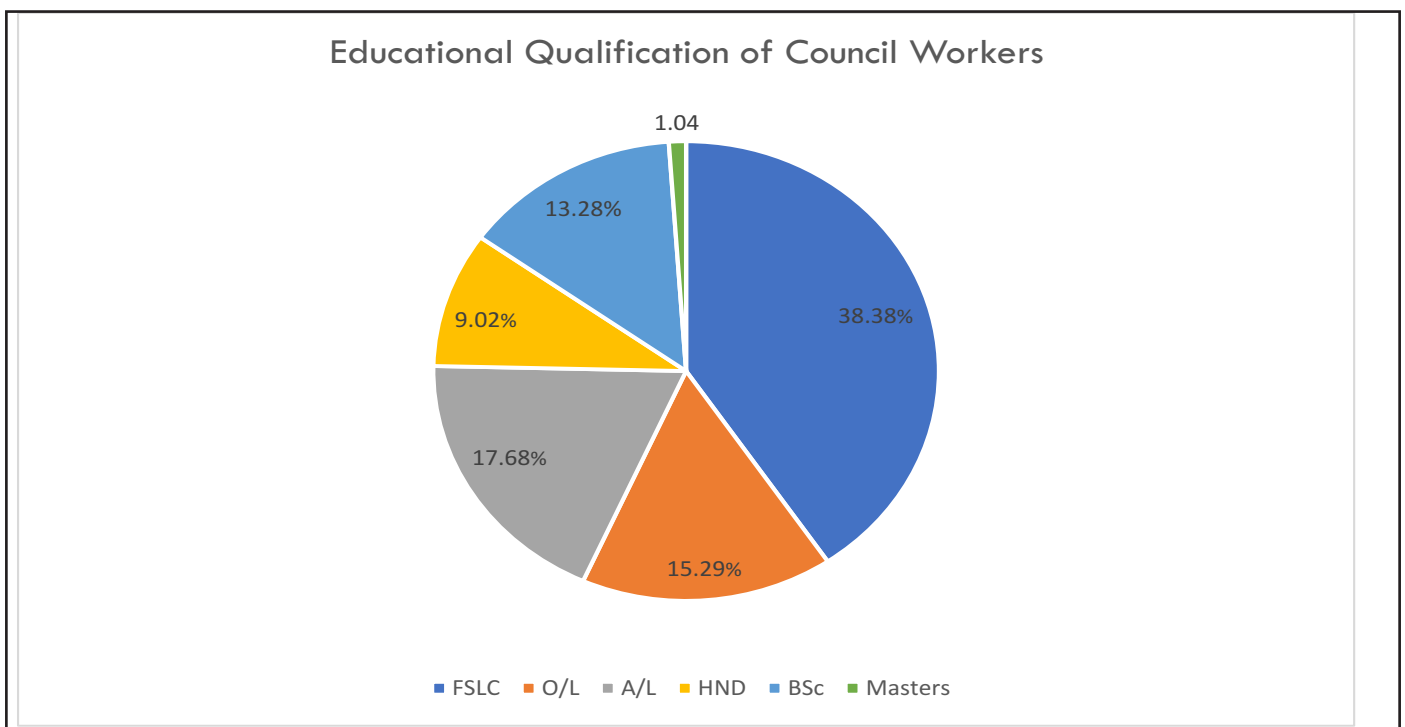
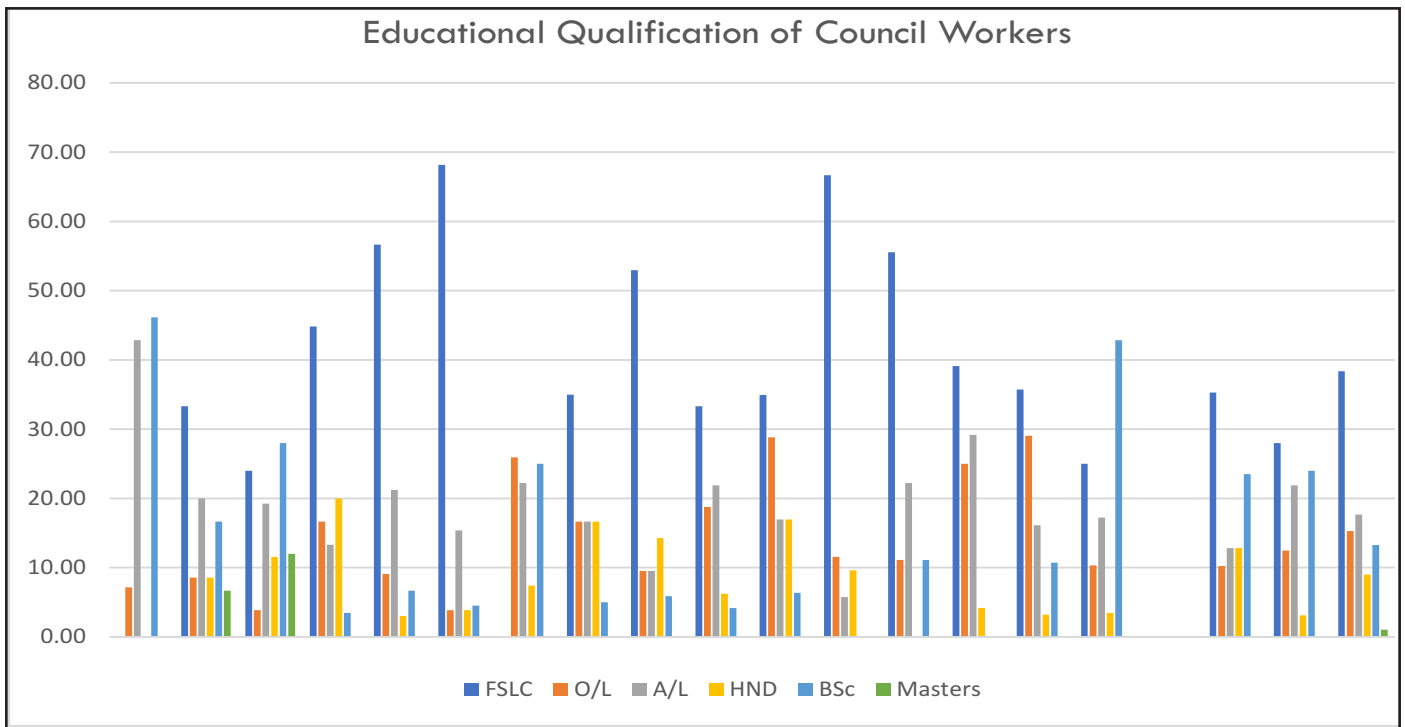


Council staff generally have half as many women as are men with 67.33% men as against 32.97% women. High percentages of male staff are found in Wum, Ndu and Elak councils contrary to Bamenda I, and Bamenda III who have the highest number of female staff. However, these statistics are just indicative as we could not have data from all councils at the time of writing this report.

The implication is that there is no gender balance in council recruitment.

Question: What is your educational qualification?

Council	Educational Qualification						Personnel with educational Qualification in %						
	FSLC	O/L	A/L	HND	BSc	Masters	Total	FSLC	O/L	A/L	HND	BSc	Masters
Bamenda City	0	1	6	0	6	0	13	0.0	7.1	42.9	0.0	46.2	0.0
Bamenda I	10	3	7	3	5	2	30	33.3	8.6	20.0	8.6	16.7	6.7
Bamenda III	6	1	5	3	7	3	25	24.0	3.9	19.2	11.5	28.0	12.0
Fundong	13	5	4	6	1	0	29	44.8	16.7	13.3	20.0	3.5	0.0
Elak	17	3	7	1	2	0	30	56.7	9.1	21.2	3.0	6.7	0.0
Kumbo	15	1	4	1	1	0	22	68.2	3.9	15.4	3.9	4.6	0.0
Nkum	0	7	6	2	5	0	20	0.0	25.9	22.2	7.4	25.0	0.0
Ako	7	4	4	4	1	0	20	35.0	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.0	0.0
Misaje	9	2	2	3	1	0	17	52.9	9.5	9.5	14.3	5.9	0.0
Ndu	8	6	7	2	1	0	24	33.3	18.8	21.9	6.3	4.2	0.0
Nwa	22	17	10	10	4	0	63	34.9	28.8	17.0	17.0	6.4	0.0
Benakuma	28	6	3	5	0	0	42	66.7	11.5	5.8	9.6	0.0	0.0
Furu-Awa	5	1	2	0	1	0	9	55.6	11.1	22.2	0.0	11.1	0.0
Wum	9	6	7	1	0	0	23	39.1	25.0	29.2	4.2	0.0	0.0
Andek	10	9	5	1	3	0	28	35.7	29.0	16.1	3.2	10.7	0.0
Mbengwi	7	3	5	1	12	0	28	25.0	10.3	17.2	3.5	42.9	0.0
Njikwa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Babessi	12	4	5	5	8	0	34	35.3	10.3	12.8	12.8	23.5	0.0
Ndop	7	4	7	1	6	0	25	28.0	12.5	21.9	3.1	24.0	0.0
Total	185	83	96	49	64	5	482	38.4	15.3	17.7	9.0	13.3	1.0



38.38% of council staff have at least a First School Leaving Certificate with some councils having as many as from Kumbo (68.18%) and Benakuma (66.67%).

About 41.99% of workers have between an Ordinary Level and HND certificate. 14% of workers have above an HND certificate including the Bamenda City Council with 46% of workers with Bachelor's Degrees, Nkum 25%, Ndop 24%, and Babessi 23.53%.

It should be noted that over 90% of the staff have not had any formal training on council administration and management, reason for the poor performances of councils.

The implication is that there is need for capacity building of council workers.

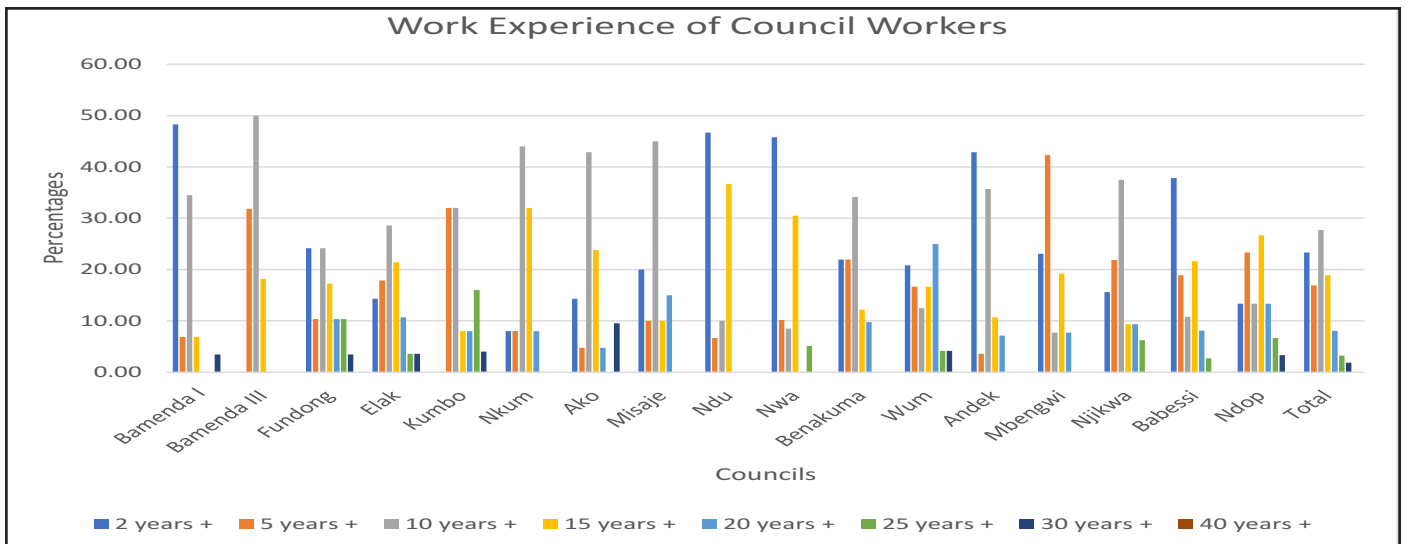
Question: For how long have you been working with the council?

Council	2 years +	5 years +	10 years +	15 years +	20 years +	25 years +	30 years +	40 years +
Bamenda I	14	2	10	2	0	0	1	0
Bamenda III	0	7	11	4	0	0	0	0
Fundong	7	3	7	5	3	3	1	0
Elak	4	5	8	6	3	1	1	0
Kumbo	0	8	8	2	2	4	1	0
Nkum	2	2	11	8	2	0	0	0
Ako	3	1	9	5	1	0	2	0
Misaje	4	2	9	2	3	0	0	0
Ndu	14	2	3	11	0	0	0	0
Nwa	27	6	5	18	0	3	0	0
Benakuma	9	9	14	5	4	0	0	0
Wum	5	4	3	4	6	1	1	0
Andek	12	1	10	3	2	0	0	0
Mbengwi	6	11	2	5	2	0	0	0
Njikwa	5	7	12	3	3	2	0	0
Babessi	14	7	4	8	3	1	0	0
Ndop	4	7	4	8	4	2	1	0

Council	2 years +	5 years +	10 years +	15 years +	20 years +	25 years +	30 years +	40 years +
Bamenda I	48.28	6.90	34.48	6.90	0.00	0.00	3.45	0
Bamenda III	0.00	31.82	50.00	18.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Fundong	24.14	10.34	24.14	17.24	10.34	10.34	3.45	0
Elak	14.29	17.86	28.57	21.43	10.71	3.57	3.57	0
Kumbo	0.00	32.00	32.00	8.00	8.00	16.00	4.00	0
Nkum	8.00	8.00	44.00	32.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ako	14.29	4.76	42.86	23.81	4.76	0.00	9.52	0
Misaje	20.00	10.00	45.00	10.00	15.00	0.00	0.00	0
Ndu	46.67	6.67	10.00	36.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Nwa	45.76	10.17	8.47	30.51	0.00	5.08	0.00	0
Benakuma	21.95	21.95	34.15	12.20	9.76	0.00	0.00	0
Wum	20.83	16.67	12.50	16.67	25.00	4.17	4.17	0
Andek	42.86	3.57	35.71	10.71	7.14	0.00	0.00	0
Mbengwi	23.08	42.31	7.69	19.23	7.69	0.00	0.00	0
Njikwa	15.63	21.88	37.50	9.38	9.38	6.25	0.00	0
Babessi	37.84	18.92	10.81	21.62	8.11	2.70	0.00	0
Ndop	13.33	23.33	13.33	26.67	13.33	6.67	3.33	0
Total	23.35	16.89	27.72	18.89	8.07	3.22	1.85	0.00

The figures in the table above are in percentages





It could be said that, on a general note, councils have experienced staff with about 78% with more than five years of experience. 50% of council staff have above ten years of work experience. It is a good indicator that councils have some experienced personnel to count on. However, the last seven years have been characterised by conflict that has not allowed them to do much.

Huge recruitment of staff in the past two years with 48% in the Bamenda City Council making the high percentage of youthful population found in the councils followed by Ndu and Nwa. Whereas, many councils fall in the middle range with an over 60% majority of staff. The dynamic range of 40-50 years of age includes the Bamenda City Council, Bamenda I, Ako, Wum, Mbengwi, Andek and Babessi. Workers in Elak, Nkum and Misaje are fast aging. Though with an aging staff, other parameters indicate that they are not corresponding to many years of working experience to draw from. It is impressive to observe that over 70% of council staff are in the 50-60 years age group, portraying a fast-aging staff. This indicates the need for the recruitment and training of new staff to prepare for a smooth relay in the years ahead.

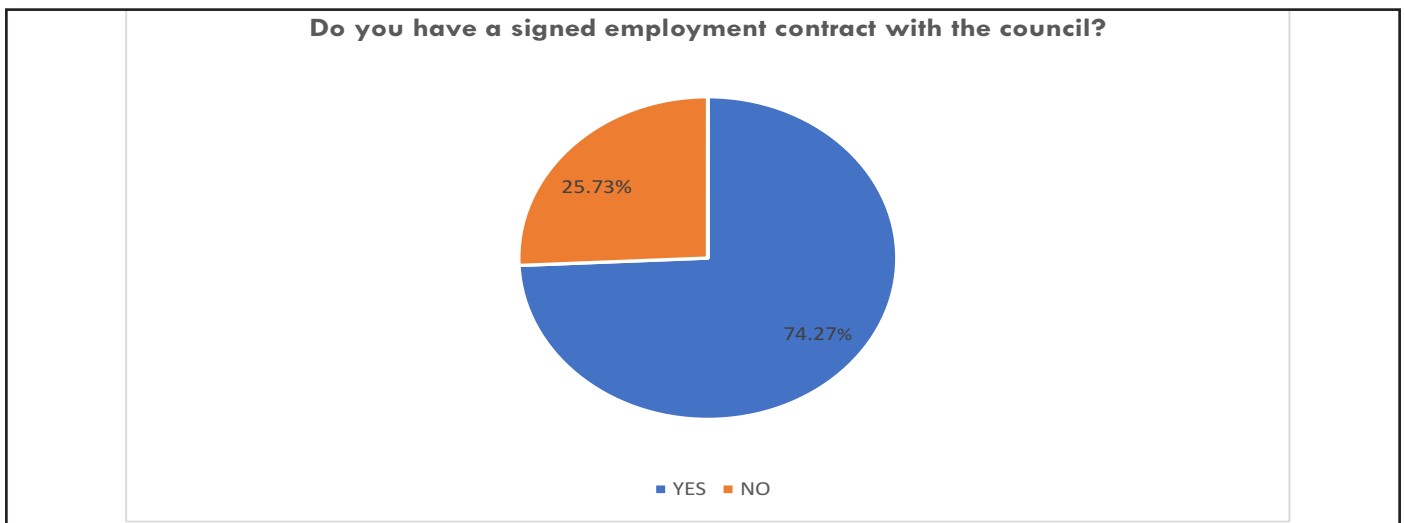
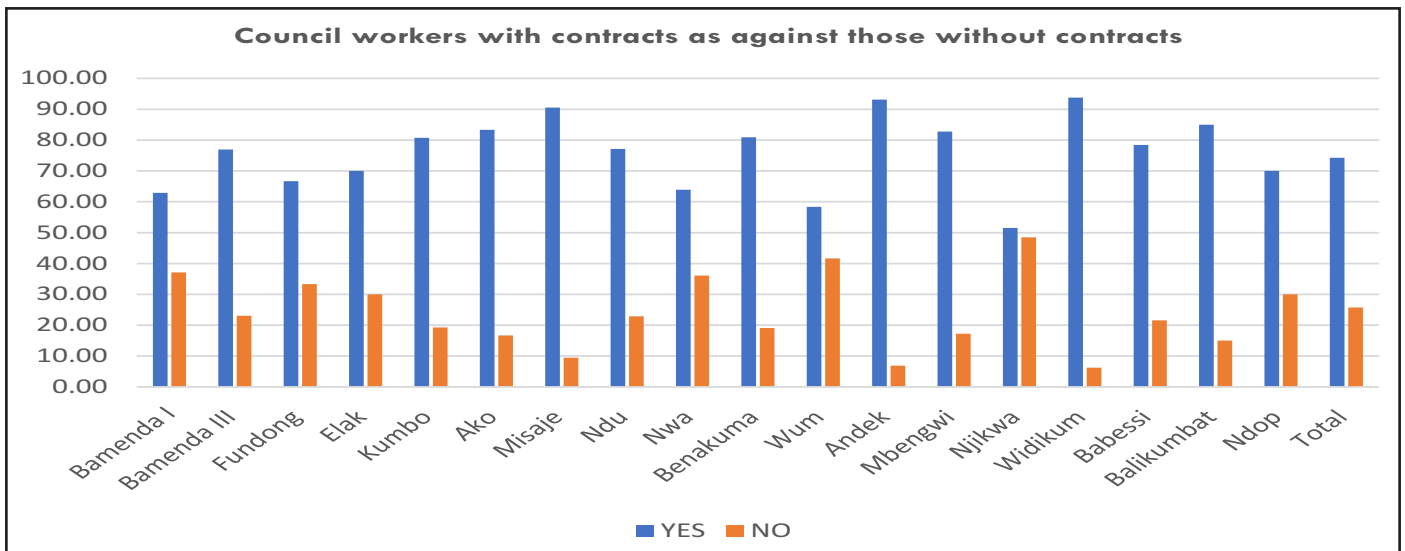
In fact, only 37% of staff are in the range of 30-40 years age group with Fundong, Kumbo and Nkum falling far below the percentage.

e) Relationship between council workers, council executives, and councillors

Question: Do you have a signed employment contract with the council?

Council	YES	NO
Bamenda I	62.86	37.14
Bamenda III	76.92	23.08
Fundong	66.67	33.33
Elak	70.00	30.00
Kumbo	80.77	19.23
Ako	83.33	16.67
Misaje	90.48	9.52
Ndu	77.14	22.86
Nwa	63.93	36.07
Benakuma	80.95	19.05
Wum	58.33	41.67
Andek	93.10	6.90
Mbengwi	82.76	17.24
Njikwa	51.52	48.48
Widikum	93.75	6.25
Babessi	78.38	21.62
Balikumbat	85.00	15.00
Ndop	70.00	30.00
Total	74.27	25.73

The figures in the table above are in percentages



74.27% of council workers have signed contracts while 25.73% said they did not have contracts. Councils which top the chart of those having signed contracts with their staff include: Widikum (93.75%), Andek (93.10%), Misaje (90.48%), Balikumbat (85%), Ako (83.33%), Mbengwi (82.76%) and Kumbo (80.77%).

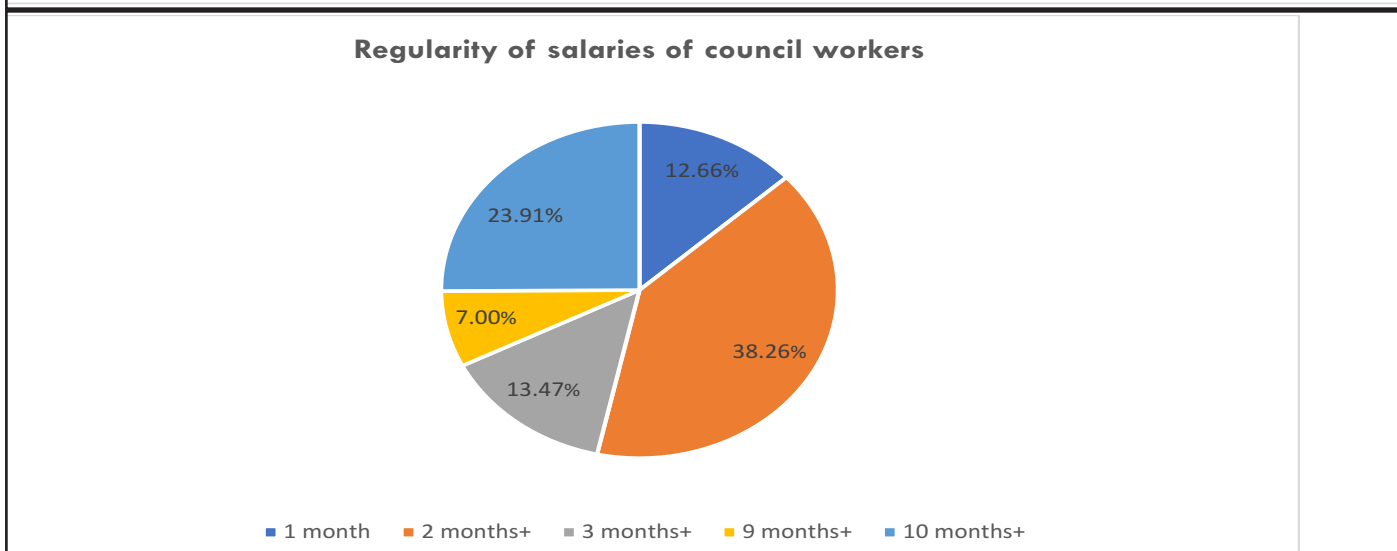
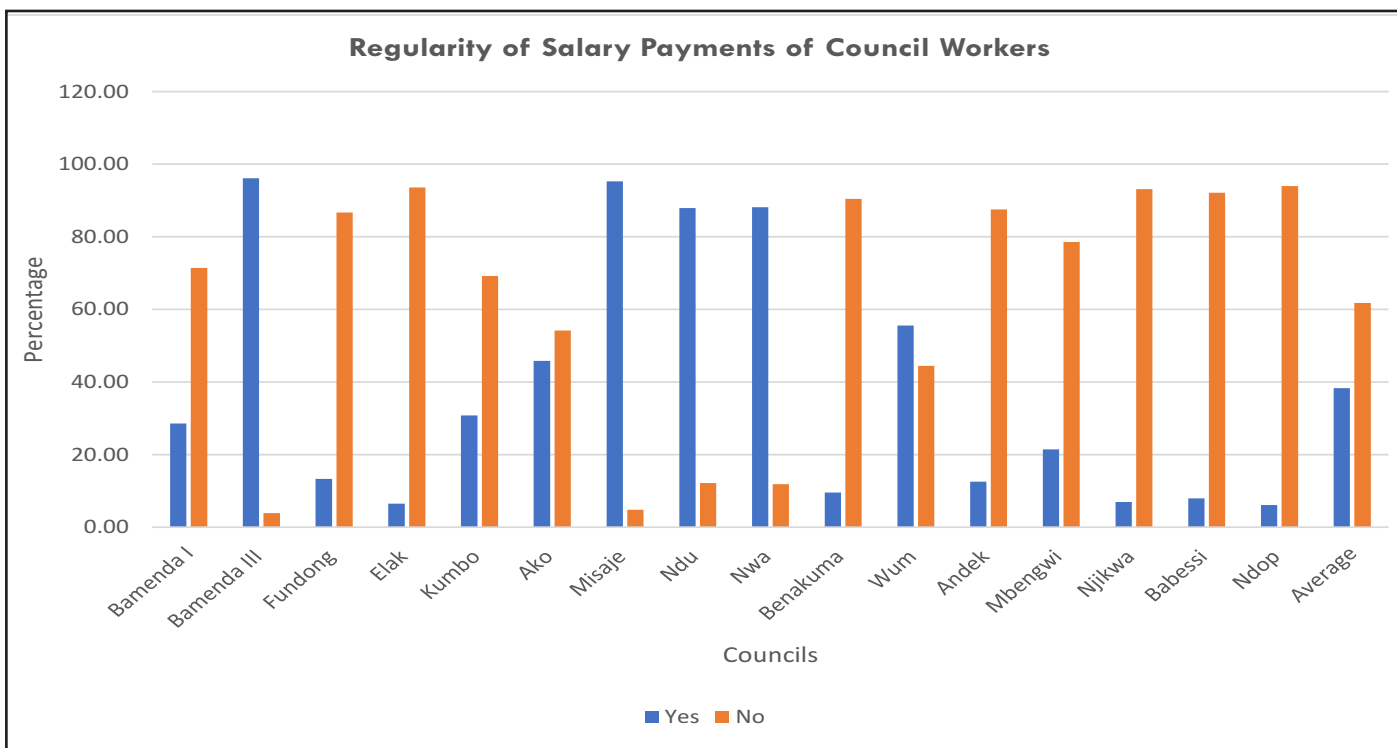
Wum (41.67%) and Njikwa (48.48%) are among councils with workers who do not have signed contracts.

Question: Do you have a regular salary from the Council?

Council	Yes	No	If No, how many months does the council owe you?				
			1 month	2 months+	3 months+	9 months+	10 months+
Bamenda I	10	25	6	2	0	0	0
Bamenda III	25	1	0	1	0	0	0
Fundong	4	26	0	23	2	0	0
Elak	2	29	0	0	1	10	1
Kumbo	8	18	0	8	4	0	3
Ako	11	13	0	2	6	0	0
Misaje	20	1	0	19	1	0	0
Ndu	29	4	1	0	0	0	0
Nwa	52	7	0	0	0	0	8
Benakuma	4	38	1	4	2	1	30
Wum	5	4	1	3	0	0	0
Andek	3	21	0	15	8	0	1
Mbengwi	6	22	0	12	1	0	0
Njikwa	2	27	0	1	4	0	18
Babessi	3	35	0	0	2	0	26
Ndop	2	31	0	12	5	6	0
Total	186	302	9	102	36	17	87

Council	If no how many months does the council owe you?						
	Yes	No	1 month	2 months+	3 months+	9 months+	10 months+
Bamenda I	28.57	71.43	75.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bamenda III	96.15	3.85	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fundong	13.33	86.67	0.00	92.00	8.00	0.00	0.00
Elak	6.45	93.55	0.00	0.00	8.33	83.33	8.33
Kumbo	30.77	69.23	0.00	53.33	26.67	0.00	20.00
Ako	45.83	54.17	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00	0.00
Misaje	95.24	4.76	0.00	95.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
Ndu	87.88	12.12	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nwa	88.14	11.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Benakuma	9.52	90.48	2.63	10.53	5.26	2.63	78.95
Wum	55.56	44.44	25.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
Andek	12.50	87.50	0.00	62.50	33.33	0.00	4.17
Mbengwi	21.43	78.57	0.00	92.31	7.69	0.00	0.00
Njikwa	6.90	93.10	0.00	4.35	17.39	0.00	78.26
Babessi	7.89	92.11	0.00	0.00	7.14	0.00	92.86
Ndop	6.06	93.94	0.00	52.17	21.74	26.09	0.00
Average	38.26	61.74	12.66	38.26	13.47	7.00	23.91

The figures in the table above are in percentages



61.74% of respondents involving 16 councils answered no to the question if they had a regular salary from the council, whereas only 38.26% were affirmative they had regular salaries from the councils. Stating further, some respondents said they had gone for over two months without salaries and some for more than ten months, including Babessi 92.86%, Benakuma 78.95% and Njikwa 78.26%.

Councils who are reportedly paying their workers regularly included Nwa 88.14%, Ndu 87.88%, Misaje 95.24% and Bamenda III 96.15%. Even in councils where respondents strongly agree that salaries were regular, the survey still revealed respondents who claim they have gone for months without salary.

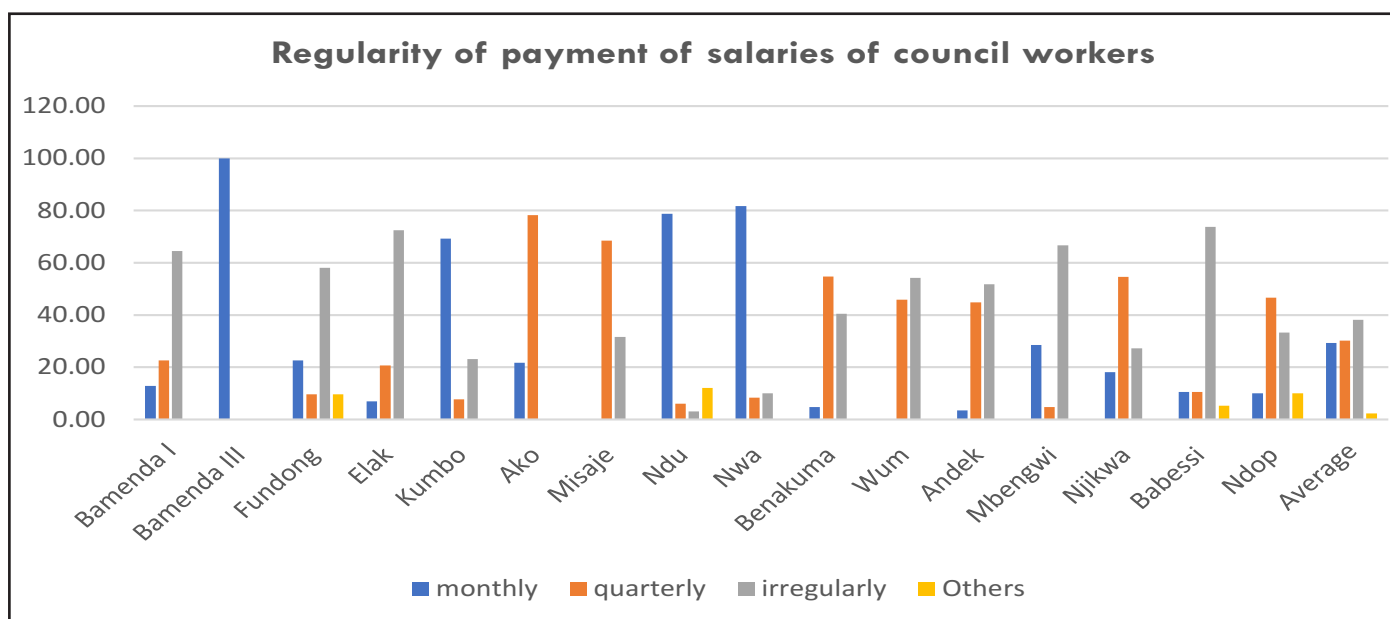
That respondents from Donga Mantung councils scored their councils highly with regards to the regular payment of salaries is an indicator of the relative calm in the Division.

The irregularity in the payment of salaries has been attributed to the late disbursement of the Additional Council Taxes subvention from the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (Le Fonds Spécial d'Equipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale, FEICOM). With the crisis situation in the Region, councils, for the most part, depend on government subvention. The disbursement of these funds was always delayed and when it came, it was absorbed by the debt situation of councils.

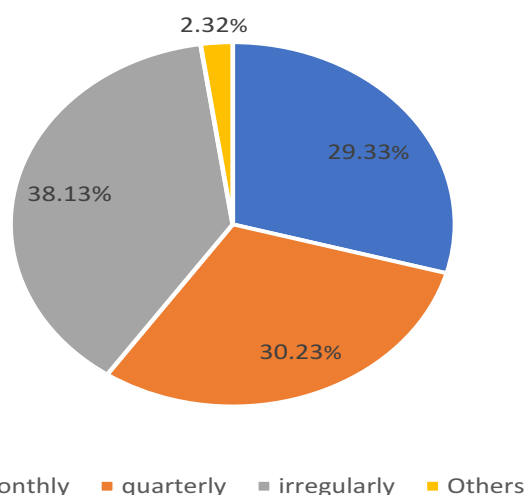
Question: How are salaries paid? Monthly, Quarterly, Irregularly?

Council	monthly	quarterly	irregularly	Others
Bamenda I	12.90	22.58	64.52	0.00
Bamenda III	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fundong	22.58	9.68	58.06	9.68
Elak	6.90	20.69	72.41	0.00
Kumbo	69.23	7.69	23.08	0.00
Ako	21.74	78.26	0.00	0.00
Misaje	0.00	68.42	31.58	0.00
Ndu	78.79	6.06	3.03	12.12
Nwa	81.67	8.33	10.00	0.00
Benakuma	4.76	54.76	40.48	0.00
Wum	0.00	45.83	54.17	0.00
Andek	3.45	44.83	51.72	0.00
Mbengwi	28.57	4.76	66.67	0.00
Njikwa	18.18	54.55	27.27	0.00
Babessi	10.53	10.53	73.68	5.26
Ndop	10.00	46.67	33.33	10.00
Average	29.33	30.23	38.13	2.32

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Regularity of payment of salaries of council workers



Answering this question, respondents stated that salaries in their councils were paid monthly, some said quarterly and others provided no specific regularity. Among the respondents, 29.33% held that their salaries were paid on a monthly basis. 30.23% said salaries were paid on a quarterly basis. Meanwhile, 38.18% held that the payment of their salaries did not follow any particular regularity.

However, it is important to note that even in councils where respondents said salaries were for the most part regular, we found respondents who held that salaries were irregular. This can be understood in the sense that some councils practice discrimination in the payment of salaries.

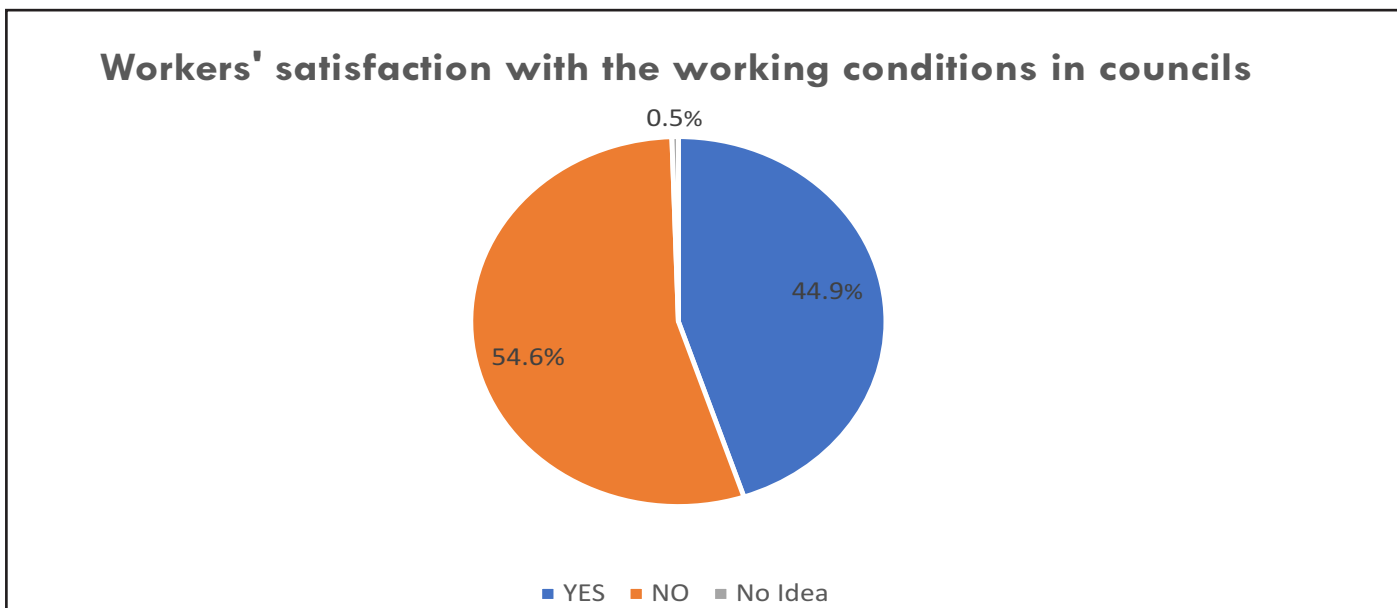
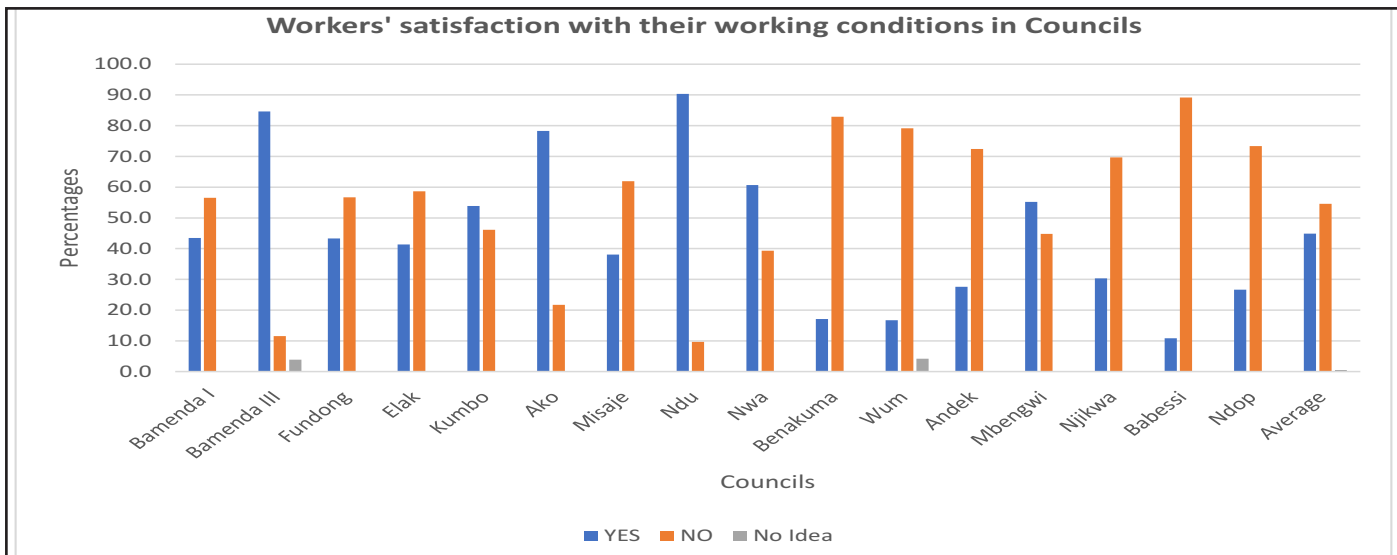
Among councils noted for the regular payment of salaries were: Bamenda III (100%), Nwa (81.67%), Ndu (78.79%), and Ako (78.26%). On the other hand, Babessi (73.68%), Elak (72.41%), and Bamenda I (64.52%) are noted for the irregular payment of salaries. For instance, the Public Independent Conciliator received complaints from workers of Babessi Council alleging 11 months of unpaid salaries and even 14 months for others.

It is important to note that, regarding salary payments, a vast majority of councils are yet to embrace the 2014 salary scale for council workers, talk less of the 2023 salary scale. Some of the workers do not even know their entitlements, especially given that they work without contracts.

Question: Are you satisfied with the working conditions in your council? If no, why?

Council	YES	NO	No Idea	If NO, why?					
				Poor working conditions	Poor administration and Management	violation of workers' rights	Discriminatory and unequal practices	insecurity	Poor Treatment of workers
Bamenda I	43.5	56.5	0.0	47.1	17.7	23.5	11.8	0.0	0.0
Bamenda III	84.6	11.5	3.9	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
Fundong	43.3	56.7	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.0
Elak	41.4	58.6	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3
Kumbo	53.9	46.2	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.7	40.0
Ako	78.3	21.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Misaje	38.1	61.9	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0
Ndu	90.3	9.7	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nwa	60.7	39.3	0.0	27.3	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	63.6
Benakuma	17.1	82.9	0.0	8.6	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	77.2
Wum	16.7	79.2	4.2	81.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	14.3
Andek	27.6	72.4	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
Mbengwi	55.2	44.8	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
Njikwa	30.3	69.7	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	57.1
Babessi	10.8	89.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ndop	26.7	73.3	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	25.0
Average	44.9	54.6	0.5	28.1	3.1	7.5	3.8	5.6	51.9

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Asked whether or not they were satisfied with their working conditions, 54.61% of the total number of council workers interviewed answered in the negative, 50% citing the ill-treatment of workers (including low and irregular salaries, no health or social insurance contributions, no advancements or payments of salary arrears, no workers' contracts) (50%), and 28.13% the poor conditions of work (no logistics, working tools, office equipment including even absence of a job description to guide workers) as principal reasons.

Only 44.89% of workers said they were satisfied with their working conditions. Top amongst the councils where workers were unsatisfied with their working conditions were Benakuma (82.93%) and Babessi (89.19%). For the councils whose workers were contented with their working conditions, Ndu Council came first with a percentage of 90.32% and followed by Bamenda III (84.62%).

As to the reasons why they were not satisfied with their working conditions, the council workers

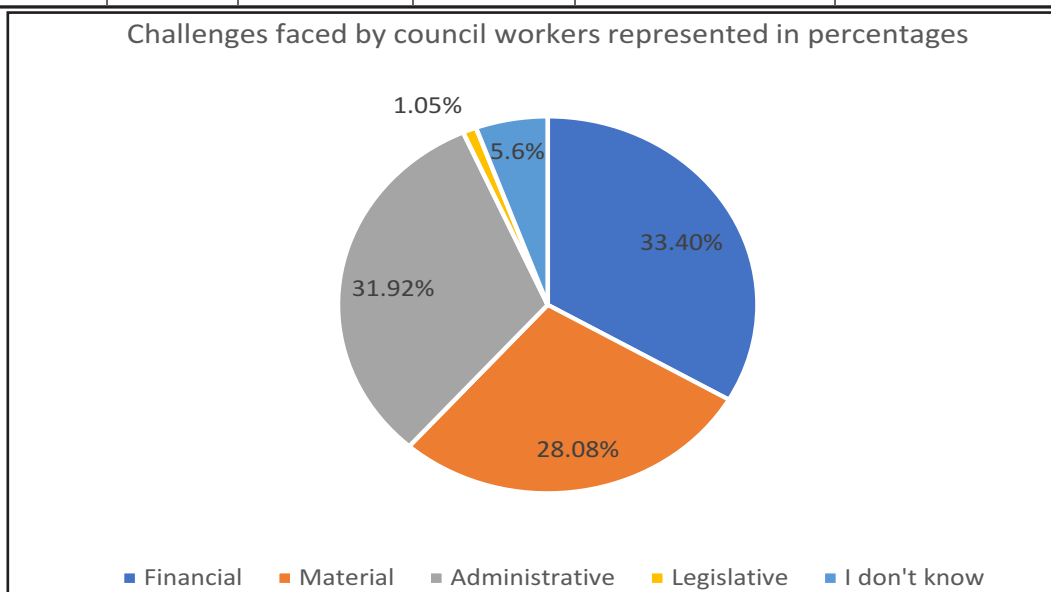
who participated in the perception survey gave responses ranging from poor working conditions, violation of workers' rights, discrimination, poor treatment of workers to insecurity.

A hundred percent of workers who responded "No" to the survey from Ndu Council stated that their working conditions are poor; 88.95% of "No" respondents from Wum also described their working conditions as poor.

The "No" respondents in Ako (100%) and Fundong (86.96%) were of the opinion that their non-satisfaction stems from the way staff were being treated. They held that there was neither health insurance nor regular payment of salaries.

Question: What are the main challenges you face at work as a council worker?

Council	Total	Financial (%)	Material (%)	Administrative (%)	Legislative (%)	I don't know (%)
Bamenda I	35	11.43	57.14	28.57	2.86	0.00
Bamenda III	26	11.54	23.08	50.00	0.00	15.38
Fundong	31	51.61	12.90	25.81	3.23	6.45
Elak	31	48.39	32.26	19.35	0.00	0.00
Kumbo	11	18.18	54.55	27.27	0.00	0.00
Misaje	21	14.29	57.14	23.81	0.00	4.76
Ndu	11	18.18	0.00	36.36	0.00	45.45
Nwa	53	33.96	26.42	39.62	0.00	0.00
Benakuma	43	0.00	11.63	88.37	0.00	0.00
Wum	33	39.39	30.30	21.21	3.03	6.06
Andek	41	39.02	24.39	34.15	0.00	2.44
Mbengwi	25	60.00	28.00	8.00	4.00	0.00
Njikwa	16	37.50	31.25	31.25	0.00	0.00
Babessi	37	64.86	21.62	8.11	2.70	2.70
Ndop	19	52.63	10.53	36.84	0.00	0.00
Average	28.87	33.40	28.08	31.92	1.05	5.60



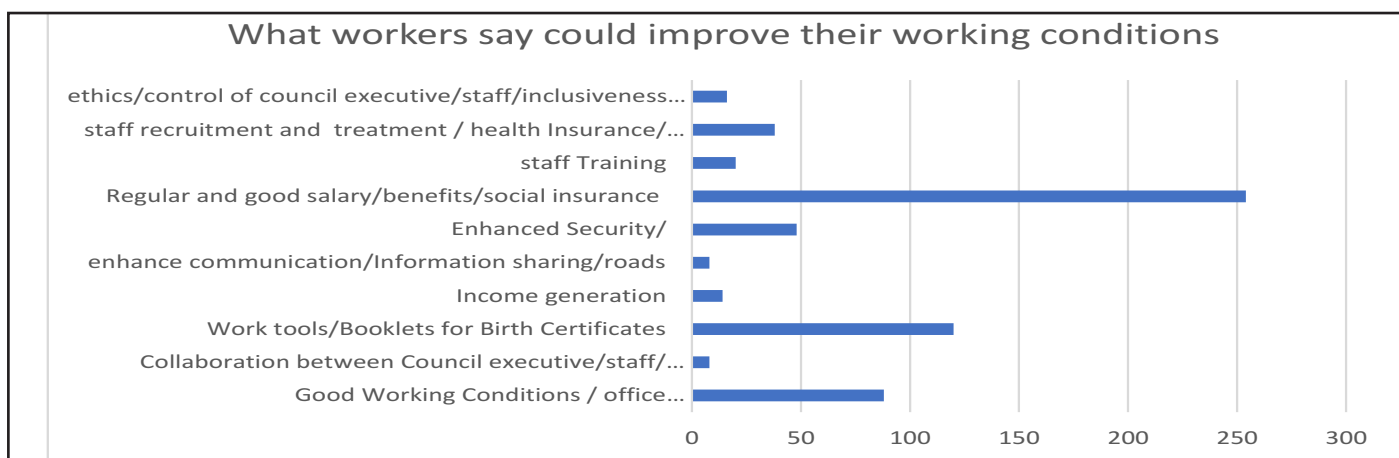
Stating their main challenges at work, 33.40% of respondents said they faced financial challenges, 20.80% of council workers said they faced material challenges, 31.92% faced administrative challenges, while 1.05% faced challenges interpreting the law and related legal texts.

- Top among councils whose workers said they faced financial challenges were Babessi (64.86%), Mbengwi (60%) and Ndop (52.63%).
- Workers in Bamenda I (57.14%), Misaje (57.14%) and Kumbo (54.55%) said they faced material challenges in their work. These were attributed to the absence of office space, working materials and office supplies.
- Administrative challenges were most reported by workers in Benakuma (88.37%), Bamenda III (50%) and Nwa (37.62%), attributed to a red tape in administrative procedures.

From the perception survey, most workers said they faced a challenge with interpreting relevant texts given that they are often only in French.

Workers' Proposals on how council functioning could be improved

Council	Ensure Good Working Conditions	Ensure health relations between council executive and staff	Provide appropriate Working tools	Improve income base of the council	enhance communication/ Information sharing	Enhance Security	Regular and good salary/ benefits/ social insurance	Staff Training	Improve staff treatment	ethics/control of council executive/staff/inclusiveness treatment of persons
Bamenda I	19	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda III	5	0	10	0	1	2	0	0	4	0
Fundong	0	0	2	0	0	0	9	1	5	0
Elak	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kumbo	2	0	6	0	0	5	8	0	4	0
Ako	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
Misaje	0	0	3	0	0	4	6	6	0	1
Ndu	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0
Nwa	0	0	14	0	0	0	19	0	1	0
Benakuma	0	1	2	0	0	0	27	0	4	0
Wum	2	1	9	1	0	0	13	0	0	4
Andek	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Mbengwi	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Njikwa	10	0	2	2	1	9	1	0	1	2
Babessi	4	0	5	0	0	0	36	0	0	0
Ndop	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
total	44	4	60	7	4	24	127	10	19	8



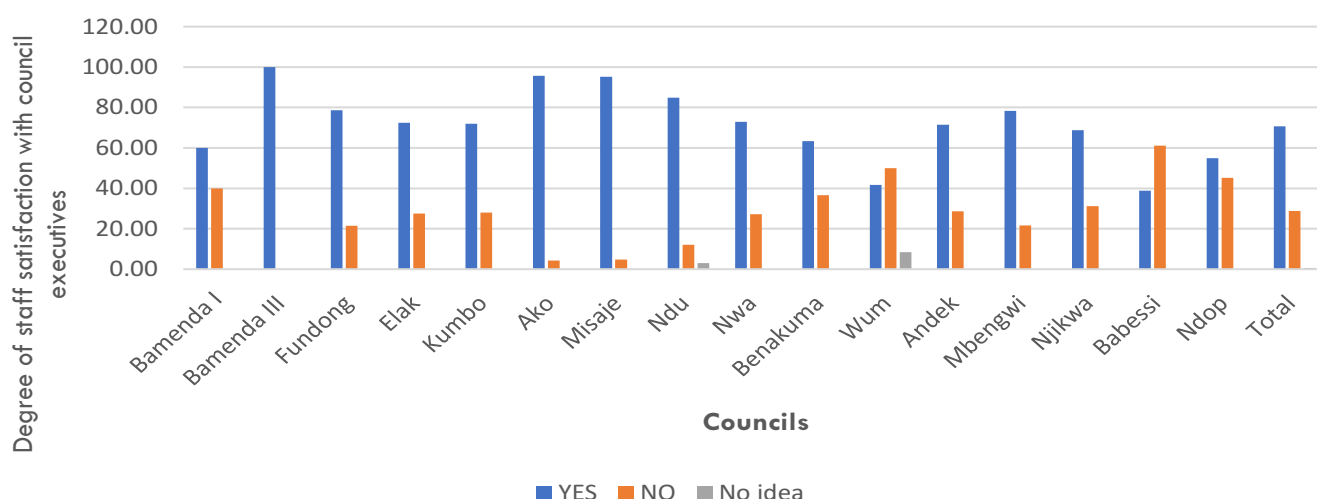
Workers who responded to the perception survey said the following could go a long way to improve their working conditions: ameliorate working conditions (ensure adequate office space, permanent supply of water, electricity, provide office equipment and clear job descriptions); availability of working materials; provision of civil status booklets; and regular in-service training. Improve staff treatment: equality at work, good and regular salaries, provide health and social Insurances, incentives, payment of overtime and risk allowances, regularise employment by providing workers with contracts.

Question: Are you satisfied working with your council executive? If no, why?

Council	YES	NO	No idea
Bamenda I	60.00	40.00	0.00
Bamenda III	100.00	0.00	0.00
Fundong	78.57	21.43	0.00
Elak	72.41	27.59	0.00
Kumbo	72.00	28.00	0.00
Ako	95.65	4.35	0.00
Misaje	95.24	4.76	0.00
Ndu	84.85	12.12	3.03
Nwa	72.88	27.12	0.00
Benakuma	63.41	36.59	0.00
Wum	41.67	50.00	8.33
Andek	71.43	28.57	0.00
Mbengwi	78.38	21.62	0.00
Njikwa	68.75	31.25	0.00
Babessi	38.89	61.11	0.00
Ndop	54.84	45.16	0.00
Total	70.67	28.74	0.59

The figures in the table above are in percentages

Staff satisfaction working with their council executive



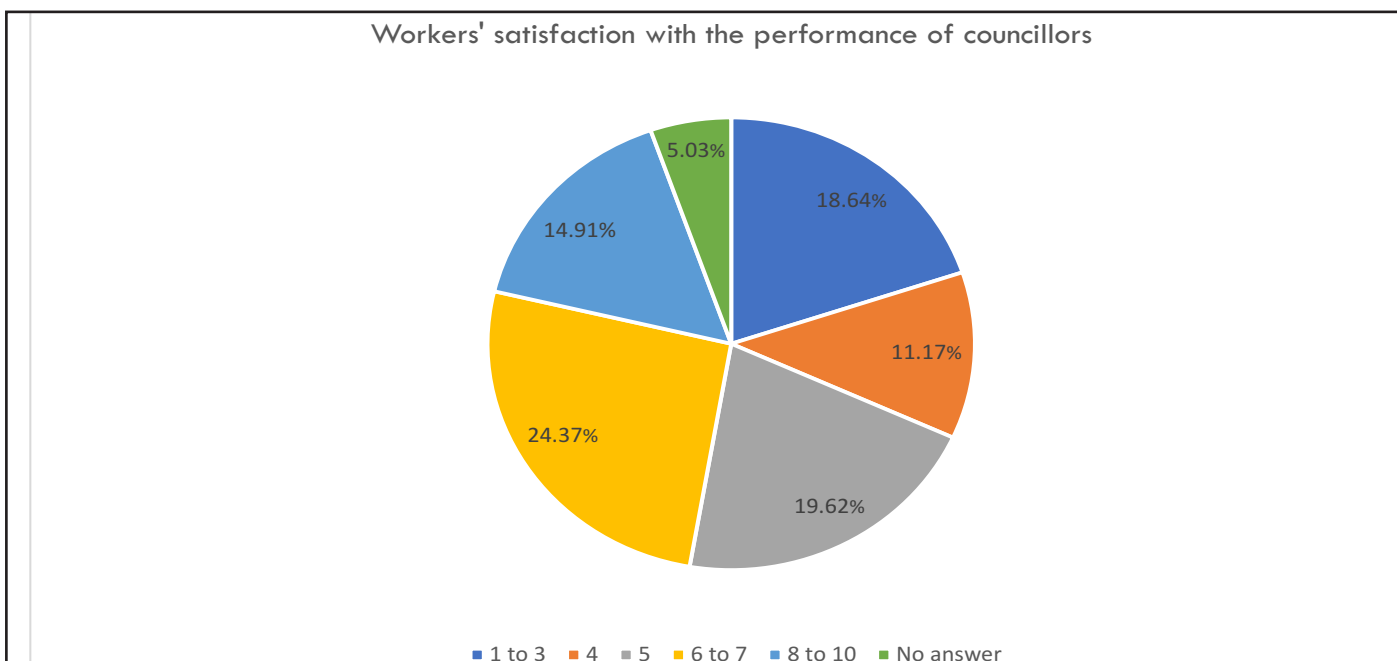
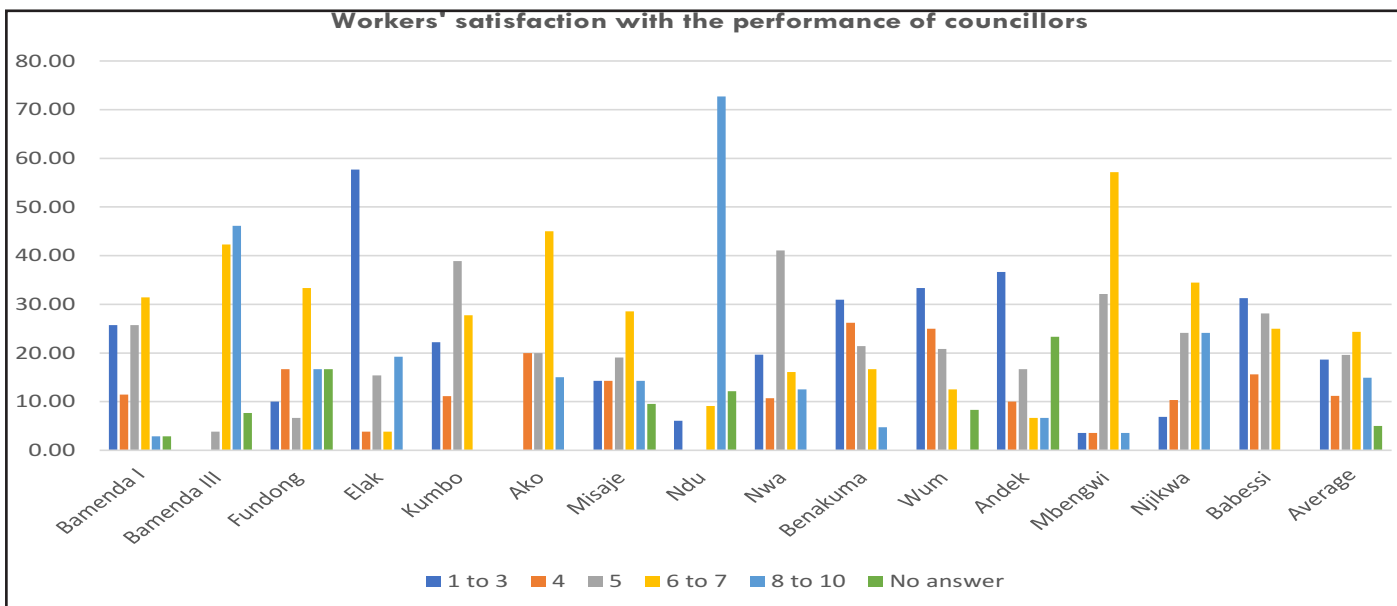
Council workers were asked the question whether or not they were satisfied working with council executives. Answering the question with a “yes” or “no”, 70.67% responded in the affirmative while 28.74% gave a negative response. Council workers who gave affirmative responses to the questionnaires in Bamenda III (100%), Ako (95.65%), and Misaje (95.24%) said they were satisfied working with their executive. However, those in Babessi (61.11%), Wum (50%) and Ndop (45.16%) were not satisfied with their council executive.

Question: Score your satisfaction with the performances of your councillors on a scale 1 to 10. [Very Poor (1-3), poor (4), Average (5), Good (6-7), Very Good (8-10)].

Council workers were asked to score their satisfaction in the performance of their councillors.

Council	1 to 3 (Very Poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6 to 7 (Good)	8 to 10 (Very Good)	No answer
Bamenda I	25.71	11.43	25.71	31.43	2.86	2.86
Bamenda III	0.00	0.00	3.85	42.31	46.15	7.69
Fundong	10.00	16.67	6.67	33.33	16.67	16.67
Elak	57.69	3.85	15.38	3.85	19.23	0.00
Kumbo	22.22	11.11	38.89	27.78	0.00	0.00
Ako	0.00	20.00	20.00	45.00	15.00	0.00
Misaje	14.29	14.29	19.05	28.57	14.29	9.52
Ndu	6.06	0.00	0.00	9.09	72.73	12.12
Nwa	19.64	10.71	41.07	16.07	12.50	0.00
Benakuma	30.95	26.19	21.43	16.67	4.76	0.00
Wum	33.33	25.00	20.83	12.50	0.00	8.33
Andek	36.67	10.00	16.67	6.67	6.67	23.33
Mbengwi	3.57	3.57	32.14	57.14	3.57	0.00
Njikwa	6.90	10.34	24.14	34.48	24.14	0.00
Babessi	31.25	15.63	28.13	25.00	0.00	0.00
Ndop	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average	18.64	11.17	19.62	24.37	14.91	5.03

The figures in the table above are in percentages

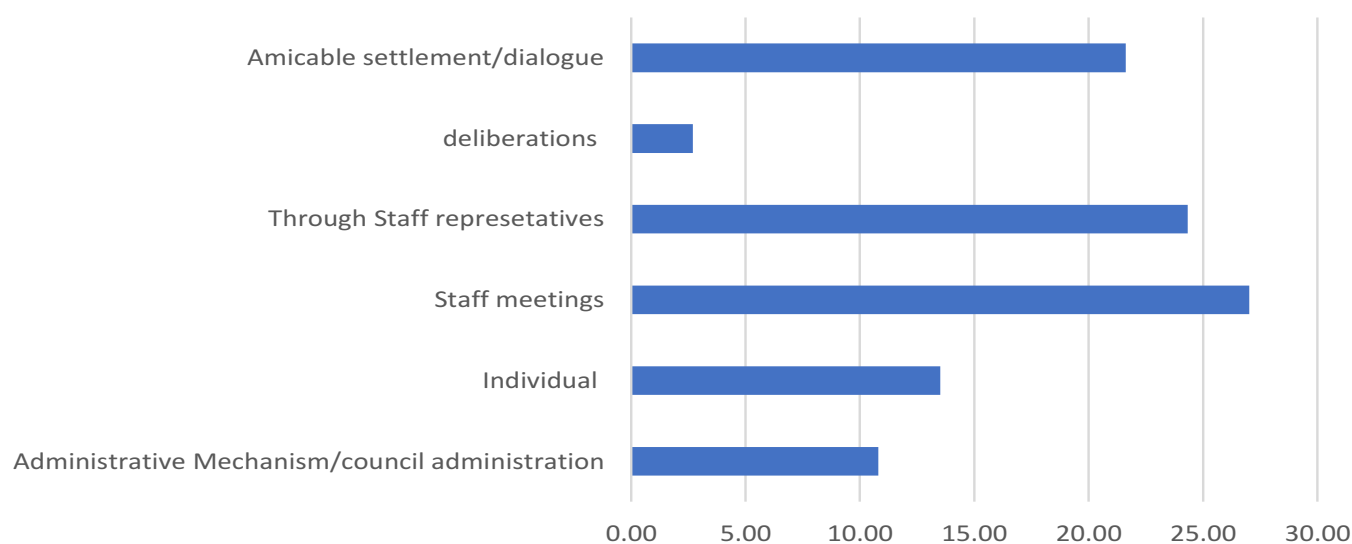


Some council workers (29.81%) who participated in the perception survey scored as below average the performance of their councillors. Respondents, 19.62%, gave an average score while 39.28% of respondents said they were satisfied with the performance of their councillors. Some workers (5.03%) who responded to the survey were indifferent. Councils where workers were least satisfied with their councillors included: Elak (61.54%), Wum (58.33%), and Benakuma (57.14%). Councils where workers were greatly satisfied with the performance of councillors included: Bamenda III (88.46%), Ndu (81.82%) and Mbengwi (60.71%). However, some workers were indifferent as could be seen in the perception of Andek (23.33%).

Question: How does your council handle staff problems?

Council	Administrative Mechanism/council administration	Individual	Staff meetings	Staff representatives	Deliberations	Amicable settlement /Dialogue
Bamenda I	0	1	0	1	0	0
Bamenda III	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fundong	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elak	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kumbo	0	0	1	1	0	0
Ako	0	1	1	0	1	1
Misaje	1	1	1	1	0	1
Ndu	1	1	0	1	0	1
Nwa	0	0	0	1	0	1
Benakuma	0	0	1	1	0	1
Wum	0	0	1	1	0	1
Andek	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mbengwi	1	1	1	0	0	0
Njikwa	0	0	1	0	0	0
Babessi	0	0	1	1	0	0
Ndop	0	0	1	1	0	1
Total	4	5	10	9	1	8
Average	10.81	13.51	27.03	24.32	2.70	21.62

Mechanisms used in handling staff problems



Regarding the manner in which councils handle staff problems, the perception survey revealed that staff issues in councils are resolved through various mechanisms:

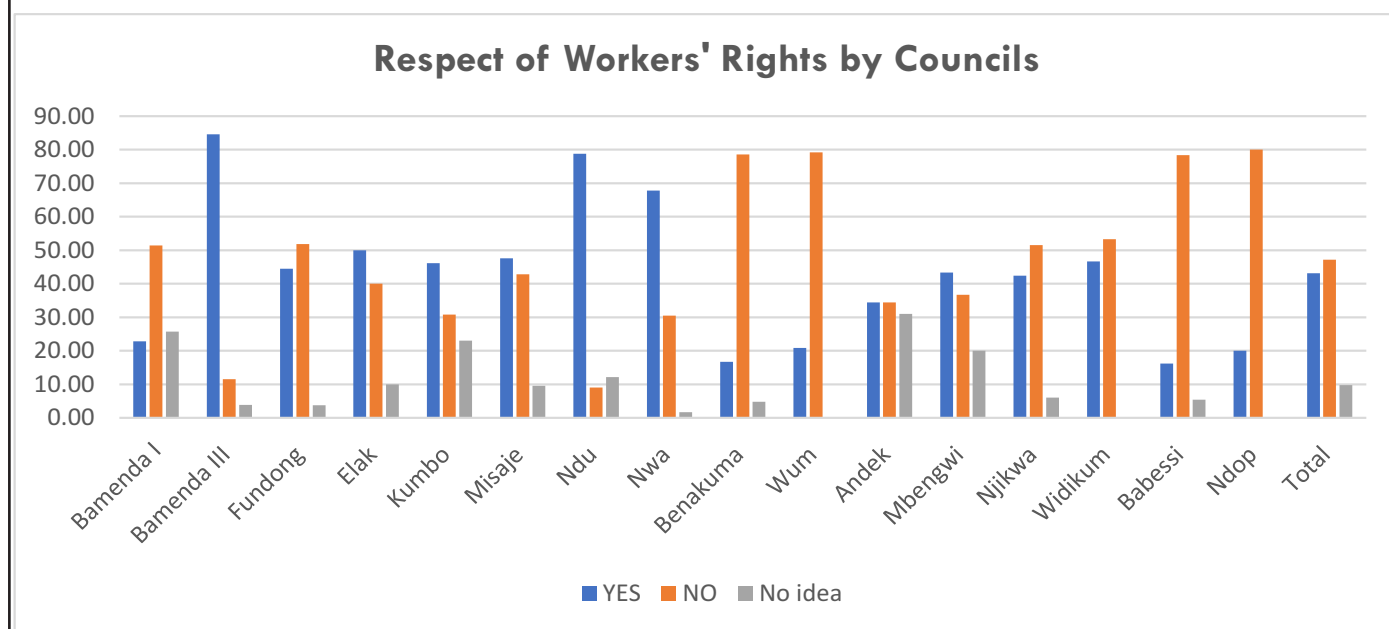
- 27.03% through staff meetings,
- 24.32% through staff representatives,
- 21.62% through amicable settlement/dialogue,
- 2.70% through deliberations,
- 10.81% through administrative mechanisms.

However, it was also noticed that some council workers did not identify any formal dispute settlement mechanism to address workers' problems before they escalate. Such oversight structures are imperative to stem the increasing prevalence of disputes in councils.

Question: Are workers' rights respected in your councils? If no, which rights are not respected?

Council	Yes	no	No idea	Total	Council	YES	NO	No idea
Bamenda I	8	18	9	35	Bamenda I	22.86	51.43	25.7
Bamenda III	22	3	1	26	Bamenda III	84.62	11.54	3.8
Fundong	12	14	1	27	Fundong	44.44	51.85	3.7
Elak	15	12	3	30	Elak	50.00	40.00	10.0
Kumbo	12	8	6	26	Kumbo	46.15	30.77	23.1
Misaje	10	9	2	21	Misaje	47.62	42.86	9.5
Ndu	26	3	4	33	Ndu	78.79	9.09	12.1
Nwa	40	18	1	59	Nwa	67.80	30.51	1.7
Benakuma	7	33	2	42	Benakuma	16.67	78.57	4.8
Wum	5	19	0	24	Wum	20.83	79.17	0.0
Andek	10	10	9	29	Andek	34.48	34.48	31.0
Mbengwi	13	11	6	30	Mbengwi	43.33	36.67	20.0
Njikwa	14	17	2	33	Njikwa	42.42	51.52	6.1
Widikum	7	8	0	15	Widikum	46.67	53.33	0.0
Babessi	6	29	2	37	Babessi	16.22	78.38	5.4
Ndop	5	20	0	25	Ndop	20.00	80.00	0.0
Total	212	232	48	492	Total	43.09	47.15	9.8

The figures in the table above are in percentages



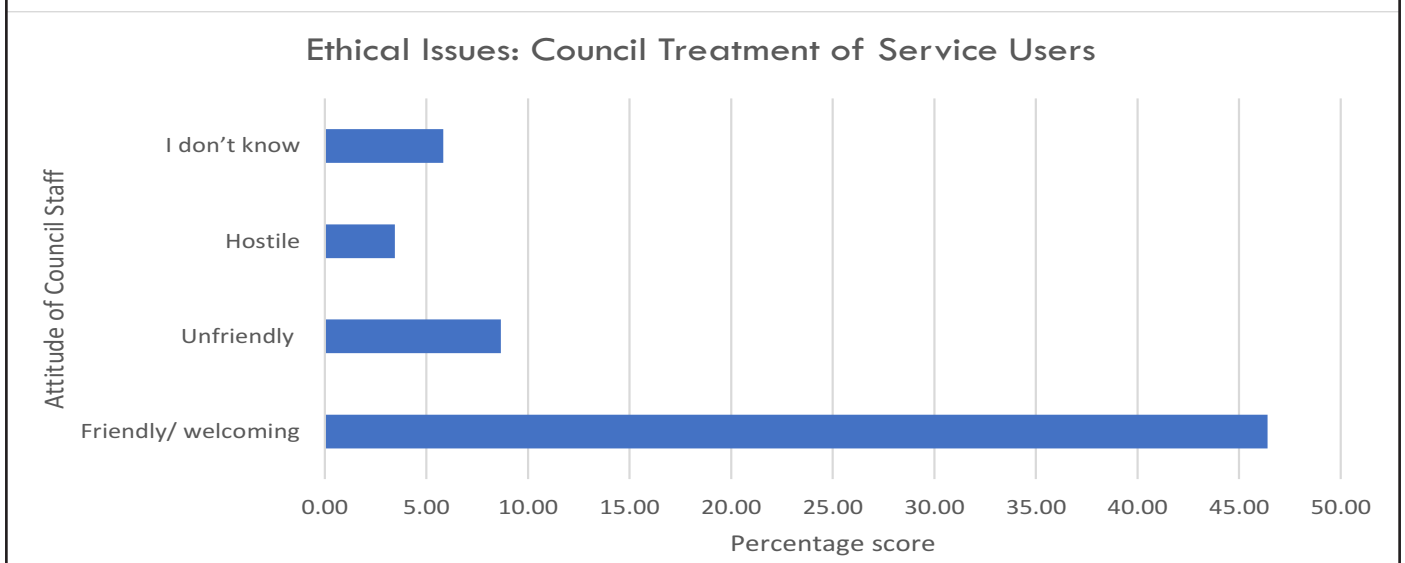
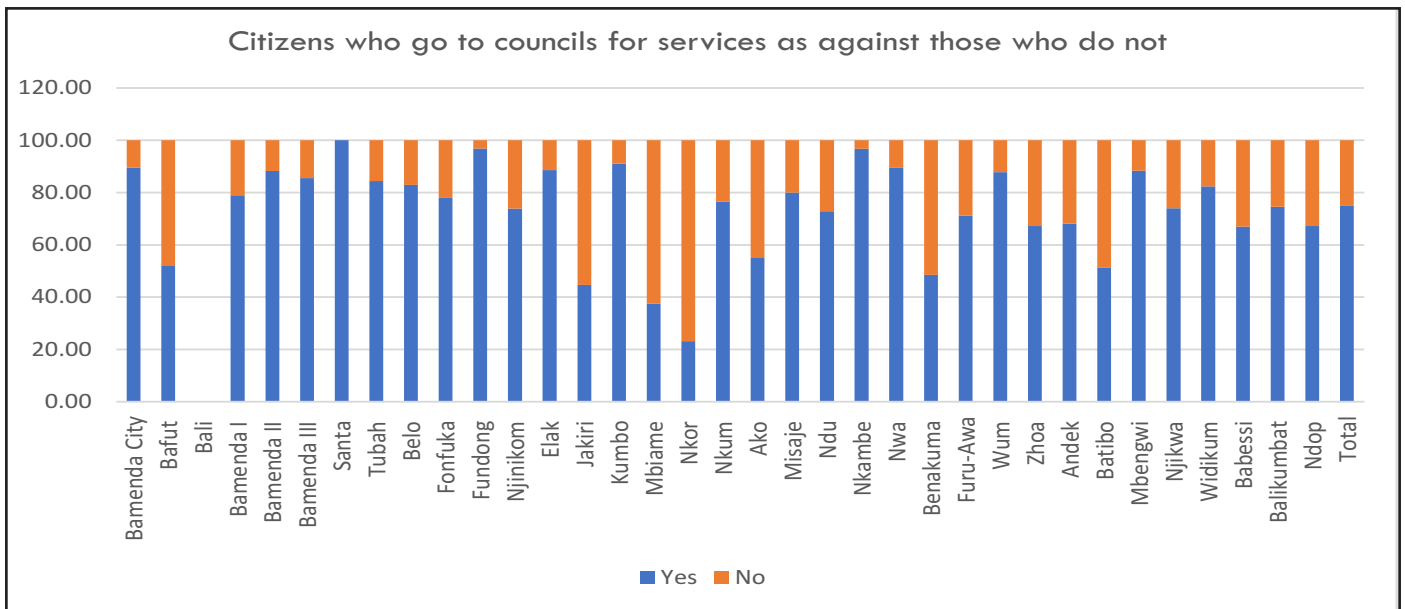
Some council workers (43.09%) who participated in the survey said councils respect workers' rights while 47.15% of the workers said their rights were not respected, and 9.76% of respondents were indifferent. Amongst councils perceived as top in the respect of workers' rights were Bamenda III (84.62%), Ndu (78.79%), and Nwa (67.80%). The perception survey revealed that some councils with the least respect for workers' rights included Ndop (80%), Wum (79.17%) and Benakuma (78.57%).

3. Relationship with citizens and beneficiary populations

Question: Do you go to the council for services? If no, why? If yes, how are you treated?

Council	Yes	No	Friendly	Unfriendly	Hostile	I don't know
Bamenda City	89.52	10.48	37.84	16.22	11.71	8.11
Bafut	51.96	48.04	56.60	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bali	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bamenda I	78.95	21.05	46.67	6.67	1.67	0.00
Bamenda II	88.24	11.76	45.00	16.67	1.67	5.00
Bamenda III	85.54	14.46	45.07	9.86	0.00	0.00
Santa	100.00	0.00	51.28	2.56	0.00	2.56
Tubah	84.42	15.58	41.54	15.38	4.62	0.00
Belo	82.89	17.11	46.03	7.94	0.00	0.00
Fonfuka	77.97	22.03	45.65	10.87	13.04	0.00
Fundong	96.84	3.16	47.83	4.35	2.17	1.09
Njinikom	73.91	26.09	37.25	13.73	5.88	0.00
Elak	88.57	11.43	45.16	9.68	4.84	9.68
Jakiri	44.68	55.32	45.24	7.14	0.00	0.00
Kumbo	91.04	8.96	52.46	3.28	0.00	0.00
Mbiame	37.50	62.50	83.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nkor	23.21	76.79	23.08	46.15	15.38	38.46
Nkum	76.47	23.53	47.69	9.23	1.54	3.08
Ako	55.00	45.00	47.27	3.64	1.82	0.00
Misaje	80.00	20.00	48.44	3.13	1.56	0.00
Ndu	72.82	27.18	45.33	14.67	1.33	25.33
Nkambe	96.77	3.23	50.00	7.78	1.11	0.00
Nwa	89.61	10.39	36.23	10.14	15.94	0.00
Benakuma	48.54	51.46	24.00	6.00	4.00	54.00
Furu-Awa	71.11	28.89	53.13	6.25	0.00	0.00
Wum	87.80	12.20	43.52	10.19	1.85	0.93
Zhoa	67.21	32.79	46.34	2.44	2.44	19.51
Andek	68.06	31.94	44.90	2.04	12.24	4.08
Batibo	51.39	48.61	40.54	18.92	0.00	0.00
Mbengwi	88.42	11.58	70.24	3.57	1.19	7.14
Njikwa	74.00	26.00	43.24	0.00	0.00	0.00
Widikum	82.35	17.65	44.29	11.43	8.57	0.00
Babessi	66.98	33.02	50.70	5.63	0.00	1.41
Balikumbat	74.55	25.45	56.10	9.76	0.00	19.51
Ndop	67.21	32.79	51.22	9.76	0.00	39.02
Percentage Average	74.86	25.14	46.40	8.66	3.44	5.83

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Answering the question "Do you go to the council for services?", 74.86% of the respondents answered "YES" and 25.16% answered "NO". Of the 74.86% respondents who go to councils for services, 46.40% feel satisfied with their treatment, meanwhile 12% found their treatment unfriendly or hostile. Over 50% were indifferent.

Councils with the highest ratings for their friendliness according to respondents included Mbengwi (70.24%) Kumbo (52.46%) and Nkambe (50%). Respondents in Nkor (46.15%) perceived their council as the most unfriendly followed by Batibo (18.92%), Bamenda II (16.67%) and the Bamenda City Council (16.22%).

Regarding the follow-up question of "If no, why?", 85.71% of the "NO" respondents advanced the following reasons:

- Councils are not accessible and council authorities are not available (34.29%);
- 25.71% say they have no business with councils;
- 25.71% did not find their councils useful largely for ethical reasons that included corruption, unfriendly and unwelcoming conduct of council personnel and the poor treatment of service-users by council workers;
- 5.71% of respondents cited the current crises situation in the region;
- 5.71% said they were not informed of the services councils provided.

It is also important to note that 2.86% of respondents said they did not visit councils because their councils were partisan and unwelcoming to people of other political opinions.

From the foregoing, it could be concluded that many councils have a long way to go to render their services more user-friendly and inviting to their population.

a) Direct and Indirect Discrimination

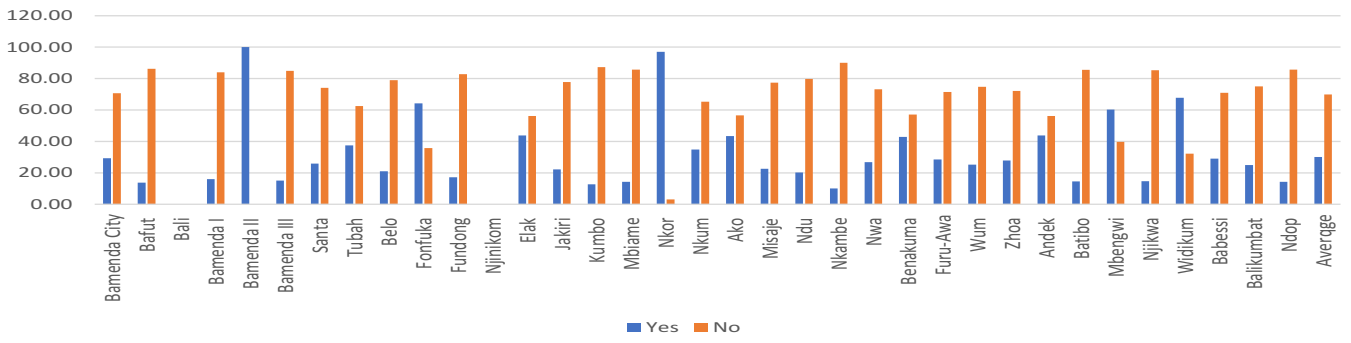
Question: Have you noticed any of the following practices in your council?

This question aims at identifying public perception on the practice of discrimination by regional and local authorities.

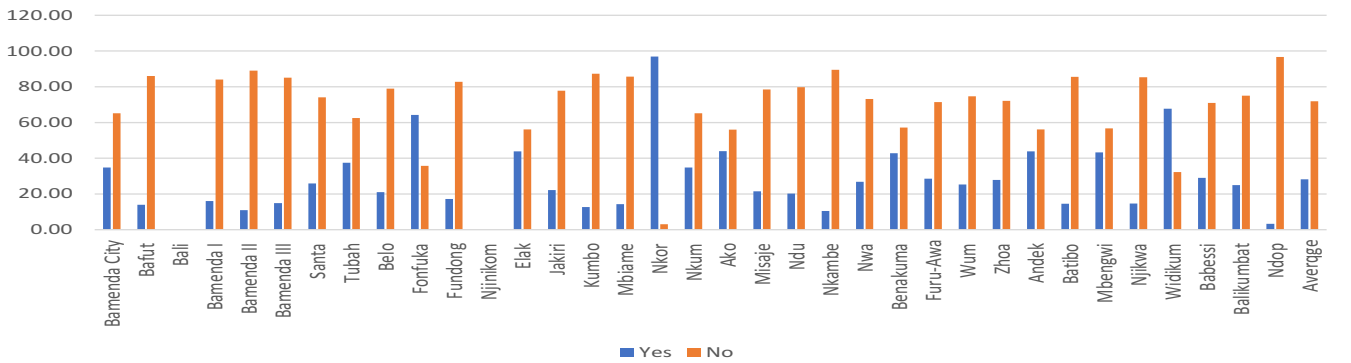
Council	Tribalism		Marginalisation		Favouritism		Exclusion		I don't know	Form of discrimination				
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		Gender-based Discrimination (men/women/PWDs)	Unequal access to council services	Unequal access to work for all	Unequal opportunity for income generating activities	Unequal distribution of development projects
Bamenda City	58.9	41.1	29.4	70.7	69.2	30.8	23.7	76.3	0.0	40.1	21.9	24.6	14.4	31.0
Bafut	20.4	79.6	13.7	86.3	28.3	71.7	9.0	91.0	0.0	0.0	32.4	17.7	7.4	8.8
Bali	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bamenda I	45.3	54.7	16.0	84.0	37.0	63.0	12.8	87.2	0.0	28.6	15.9	23.8	22.2	19.1
Bamenda II	45.6	54.4	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	11.1	13.3	5.6	8.9
Bamenda III	24.7	75.3	15.1	84.9	34.3	65.8	16.4	83.6	46.0	18.5	24.6	20.0	13.9	18.5
Santa	37.1	62.9	25.9	74.1	45.5	54.6	14.3	85.7	0.0	18.0	23.1	23.1	15.4	18.0
Tubah	49.3	50.7	37.5	62.5	70.0	30.0	27.0	73.0	0.0	19.2	17.6	28.0	17.6	21.6
Belo	27.5	72.5	21.1	79.0	39.7	60.3	17.0	83.0	0.0	22.4	35.8	29.9	19.4	10.5
Fonfuka	54.6	45.5	64.3	35.7	66.7	33.3	48.9	51.1	0.0	16.5	22.3	18.5	17.5	29.1
Fundong	18.3	81.7	17.2	82.8	50.7	49.3	24.7	75.3	0.0	18.0	24.4	19.2	16.7	12.8
Njinikom	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elak	37.3	62.7	43.9	56.1	57.8	42.2	43.1	56.9	0.0	19.8	13.2	23.6	9.4	13.2
Jakiri	28.8	71.2	22.2	77.8	44.4	55.6	40.3	59.7	0.0	14.3	11.9	11.9	9.5	21.4
Kumbo	24.5	75.5	12.7	87.3	51.7	48.3	56.5	43.6	0.0	10.5	18.6	20.9	16.3	19.8
Mbiame	0.0	100.0	14.3	85.7	0.0	100.0	6.7	93.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3
Nkor	95.7	4.4	97.0	3.0	97.2	2.8	91.7	8.3	0.0	4.0	47.0	43.0	23.0	10.0
Nkum	15.8	84.2	34.8	65.2	68.9	31.1	47.1	52.9	1.0	28.3	17.5	15.0	20.0	19.2
Ako	37.1	62.9	43.4	56.6	49.5	50.5	56.4	43.6	0.0	15.5	17.7	25.7	31.0	25.7
Misaje	32.4	67.6	22.6	77.4	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ndu	32.6	67.4	20.3	79.7	51.1	48.9	19.4	80.6	3.0	21.9	21.0	36.2	29.5	25.7
Nkambe	8.2	91.8	10.0	90.0	22.4	77.7	15.6	84.4	0.0	32.6	21.7	26.1	21.7	39.1
Nwa	51.4	48.7	26.9	73.1	50.0	50.0	39.1	60.9	0.0	19.1	17.4	27.8	15.7	25.2
Benakuma	45.1	54.9	42.9	57.1	52.2	47.8	25.6	74.4	3.0	20.5	44.9	42.3	28.2	53.9
Furu-Awa	44.4	55.6	28.6	71.4	75.7	24.3	44.4	55.6	0.0	25.0	17.2	35.9	14.1	15.6
Wum	29.3	70.7	25.3	74.7	45.0	55.1	34.4	65.6	0.0	31.8	23.5	34.1	24.2	26.5
Zhoa	28.1	71.9	27.9	72.1	33.3	66.7	21.2	78.9	0.0	19.7	18.2	21.2	19.7	18.2
Andek	47.8	52.2	43.9	56.1	65.0	35.0	41.8	58.2	2.0	10.9	21.9	23.5	31.1	26.1
Batibo	14.3	85.7	14.5	85.5	29.2	70.8	11.8	88.2	4.0	26.5	6.1	49.0	12.2	16.3
Mbengwi	21.7	78.3	60.3	39.7	29.6	70.5	60.3	39.7	0.0	15.7	20.4	43.5	10.2	38.0
Njikwa	13.6	86.4	14.6	85.4	27.3	72.7	9.5	90.5	0.0	25.0	21.4	46.4	39.3	42.9
Widikum	71.7	28.3	67.7	32.3	85.3	14.8	18.2	81.8	0.0	40.7	14.4	2.5	36.4	43.2
Babessi	16.5	83.5	29.0	71.0	81.6	18.5	40.0	60.0	0.0	29.9	29.9	27.5	28.1	28.1
Balikumbat	22.6	77.4	25.0	75.0	32.7	67.3	26.8	73.2	3.0	10.2	17.0	8.5	10.2	3.4
Ndop	31.7	68.3	14.3	85.7	54.2	45.8	28.3	71.7	0.0	18.9	23.0	35.1	29.7	32.4
Average	33.5	66.5	30.1	69.9	51.4	48.6	33.1	66.9	66.0	20.6	21.1	25.1	19.8	23.4

The figures in the table above are in percentages

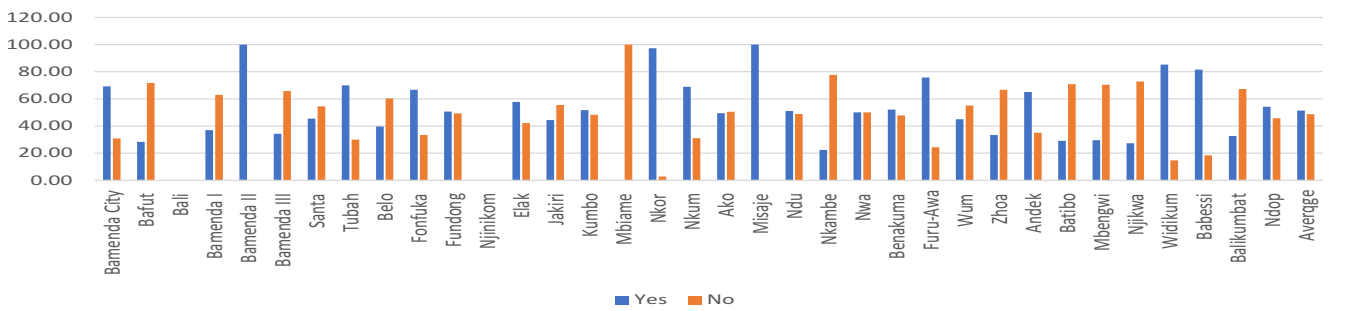
Tribalism



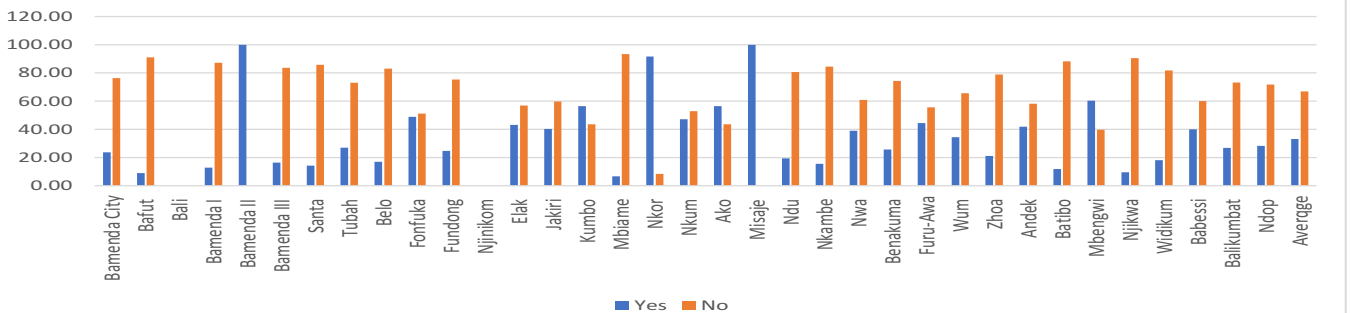
Marginalisation



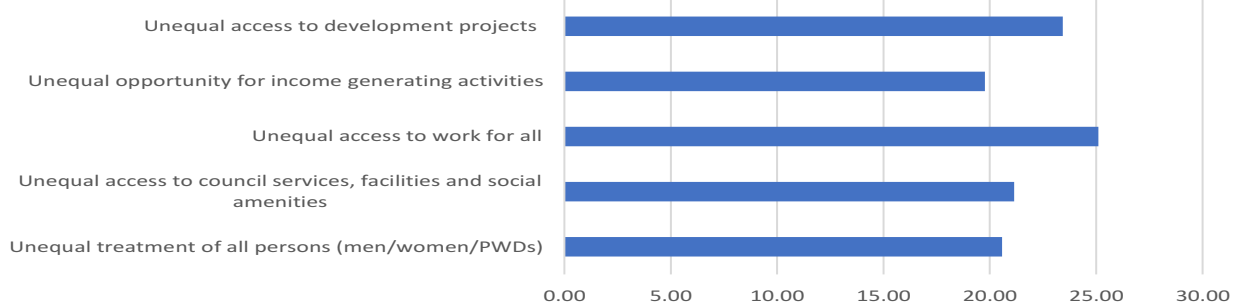
Favoritism



Exclusion



Prevalent forms of Discriminatory Practices in Councils



Respondents were also questioned on discriminatory practices in councils. They had to respond "YES" or "NO" to practices of Tribalism, Marginalisation, Favouritism and Exclusion in their councils. Responding to the question if there is tribalism in their council, 33.48% responded "YES" to the existence of tribalism in their councils as against 66.51% who said "NO". Regarding the existence of marginalisation in their councils, 30.07% of respondents were affirmative of the existence of marginalisation in their council while 69.92% gave a "NO" response. Favouritism has been identified as the most prevalent unethical issue relative to discriminatory practices in councils with 51.36% of respondents agreeing to its existence against 48.64%. It is manifested in the form of gratification to political friends, preferences to persons of their family and social circles.

Regarding exclusion, 33.07% of respondents believed in its practice as opposed to 66.93% who perceived inclusion in their councils.

Asked to justify the frequent forms of discriminatory practices in their councils, the respondents cited Unequal treatment of all persons (men/women/People with Disabilities) [20.57%], Unequal access to council services, facilities and social amenities [21.14%], Unequal access to work for all [25.11%], Unequal opportunity for income generating activities [19.76%] and Unequal access to development projects [23.43%].

Of the councils indexed by respondents as most tribalistic, Nkor (95.65%), Widikum (71.69%), Bamenda City Council (58.88%), and Fonfuka (54.55%) occupied the front seats. However, Nkambe (8.24%), Njikwa (13.64%) and Batibo (14.29%) were perceived to be least tribalistic.

Regarding those who said "yes" to the prevalence of marginalisation in their councils, Bamenda II (100%) topped the league, closely followed by Nkor (96.97%) and Widikum (67.74%). Councils perceived to have the least prevalence of marginalisation were Nkambe (10%), Kumbo (12.73%), and Bafut (13.73%).

With regards to those who said "yes" to the prevalence of favouritism, Bamenda II (100%) and Misaje (100%) shared the top spot, followed by Nkor (97.22%), Babessi (81.55%) and Furu-Awa (75.68%). The prevalence of favouritism was perceived to be low in Nkambe (22.35%), Njikwa (27.27%) and Bafut (28.28%).

Bamenda II (100%) and Misaje (100%) once more shared the top spot on the list of councils with the most prevalence of exclusion. They were followed by Nkor (91.67%). However, Bafut (8.96%), Njikwa (9.52%), Batibo (11.76%) and Bamenda I (12.77%) had the lowest prevalence of exclusion.

Regarding the forms of discrimination in councils, respondents perceived the Bamenda City Council (40.11%), Widikum (40.68%) and Nkambe (32.61%) as unequally treating Men, Women and People with Disabilities.

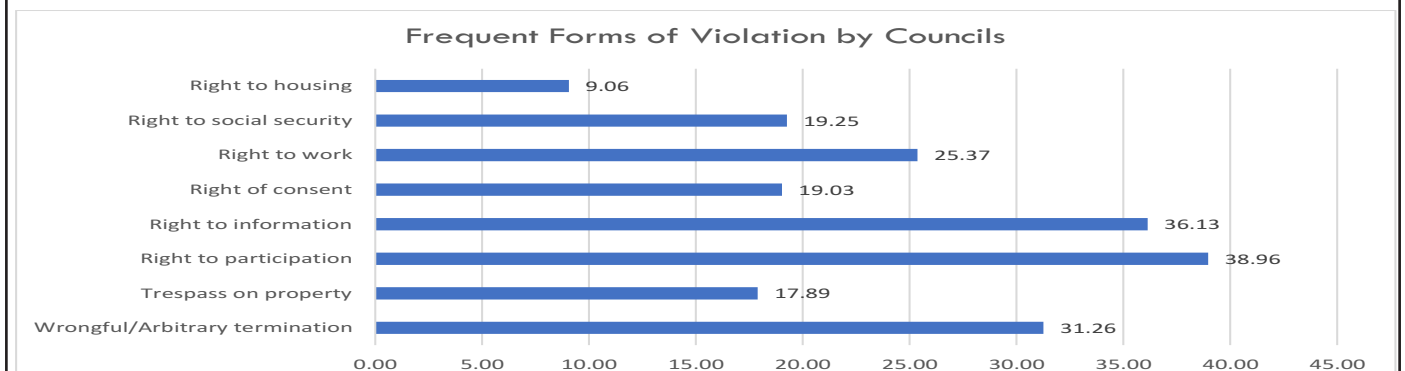
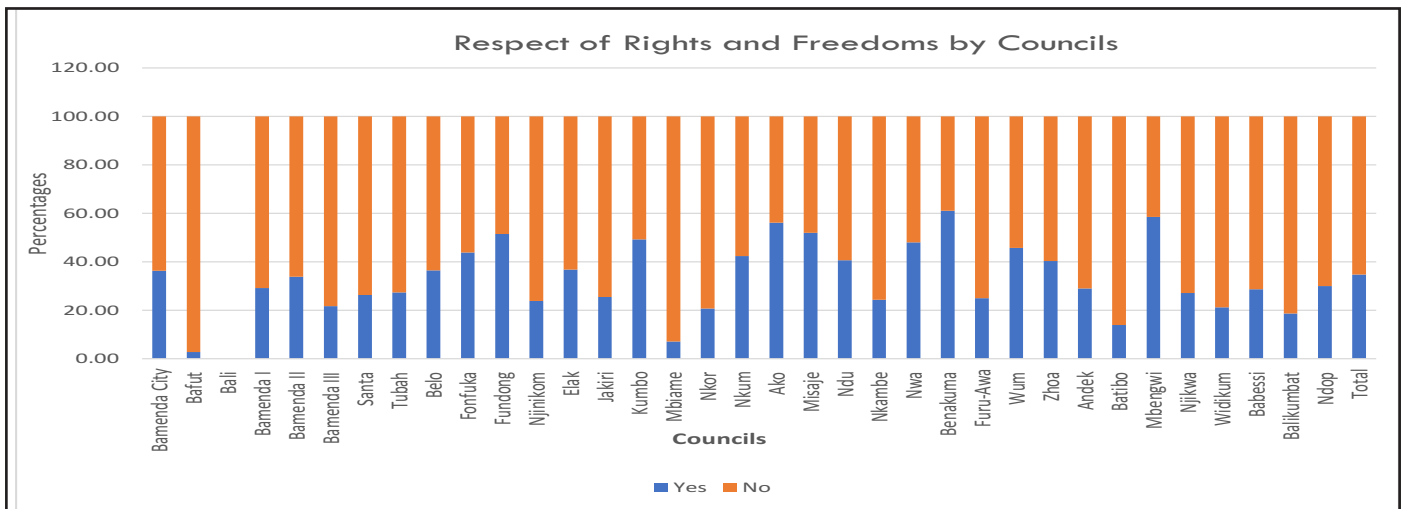
Nkor (47%), Benakuma (44.87%), and Belo (35.82%) were faulted for giving unequal access to council services, facilities and social amenities to their population. Regarding the unequal access to work for all, Batibo (48.98%), Njikwa (46.43%) and Nkor (43%) were indexed.

Respondents in Njikwa (39.29%), Widikum (36.44%), Andek (31.09%) and Ako (31.02%) said their councils do not offer equal opportunities for income generating activities. Unequal access to development projects was cited by respondents in Benakuma (53.85%), Widikum (43.22%) and Njikwa (42.86%).

Question 3: Have you been a victim of or do you know someone who has been a victim

Council	Yes	No	Frequent Forms of Violation by Councils							
			Wrongful/Arbitrary termination	Trespass on property	Right to participation	Right to information	Right of consent	Right to work	Right to social security	Right to housing
Bamenda City	36.29	63.71	4.44	8.89	77.78	66.67	26.67	11.11	19.05	2.22
Bafut	2.80	97.20	66.67	0.00	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	29.17	70.83	9.52	52.38	14.29	9.52	9.52	19.05	4.76	23.81
Bamenda II	33.82	66.18	17.39	21.74	17.39	17.39	13.04	21.74	8.70	13.04
Bamenda III	21.69	78.31	22.22	0.00	16.67	38.89	0.00	0.00	22.22	0.00
Santa	26.32	73.68	40.00	30.00	10.00	20.00	20.00	30.00	20.00	10.00
Tubah	27.38	72.62	13.04	8.70	13.04	26.09	13.04	13.04	13.04	17.39
Belo	36.49	63.51	62.96	11.11	22.22	22.22	14.81	33.33	18.52	3.70
Fonfuka	43.86	56.14	24.00	20.00	28.00	40.00	20.00	28.00	16.00	4.00
Fundong	51.43	48.57	5.56	13.89	11.11	22.22	11.11	19.44	2.78	13.89
Njinikom	23.81	76.19	60.00	33.33	66.67	60.00	80.00	100.00	86.67	60.00
Elak	36.76	63.24	24.00	4.00	52.00	16.00	32.00	48.00	12.00	0.00
Jakiri	25.51	74.49	20.00	8.00	28.00	12.00	12.00	24.00	8.00	8.00
Kumbo	49.25	50.75	24.24	3.03	60.61	42.42	24.24	18.18	9.09	9.09
Mbiame	7.14	92.86	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nkor	20.75	79.25	81.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.18	0.00	0.00
Nkum	42.35	57.65	33.33	2.78	19.44	44.44	5.56	16.67	8.33	0.00
Ako	56.12	43.88	10.91	36.36	43.64	41.82	34.55	38.18	23.64	32.73
Misaje	51.95	48.05	60.00	0.00	42.50	45.00	30.00	15.00	2.50	2.50
Ndu	40.66	59.34	37.84	37.84	13.51	8.11	5.41	16.22	27.03	5.41
Nkambe	24.36	75.64	57.89	63.16	21.05	47.37	21.05	21.05	42.11	10.53
Nwa	48.00	52.00	44.44	30.56	36.11	36.11	11.11	33.33	5.56	2.78
Benakuma	61.05	38.95	72.41	3.45	32.76	20.69	13.79	15.52	12.07	5.17
Furu-Awa	25.00	75.00	9.09	45.45	63.64	27.27	18.18	9.09	18.18	0.00
Wum	45.69	54.31	50.94	7.55	41.51	28.30	16.98	60.38	15.09	3.77
Zhoa	40.35	59.65	34.78	21.74	26.09	26.09	17.39	39.13	39.13	4.35
Andek	28.99	71.01	30.00	35.00	20.00	10.00	15.00	25.00	15.00	10.00
Batibo	13.89	86.11	50.00	10.00	30.00	20.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00
Mbengwi	58.51	41.49	1.82	0.00	85.45	72.73	30.91	20.00	52.73	5.45
Njikwa	27.08	72.92	0.00	15.38	38.46	30.77	15.38	15.38	46.15	15.38
Widikum	21.18	78.82	22.22	50.00	88.89	94.44	22.22	0.00	0.00	0.00
Babessi	28.71	71.29	24.14	34.48	34.48	41.38	0.00	13.79	24.14	0.00
Balikumbat	18.64	81.36	36.36	9.09	36.36	54.55	27.27	9.09	36.36	9.09
Ndop	30.00	70.00	22.22	33.33	77.78	61.11	33.33	50.00	55.56	27.78
Total	34.71	65.29	31.26	17.89	38.96	36.13	19.03	25.37	19.25	9.06

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Responding to the question “*Have you been a victim of or do you know someone who has been a victim of violation of their rights or freedom by a regional or council authority or service?*”, 34.71% of the respondents answered “YES” and 65.29% answered “NO”.

Regarding the follow-up question of “*If yes, what form of violation?*”, Right to participation (38.96%), right to information (36.13%) and wrongful/arbitrary termination (31.26%) were cited among the most prominent.

Amongst the 34.71% respondents who answered “YES” for wrongful/arbitrary termination, the following councils topped the chart: Nkor (81.82%), Bafut (66.67%) and Belo (62.96%).

Individual council rankings in terms of specific violations looked thus:

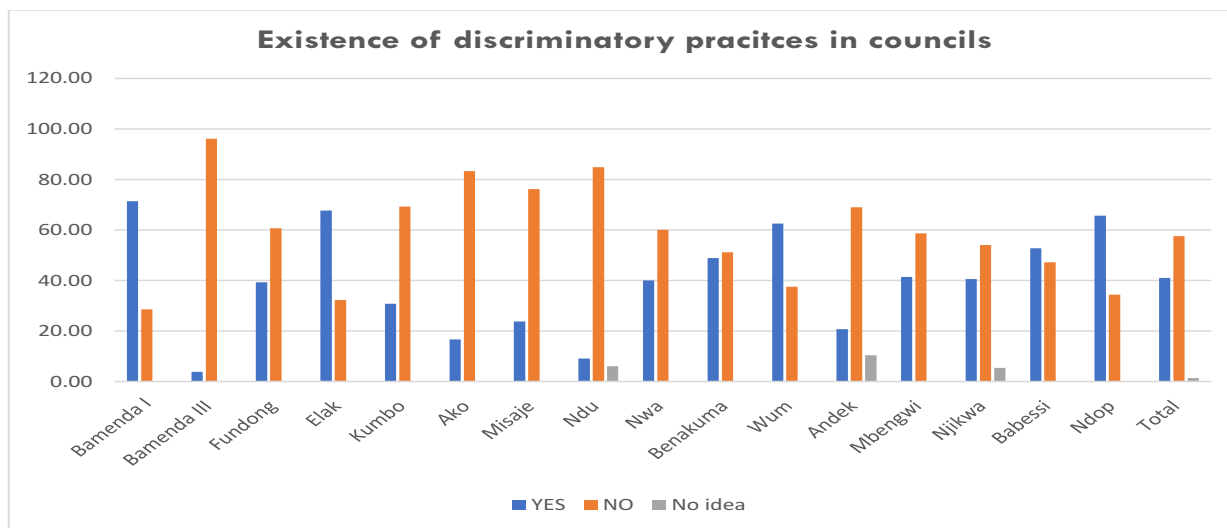
- **trespass on property:** Nkambe (63.16%), Bamenda I (52.38%) and Widikum (50%).
- **right to participation:** Widikum (88.89%), Bamenda City Council (77.78%) and Ndop (77.78%).
- **right to information:** Widikum (94.44%), Mbengwi (72.73%) and Bamenda City Council (66.67%).
- **right to consent:** Njinikom (80%), Ako (34.55%) and Ndop (33.33%).
- **rights to work:** Njinikom (100%), Wum (60.30%) and Ndop (50%).
- **right to social security:** Njinikom (86.67%), Ndop (55.56%) and Mbengwi (52.73%).
- **right to housing:** Njinikom (60%), Ako (32.73%) and Ndop (27.78%).

From the foregoing, we could conclude that Njinikom, Widikum, and Ndop are among councils most indexed for non-respect of rights and freedoms.

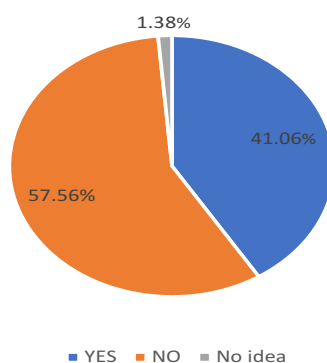
Question: As a council worker, have you noticed any discriminatory practices in your council? If yes, what form of discrimination?

Council	YES	NO	No idea	Total	Council	YES	NO	No idea
Bamenda I	25	10	0	35	Bamenda I	71.43	28.57	0.00
Bamenda III	1	25	0	26	Bamenda III	3.85	96.15	0.00
Fundong	11	17	0	28	Fundong	39.29	60.71	0.00
Elak	21	10	0	31	Elak	67.74	32.26	0.00
Kumbo	8	18	0	26	Kumbo	30.77	69.23	0.00
Ako	4	20	0	24	Ako	16.67	83.33	0.00
Misaje	5	16	0	21	Misaje	23.81	76.19	0.00
Ndu	3	28	2	33	Ndu	9.09	84.85	6.06
Nwa	22	33	0	55	Nwa	40.00	60.00	0.00
Benakuma	21	22	0	43	Benakuma	48.84	51.16	0.00
Wum	15	9	0	24	Wum	62.50	37.50	0.00
Andek	6	20	3	29	Andek	20.69	68.97	10.34
Mbengwi	12	17	0	29	Mbengwi	41.38	58.62	0.00
Njikwa	15	20	2	37	Njikwa	40.54	54.05	5.41
Babessi	19	17	0	36	Babessi	52.78	47.22	0.00
Ndop	21	11	0	32	Ndop	65.63	34.38	0.00
Total	209	293	7	509	Total	41.06	57.56	1.38

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Existence of discriminatory practices in councils



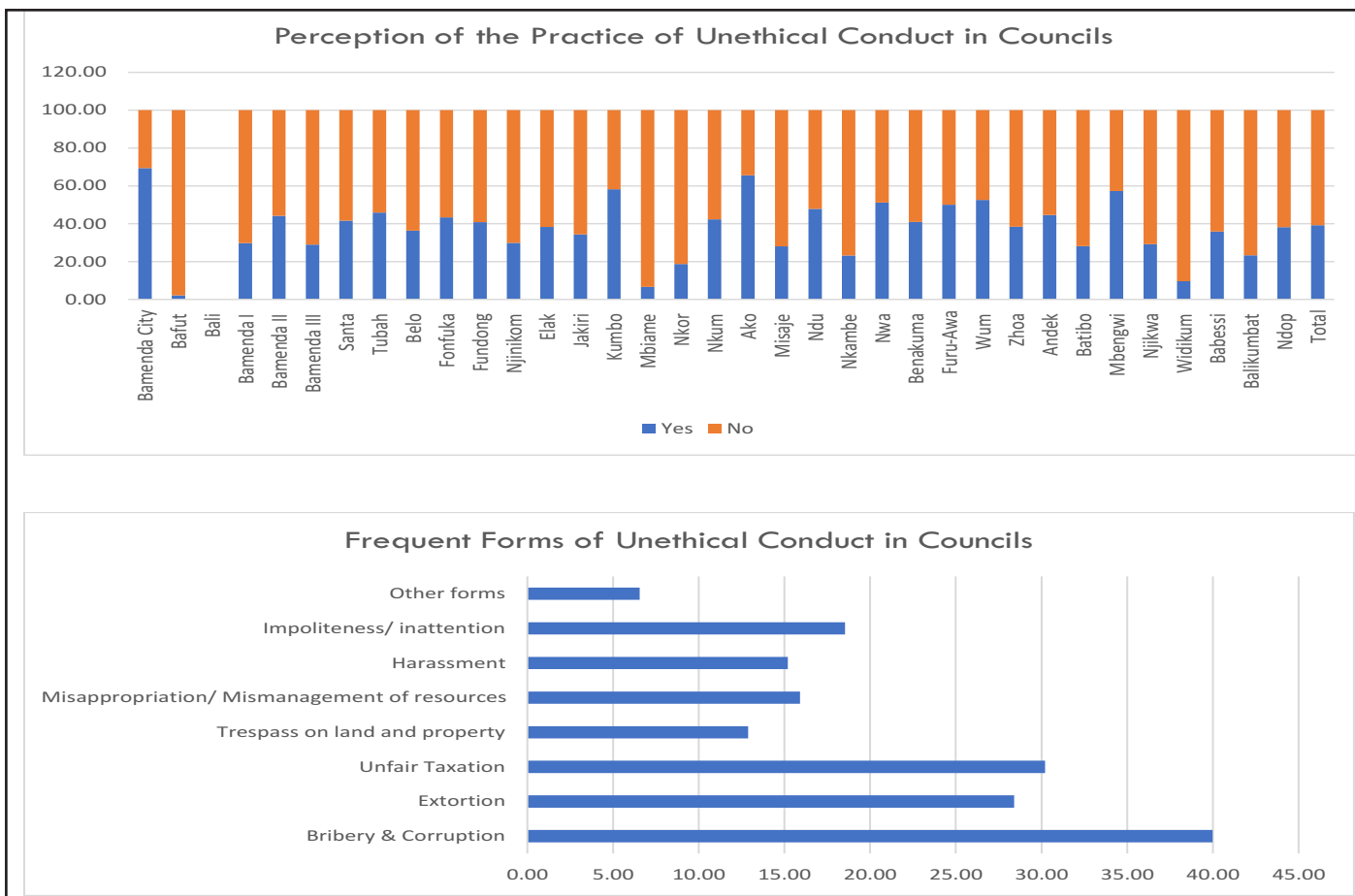
Some council workers (41.06%) who responded to the perception survey said they have noticed some form of discriminatory practices perpetrated by their councils. Such discriminatory practices included favouritism among workers; the payment of allowances to some workers and not to others; discrimination in the advancement of workers; discrimination in granting leave and paying emoluments; discrimination in the payment of workers' salaries; tribalism and exclusion. Workers perceived that discriminatory practices were rife in Bamenda I (71.43%), Elak (67.74%), and Ndop (65.63%).

b) Enforcement of Ethical Conduct

Question: Have you, or someone you know, been a victim of unethical conduct by a worker of a regional or local authority?

Council	Yes	No	FREQUENT FORMS OF UNETHICAL CONDUCT IN COUNCILS							
			Bribery & Corruption	Extortion	Unfair Taxation	Trespass on land and property	Misappropriation/ Mismanagement of resources	Harassment	Impoliteness / inattention	Other forms
Bamenda City	69.4	30.7	58.1	20.9	30.2	4.7	25.6	24.4	9.3	1.2
Bafut	2.1	97.9	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bali	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bamenda I	29.7	70.3	27.3	22.7	13.6	31.8	18.2	18.2	4.6	0.0
Bamenda II	44.1	55.9	63.3	40.0	13.3	26.7	20.0	3.3	20.0	0.0
Bamenda III	28.9	71.1	54.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.2	0.0
Santa	41.7	58.3	26.7	13.3	40.0	13.3	6.7	6.7	26.7	13.3
Tubah	46.0	54.1	50.0	17.7	44.1	5.9	5.9	20.6	17.7	2.9
Belo	36.4	63.6	42.9	53.6	35.7	14.3	14.3	35.7	25.0	7.1
Fonfuka	43.4	56.6	47.8	21.7	17.4	8.7	30.4	8.7	21.7	0.0
Fundong	40.9	59.2	6.9	6.9	20.7	6.9	20.7	0.0	24.1	13.8
Njinikom	29.9	70.2	70.0	45.0	10.0	25.0	60.0	40.0	35.0	10.0
Elak	38.4	61.6	25.0	10.7	57.1	7.1	3.6	0.0	35.7	17.9
Jakiri	34.4	65.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kumbo	58.2	41.8	33.3	53.9	46.2	2.6	2.6	23.1	25.6	10.3
Mbiame	6.7	93.3	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nkor	18.8	81.3	11.1	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	0.0
Nkum	42.4	57.7	63.9	2.8	11.1	2.8	8.3	11.1	19.4	0.0
Ako	65.6	34.4	57.1	36.5	82.5	19.1	9.5	52.4	25.4	0.0
Misaje	28.1	72.0	43.5	26.1	13.0	0.0	39.1	17.4	26.1	21.7
Ndu	47.9	52.1	21.7	15.2	26.1	30.4	10.9	10.9	17.4	0.0
Nkambe	23.2	76.8	5.3	31.6	15.8	21.1	10.5	0.0	10.5	15.8
Nwa	51.3	48.8	19.5	17.1	24.4	24.4	12.2	22.0	36.6	9.8
Benakuma	41.0	59.0	19.5	48.8	56.1	4.9	17.1	4.9	12.2	7.3
Furu-Awa	50.0	50.0	31.8	4.6	36.4	45.5	22.7	40.9	40.9	4.6
Wum	52.5	47.5	85.5	58.1	38.7	4.8	9.7	3.2	0.0	4.8
Zhoa	38.5	61.5	35.0	15.0	10.0	10.0	45.0	5.0	15.0	5.0
Andek	44.6	55.4	34.5	41.4	31.0	37.9	34.5	27.6	20.7	3.5
Batibo	28.2	71.8	40.0	40.0	10.0	5.0	20.0	0.0	25.0	0.0
Mbengwi	57.3	42.7	0.0	21.8	9.1	12.7	0.0	0.0	14.6	40.0
Njikwa	29.2	70.8	42.9	42.9	14.3	7.1	21.4	0.0	28.6	0.0
Widikum	9.6	90.4	25.0	25.0	12.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	25.0	12.5
Babessi	35.9	64.1	51.4	27.0	35.1	8.1	24.3	8.1	2.7	0.0
Balikumbat	23.3	76.7	42.9	14.3	28.6	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ndop	38.2	61.8	61.9	57.1	57.1	23.8	33.3	38.1	23.8	0.0
Total	39.2	60.8	40.0	28.4	30.2	12.9	15.9	15.2	18.5	6.6

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Respondents were questioned on issues of unethical practices in councils for which they had to respond “YES” or “NO”. Of the number of respondents who answered the question concerning unethical behaviour in councils, 39.20% responded “YES” while 60.80 % said “NO”. Of those who answered “yes”,

- 38.98% affirmed the existence of bribery and corruption,
- 28.40% on extortion,
- 30.21% regarding unfair taxation,
- 12.89% on trespass to land/property,
- 15.91% on misappropriation/mismanagement of resources,
- 15.21% on harassment,
- 18.53% on impoliteness/inattention, and
- 6.55% in favour of other forms of unethical practices by council workers.

Regarding the individual ranking of councils, the most indexed for the above-cited forms of discrimination is as follows:

- **bribery and corruption:** Wum (85.48%), Njinikom (70%), and Bamenda II (63.33%),
- **extortion:** Wum (58.06%), Ndop (57.14%), and Kumbo (53.85%),
- **unfair taxation:** Ako (82.54%), Elak (57.14%), and Ndop (57.14%),
- **trespass to land/property:** Furu-Awa (45.45%), Andek (37.93%) and Bamenda I (31.82%),
- **misappropriation/mismanagement of resources:** Njinikom (60%), Zhoa (45%) and Misaje (39.13%),
- **harassment by council workers:** Ako (52.38%), Furu-Awa (40.91%), and Njinikom (40%),
- **impoliteness/inattention:** Nkor (44.44%), Furu-Awa (40.91%) and Nwa (36.56%),

Looking at other forms of unethical practices, Mbengwi was perceived to lead with 40% followed by Misaje and Elak having 21.74% and 17.86% respectively.

It could be read from the statistics that unethical conduct manifests in councils in various

ways. Councils appear to be outsmarting each other in championing one form of ethical misconduct over the other. Whereas some councils take the cake in bribery and corruption, others hit rock bottom in low quality service delivery.

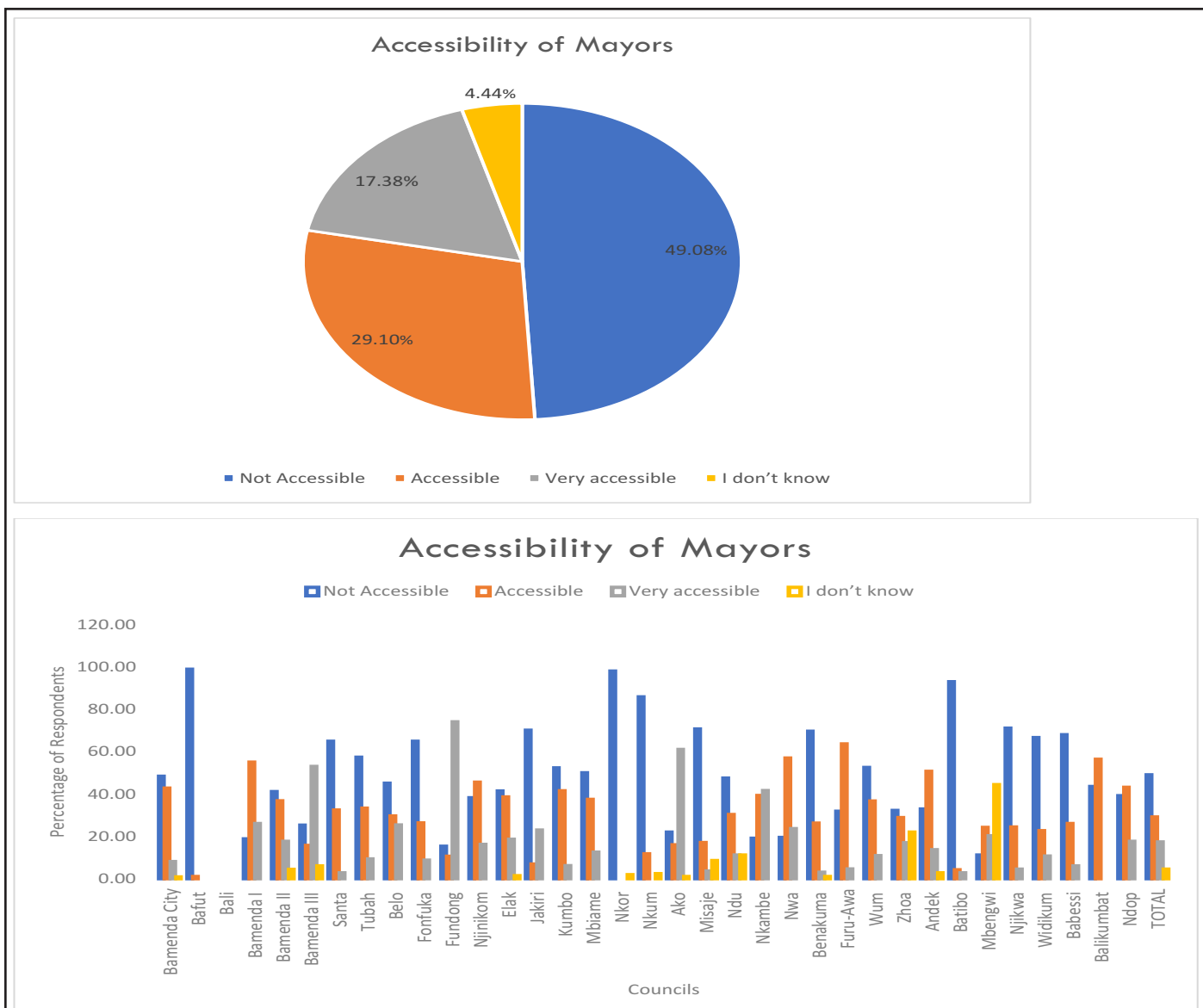
c) Accessibility of Mayors to the population

Question: *How accessible is your mayor to the population?*

The question on the accessibility of mayors sought to know if mayors are not only physically accessible but available and reachable to their populations. From our survey, we found out that some mayors were physically present but unreachable to their population, notably those of Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda City councils. On the other hand, some were said to be out of their council areas for undetermined periods, and are reportedly unavailable and unreachable to their citizens.

Council	Not Accessible	Accessible	Very accessible	I don't know	Council	Not Accessible	Accessible	Very accessible	I don't know
Bamenda City	60	53	10	1	Bamenda City	48.39	42.74	8.06	0.81
Bafut	95	1	0	0	Bafut	98.96	1.04	0.00	0.00
Bali	0	0	0	0	Bali	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	13	38	18	0	Bamenda I	18.84	55.07	26.09	0.00
Bamenda II	28	25	12	3	Bamenda II	41.18	36.76	17.65	4.41
Bamenda III	21	13	44	5	Bamenda III	25.30	15.66	53.01	6.02
Santa	24	12	1	0	Santa	64.86	32.43	2.70	0.00
Tubah	43	25	7	0	Tubah	57.33	33.33	9.33	0.00
Belo	32	21	18	0	Belo	45.07	29.58	25.35	0.00
Fonfuka	37	15	5	0	Fonfuka	64.91	26.32	8.77	0.00
Fundong	13	9	63	0	Fundong	15.29	10.59	74.12	0.00
Njinikom	26	31	11	0	Njinikom	38.24	45.59	16.18	0.00
Elak	29	27	13	1	Elak	41.43	38.57	18.57	1.43
Jakiri	61	6	20	0	Jakiri	70.11	6.90	22.99	0.00
Kumbo	34	27	4	0	Kumbo	52.31	41.54	6.15	0.00
Mbiame	8	6	2	0	Mbiame	50.00	37.50	12.50	0.00
Nkor	51	0	0	1	Nkor	98.08	0.00	0.00	1.92
Nkum	73	10	0	2	Nkum	85.88	11.76	0.00	2.35
Ako	22	16	61	1	Ako	22.00	16.00	61.00	1.00
Misaje	58	14	3	7	Misaje	70.73	17.07	3.66	8.54
Ndu	47	30	11	11	Ndu	47.47	30.30	11.11	11.11
Nkambe	17	35	37	0	Nkambe	19.10	39.33	41.57	0.00
Nwa	14	41	17	0	Nwa	19.44	56.94	23.61	0.00
Benakuma	69	26	3	1	Benakuma	69.70	26.26	3.03	1.01
Furu-Awa	14	28	2	0	Furu-Awa	31.82	63.64	4.55	0.00
Wum	63	44	13	0	Wum	52.50	36.67	10.83	0.00
Zhoa	19	17	10	13	Zhoa	32.20	28.81	16.95	22.03
Andek	24	37	10	2	Andek	32.88	50.68	13.70	2.74
Batibo	67	3	2	0	Batibo	93.06	4.17	2.78	0.00
Mbengwi	17	37	31	68	Mbengwi	11.11	24.18	20.26	44.44
Njikwa	32	11	2	0	Njikwa	71.11	24.44	4.44	0.00
Widikum	56	19	9	0	Widikum	66.67	22.62	10.71	0.00
Babessi	68	26	6	0	Babessi	68.00	26.00	6.00	0.00
Balikumbat	27	35	0	0	Balikumbat	43.55	56.45	0.00	0.00
Ndop	20	22	9	0	Ndop	39.22	43.14	17.65	0.00
TOTAL	1282	760	454	116	TOTAL	49.08	29.10	17.38	4.44

The figures in the table above are in percentages



According to respondents, 49.08% said their mayors were inaccessible while 29.10% said their mayors were accessible. A small percentage of 17.38% of mayors were said to be available, accessible and reachable. This percentage corresponds to the mayors who live and work in their council areas.

Answering the question “How accessible is your mayor to the population?”, 49.08% of respondents perceived their Mayors as “not accessible”, 29.10% perceived Mayors as “accessible” and 17.38% perceived Mayors as “very accessible”. In the 49.08% of councils that perceived their mayors to be inaccessible, Bafut (98.96%), Nkor (98.08%) and Batibo (93.06%) topped the chart largely because their mayors were not residing in the council areas and these councils are not functioning in their council areas. For respondents who perceived their mayors as accessible to the population we have Furu-awa (63.64%), Nwa (56.94%) and Balikumbat (56.54%) leading this trend. Follow-up on councils whose mayors were perceived as very accessible to the population were: Fundong (74.12%), Ako (61%) and Bamenda III (53.01%).

It is important to note that of the 35 mayors (Bamenda City Council inclusive) only 16 mayors making 45.71% of councils were rated as inaccessible, leaving a hopeful impression that over 50% of mayors were accessible.

Commenting on the accessibility of their mayors, 11.29% said they were present, welcoming, receptive and worked with the people, 80.65% said that their mayors were unavailable – out of office, unreachable, inaccessible, not seen and not in touch with the population largely due to the crises, while 5.38% commented that council offices were not functional and 2.69% said that they did not know their mayors.

d) Citizens' Participation in Council Activities

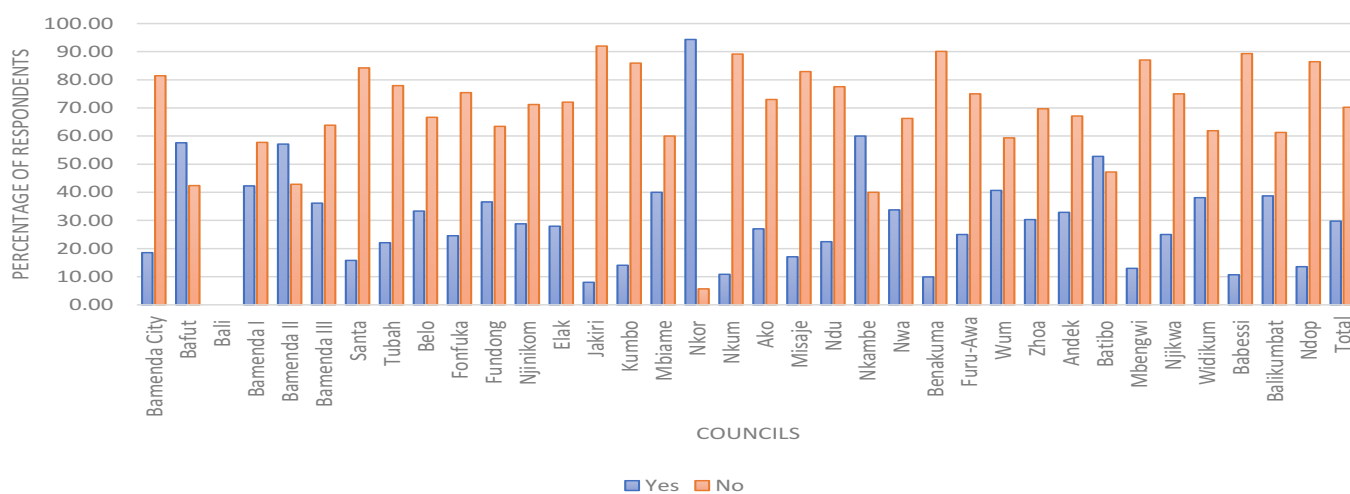
Respondents also assessed citizens' participation in council activities in the areas of elections and decision-making, project conception, implementation and evaluation, elaboration of council development plans and budgets amongst others.

Question: Are you or the population consulted by the council before taking decisions?
Table represents percentages of YES as against NO responses.

Council	Yes	No
Bamenda City	18.55	81.45
Bafut	57.61	42.39
Bali	0	0
Bamenda I	42.25	57.75
Bamenda II	57.14	42.86
Bamenda III	36.14	63.86
Santa	15.79	84.21
Tubah	22.08	77.92
Belo	33.33	66.67
Fonfuka	24.56	75.44
Fundong	36.56	63.44
Njinikom	28.79	71.21
Elak	27.94	72.06
Jakiri	8	92
Kumbo	14.06	85.94
Mbiame	40	60
Nkor	94.34	5.66

Nkum	10.84	89.16
Ako	27	73
Misaje	17.07	82.93
Ndu	22.45	77.55
Nkambe	60	40
Nwa	33.73	66.27
Benakuma	9.9	90.1
Furu-Awa	25	75
Wum	40.68	59.32
Zhoa	30.3	69.7
Andek	32.88	67.12
Batibo	52.78	47.22
Mbengwi	12.96	87.04
Njikwa	25	75
Widikum	38.1	61.9
Babessi	10.68	89.32
Balikumbat	38.71	61.29
Ndop	13.56	86.44
Total	29.76	70.24

Consultation of the Population in Council Decision-Making Processes



Responding to the question “Are you or the population consulted by the council before taking decisions?”, 29.76% of the respondents answered “YES” and 70.24% answered “NO”. Among those who affirmed that their councils consulted them before taking decisions were Nkor (94.34%), Nkambe (60%) and Bafut (57%). Contrarily, respondents of Jakiri (92%), Benakuma (90.10%) and Babessi (89.32%) held the perception that their councils did not sufficiently consult the population before taking decisions.

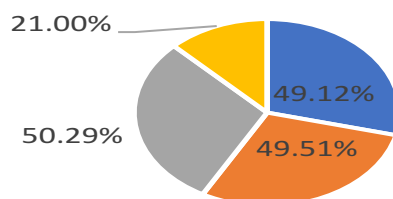
Question: Do the following categories of persons participate in council activities?

This question sought to know from the population whether or not women, persons with disabilities, youths and persons living in distant places did participate in council activities.

Council	Yes	No	I don't know	CATEGORIES			
				Women	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Persons in distant places/remote rural communities
Bamenda City	79.03	20.16	0.81	58.16	14.29	67.35	14.29
Bafut	88.75	11.25	0.00	64.79	57.75	85.92	32.39
Bali	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bamenda I	78.79	13.64	7.58	50.00	36.54	71.15	28.85
Bamenda II	48.53	51.47	0.00	57.58	54.55	66.67	39.39
Bamenda III	75.90	24.10	0.00	66.67	53.97	71.43	14.29
Santa	61.76	35.29	2.94	76.19	66.67	85.71	71.43
Tubah	70.59	29.41	0.00	66.67	35.42	66.67	41.67
Belo	63.38	36.62	0.00	51.11	57.78	71.11	55.56
Fonfuka	35.85	64.15	0.00	47.37	115.79	63.16	57.89
Fundong	67.02	17.02	15.96	55.56	14.29	19.05	11.11
Njinikom	50.00	34.29	15.71	34.29	57.14	31.43	11.43
Elak	79.10	20.90	0.00	49.06	37.74	43.40	20.75
Jakiri	50.00	50.00	0.00	29.27	14.63	41.46	17.07
Kumbo	53.03	34.85	12.12	48.57	57.14	60.00	37.14
Mbiame	66.67	20.00	13.33	40.00	40.00	70.00	40.00
Nkor	78.69	11.48	9.84	72.92	20.83	95.83	10.42
Nkum	47.06	52.94	0.00	22.50	55.00	30.00	27.50
Ako	35.06	57.14	7.79	40.74	40.74	74.07	29.63
Misaje	45.67	14.17	40.16	58.62	87.93	29.31	10.34
Ndu	56.60	20.75	22.64	36.67	75.00	13.33	18.33
Nkambe	61.61	9.82	28.57	56.52	66.67	52.17	0.00
Nwa	48.39	36.56	15.05	68.89	64.44	73.33	0.00
Benakuma	36.72	38.28	25.00	76.60	72.34	10.64	6.38
Furu-Awa	43.48	21.74	34.78	23.33	86.67	30.00	0.00
Wum	53.70	19.14	27.16	22.99	57.47	5.75	31.03
Zhoa	36.54	55.77	7.69	21.05	26.32	21.05	78.95
Andek	56.32	19.54	24.14	40.82	42.86	28.57	14.29
Batibo	26.97	53.93	19.10	16.67	25.00	70.83	0.00
Mbengwi	48.31	43.82	7.87	53.49	69.77	55.81	16.28
Njikwa	35.00	38.33	26.67	38.10	95.24	80.95	0.00
Widikum	41.98	54.32	3.70	17.65	50.00	50.00	0.00
Babessi	43.09	55.28	1.63	71.70	43.40	88.68	47.17
Balikumbat	59.65	35.09	5.26	35.29	41.18	26.47	17.65
Ndop	71.60	7.41	20.99	31.03	25.86	25.86	0.00
Total	55.14	31.69	13.17	49.12	49.51	50.29	21.00

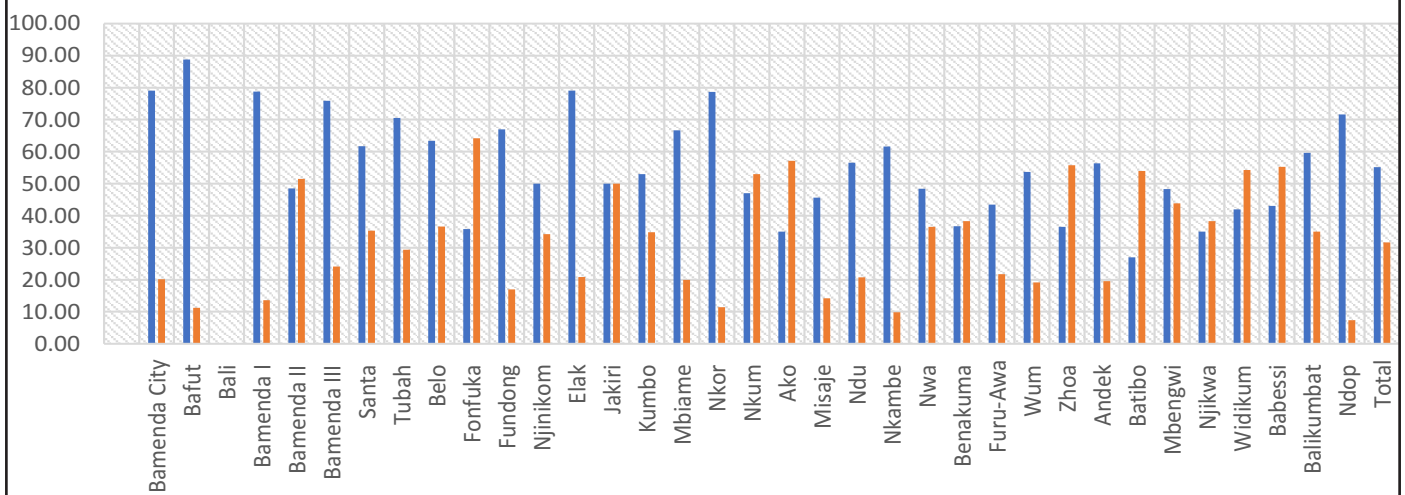
The figures in the table above are in percentages

Participation in Council Activities by Vulnerable Persons



- Women
- Persons with disabilities
- Youth
- Persons in distant places/remote rural communities

Participation of the Population in Council Activities



Out of a total of 2780 respondents to the question if they participate in council activities 55.14% answered “YES”, while 31.69% said “No”, and 13.17% provided the response, “I don’t know”. Amongst councils that distinguished themselves for high participation of the population were Bafut (88.75%), Elak (79.10%), Bamenda City Council (79.03%), Bamenda I (78.79%), and Nkor (78.69%). However, 13.17% of participants declared they knew nothing about the participation of the population in council activities amongst which were respondents of Misaje (40.16%), Furu-Awa (34.78%), Wum (27.16%) and Njikwa (26.67%). The implication is that, either these persons were not properly informed of council activities or they did not know that their participation in such activities is of right.

Regarding participation in council activities by gender, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator sought to know whether women, youth, and people living in remote communities participated in Council activities. The participation of youths was reported by 50.29% of respondents, persons with disabilities 49.51 %, women 49.12% and persons in distant/remote communities constituted 21.00%. High participation of women were reported in Benakuma (76.60%), Santa Council (76.19%), Nkor (72.92%), whereas high participation of persons with disabilities were reported in Njikwa (95.24%), Misaje (87.93%), Furu-Awa (87.67%), Ndu (75.00%); and higher participation of youths reported in Nkor (95.83%), Babessi (88.68%), Bafut (85.92%), Santa (85.71%) and Njikwa (80.95%). These councils rank amongst those privileging the engagement of youths through jobs and community work.

Regarding the generally low (21%) participation of persons in distant/remote communities in the affairs of their councils, respondents reported some encouraging values in Zhoa (78.95%), Fonfuka (57.89%) and Belo (55.56%) participation. Respondents did not report any cases of participation by persons living in distant communities in eight councils. It could be concluded that, persons in remote communities remain very distant from mainstream council action in many localities.

On the other hand, council executives said the population were involved in the identification and monitoring of council projects. They are invited for town hall meetings where they express their worries. Mayors and their deputies say the population also participate in varied facets of the development of their municipalities through the contribution of ideas, labour and collaboration.

Question: What aspects of the legislation governing council work would you like changed or amended?

Mayors and their deputies who participated in the perception survey made the following proposal to improve council functioning:

- Duties of the deputy mayor should be defined and not left at the discretion of the mayor.

As such, the status of mayor and deputies of regional and local councils should be revisited.

- Share the official 15% of the state budget to councils.
- Subventions to council should be provided at the beginning of the year and not quarterly.
- the council should be given financial autonomy
- Supervisory authorities should be checked to ensure smooth functioning.
- Most documents from ministries should have English versions.
- The number of female elective positions should be increased
- The council should be given free hand to manage their affairs.
- Allowances should be reviewed.
- Put in place internal rules and regulation for councils.
- State subvention should be paid to the council accounts directly.
- Mayors should be part of the land consultative board.
- The salary of council workers should be paid directly by the state.
- There should be regular financial controls for smooth running of councils.

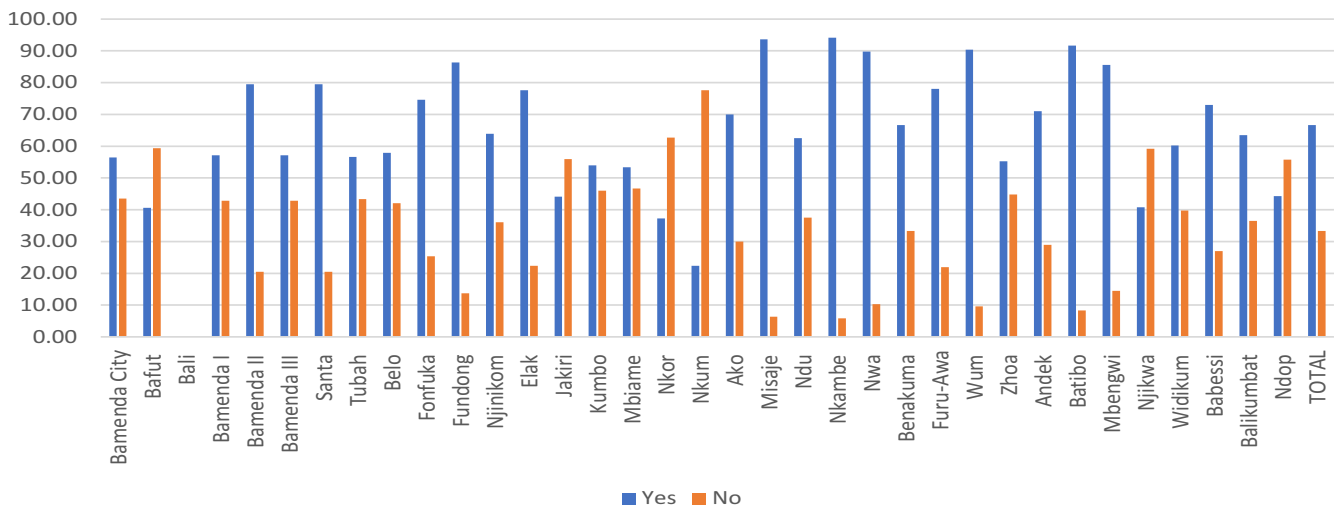
Question: Do you support council activities? If yes, how? If no, why?

Respondents were questioned if they support council activities and how. If not, why do they not support council activities.

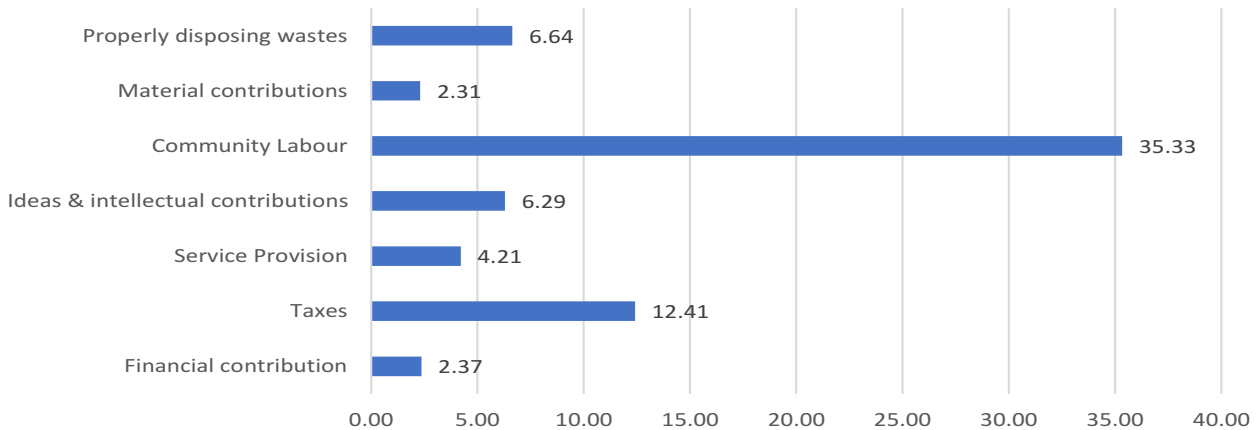
Council	Yes	No	IF YES, HOW?							IF NO, WHY?		
			Financial contribution	Taxes	Service Provision	Ideas & intellectual contributions	Community Labour	Material contributions	Properly disposing wastes	Security concerns	Not interested	Lack of information
Bamenda City	56.45	43.55	4.29	0	10	1.43	34.29	1.43	5.71	0	0	51.85
Bafut	40.63	59.38	0.00	0	2.56	2.56	89.74	0.00	0.00	0	98.25	0.00
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	57.14	42.86	15.00	5	25.00	0.00	47.50	12.50	7.50	0	0.00	0.00
Bamenda II	79.49	20.51	0.00	45.16	0.00	4.84	35.48	0.00	0.00	31.25	12.50	37.50
Bamenda III	57.14	42.86	15.00	5.00	25.00	20.00	47.50	12.50	7.50	0	0.00	0.00
Santa	79.49	20.51	0.00	45.16	4.84	35.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	43.75	0.00	37.50
Tubah	56.63	43.37	4.26	6.38	8.51	21.28	51.06	8.51	0.00	50	36.11	13.89
Belo	57.89	42.11	0.00	4.55	0.00	0.00	22.73	0.00	9.09	68.75	0.00	18.75
Fonfuka	74.63	25.37	2.00	26.00	18.00	2.00	12.00	0.00	30.00	70.59	0.00	52.94
Fundong	86.32	13.68	0.00	8.54	4.88	18.29	67.07	1.22	0.00	46.15	30.77	23.08
Njinikom	63.93	36.07	2.56	0.00	5.13	2.56	38.46	2.56	2.56	4.55	13.64	40.91
Elak	77.61	22.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jakiri	44.09	55.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kumbo	53.97	46.03	0.00	2.94	2.94	5.88	47.06	0.00	35.29	82.76	0.00	10.34
Mbiame	53.33	46.67	0.00	12.50	0.00	0.00	37.50	0.00	0.00	71.43	0.00	14.29
Nkor	37.29	62.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	63.64	0.00	13.64	21.62	0.00	0.00
Nkum	22.35	77.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.26	26.32	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00	4.55
Ako	70.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Misaje	93.67	6.33	0.00	75.68	0.00	0.00	66.22	1.35	12.16	60.00	60.00	0.00
Ndu	62.50	37.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nkambe	94.19	5.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nwa	89.74	10.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Benakuma	66.67	33.33	0.00	7.81	7.81	1.56	18.75	0.00	17.19	0.00	0.00	3.13
Furu-Awa	78.05	21.95	3.13	6.25	3.13	9.38	53.13	15.63	37.50	55.56	11.11	0.00
Wum	90.40	9.60	0.88	0.88	0.88	2.65	61.95	0.00	26.55	0.00	50.00	41.67
Zhoa	55.22	44.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Andek	71.01	28.99	10.20	8.16	4.08	4.08	44.90	8.16	4.08	25.00	35.00	10.00
Batibo	91.67	8.33	1.52	0.00	0.00	12.12	87.88	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mbengwi	85.56	14.44	0.00	0.00	1.30	1.30	85.71	1.30	1.30	0.00	0.00	23.08
Njikwa	40.82	59.18	45.00	65.00	30.00	0.00	60.00	5.00	10.00	55.17	37.93	51.72
Widikum	60.24	39.76	6.00	0.00	6.00	46.00	0.00	8.00	8.00	0.00	6.06	90.91
Babessi	73.00	27.00	2.74	54.79	1.37	1.37	47.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Balikumbat	63.49	36.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50	2.50	0.00	0.00	8.70	4.35	21.74
Ndop	44.26	55.74	0.00	29.63	7.41	3.70	29.63	3.70	3.70	8.82	20.59	0.00
TOTAL	66.69	33.31	2.37	12.41	4.21	6.29	35.33	2.31	6.64	16.07	13.64	16.07

The figures in the table above are in percentages

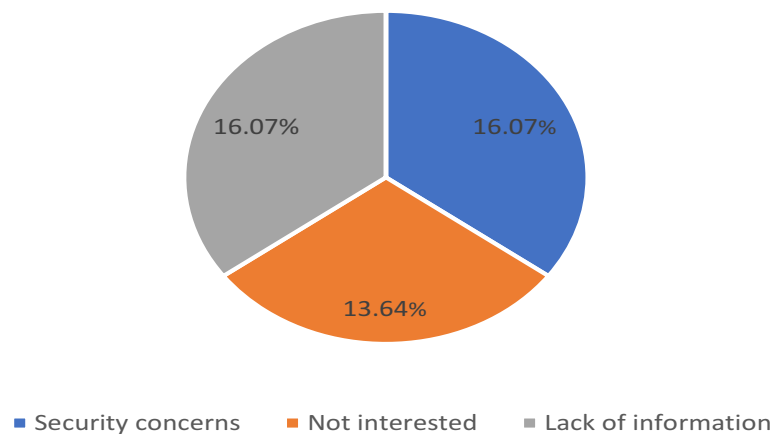
Citizens' support for council activities



If YES, How?



Reasons for citizens' limited support for council activities



Responding to the question, 66.69% of respondents answered “YES” affirming that they supported council activities, against 33.31% who responded that they did not support council activities.

- Of those who responded “YES”, 2.37% supported council activities through financial contribution, 12.41% through taxes, 4.21% through service provision, 6.29% through ideas and intellectual contribution, 35.33% through community labour, 2.31% through material contribution and 6.64% through proper waste management.
- Of those who responded that they did not support council activities, only 54% advanced

reasons which included: the prevailing security concerns (16.07%), not interested (13.64%) and lack of information (16.07%). A large number of respondents in Bafut (98.25%) and Misaje (60.00%) declared that they did not support their councils for lack of interest. Meanwhile, respondents of Widikum (90.91%), Bamenda City Council (51.85%) and Njikwa (51.72%) said they lack information about council affairs to know where council need support.

- Though the studies revealed that principal forms of support provided by the population to their councils are in the form of community labour (35.33%), taxes (12.41%) and intellectual contributions of ideas (6.29%), the situation of individual councils revealed stark disparities with some councils like Njikwa where support from the population in terms of financial contributions made 45.00%, and others received substantial support in terms of service provision and material contributions.

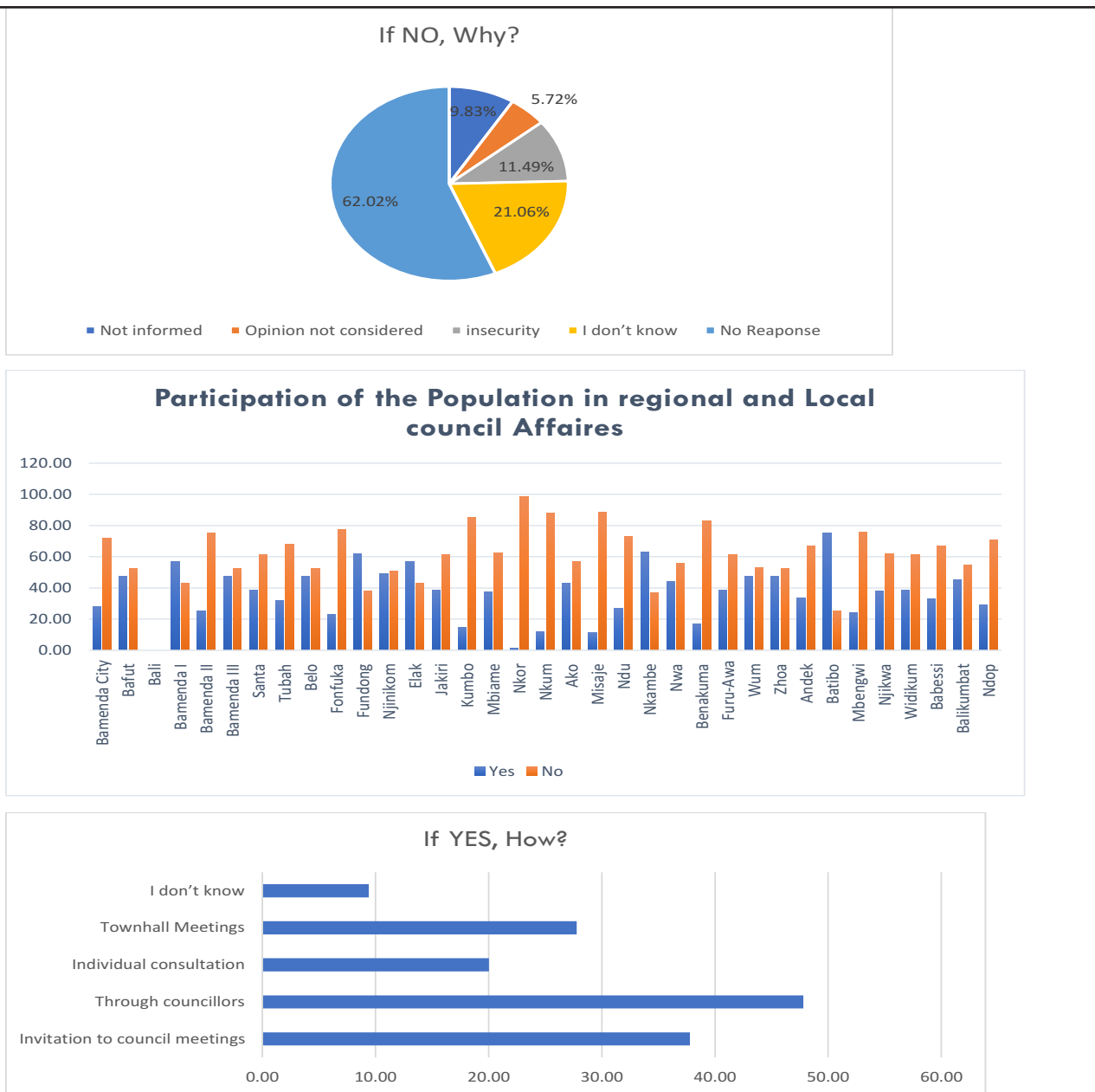
From the above analysis, one can conclude that citizens' support for council activities is very low.

Question: Does your council involve you or your community in the identification of council projects in your area?

This question seeks to find out if the population participated in council projects identification and conception. Are the people consulted with regards to their needs and priorities?

Council	IF YES, HOW?							IF NO, WHY?				No Response
	Yes	No	Invitation to council meetings	Through councillors	Individual consultation	Townhall Meetings	I don't know	Not informed	Opinion not considered	Insecurity	I don't know	
Bamenda City	28.23	71.77	25.71	45.71	8.57	20	42.86	0	0	0	0	
Bafut	47.42	52.58	4.35	89.13	4.35	4.35	0.00	0	0	76.47	0	
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bamenda I	56.94	43.06	58.54	31.71	21.95	41.46	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	
Bamenda II	25.00	75.00	41.18	47.06	35.29	29.41	0.00	13.73	23.53	13.73	0	
Bamenda III	47.56	52.44	20.51	64.10	0.00	15.38	0.00	60.47	23.26	16.28	2.33	
Santa	38.46	61.54	40.00	40.00	13.33	40.00	0.00	25.00	12.50	4.17	58.33	
Tubah	32.05	67.95	44.00	28.00	12.00	16.00	16.00	7.55	7.55	13.21	58.49	
Belo	47.44	52.56	43.24	59.46	48.65	32.43	0.00	14.63	12.20	9.76	46.34	
Fonfuka	22.81	77.19	46.15	53.85	7.69	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Fundong	62.11	37.89	25.42	38.98	6.78	11.86	16.95	33.33	16.67	11.11	38.89	
Njinikom	49.23	50.77	43.75	34.38	31.25	25.00	9.38	18.18	3.03	6.06	0.00	
Elak	57.14	42.86	35.00	45.00	15.00	32.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Jakiri	38.82	61.18	48.48	33.33	24.24	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Kumbo	14.71	85.29	30.00	40.00	40.00	50.00	0.00	15.52	3.45	32.76	48.28	
Mbiame	37.50	62.50	16.67	16.67	50.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	20.00	50.00	20.00	
Nkor	1.64	98.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.67	1.67	
Nkum	11.76	88.24	60.00	30.00	40.00	10.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	2.67	0.00	
Ako	43.00	57.00	18.60	23.26	30.23	27.91	48.84	33.33	24.56	5.26	0.00	
Misaje	11.54	88.46	44.44	55.56	22.22	22.22	44.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.80	
Ndu	27.08	72.92	15.38	19.23	0.00	11.54	15.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Nkambe	62.92	37.08	53.57	67.86	41.07	46.43	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Nwa	44.16	55.84	38.24	58.82	8.82	47.06	0.00	13.95	32.56	9.30	16.28	
Benakuma	17.00	83.00	41.18	58.82	29.41	23.53	5.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.05	
Furu-Awa	38.64	61.36	82.35	52.94	29.41	17.65	0.00	7.41	25.93	25.93	29.63	
Wum	47.20	52.80	45.76	49.15	11.86	49.15	20.34	10.61	7.58	42.42	33.33	
Zhoa	47.27	52.73	34.62	26.92	23.08	7.69	42.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Andek	33.33	66.67	15.38	26.92	26.92	7.69	7.69	19.23	7.69	5.77	3.85	
Batibo	75.00	25.00	14.81	61.11	0.00	42.59	0.00	0.00	11.11	22.22	0.00	
Mbengwi	23.96	76.04	39.13	43.48	13.04	60.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Njikwa	38.00	62.00	47.37	78.95	42.11	26.32	0.00	22.58	6.45	38.71	41.94	
Widikum	38.55	61.45	68.75	87.50	34.38	6.25	0.00	64.71	0.00	31.37	3.92	
Babessi	33.01	66.99	58.82	23.53	32.35	23.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Balikumbat	45.16	54.84	67.86	46.43	3.57	32.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Ndop	29.31	70.69	29.41	29.41	47.06	29.41	5.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL	37.57	62.43	37.79	47.80	20.02	27.78	9.40	9.83	5.72	11.49	10.94	62.02

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Regarding the question “Does your council involve you or your community in the identification of council projects in your area? If YES, how? If “No”, why?”, 37.57% of respondents, answered “YES” that they are involved in the identification of council projects against 62.43% of respondents who answered “NO”.

- Of those who responded “YES”, they were involved in the identification of council projects, 37.79% said they were involved in council projects through invitations to council meetings, 47.80% said they identified council projects through their councillors, 20.02% through individual consultations and 27.78% through town hall meetings organised by their councils. Amongst the councils with high levels of involvement in the identification of council projects were: Batibo (75%), Nkambe (62.92%) and Fundong 62.11%.
- Meanwhile of those who answered “NO”, to their involvement in the identification of council projects, the reasons advanced included: they were not informed (9.83%), opinion not considered (5.72%), and insecurity (11.49%). Top amongst councils respondents perceived as those with very low levels of involvement of their populations in the identification of projects were Nkor (1.64%), Misaje (11.54%), Nkum (11.76%), Kumbo (14.71%), and Benakuma (17.00%).

Regarding how they participated in project identification,

- 47.80% said through their councillors,
- 37.79% said through invitations to council meetings,
- 27.78% said through townhall meetings, and

- 20.02% said through direct consultation.

The individual ranking per council was as follows:

- Furu-Awa (82.35%), Bamenda I (58.54%), Balikumbat (67.86%) engaged the participation of their populations more through invitations to council meetings,
- Widikum (87.50%), Njikwa (78.95%), Nkambe (67.86%) top the list of councils where the population participated more through councillors,
- Mbiame (50%) and Ndop (47.06) amongst those who worked more through individual consultations,
- Mbengwi (60.00%), Wum (49.15%), Kumbo (50.00%), and Santa (40.00%) engaged the population more through the organisation of townhall meetings.

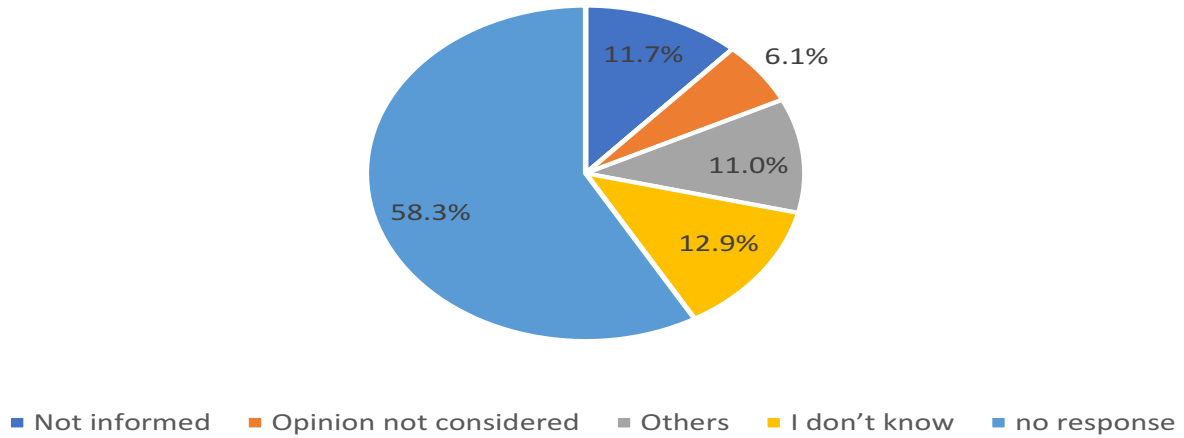
Overall, it could be said that the populations' engagement with councils is very low, largely due to the prevailing security situation which allowed possibilities for councils and mayors to sideline the people in deciding on projects concerning their welfare.

Question: Does your council involve you or your community in the implementation of council projects in your area?

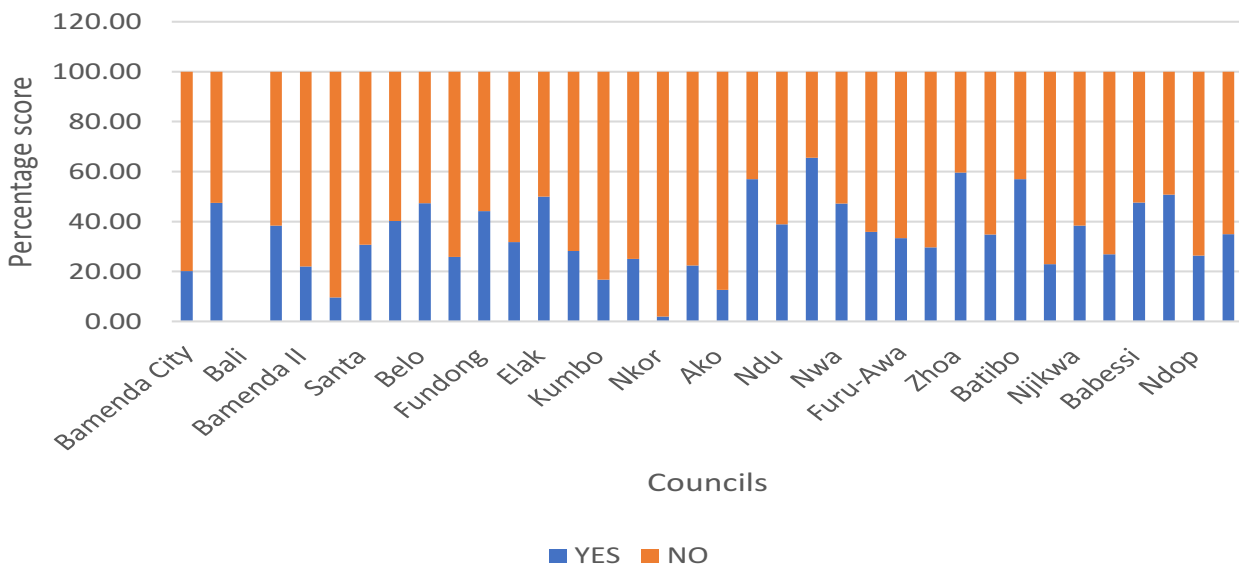
Councils			IF YES, HOW?					IF NO, WHY?				
	YES	NO	Contribution of ideas	Contribution of material	Fundraising	Provision of labour	Others	Not informed	Opinion not considered	Others	I don't know	no response
Bamenda City	20.2	79.8	32.0	0.0	48.0	80.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	
Bafut	47.5	52.5	48.9	48.9	0.0	29.8	2.1	0.0	0.0	3.9	1.9	
Bali	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Bamenda I	38.4	61.6	28.6	0.0	0.0	46.4	10.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Bamenda II	22.1	77.9	20.0	20.0	26.7	46.7	0.0	20.8	28.3	11.3	0.0	
Bamenda III	9.6	90.4	12.5	37.5	0.0	50.0	0.0	65.3	21.3	13.3	1.3	
Santa	30.8	69.2	58.3	8.3	8.3	50.0	8.3	29.6	0.0	14.8	55.6	
Tubah	40.3	59.7	32.3	6.5	16.1	51.6	25.8	4.4	0.0	21.7	76.1	
Belo	47.4	52.6	55.6	44.4	41.7	50.0	5.6	0.0	5.0	10.0	25.0	
Fonfuka	25.9	74.1	13.3	13.3	13.3	46.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	
Fundong	44.2	55.8	19.1	0.0	35.7	45.2	0.0	37.7	47.2	0.0	15.1	
Njinikom	31.8	68.3	60.0	45.0	30.0	75.0	40.0	9.3	4.7	4.7	0.0	
Elak	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	
Jakiri	28.3	71.7	38.5	11.5	15.4	69.2	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Kumbo	16.7	83.3	54.6	9.1	0.0	63.6	18.2	12.7	3.6	29.1	50.9	
Mbiame	25.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	58.3	25.0	
Nkor	2.0	98.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	6.0	
Nkum	22.4	77.7	31.6	31.6	0.0	68.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	
Ako	12.6	87.4	16.7	0.0	8.3	75.0	0.0	62.7	20.5	16.9	6.0	
Misaje	56.9	43.1	34.2	29.3	4.9	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.7	
Ndu	39.0	61.1	48.7	8.1	0.0	48.7	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Nkambe	65.5	34.5	56.4	38.2	23.6	69.1	14.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	
Nwa	47.2	52.8	32.4	32.4	8.8	73.5	8.8	0.0	13.2	7.9	13.2	
Benakuma	35.9	64.2	10.5	15.8	10.5	29.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.2	
Furu-Awa	33.3	66.7	71.4	35.7	14.3	71.4	7.1	10.7	14.3	28.6	32.1	
Wum	29.6	70.4	48.7	8.1	10.8	78.4	10.8	4.6	5.7	42.1	39.8	
Zhoa	59.6	40.4	19.4	9.7	9.7	38.7	9.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	81.0	
Andek	34.9	65.2	60.9	34.8	30.4	26.1	13.0	34.9	9.3	7.0	16.3	
Batibo	56.9	43.1	34.2	29.3	4.9	78.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Mbengwi	22.9	77.1	81.8	0.0	0.0	77.3	77.3	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Njikwa	38.3	61.7	72.2	11.1	5.6	61.1	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Widikum	26.8	73.2	77.3	36.4	18.2	4.6	0.0	31.7	3.3	71.7	3.3	
Babessi	47.6	52.4	36.7	20.4	16.3	73.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Balikumbat	50.8	49.2	31.3	21.9	9.4	6.3	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	
Ndop	26.3	73.7	46.7	6.7	20.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
TOTAL	34.9	65.1	39.2	20.3	13.9	54.0	7.7	11.7	6.1	11.0	12.9	58.3

The figures in the table above are in percentages

Reasons for NO Participation



Council Involvement of the Population in Projects



Following up on this question, respondents also pronounced on the involvement of the population in the planning, implementation, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of council projects in their communities.

Responding to the question, “Does your council involve you or your community in the implementation of council projects in your area?”, 34.92% of the respondents were affirmative while 65.08% were negative. Only six councils registered a score above average for high participation of their populations. The majority of councils did not involve their population in the implementation of council projects with the following councils rated very high for the non-involvement of the population namely: Nkor (98.04%), Bamenda III (90.25%), Ako (87.37%), and the Bamenda City Council (79.84%). About 80% of those who agreed that the Bamenda City Council involved the population in projects said the involvement was in terms of provision of labour.

Interpretation: The majority of councils managed projects in the most obscure manner. There was no transparency in council project management, the population was left out in most cases as they did not participate in deciding which projects were necessary for the communities and how they were implemented. Consequently, there was little accountability to the population for the many abandoned and uncompleted projects in the communities.

Explaining how they were involved in council projects, 54.03% of respondents said it was through the provision of labour, contribution of ideas (39.15%), contribution of materials (20.25%), and fundraising (13.80%). Also, 7.72% of respondents cited other forms of involvement.

The 65.08% who said they were not involved in the implementation of council projects advanced the following reasons: lack of information (11.70%), their opinions were not considered (6.06%), with some (11.04%) citing security and other concerns.

The councils with high levels of citizens' involvement in the implementation of council projects were: Nkambe (65.48%), Zhoa (59.62%), Misaje (56.94%) and Batibo (56.94%). Contrarily, councils with low levels of involvement in the implementation of council projects were: Nkor (1.96%), Bamenda III (9.64%) and Ako (12.63%). Negative responses were dominant in Nkor (98.04%), Bamenda III (90.36%) and Ako (87.37%).

Regarding citizens' contribution of ideas to the implementation of council projects, Mbengwi (89.82%), Widikum (77.27%) and Njikwa (72.22%) occupied the top spots while Benakuma (10.53%), Bamenda III (12.50%) and Fonfuka (13.33%) still had much to be desired.

Respondents who said they involved themselves in the implementation of council projects through the contribution of materials were dominant in Bafut (48.94%), Njinikom (45%) and Belo (44.44%). Citizens' contribution of materials to the implementation of council projects was perceived to be very low in Tubah (6.45%), Ndop (6.67%), Ndu (8.11%) and Wum (8.11%).

Respondents also said they fundraised to support the implementation of council projects. This form of support was perceived in the Bamenda City Council (48%), Belo (41.67%), and Andek (30.43%). However, the ratings were low in Batibo (4.88%), Misaje (4.88%), and Njikwa (5.56%).

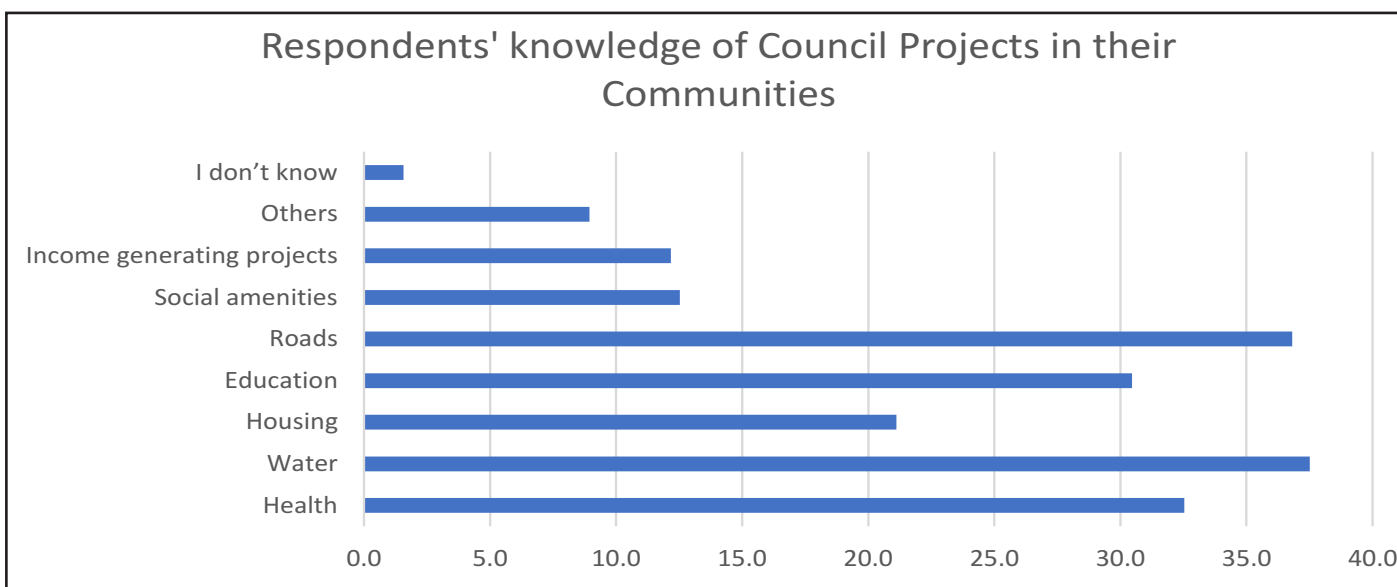
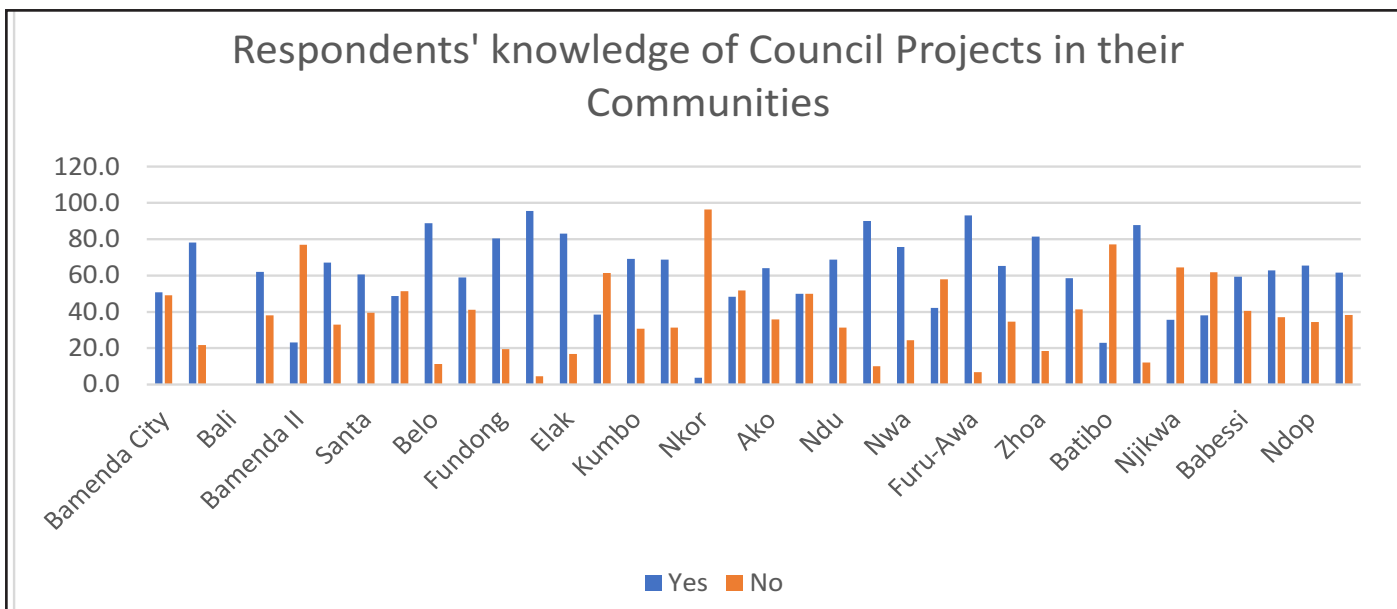
Support through the provision of labour was dominant in Misaje (100%), Bamenda City (80%) and Wum (78.38%). The ratings were however low in Widikum (4.55%), Balikumbat (6.25%) and Andek (26.09%).

Question: Do you know of any council development project carried out in your area in the last three years?

The question intended to sample the population's knowledge of council activities in their communities.

Council	Yes	No	Health	Water	Housing	Education	Roads	Social amenities	Income generating projects	Others	I don't know
Bamenda City	50.8	49.2	9.5	49.2	20.6	31.8	63.5	9.5	6.4	12.7	0.0
Bafut	78.2	21.8	36.7	76.0	5.1	2.5	20.3	0.0	0.0	13.9	0.0
Bali	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bamenda I	62.0	38.0	34.1	36.4	13.6	25.0	54.6	11.4	15.9	9.1	0.0
Bamenda II	23.1	76.9	20.0	26.7	26.7	26.7	6.7	60.0	13.3	0.0	3.0
Bamenda III	67.1	32.9	41.8	29.1	10.9	23.6	65.5	3.6	0.0	5.5	1.0
Santa	60.5	39.5	30.4	21.7	21.7	26.1	34.8	8.7	4.4	4.4	0.0
Tubah	48.7	51.3	21.6	27.0	16.2	29.7	29.7	18.9	35.1	18.9	0.0
Belo	88.8	11.3	40.9	50.7	28.2	47.9	53.5	25.4	15.5	15.5	0.0
Fonfuka	58.9	41.1	18.2	9.1	18.2	33.3	33.3	3.0	6.1	3.0	0.0
Fundong	80.5	19.5	11.3	19.4	24.2	9.7	16.1	4.8	9.7	4.8	21.0
Njinikom	95.5	4.5	26.6	50.0	18.8	42.2	50.0	9.4	7.8	0.0	2.0
Elak	83.1	16.9	32.2	35.6	15.3	23.7	50.9	11.9	1.7	11.9	0.0
Jakiri	38.5	61.5	18.9	21.6	5.4	24.3	29.7	21.6	16.2	18.9	0.0
Kumbo	69.2	30.8	6.7	17.8	15.6	20.0	37.8	11.1	22.2	37.8	0.0
Mbiame	68.8	31.3	27.3	36.4	27.3	63.6	45.5	0.0	18.2	9.1	0.0
Nkor	3.7	96.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nkum	48.2	51.8	19.5	19.5	2.4	39.0	43.9	4.9	24.4	0.0	0.0
Ako	64.1	35.9	62.7	42.4	32.2	30.5	35.6	15.3	8.5	13.6	8.0
Misaje	50.0	50.0	39.4	27.3	36.4	39.4	36.4	9.1	3.0	3.0	16.0
Ndu	68.8	31.3	30.3	63.6	25.8	40.9	39.4	21.2	10.6	10.6	0.0
Nkambe	90.0	10.0	63.0	65.4	42.0	44.4	50.6	32.1	30.9	17.3	2.0
Nwa	75.7	24.3	35.7	48.2	23.2	44.6	48.2	17.9	16.1	25.0	0.0
Benakuma	42.2	57.8	37.2	30.2	37.2	34.9	30.2	0.0	9.3	2.3	0.0
Furu-Awa	93.2	6.8	73.2	70.7	29.3	53.7	58.5	24.4	24.4	4.9	0.0
Wum	65.3	34.7	12.4	8.6	17.3	65.4	70.4	8.6	8.6	3.7	0.0
Zhoa	81.5	18.5	15.9	27.3	31.8	40.9	34.1	27.3	13.6	11.4	0.0
Andek	58.6	41.4	39.0	41.5	22.0	19.5	19.5	9.8	26.8	2.4	0.0
Batibo	22.9	77.1	50.0	37.5	12.5	6.3	6.3	12.5	0.0	0.0	2.0
Mbengwi	87.9	12.1	64.4	83.9	17.2	32.2	39.1	4.6	13.8	0.0	0.0
Njikwa	35.6	64.4	68.8	56.3	18.8	37.5	31.3	25.0	12.5	31.3	0.0
Widikum	38.1	61.9	59.4	46.9	25.0	25.0	25.0	6.3	0.0	9.4	0.0
Babessi	59.4	40.6	18.3	28.3	30.0	28.3	65.0	5.0	28.3	0.0	0.0
Balikumbat	62.9	37.1	33.3	38.5	38.5	33.3	33.3	10.3	2.6	12.8	0.0
Ndop	65.6	34.4	40.0	70.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	5.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
% Average	61.6	38.4	32.5	37.5	21.1	30.5	36.8	12.5	12.2	8.9	1.6

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Answering the question about knowledge of council development projects carried out in their communities in the last three years, 61.61% of respondents answered in affirmation while 38.39% responded “NO”. Leading councils whose population were aware of their development projects were Njinikom (95.52%), Nkambe (90%), Belo (88.75%), and Mbengwi (87.88%). Meanwhile, top amongst councils whose population were unaware of their development projects were Nkor (96.30%), Batibo (77.14%), and Bamenda II (76.92%).

Identifying the type of council development project carried out, 34.52% of respondents who answered “YES” pronounced on Health (34.52%), Water (42.58), Housing (22.34%), Education (32.74%), Roads (42.13%), Social amenities (12.50%), Income generating projects (13.01%) and other council development projects (9.52%).

In a general manner, councils focused over 90% of their attention to these areas of development, though in varied proportions. Aside the above key areas of attention for councils, 9.52% of respondents also attested to the existence of other projects in councils.

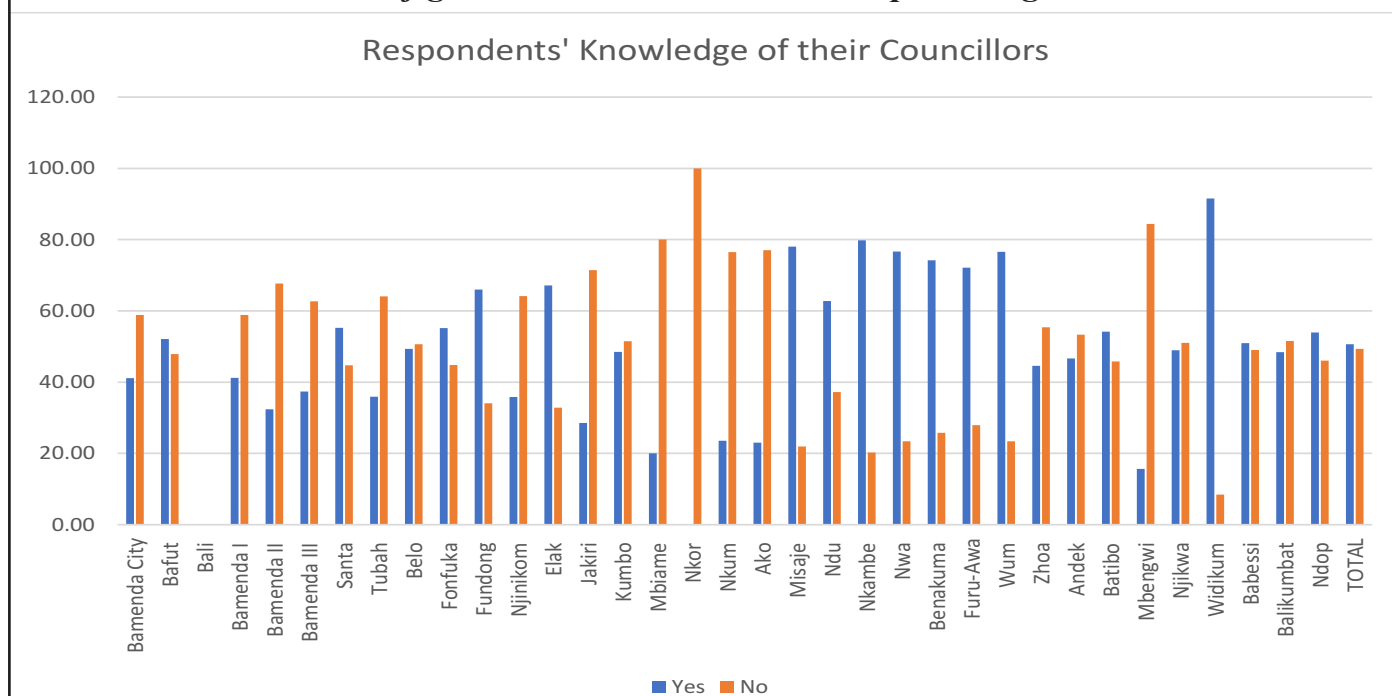
Question: Do you know your councillor?

Following the observation that many citizens do not know their councillors, hence did not know that they could contribute to council functioning through their councillors.

Council	Yes	No
Bamenda City	41.13	58.87
Bafut	52.08	47.92
Bali	0	0
Bamenda I	41.18	58.82
Bamenda II	32.35	67.65
Bamenda III	37.35	62.65
Santa	55.26	44.74
Tubah	35.9	64.1
Belo	49.37	50.63
Fonfuka	55.17	44.83
Fundong	65.96	34.04
Njinikom	35.82	64.18
Elak	67.14	32.86
Jakiri	28.57	71.43
Kumbo	48.53	51.47
Mbiame	20	80
Nkor	0	100
Nkum	23.53	76.47

Ako	23	77
Misaje	78.05	21.95
Ndu	62.77	37.23
Nkambe	79.76	20.24
Nwa	76.62	23.38
Benakuma	74.23	25.77
Furu-Awa	72.09	27.91
Wum	76.61	23.39
Zhoa	44.62	55.38
Andek	46.67	53.33
Batibo	54.17	45.83
Mbengwi	15.63	84.38
Njikwa	48.98	51.02
Widikum	91.57	8.43
Babessi	50.96	49.04
Balikumbat	48.44	51.56
Ndop	53.97	46.03
TOTAL	50.65	49.35

The figures in the table above are in percentages



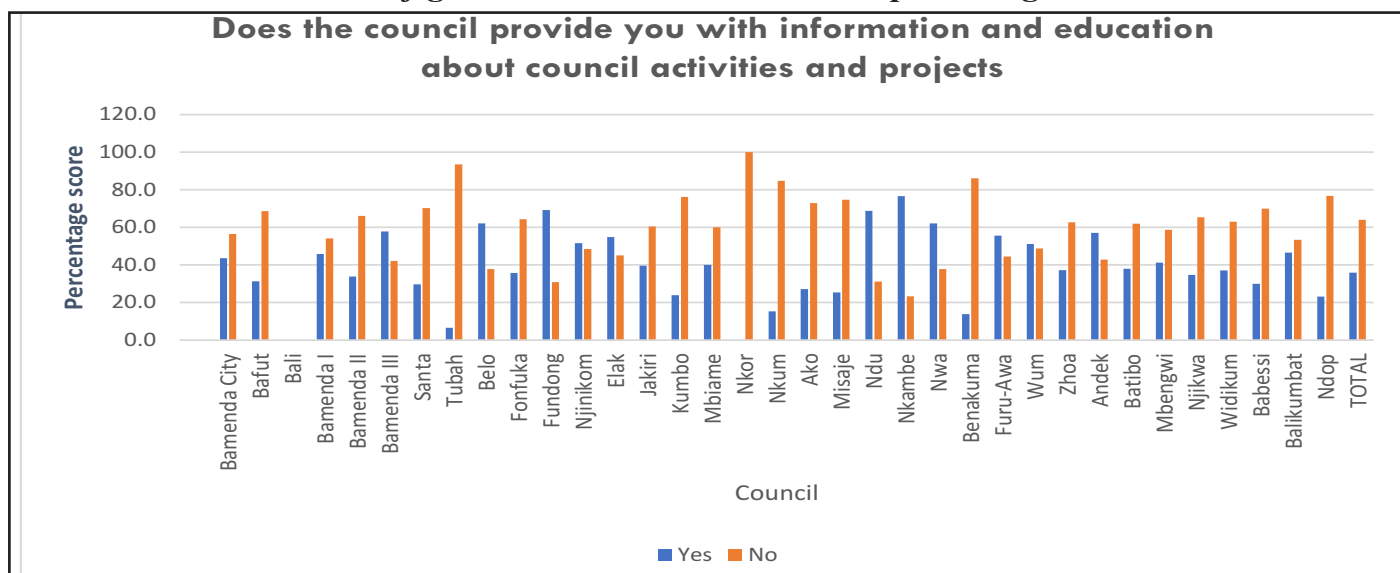
Responding to the question “Do you know your councillor?”, 50.65% of the respondents affirmed they know their councillors and 49.35% of respondents were negative. Amongst councils where respondents affirmed knowledge of their councillors were Widikum (91.57%), Nkambe (79.76%), Misaje (78.05%), Nwa (76.62 %), Benakuma (74.23%), Furu-Awa (72.09%) and Wum (76.61%). However, respondents in Nkor (100%), (Mbengwi (84.38%) and Mbiame (80%) Ako (77.00%), Nkum (76.47%), declared they did not know their councillors. The implication is that many councillors in these councils do not work with their communities and the citizens do not interact with their councillors and this limits their knowledge of council functioning and their participation in council affairs.

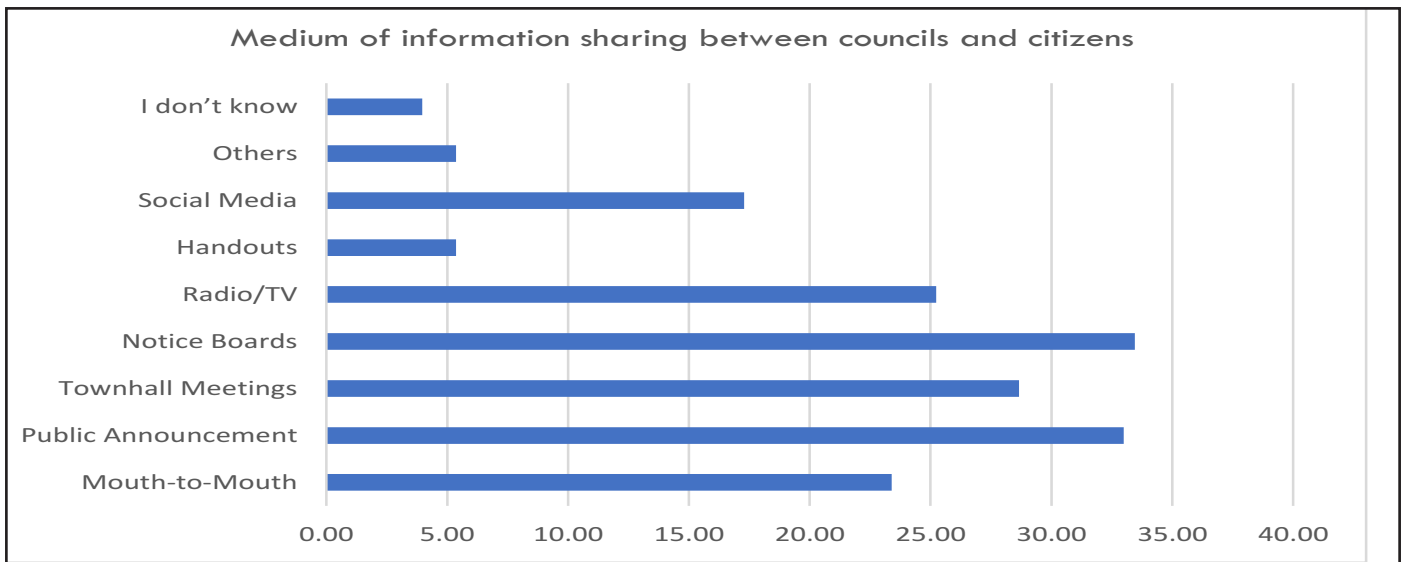
Question: Does the council provide you with information and education about council activities and projects?

This question sought to know if the population’s right to information was respected by councils.

Council	Yes	No	IF YES, BY WHAT MEANS?								I don't know
			Mouth-to-Mouth	Public Announcement	Townhall Meetings	Notice Boards	Radio /TV	Handouts	Social Media	Others	
Bamenda City	43.6	56.5	31.5	24.1	18.5	9.3	24.1	1.9	13.0	24.1	0.0
Bafut	31.3	68.7	9.7	25.8	0.0	0.0	67.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bali	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bamenda I	45.8	54.2	6.1	21.2	48.5	24.2	12.1	6.1	12.1	0.0	0.0
Bamenda II	33.8	66.2	17.4	39.1	43.5	43.5	43.5	26.1	8.7	0.0	0.0
Bamenda III	57.8	42.2	12.5	43.8	33.3	37.5	0.0	18.8	16.7	0.0	0.0
Santa	29.7	70.3	45.5	27.3	45.5	27.3	18.2	0.0	9.1	0.0	30.8
Tubah	6.5	93.5	32.4	29.4	20.6	32.4	26.5	8.8	8.8	2.9	0.0
Belo	62.2	37.8	26.1	41.3	39.1	26.1	21.7	10.9	82.6	0.0	0.0
Fonfuka	35.7	64.3	25.0	60.0	15.0	30.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fundong	69.2	30.9	6.2	27.7	47.7	40.0	46.2	16.9	40.0	0.0	3.5
Njinikom	51.6	48.4	24.2	39.4	42.4	24.2	3.0	3.0	9.1	0.0	9.7
Elak	54.9	45.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Jakiri	39.6	60.4	38.9	19.4	19.4	16.7	19.4	2.8	5.6	0.0	0.0
Kumbo	23.9	76.1	43.8	25.0	31.3	31.3	18.8	0.0	6.3	0.0	21.6
Mbiame	40.0	60.0	66.7	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Nkor	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.0
Nkum	15.3	84.7	53.9	15.4	7.7	38.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.8	0.0
Ako	27.1	72.9	37.9	51.7	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Misaje	25.4	74.7	38.9	38.9	16.7	50.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.8
Ndu	68.8	31.2	12.5	37.5	9.4	25.0	48.4	9.4	17.2	0.0	0.0
Nkambe	76.7	23.3	34.8	58.0	44.9	55.1	59.4	0.0	18.8	39.1	0.0
Nwa	62.2	37.8	6.5	30.4	41.3	73.9	60.9	13.0	21.7	0.0	21.4
Benakuma	13.9	86.1	64.3	7.1	7.1	14.3	7.1	0.0	14.3	14.3	0.0
Furu-Awa	55.6	44.4	56.0	68.0	36.0	48.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wum	51.2	48.8	6.4	17.5	30.2	73.0	3.2	3.2	1.6	4.8	0.0
Zhoa	37.3	62.7	9.1	18.2	27.3	31.8	4.6	0.0	9.1	0.0	16.2
Andek	57.1	42.9	30.0	37.5	15.0	42.5	42.5	5.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
Batibo	38.0	62.0	11.1	77.8	25.9	7.4	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mbengwi	41.2	58.8	10.0	12.5	65.0	37.5	27.5	2.5	12.5	0.0	0.0
Njikwa	34.7	65.3	17.7	64.7	41.2	64.7	29.4	0.0	17.7	23.5	0.0
Widikum	37.0	63.0	73.3	16.7	20.0	6.7	10.0	3.3	60.0	6.7	0.0
Babessi	30.0	70.0	16.7	33.3	13.3	30.0	30.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Balikumbat	46.6	53.5	18.5	22.2	33.3	59.3	22.2	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
Ndop	23.2	76.8	61.5	23.1	30.8	23.1	38.5	0.0	30.8	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	36.0	64.1	27.0	31.1	25.6	29.2	20.0	3.9	14.3	4.2	4.0

The figures in the table above are in percentages





Respondents were asked whether Councils provide them with information and education about council activities and projects. Out of a total of 2,979 persons who responded, 1,079 persons answered in the affirmative thus representing 36.23% while 1,899 answered in the negative thus representing 63.77%. From the minority of 36.23% who said councils provided them with information and education about council activities and projects, 33.46% stated they received information through notice boards, 32.99% through public announcements, 28.65% through townhall meetings, and 25.23% through radio and TV broadcast.

Amongst councils topping in the provision of information about council activities and projects to their population were Nkambe (76.67%), Fundong (69.15%), and Ndu (68.82%) revealing that information was passed through radio and television where it scores 48.44% in the usage of this medium.

On the other hand, 63.77% responded that councils did not inform and educate the population on council activities and projects and advanced reasons including the following:

- Councils largely worked with friends and family members (38.46%),
- The councils selected those to whom it released information (10.99%),
- Councils neither considered the interest of the population nor their opinion (10.99%),
- The ongoing crises situation has caused councils not to be operational in their municipalities for fear of the unknown (27.47%).

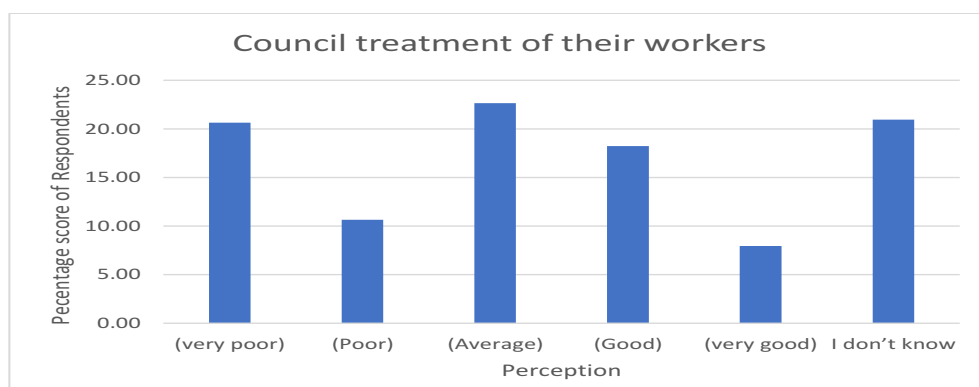
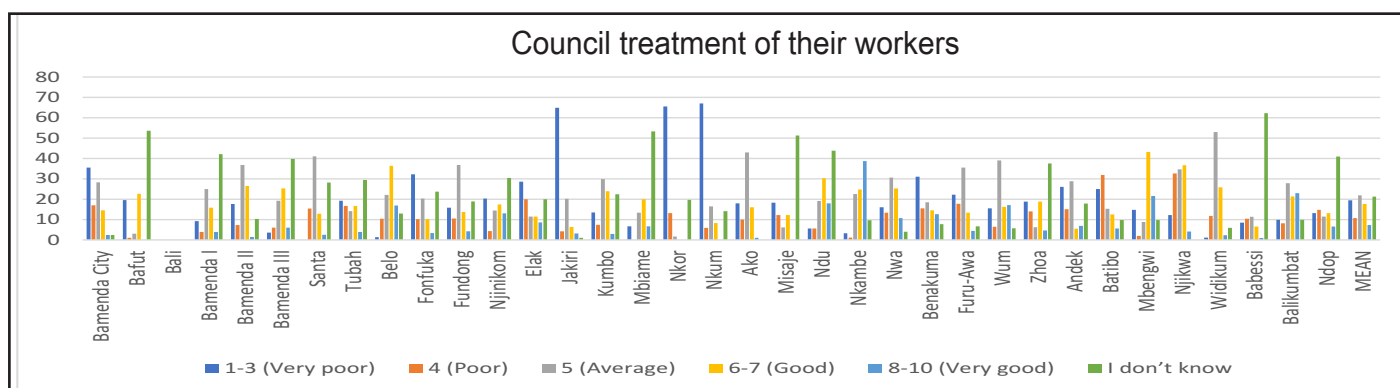
It should be underlined that the usage of local / community radios was an important medium of communication in councils especially in councils like Bafut (67.74%) due to the current security challenge hence, facilitating things.

Question: How do you assess your council’s treatment of council workers?

This question was intended to throw light on the relationship between council authorities and personnel serving in council services, specifically, how councils treat their workers.

Council	1-3 (Very poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	8-10 (Very good)	I don't know
Bamenda City	35.48	16.94	28.23	14.52	2.42	2.42
Bafut	19.59	1.03	3.09	22.68	0	53.61
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	9.21	3.95	25	15.79	3.95	42.11
Bamenda II	17.65	7.35	36.76	26.47	1.47	10.29
Bamenda III	3.61	6.02	19.28	25.3	6.02	39.76
Santa	0	15.38	41.03	12.82	2.56	28.21
Tubah	19.23	16.67	14.1	16.67	3.85	29.49
Belo	1.3	10.39	22.08	36.36	16.88	12.99
Fonfuka	32.2	10.17	20.34	10.17	3.39	23.73
Fundong	15.79	10.53	36.84	13.68	4.21	18.95
Njinikom	20.29	4.35	14.49	17.39	13.04	30.43
Elak	28.57	20	11.43	11.43	8.57	20
Jakiri	64.89	4.26	20.21	6.38	3.19	1.06
Kumbo	13.43	7.46	29.85	23.88	2.99	22.39
Mbiame	6.67	0	13.33	20	6.67	53.33
Nkor	65.57	13.11	1.64	0	0	19.67
Nkum	67.06	5.88	16.47	8.24	0	14.12
Ako	18	10	43	16	1	0
Misaje	18.29	12.2	6.1	12.2	0	51.22
Ndu	5.62	5.62	19.1	30.34	17.98	43.82
Nkambe	3.23	1.08	22.58	24.73	38.71	9.68
Nwa	16	13.33	30.67	25.33	10.67	4
Benakuma	31.07	15.53	18.45	14.56	12.62	7.77
Furu-Awa	22.22	17.78	35.56	13.33	4.44	6.67
Wum	15.45	6.5	39.02	16.26	17.07	5.69
Zhoa	18.75	14.06	6.25	18.75	4.69	37.5
Andek	26.03	15.07	28.77	5.48	6.85	17.81
Batibo	25	31.94	15.28	12.5	5.56	9.72
Mbengwi	14.71	1.96	8.82	43.14	21.57	9.8
Njikwa	12.24	32.65	34.69	36.73	4.08	0
Widikum	1.18	11.76	52.94	25.88	2.35	5.88
Babessi	8.49	10.38	11.32	6.6	0.94	62.26
Balikumbat	9.84	8.2	27.87	21.31	22.95	9.84
Ndop	13.11	14.75	11.48	13.11	6.56	40.98
MEAN	19.42	10.75	21.89	17.66	7.35	21.29

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Answering the question, “How do you assess your council’s treatment of workers”, 79.34% responded. The trend ranged from average to very poor, making 67.55% of all respondents. Following the mean of the responses: 19.99% answered “Very Poor”, 11.07% for “Poor”, 22.53% for “Average”, whereas 18.18% said “Good”, and 7.57% answered “Very Good”. As could be seen on the table above, councils falling in the spectrum of those not treating their workers very well included Nkum (67.06%), Nkor (65.57%), and Jakiri (64.89%).

Meanwhile, councils reportedly giving their workers better treatment included Widikum (52.94%), Mbengwi (43.14%), and Ako (43%). Respondents perceived Nkambe (38.71%) amongst those giving their workers the best treatment.

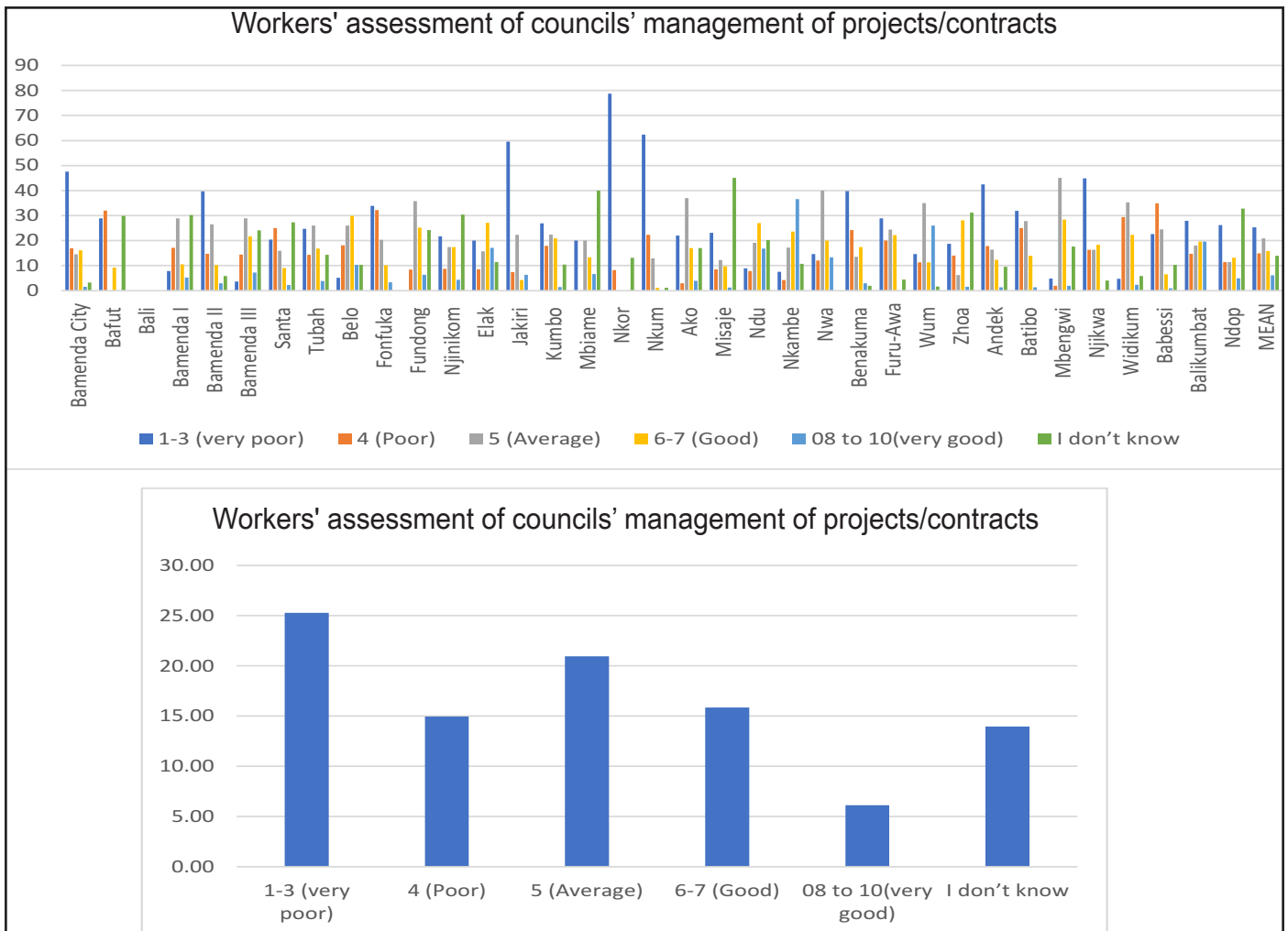
Generally, respondents were of the opinion that the treatment given to council workers needed to be improved.

Question: How do you assess your council’s management of projects/contracts?

This question sought to understand from public perception how councils managed projects and contracts.

Council	1-3 (very poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	08 to 10 (Very good)	I don’t know
Bamenda City	47.58	16.94	14.52	16.13	1.61	3.23
Bafut	28.87	31.96	0	9.28	0	29.9
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	7.89	17.11	28.95	10.53	5.26	30.26
Bamenda II	39.71	14.71	26.47	10.29	2.94	5.88
Bamenda III	3.61	14.46	28.92	21.69	7.23	24.1
Santa	20.45	25	15.91	9.09	2.27	27.27
Tubah	24.68	14.29	25.97	16.88	3.9	14.29
Belo	5.19	18.18	25.97	29.87	10.39	10.39
Fonfuka	33.9	32.2	20.34	10.17	3.39	0
Fundong	0	8.42	35.79	25.26	6.32	24.21
Njinikom	21.74	8.7	17.39	17.39	4.35	30.43
Elak	20	8.57	15.71	27.14	17.14	11.43
Jakiri	59.57	7.45	22.34	4.26	6.38	0
Kumbo	26.87	17.91	22.39	20.9	1.49	10.45
Mbiame	20	0	20	13.33	6.67	40
Nkor	78.69	8.2	0	0	0	13.11
Nkum	62.35	22.35	12.94	1.18	0	1.18
Ako	22	3	37	17	4	17
Misaje	23.17	8.54	12.2	9.76	1.22	45.12
Ndu	8.99	7.87	19.1	26.97	16.85	20.22
Nkambe	7.53	4.3	17.2	23.66	36.56	10.75
Nwa	14.67	12	40	20	13.33	0
Benakuma	39.81	24.27	13.59	17.48	2.91	1.94
Furu-Awa	28.89	20	24.44	22.22	0	4.44
Wum	14.63	11.38	34.96	11.38	26.02	1.63
Zhoa	18.75	14.06	6.25	28.13	1.56	31.25
Andek	42.47	17.81	16.44	12.33	1.37	9.59
Batibo	31.94	25	27.78	13.89	1.39	0
Mbengwi	4.9	1.96	45.1	28.43	1.96	17.65
Njikwa	44.9	16.33	16.33	18.37	0	4.08
Widikum	4.71	29.41	35.29	22.35	2.35	5.88
Babessi	22.64	34.91	24.53	6.6	0.94	10.38
Balikumbat	27.87	14.75	18.03	19.67	19.67	0
Ndop	26.23	11.48	11.48	13.11	4.92	32.79
MEAN	25.29	14.96	20.95	15.85	6.13	13.97

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Responding to the question “How do you assess your council’s management of projects/contracts?”, 26.04% of respondents perceived the management of council projects/contracts as “very poor”, 15.40% as “poor”, 21.57% as “average”, 16.32% as “good” and 6.31% as “very good” with:

- Nkor (78.69%), Nkum (62.35%) and Jakiri (59.57%) topping the list of councils with very poor management of their projects/contracts,
- Babessi (34.91%) and Fonfuka (32.2%) for councils with poor management,
- Fundong (35.79%), and Widikum (35.29%) among councils with average management.

In fact, over 40% of councils were rated either very poor (25.53%) or poor (15.54%).

Councils perceived for good management of projects/contracts above the mean of 16.62% included Belo (29.87%), Mbengwi (28.43%), and Zhoa (28.13%).

Meanwhile Nkambe (36.56%) and Wum (26.02%) topped the list for “very good” management of council projects/contracts.

Explaining the very poor/poor score of councils, respondents provided the following reasons:

- 9.20% of the respondents said their mayors have privatised council projects, meaning they single-handedly manage projects, sometimes drafting in only their friends and relatives, political and social allies. Mayors were accused of not involving their deputies and the population in the management of projects;
- 5.75% said monitoring and follow-up was absent;
- 9.20% said there was zero accountability or transparency in the execution of projects;
- 67.82% of respondents revealed that most projects are only completed on paper. They said most projects are poorly executed and others simply abandoned citing the ongoing security situation as a big scare to many contractors;
- 8.05% of respondents cited discriminatory practices in the distribution of projects.

Respondents were unanimous that information about council projects are privy to a handful

of persons and the rest of the population are distant from their conception, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Respondents fear that if nothing is done to reverse the catastrophic management of some mayors, they will simple pocket the resources accompanying the decentralisation process.

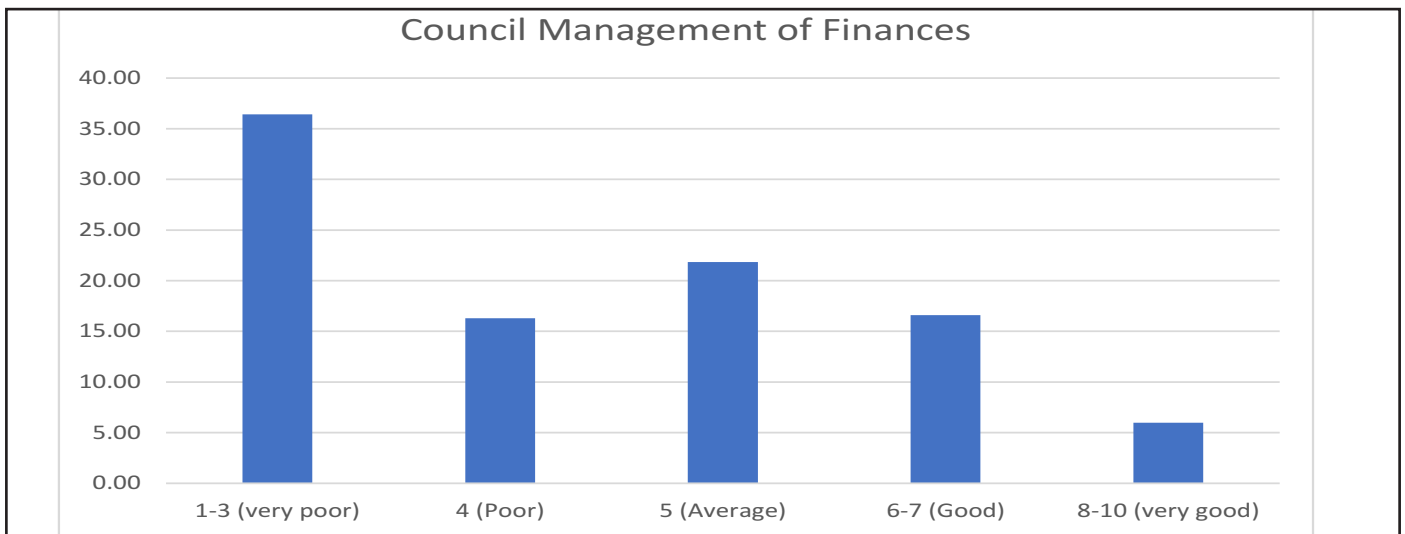
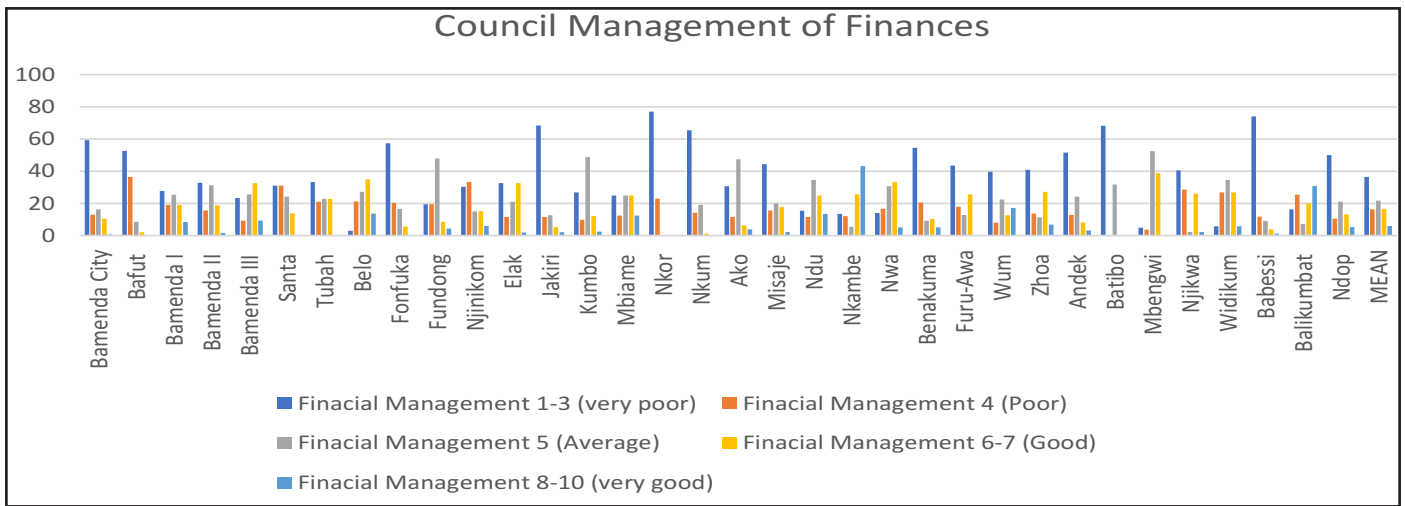
Question: How do you assess your council's management of resources?

Information was also gathered on council management of its financial and material resources and council infrastructures (markets, slabs and slaughter houses etc). Responding on a scale of 1 – 10, respondents had to score council management of resources ranging from very poor, poor, average, good to very good.

Answering this question, respondents were divided on their perception about how councils managed their financial, material and infrastructural resources. With regards to financial resources, councils who scored above the mean of 37.48% were perceived to have very poor financial management in their councils – these included Nkor (76.92%), Babessi (74.03%) and Jakiri (68.42%). In the same light, Bafut (36.56%), Njinikom (33.33%) and Santa (31.03%) were amongst the councils that scored above the mean of 16.78% and were perceived to be poor in the management of financial resources. Kumbo (48.78%), Fundong (47.83%) and Ako (47.44%) were among the councils ranking above the mean of 22.49% which respondents perceived as “average” in the management of financial resources. The respondents also attested that Mbengwi (38.75%), and Belo (34.85%) which were above the 17.10% mean were perceived “good” in the management of finance. Lastly, Nkambe (43.24%) and Balikumbat (30.91%) were perceived by respondents to have a “very good” management of financial resources.

Council	Financial Management				
	1-3 (Very poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	8-10 (Very good)
Bamenda City	59.35	13.01	16.26	10.57	0.81
Bafut	52.69	36.56	8.6	2.15	0
Bamenda I	27.66	19.15	25.53	19.15	8.51
Bamenda II	32.81	15.63	31.25	18.75	1.56
Bamenda III	23.26	9.3	25.58	32.56	9.3
Santa	31.03	31.03	24.14	13.79	0
Tubah	33.33	21.05	22.81	22.81	0
Belo	3.03	21.21	27.27	34.85	13.64
Fonfuka	57.41	20.37	16.67	5.56	0
Fundong	19.57	19.57	47.83	8.7	4.35
Njinikom	30.3	33.33	15.15	15.15	6.06
Elak	32.69	11.54	21.15	32.69	1.92
Jakiri	68.42	11.58	12.63	5.26	2.11
Kumbo	26.83	9.76	48.78	12.2	2.44
Mbiame	25	12.5	25	25	12.5
Nkor	76.92	23.08	0	0	0
Nkum	65.48	14.29	19.05	1.19	0
Ako	30.77	11.54	47.44	6.41	3.85
Misaje	44.44	15.56	20	17.78	2.22
Ndu	15.38	11.54	34.62	25	13.46
Nkambe	13.51	12.16	5.41	25.68	43.24
Nwa	14.1	16.67	30.77	33.33	5.13
Benakuma	54.64	20.62	9.28	10.31	5.15
Furu-Awa	43.59	17.95	12.82	25.64	0
Wum	39.64	8.11	22.52	12.61	17.12
Zhoa	40.91	13.64	11.36	27.27	6.82
Andek	51.61	12.9	24.19	8.06	3.23
Batibo	68.29	0	31.71	0	0
Mbengwi	5	3.75	52.5	38.75	0
Njikwa	40.48	28.57	2.38	26.19	2.38
Widikum	5.77	26.92	34.62	26.92	5.77
Babessi	74.03	11.69	9.09	3.9	1.3
Balikumbat	16.36	25.45	7.27	20	30.91
Ndop	50	10.53	21.05	13.16	5.26
MEAN	36.41	16.30	21.85	16.61	5.97

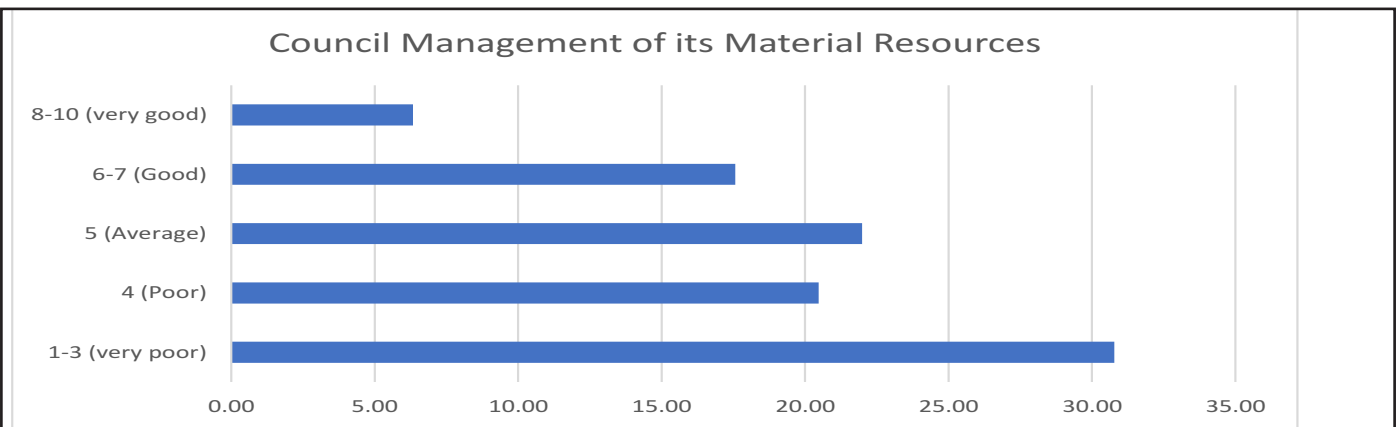
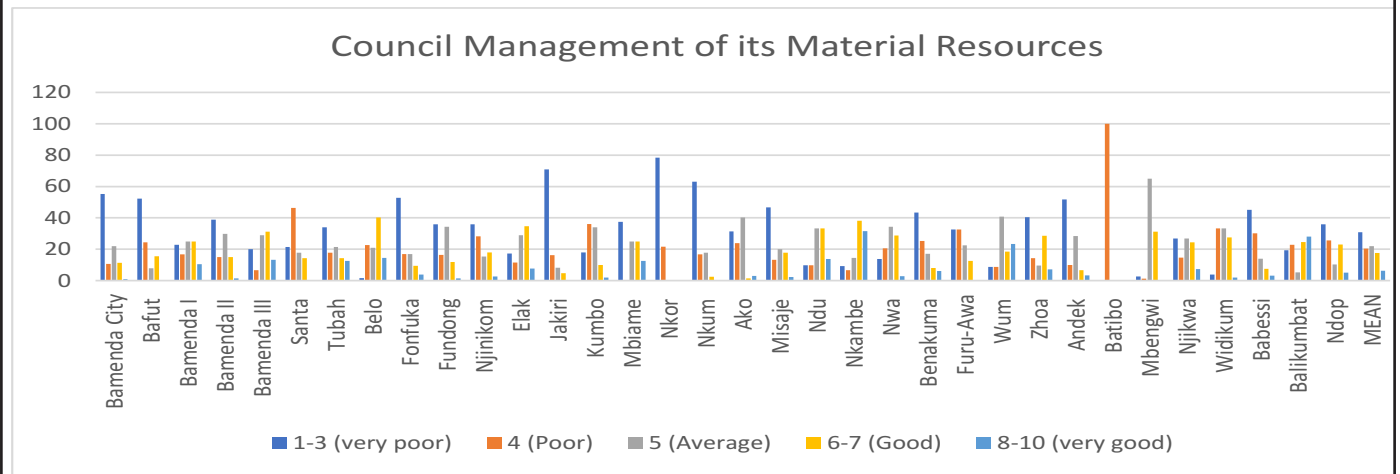
The figures in the table above are in percentages



Concerning the management of material resources, councils which scored above the mean of 31.68% were perceived to have a “very poor” management of material resources in their councils – these included Nkor (78.43%), Jakiri (70.93%) and Nkum (63.1%). Councils with poor management of material resources were Batibo (100%), Santa (46.43%) and Widikum (33.33%). Mbengwi (64.94%), Wum (40.78%), Ako (40.3%) were the councils perceived “average” in the management of material resources. The respondents also attested that Belo (40.32%) and Elak (34.62%) were good in the management of material resources. Lastly, Nkambe (31.58%) and Balikumbat (28.07%) were perceived by respondents to have a very good management of material resources, both scoring far above the mean of 6.53%.

Council	Council Management of its Material Resources				
	1-3 (Very poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	8-10 (Very good)
Bamenda City	55.28	10.57	21.95	11.38	0.81
Bafut	52.22	24.44	7.78	15.56	0
Bamenda I	22.92	16.67	25	25	10.42
Bamenda II	38.81	14.93	29.85	14.93	1.49
Bamenda III	20	6.67	28.89	31.11	13.33
Santa	21.43	46.43	17.86	14.29	0
Tubah	33.93	17.86	21.43	14.29	12.5
Belo	1.61	22.58	20.97	40.32	14.52
Fonfuka	52.83	16.98	16.98	9.43	3.77
Fundong	35.82	16.42	34.33	11.94	1.49
Njinikom	35.9	28.21	15.38	17.95	2.56
Elak	17.31	11.54	28.85	34.62	7.69
Jakiri	70.93	16.28	8.14	4.65	0
Kumbo	18	36	34	10	2
Mbiame	37.5	0	25	25	12.5
Nkor	78.43	21.57	0	0	0
Nkum	63.1	16.67	17.86	2.38	0
Ako	31.34	23.88	40.3	1.49	2.99
Misaje	46.67	13.33	20	17.78	2.22
Ndu	9.8	9.8	33.33	33.33	13.73
Nkambe	9.21	6.58	14.47	38.16	31.58
Nwa	13.7	20.55	34.25	28.77	2.74
Benakuma	43.43	25.25	17.17	8.08	6.06
Furu-Awa	32.5	32.5	22.5	12.5	0
Wum	8.74	8.74	40.78	18.45	23.3
Zhoa	40.48	14.29	9.52	28.57	7.14
Andek	51.67	10	28.33	6.67	3.33
Batibo	0	100	0	0	0
Mbengwi	2.6	1.3	64.94	31.17	0
Njikwa	26.83	14.63	26.83	24.39	7.32
Widikum	3.92	33.33	33.33	27.45	1.96
Babessi	45.16	30.11	13.98	7.53	3.23
Balikumbat	19.3	22.81	5.26	24.56	28.07
Ndop	35.9	25.64	10.26	23.08	5.13
MEAN	30.78	20.47	21.99	17.57	6.34

The figures in the table above are in percentages

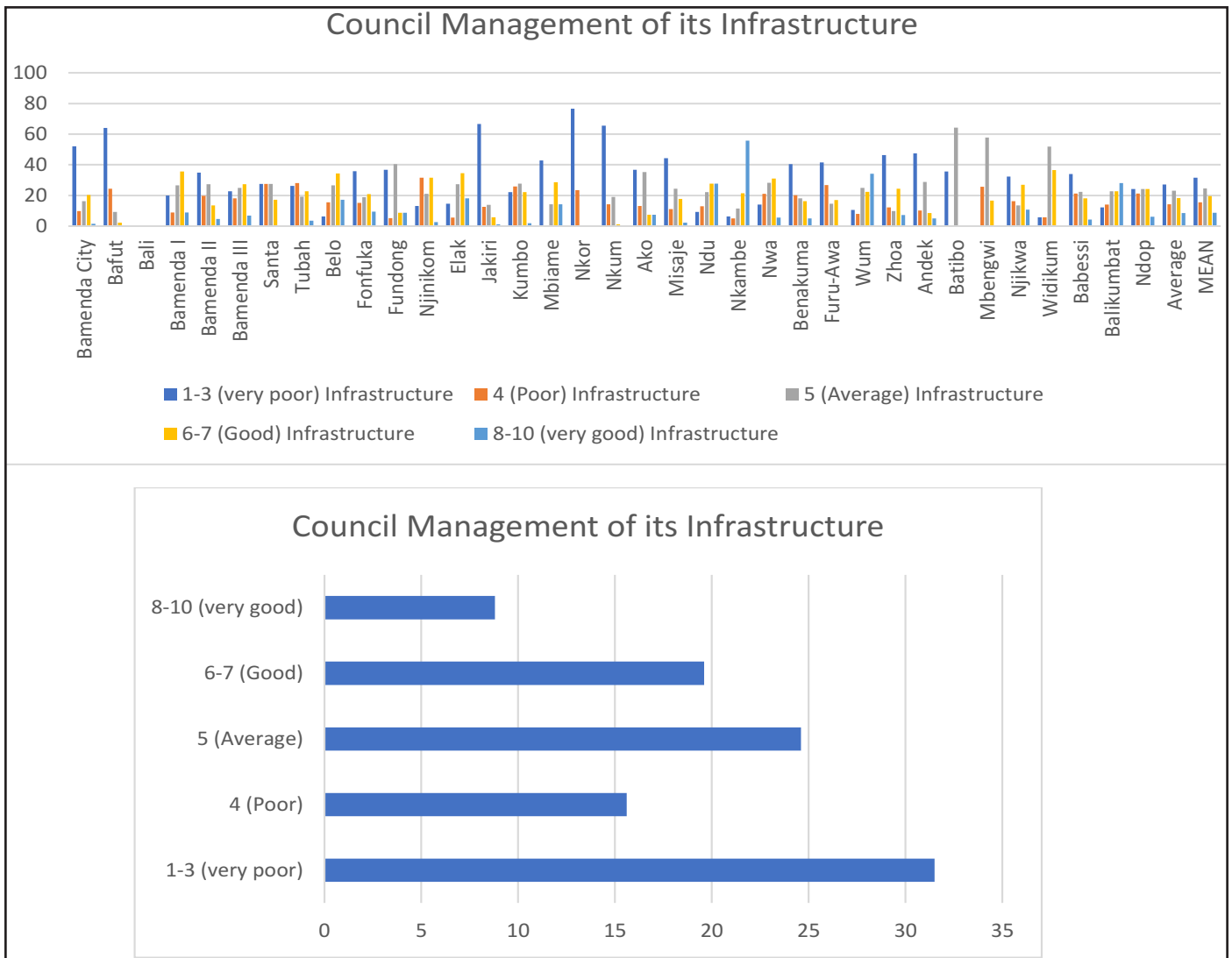


With regards to the management of infrastructure, councils that scored above the mean of 31.45% were perceived to have a “very poor” management of infrastructure in their councils – this included Nkor (76.47%), and Jakiri (66.67%). In the same light, Njinikom (31.58%), Tubah (21.58%) and Furu-Awa (26.83%) were perceived to be “poor” in the management of infrastructure. Batibo (64.29%), Mbengwi (57.69%) and Fundong (40.35%) were among councils perceived “average” in their management of infrastructural resources.

The respondents also attested that Elak, and Widikum, with ratings of 34.55% and 36.54% respectively, were good in the management of infrastructural resources. Lastly, Nkambe (55.5%) and Wum (34.21%) were perceived by respondents to have a “very good” management of infrastructural resources.

COUNCIL	Council management of Infrastructure				
	1-3 (very poor)	4 (poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	8-10 (very good)
Bamenda City	52	9.8	16.3	20.3	1.6
Bafut	64	24.4	9.3	2.3	0
Bali	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	20	8.9	26.7	35.6	8.9
Bamenda II	34.9	19.7	27.3	13.6	4.6
Bamenda III	22.7	18.2	25	27.3	6.8
Santa	27.6	27.6	27.6	17.2	0
Tubah	26.3	28.1	19.3	22.8	3.5
Belo	6.3	15.6	26.6	34.4	17.2
Fonfuka	35.9	15.1	18.9	20.8	9.4
Fundong	36.8	5.3	40.4	8.8	8.8
Njinikom	13.2	31.6	21.1	31.6	2.6
Elak	14.6	5.5	27.3	34.6	18.2
Jakiri	66.7	12.6	13.8	5.8	1.2
Kumbo	22.2	25.9	27.8	22.2	1.9
Mbiame	42.9	0	14.3	28.6	14.3
Nkor	76.5	23.5	0	0	0
Nkum	65.5	14.3	19.1	1.2	0
Ako	36.8	13.2	35.3	7.4	7.4
Misaje	44.4	11.1	24.4	17.8	2.2
Ndu	9.3	13	22.2	27.8	27.8
Nkambe	6.3	5.1	11.4	21.5	55.7
Nwa	14.1	21.1	28.2	31	5.6
Benakuma	40.4	20.2	18.2	16.2	5.1
Furu-Awa	41.5	26.8	14.6	17.1	0
Wum	10.5	7.9	25	22.4	34.2
Zhoa	46.3	12.2	9.8	24.4	7.3
Andek	47.5	10.2	28.8	8.5	5.1
Batibo	35.7	0	64.3	0	0
Mbengwi	0	25.6	57.7	16.7	0
Njikwa	32.4	16.2	13.5	27	10.8
Widikum	5.8	5.8	51.9	36.5	0
Babessi	34	21.3	22.3	18.1	4.3
Balikumbat	12.3	14	22.8	22.8	28.1
Ndop	24.2	21.2	24.2	24.2	6.1
MEAN	31.5	15.6	24.6	19.6	8.8

The figures in the table above are in percentages

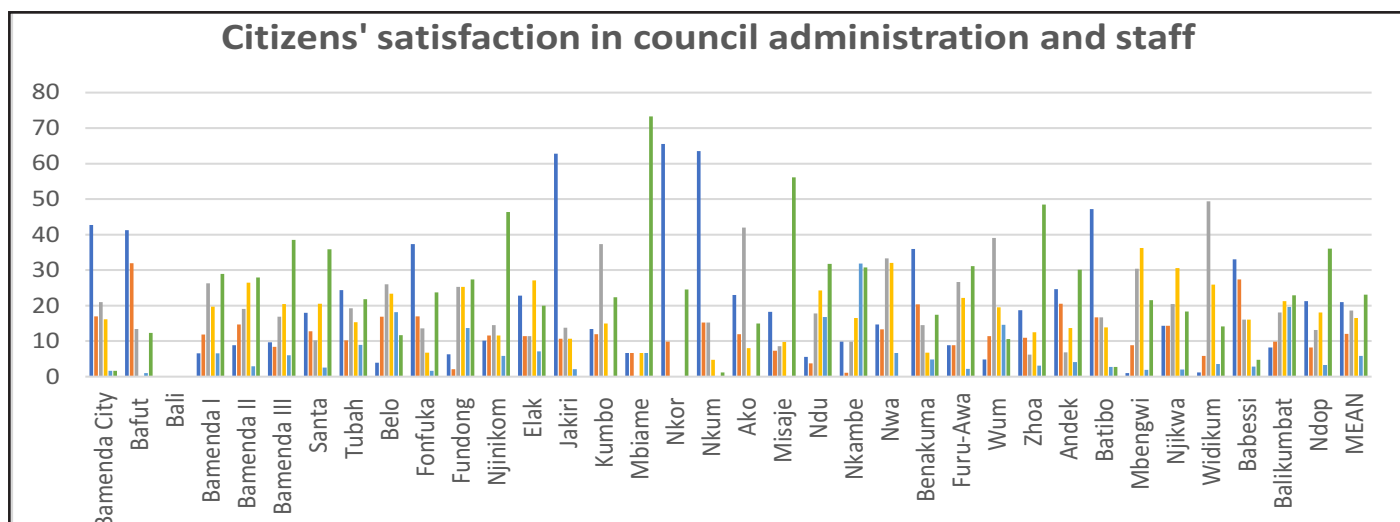


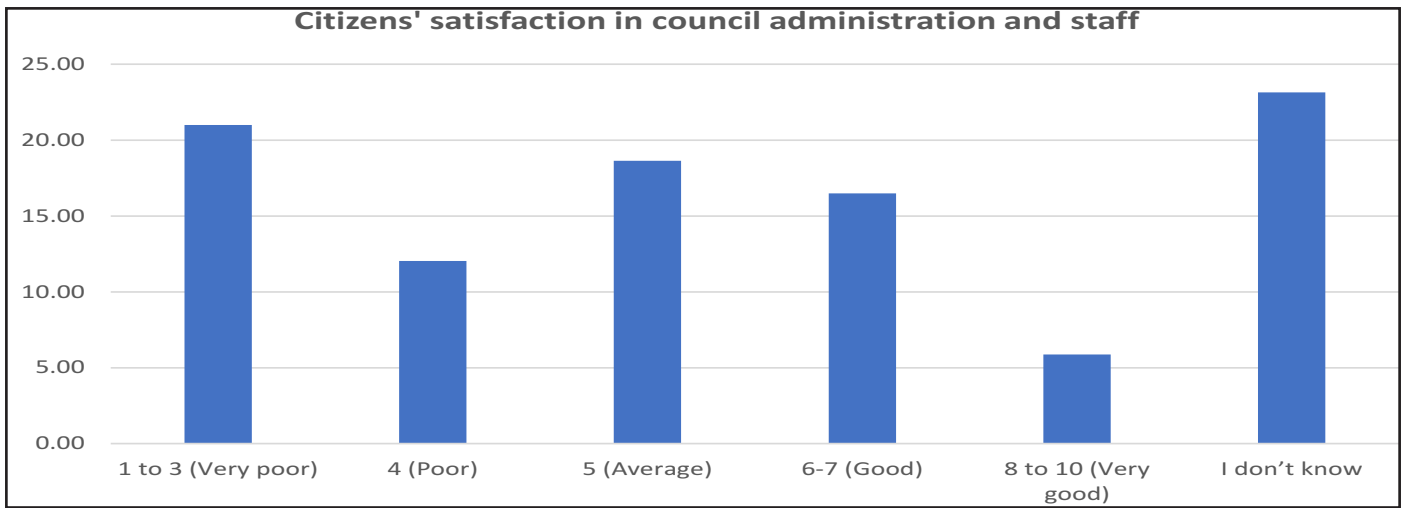
From the above perceptions, it can be concluded that the mismanagement of resources was prevalent in many councils, with Nkor, Jakiri and Njinikom leading in the “very poor” management of resources while councils such as Nkambe and Balikumbat are topping the chart as those with very good management of resources.

Question: Score your confidence and/or satisfaction in council administration and staff on a scale of 1-10.

Citizens' satisfaction with the performance of the administration and staff of their Councils						
Council	1 to 3 (Very poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	8 to 10 (Very good)	I don't know
Bamenda City	42.74	16.94	20.97	16.13	1.61	1.61
Bafut	41.24	31.96	13.4	0	1.03	12.37
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	6.58	11.84	26.32	19.74	6.58	28.95
Bamenda II	8.82	14.71	19.12	26.47	2.94	27.94
Bamenda III	9.64	8.43	16.87	20.48	6.02	38.55
Santa	17.95	12.82	10.26	20.51	2.56	35.9
Tubah	24.36	10.26	19.23	15.38	8.97	21.79
Belo	3.9	16.88	25.97	23.38	18.18	11.69
Fonfuka	37.29	16.95	13.56	6.78	1.69	23.73
Fundong	6.32	2.11	25.26	25.26	13.68	27.37
Njinikom	10.14	11.59	14.49	11.59	5.8	46.38
Elak	22.86	11.43	11.43	27.14	7.14	20
Jakiri	62.77	10.64	13.83	10.64	2.13	0
Kumbo	13.43	11.94	37.31	14.93	0	22.39
Mbiame	6.67	6.67	0	6.67	6.67	73.33
Nkor	65.57	9.84	0	0	0	24.59
Nkum	63.53	15.29	15.29	4.71	0	1.18
Ako	23	12	42	8	0	15
Misaje	18.29	7.32	8.54	9.76	0	56.1
Ndu	5.61	3.74	17.76	24.3	16.82	31.78
Nkambe	9.89	1.1	9.89	16.48	31.87	30.77
Nwa	14.67	13.33	33.33	32	6.67	0
Benakuma	35.92	20.39	14.56	6.8	4.85	17.48
Furu-Awa	8.89	8.89	26.67	22.22	2.22	31.11
Wum	4.88	11.38	39.02	19.51	14.63	10.57
Zhoa	18.75	10.94	6.25	12.5	3.13	48.44
Andek	24.66	20.55	6.85	13.7	4.11	30.14
Batibo	47.22	16.67	16.67	13.89	2.78	2.78
Mbengwi	0.98	8.82	30.39	36.27	1.96	21.57
Njikwa	14.29	14.29	20.41	30.61	2.04	18.37
Widikum	1.18	5.88	49.41	25.88	3.53	14.12
Babessi	33.02	27.36	16.04	16.04	2.83	4.72
Balikumbat	8.2	9.84	18.03	21.31	19.67	22.95
Ndop	21.31	8.2	13.11	18.03	3.28	36.07
MEAN	20.99	12.03	18.64	16.49	5.87	23.14

The figures in the table above are in percentages





Respondents were asked to score their confidence/satisfaction in their council administration and the staff on a scale of 1-10. The 22.29% rated their satisfaction/confidence in their council administration and staff as “very poor”, 12.69% rated it as “poor”, 19.18% as average, 16.97% as good and only 6.04% said it was satisfactory. Amongst councils with performances falling below average (very poor/poor) were Nkor (75.41%), Nkum (78.82%), Jakiri (73.41%), Bafut (73.20%) and Babessi (60.38%). In fact, on the lower side, respondents of Nkor, Bafut, Fonfuka, Nkum, Ako, Misaje and Benakuma were very dissatisfied with their council with less than 10% satisfaction ratings. Whereas, Nkambe (48.35%), Belo (41.56%) and Ndu (41.12%) topped the list of councils with the highest perception of satisfaction by their citizens.

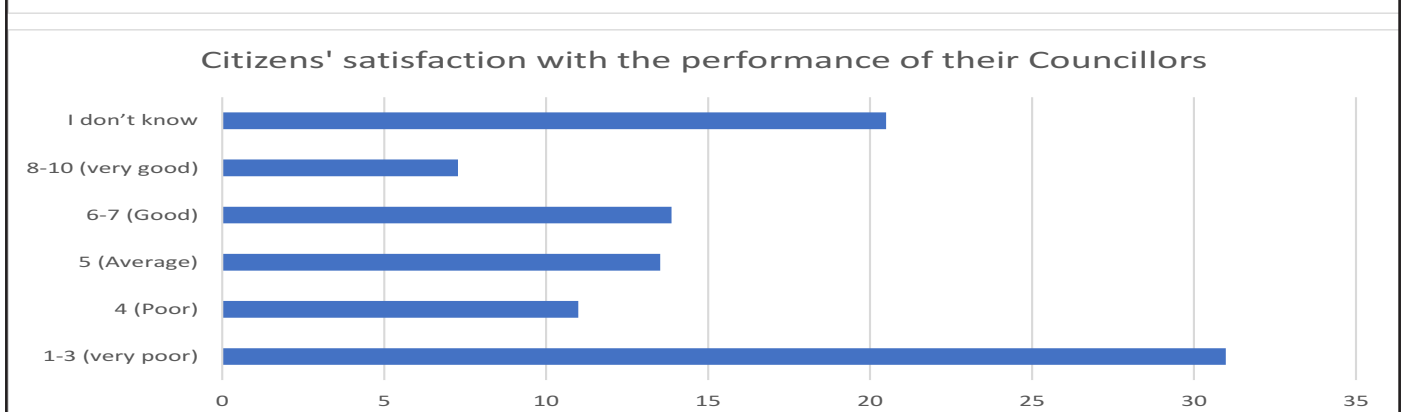
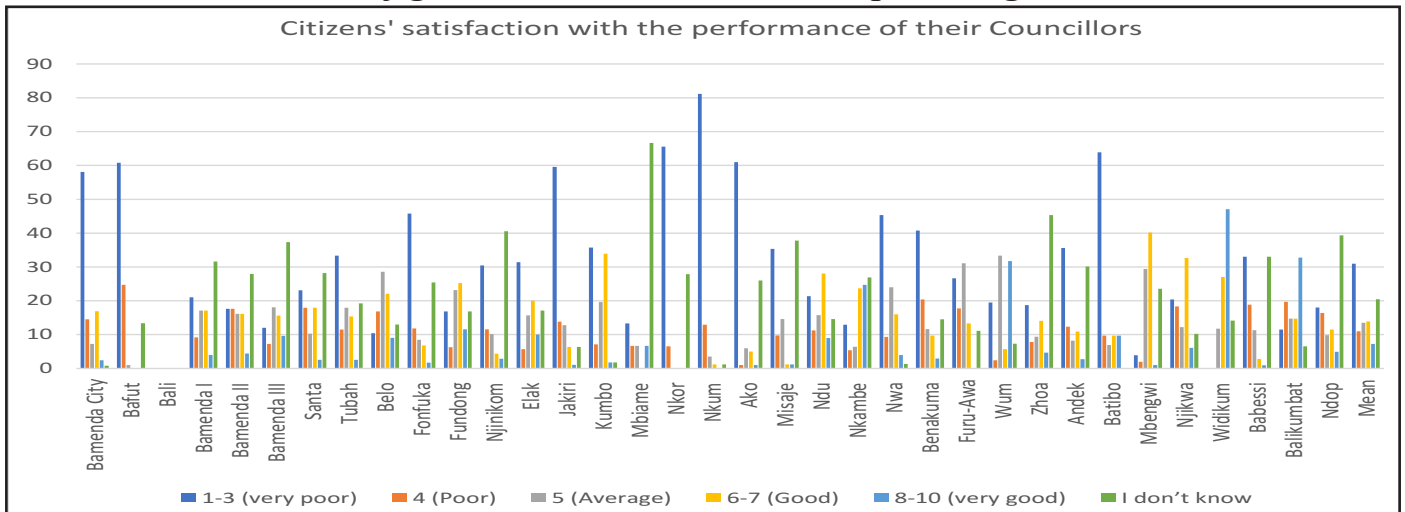
It is also important to state that a high percentage of citizens of fifteen (15) councils including Mbiame (73.33%), Misaje (56.10%), Zhoa (48.44%), Njinikom (46.38%) and Ndop (36.07%) did not pronounce on their satisfaction of confidence in their councils. This leaves us with the conclusion that in a general manner, less than 25% of citizens are satisfied with and have confidence in their councils. It also means that councils in general were not meeting the expectation of citizens which partly explains the apathy citizens manifest with regards to council affairs. It was also revealed that respondents did not feel free to voice their opinions for fear of retributions from authorities.

Question: Score your satisfaction with the performance of your councillor on a scale of 1-10.

Citizens also scored their satisfaction with their councillors as follows:

Citizens' satisfaction with the performance of their Councillors						
Council	1-3 (very poor)	4 (Poor)	5 (Average)	6-7 (Good)	8-10 (very good)	I don't know
Bamenda City	58.06	14.52	7.26	16.94	2.42	0.81
Bafut	60.82	24.74	1.03	0	0	13.4
Bali	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bamenda I	21.05	9.21	17.11	17.11	3.95	31.58
Bamenda II	17.65	17.65	16.18	16.18	4.41	27.94
Bamenda III	12.05	7.23	18.07	15.66	9.64	37.35
Santa	23.08	17.95	10.26	17.95	2.56	28.21
Tubah	33.33	11.54	17.95	15.38	2.56	19.23
Belo	10.39	16.88	28.57	22.08	9.09	12.99
Fonfuka	45.76	11.86	8.47	6.78	1.69	25.42
Fundong	16.84	6.32	23.16	25.26	11.58	16.84
Njinikom	30.43	11.59	10.14	4.35	2.9	40.58
Elak	31.43	5.71	15.71	20	10	17.14
Jakiri	59.57	13.83	12.77	6.38	1.06	6.38
Kumbo	35.71	7.14	19.64	33.93	1.79	1.79
Mbiame	13.33	6.67	6.67	0	6.67	66.67
Nkor	65.57	6.56	0	0	0	27.87
Nkum	81.18	12.94	3.53	1.18	0	1.18
Ako	61	1	6	5	1	26
Misaje	35.37	9.76	14.63	1.22	1.22	37.8
Ndu	21.35	11.24	15.73	28.09	8.99	14.61
Nkambe	12.9	5.38	6.45	23.66	24.73	26.88
Nwa	45.33	9.33	24	16	4	1.33
Benakuma	40.78	20.39	11.65	9.71	2.91	14.56
Furu-Awa	26.67	17.78	31.11	13.33	0	11.11
Wum	19.51	2.44	33.33	5.69	31.71	7.32
Zhoa	18.75	7.81	9.38	14.06	4.69	45.31
Andek	35.62	12.33	8.22	10.96	2.74	30.14
Batibo	63.89	9.72	6.94	9.72	9.72	0
Mbengwi	3.92	1.96	29.41	40.2	0.98	23.53
Njikwa	20.41	18.37	12.24	32.65	6.12	10.2
Widikum	0	0	11.76	27.06	47.06	14.12
Babessi	33.02	18.87	11.32	2.83	0.94	33.02
Balikumbat	11.48	19.67	14.75	14.75	32.79	6.56
Ndop	18.03	16.39	9.84	11.48	4.92	39.34
Mean	30.98	10.99	13.52	13.87	7.28	20.49

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Regarding citizens' satisfaction with their councillors, 39.89% of respondents rated the performances of their councillors as "very poor", 11.32% as "poor", 13.92% as "average", 14.28% as "good" and 7.5% as "very good". Amongst councils where councillors' performances were seen to be very poor were Nkum (81.18%) and Nkor (65.57%). Benakuma (20.39%) and Babessi (18.67%) were perceived as "poor", meanwhile Wum (33.33%) and Furu-Awa (31.11%) had an "average" score. The councils that scored above the mean and perceived as good in providing satisfaction in the performance of their councillors included: Mbengwi (40.2%) and Kumbo (33.93%).

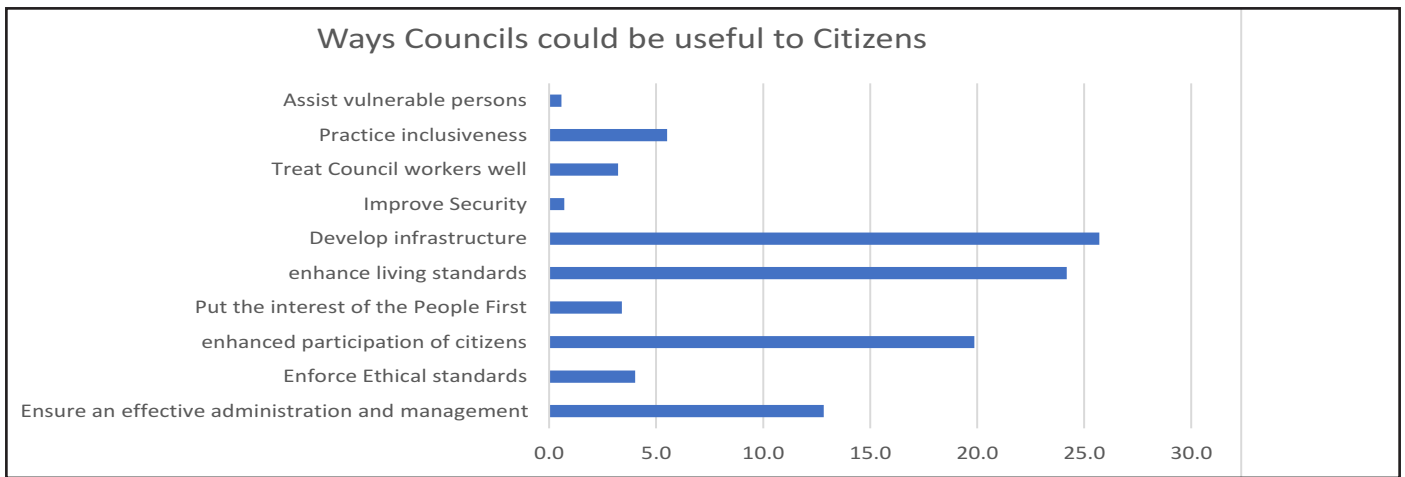
Finally, Widikum (47.06%) and Balikumbat (32.79%) were rated by the respondents as "very good" in respect to their satisfaction with the performance of their councillors.

This low appreciation could also mean that most councillors were not really selected by the population.

Question: How could your council become more useful to you?

Council	Ensure an effective administration and management	Enforce Ethical standards	enhanced participation of citizens	Put the interest of the People First	enhance living standards	Develop infrastructure	Improve Security	Treat Council workers well	Practice inclusiveness	Assist vulnerable persons
Bamenda City	7.5	7.1	36.9	10.4	12.5	10.4	2.5	10.4	2.5	0.0
Bafut	0.0	0.0	39.3	0.0	3.6	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bali	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bamenda I	2.8	0.9	26.6	0.9	37.6	30.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Bamenda II	15.9	0.0	20.7	0.0	6.1	56.1	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0
Bamenda III	1.9	8.7	35.0	1.0	35.0	11.7	3.9	0.0	1.9	1.0
Santa	18.9	0.0	32.4	5.4	13.5	24.3	0.0	0.0	5.4	0.0
Tubah	6.7	0.0	26.7	0.0	33.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	13.3	13.3
Belo	20.6	0.0	60.3	0.0	19.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fonfuka	4.4	7.3	22.6	0.0	28.5	24.1	0.0	0.0	13.1	0.0
Fundong	21.9	1.8	11.6	0.0	20.9	33.3	0.0	10.6	0.0	0.0
Njinikom	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	32.1	46.4	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elak	0.0	0.0	13.3	11.7	43.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	11.7	0.0
Jakiri	38.5	0.0	25.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	11.5	0.0	0.0
Kumbo	15.9	0.0	31.9	0.0	15.9	33.3	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0
Mbiame	17.4	0.0	8.7	0.0	17.4	30.4	0.0	0.0	26.1	0.0
Nkor	28.3	0.0	5.7	3.8	3.8	58.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nkum	21.3	12.8	18.3	0.0	19.5	23.2	0.0	4.9	0.0	0.0
Ako	15.9	4.2	12.7	0.0	38.2	29.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Misaje	13.0	0.0	40.3	0.0	32.5	5.2	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0
Ndu	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	64.9	35.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nkambe	16.3	0.0	10.9	20.7	14.1	28.3	0.0	0.0	9.8	0.0
Nwa	12.2	0.0	2.0	0.0	73.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.2	0.0
Benakuma	62.5	4.2	4.2	0.0	4.2	8.3	0.0	8.3	8.3	0.0
Furu-Awa	4.6	13.6	18.2	0.0	47.7	9.1	0.0	0.0	2.3	4.6
Wum	8.5	7.6	17.0	0.0	10.2	43.2	0.0	13.6	0.0	0.0
Zhoa	0.0	28.8	0.0	9.1	25.8	30.3	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Andek	0.0	27.7	0.0	13.9	24.6	30.8	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Batibo	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.4	76.5	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mbengwi	0.0	0.0	39.8	0.0	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	56.1	0.0
Njikwa	43.8	0.0	40.6	0.0	9.4	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Widikum	12.5	0.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	12.5	0.0
Babessi	0.0	6.9	6.9	0.0	20.7	65.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balikumbat	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
Ndop	0.0	4.6	18.2	0.0	54.6	22.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	12.9	4.6	19.8	2.7	24.1	26.9	0.7	3.7	4.4	0.2
Average	12.5	3.9	19.3	3.3	23.5	25.0	0.7	3.1	5.4	0.6
Mean	12.8	4.0	19.9	3.4	24.2	25.7	0.7	3.2	5.5	0.6

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Reacting to the question “How could your council become more useful to you?”, respondents in their majority said their councils could be useful in the following ways:

- Providing development infrastructures (25.70%) namely roads, electricity and social amenities,
- Enhancing their living standards (24.18%) by providing them with jobs and income generating opportunities, water and health facilities,
- Providing information and opportunities to participate in council affairs (19.87%) including information on council actions, and
- ensuring that councils were effectively managed.

On the other hand, a small number found ensuring security, assisting vulnerable persons, enforcing ethical values, practicing inclusiveness and treating council workers well as their priority.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that the population have a dire desire for development projects, improved governance and employment opportunities.

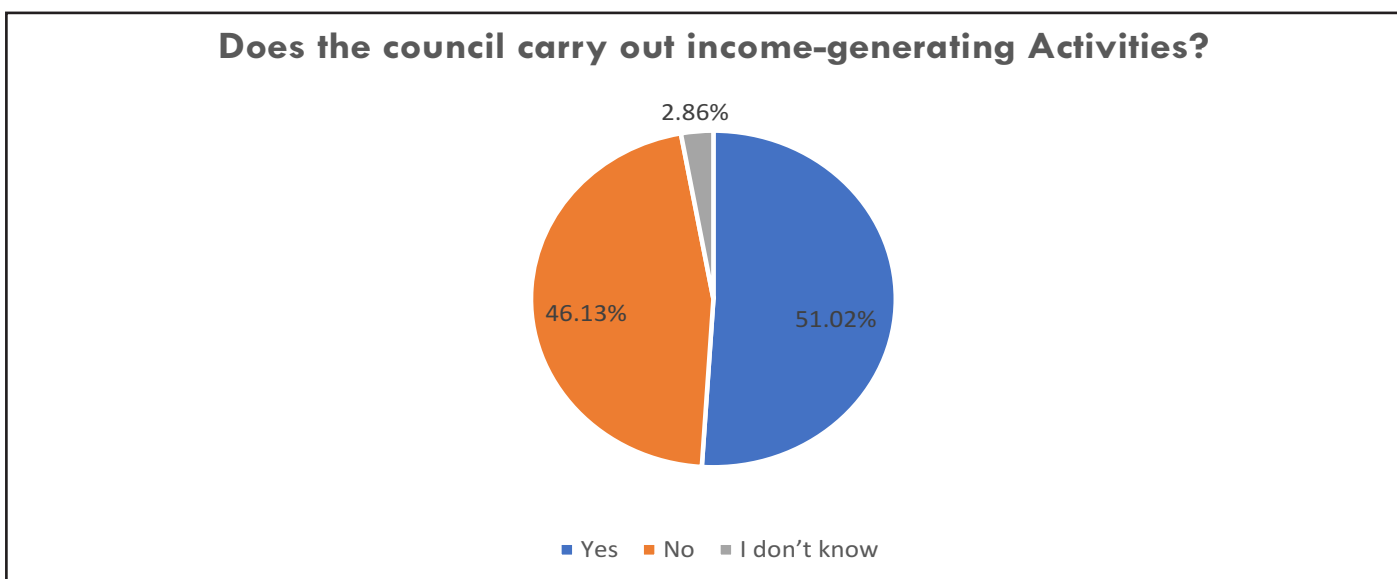
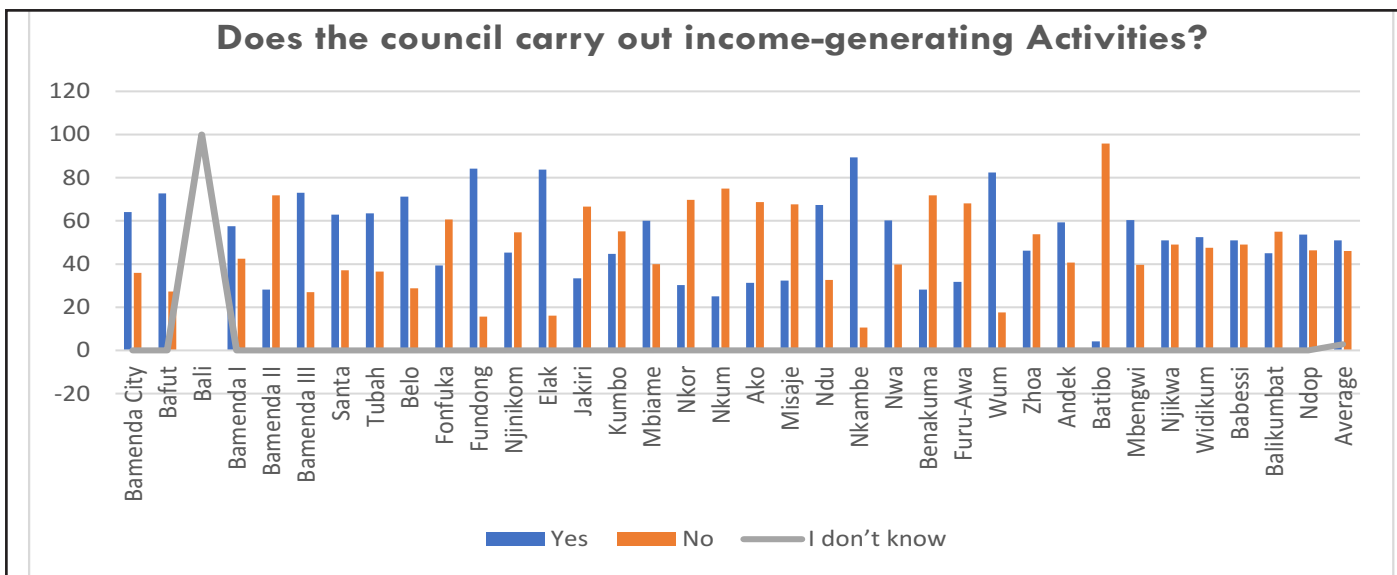
e) Income generating projects

Question: Does your council provide income-generating and/or employment opportunities to the population?

Amongst council development projects, the questionnaire singled out income generating activities as a case study to know how much attention councils paid to the creation of activities that provided their populations with income and employment opportunities.

Council	Yes	No	I don't know	Council	Yes	No	I don't know
Bamenda City	64.04	35.96	0	Ako	31.31	68.69	1
Bafut	72.73	27.27	0	Misaje	32.39	67.61	11
Bali	0	0	0	Ndu	67.39	32.61	0
Bamenda I	57.53	42.47	0	Nkambe	89.41	10.59	0
Bamenda II	28.13	71.88	4	Nwa	60.27	39.73	0
Bamenda III	73.08	26.92	5	Benakuma	28.16	71.84	0
Santa	62.86	37.14	0	Furu-Awa	31.82	68.18	0
Tubah	63.54	36.46	0	Wum	82.4	17.6	0
Belo	71.25	28.75	0	Zhoa	46.15	53.85	0
Fonfuka	39.29	60.71	0	Andek	59.38	40.63	0
Fundong	84.27	15.73	2	Batibo	4.17	95.83	0
Njinikom	45.31	54.69	0	Mbengwi	60.42	39.58	0
Elak	83.82	16.18	0	Njikwa	51.02	48.98	0
Jakiri	33.33	66.67	0	Widikum	52.44	47.56	0
Kumbo	44.78	55.22	0	Babessi	50.98	49.02	0
Mbiame	60	40	3	Balikumbat	45	55	0
Nkor	30.19	69.81	2	Ndop	53.7	46.3	0
Nkum	25	75	0	TOTAL	53.76	46.24	28

The figures in the table above are in percentages



Answering the question “Does the council provide income generating employment opportunities to the population?”, 51.02% of the respondents answered “YES” and 46.13% of the respondents answered “NO”. Amongst councils which answered yes, Nkambe (89.41%), Fundong (84.27%) and Elak (83.82%) topped the chart. For respondents who were of the impression that their councils were not offering enough income-generating activities, Batibo (95.83%), Nkum (75%), Bamenda II (71.88%) and Benakuma (71.84%) topped the list.

Regarding the follow-up question of “if yes, what type of activity?”, 62.34% commented that councils provided holiday jobs, 8.83% commented that councils provide infrastructure, 5.19% said jobs, 14.81% cited employment and 8.83% held that councils supported income-generating activities.

III. Appraisal of citizens’ perceptions of how councils performed in 2023

On general terms, the survey revealed the following trends new and patterns in the way councils functioned in 2023 compared to 2022. Whereas Nkambe, Ndu, and Mbengwi councils featured among the best managed councils in terms of their functioning and relations with their populations, Nkor, Njinikom and Ndop featured amongst the worst managed, performing poorest in almost every aspect of the assessment taking over the baton from Babessi Council in 2022. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact these mayors are reportedly always absent on the ground and they or their actions were apparently not seen, heard or felt by the population.

However, it is important to note that the aforementioned analyses are an interpretation of how

citizens saw the functioning of their councils, which may not accurately reflect the reality. The fact that some respondents avoided answering the questions posed by the survey for various personal reasons also made it difficult to say with exactitude their real opinion on these matters and this certainly impacted the council rankings placing some councils among the top performing or underperforming councils, depending on the situation.

The survey also revealed the existence of very high levels of apathy and indifference amongst the citizenry regarding the conduct of council affairs and this also affected the quality of the information gathered. Many citizens feigned ignorance about council actions in their communities and many mayors and councillors were reportedly not known to their citizens. This lack of interest was attributed to an insufficient flow of information and poor communication between mayors and councillors and their citizens. Many respondents held that their discouragement stemmed from the fact that their council executives practised favouritism and tribalism as some councils were said to run along party lines. The fact that many respondents did not know their mayors or councillors is not strange as many of these elected representatives of the people reportedly disappeared immediately after their elections in 2020. Others only make occasional visits to their council areas whenever possible often under military escort.

It would be fair to also mention that the conduct of this survey had its own shortcomings that have mitigated the outcome to a considerable extent. Hence, it should only be seen as the opinion of a few that should only be generalised to a limited extent. The prevailing insecurity in the region certainly affected the information gathering process and obviously the findings, and this made it difficult to say with exactitude how councils actually functioned and how they related with their citizens in 2023.

Nonetheless, corroborating the findings with information from other sources, including complaints and denunciations received by the Public Independent Conciliator, in many cases, revealed trends and patterns that permitted the Public Independent Conciliator to safely draw the conclusions we have here which are more or less credible and informative as to how councils of the region performed.

PART FOUR

GENERAL APPRAISAL

I. DIFFICULTIES, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

In 2023, as was the case in 2022, the functioning of regional and local authorities, as well as the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator was not without issues and challenges. These issues were manifest in the administration of regional and council services, management of resources, personnel and projects, as well as relations with citizens. A close examination of the issues raised indicate that they would all be linked to the current situation in the field. This situation has also not left the functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator indifferent.

The following are the difficulties and challenges faced by regional and local authorities as well as the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in their functioning in 2023.

A. DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In 2023, regional and local authorities in general continued to face major difficulties and challenges affecting their functioning including the following:

- i. Despite the gradual return to normalcy, regional and council staff were still exposed to great insecurity which negatively impacted their operations in the region. Mayors and other council executives and staff remained exposed to various threats of aggression from separatist fighters including gun attacks, torture and kidnapping for ransom. A case in point is the Mayor of Misaje who came under separatist gunfire in Mbo’nsò while on his way to Bamenda to attend a workshop on the invitation of the Public Independent Conciliator. We thank God his injuries were not fatal. The high insecurity continues to restrict field operations for many regional and council services with the effect that affected councils are still lodging out of their council areas.
- ii. The communication challenges resulting from the difficult topography and enclave nature of some localities that obstruct radio and television coverage of the entire region and the very bad roads continued to compound the insecurity in the region. However, there is hope in the horizon with the commencement of the tarring of the Bamenda Ring-Road. That, roads hitherto blocked by separatist fighters have been opened for movements thanks to the military, gives reason to hope for the opportunity to carry on more field activities in 2024.
- iii. The delay in the disbursement of state subvention continued to negatively affect every area of functioning of regional and council services. While it slowed down the execution of planned activities, some were simply not realised and deferred to a future time. The result is that council faced many challenges with paying workers’ salaries, some councils owing their staff over eleven months of unpaid salaries. Many councils in the region have huge debts to pay not only to their staff but also to contractors and other service providers. At the moment of preparing this report, councils of the region had reportedly received only two of the expected four instalments of their subvention for 2023.
- iv. The slow implementation of the decentralisation project continued to negatively impact the work of regional and local authorities of the region on the ground. This continued to fuel the doubts and misgivings planted by detractors of decentralisation in the citizenry. The challenge is that the Regional Assembly like other public structures remained engaged in the big fight to enhance their recognition and credibility in the eyes of the public.
- v. Many respondents want councils to be fully independent of the supervision of the administration (Senior Divisional Officers – SDOs) as they take this supervision to imply in-

fringement on the autonomy of councils. Deputy Mayors also want to have well-defined, and clear roles in the management of council business, so as to limit incidents of rivalry with Mayors.

- vi. That some supervisory authorities of councils (Senior Divisional Officers, SDOs) continued to stall the functioning of councils remains a big challenge to deal with. Apart from accompanying mayors only when they have an interest to satisfy, they reportedly make exigent demands on council administration for fuel and others as prerogatives for putting their visa on council resolutions for execution.
- vii. The fact that the devolution of powers is yet to be accompanied by adequate resources is a drawback to regional and council functioning. Inadequate resources, a slow devolution process and the delay in the disbursement of the annual subventions did not only defer the execution of some activities but also slowed down the realisation of council development plans.
- viii. Regional and local decentralised entities lack the technical know-how and expertise to realise their missions. They are staffed in the majority of cases by hand-picked personnel lacking the expertise to function in positions demanding particular skills and expertise. This situation has been compounded by a joint ministerial circular prohibiting recruitments by regional services. The need for expertise and to develop the capacities of non-expert personnel is urgent.
- ix. The continuous absence of a local civil service code and other instruments of decentralisation as well as a code of ethics for councils is an obstacle to the effective functioning of regional and local decentralised entities.
- x. Regional and local authorities faced financial constraints especially as councils in the restive regions of the North-West and South-West regions are not yet able to generate income from other sources other than relying on state subventions. They continued to face difficulties meeting up with their National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) contributions for their personnel, a situation that has brought huge penalties to many councils.
- xi. The delay in the disbursement of council subventions continued to push many councils to prioritise other expenditures to the detriment of payment of salaries and realising development projects. Councils are yet to find resources to accomplish council development plans.
- xii. That councils should submit their recruitments for the approval of the Minister of Decentralisation and Local Development is posing serious conflicts with the Labour Code and Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities which authorise mayors to recruit FREELY. Applying such instructions has seen some mayors already on the verge of being dragged to court for wrongful termination of valid employment contracts drawn on the basis of the Labour Code on grounds that the contract did not have the Minister's endorsement.
- xiii. In the same light, the continuous perception of the role of the supervisory authority as a stumbling block than a control mechanism for the effective functioning of councils, remains prevalent in the population. Apart from the fact that their presence is seen to have very little positive influence on the functioning of councils, many find it redundant that an elected authority of the people should be under the direct supervision of an appointed official in the context of decentralisation. Some think that this control could be reviewed in a manner to avoid it serving as an obstacle to the proper functioning of regional and local decentralised entities.

B. Challenges and Difficulties Specific to the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North-West Region

- i. The high insecurity characteristic of the prevailing context of work also affected the functioning of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator as has been the case with

- councils. However, the situation did not stop the Public Independent Conciliator from carrying on with field visits of some councils at their bases, thanks to military escort.
- ii. While being thankful for providing the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator with the much-awaited salary scale, the absence of an approved organisational chart and a personnel statute for staff of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator remains a major drawback in the functioning of the Office.
 - iii. The late disbursement of the subvention of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator slows the timely execution of planned activities.

The difficulties and challenges enumerated above and many others are not without very serious consequences on the effective functioning of regional and local decentralized entities as well as the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator in the North-West Region. They also constitute obstacles to the effective materialization of the Special Status on the ground.

II. LESSONS LEARNT

Given that the Public Independent Conciliator in 2023 was not indifferent to challenges imposed by the current context of crises and insecurity that has affected life in the entire region in general, it should be underlined that each day and each situation did not only come with challenges but also with some lessons learnt. These enabled the office build the resilience required to face the situation. Lessons learnt included the following:

- i. The shortcomings demonstrated by many council executives is a functioning of their investiture and election. They seem to pay more allegiance to their political godfathers rather than to the population who elected them.
- ii. The continuous dependence of councils on government subventions due to the inability to device other sources of income, negatively affects their financial autonomy hence retarding the decentralization project.
- iii. Reinforcing the role of the population in council functioning would improve the effectiveness and performances of regional and council administration and enhance the delivery of their missions.
- iv. The people seem to be frustrated by the statutory limitation of the Public Independent Conciliator's missions and wish to see the ombudsman acting in the area of administrative justice, handling inter-service matters, as well as take the front roll in the ongoing peacebuilding processes in the region.
- v. The growing trust and credibility in the Public Independent Conciliator, which is a factor of its independent and impartial character and functioning, is crucial to the realisation of its missions and in the restoration of the people's confidence in state institutions. The Public Independent Conciliator seems to be seen as credible in the eyes of the population.
- vi. The fact that the Public Independent Conciliator is poised to continue paying attention to all complaints, be they within or without his mandate, is a recognition of his role as pacificator and peace crusader in the current context of the ongoing crises in the North-West Region.

PART FIVE

CONCLUSIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS AND PERSPECTIVE

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

After examining the functioning of regional and local council services and their relations with citizens, and considering the difficulties and challenges faced in 2023, the following recommendations could be made to various authorities at various levels of competence for the concerned institutions to realize optimum performance in 2024.

Considering that there has been little change from the functioning of 2022, these recommendations are for the most part re-emphasizing recommendations that were made for consideration in 2023, many of which are pending realisation.

1. The Regional and local Authorities

- i. Continuous emphasis on more consultation of citizens and Divisional Representatives in the decision-making processes of the Regional Assembly. The involvement of users and beneficiary populations in the activities and projects of the Regional Assembly should also be increased. An unbiased and constructive approach towards the population will prompt their cooperation and actions in their communities.
- ii. Regional and council authorities should fully comply with all regulations organising their functioning, particularly the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities to create harmony at work. This will also imply putting in place internal dispute-resolution mechanisms to address internal discontent and oversight.
- iii. Integrate fully the respect of ethical standards and compliance with existing legislation governing the functioning of regional and local decentralised entities; local public service rules and regulations.
- iv. Continue to raise awareness and sensitise the population on the missions, roles and functioning of regional and council authorities, notably on the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities.
- v. Continue to enforce spatial distribution of employment opportunities at all levels including the Regional Assembly and local decentralised entities to ensure equitable representation of all 34 council areas in the region. Regional and decentralised entities should capture the specificities of the region in their staffing, organisation and functioning. They should ensure that all socio-political as well as tribal, gender, minority, religious and other components are equally represented at all levels inclusively.
- vi. Councils should prioritize the creation of income-generating opportunities for the council to boost its financial resources, as well as for the population to improve on their welfare and living standards.
- vii. Create consultative platforms at all level of council functioning to engage the participation of all sectors of the community in council activities and decision-making processes inclusively. This will also require that councils should institute an effective information and communication system that reaches out promptly to all communities through which citizens should constantly be put abreast with the activities of councils.
- viii. Councils should mainstream the rights-based and gender-based approaches in their functioning. The effective integration of these concepts will also demand the creation of effective focal points to monitor and ensure the enforcement of the required standards.

2. The Public Independent Conciliator should:

- i. Continue to monitor regional and council functioning as per the law. This will require multiplying activities that will enable the tracking of the functioning of regional and coun-

cil services and their relations with citizens.

- ii. The Public Independent Conciliator should, within the concept of good governance in councils, also work with village development and other grassroots organisations to monitor council functioning and actions in the communities. Traditional and village authorities should also be empowered to monitor as well as get involved in the management of council projects.
- iii. Step up sensitisation of the masses on the missions and functioning of the councils, Regional Assembly and the Public Independent Conciliator. Intensify campaigns on the role and involvement of citizens and community structures to enhance their effective participation in regional and council affairs.
- iv. Independent financing to ensure timely execution of its projects.

3. Government

- i. Ensure the timely disbursement of State subventions for the effective functioning of regional and council services to enable the full implementation of programmed activities and projects; (MINFI/ MINDDEVEL).
- ii. Integrate the budget of the Public Independent Conciliator in a separate budgetary line in the State budget otherwise, ensure the timely disbursement of State subvention (Presidency/PM/MINFI).
- iii. Ensure effective devolution of powers and resources to the region and councils by finalising the necessary administrative processes and procedures to enable the smooth functioning of the Regional Assembly (PM/MINDDEVEL/MINSANTE/MINT/MINESEC/MINTOURL/MINHDU).
- iv. Ensure timely approval of council deliberations by supervisory authorities (MINDDEVEL/ Representative of the State (Governor)/ Senior Divisional Officers).
- v. Accord more autonomy to councils to ensure flexibility in their actions and response to situations (MINDDEVEL/Governor/Senior Divisional Officers/Divisional Officers).
- vi. Accelerate the elaboration of the Local Public Service Code for regional and council services (Presidency/Prime Minister's Office/MINDDEVEL/Concerned ministries).
- vii. Redefine the prerogatives of the Regional Assembly in alignment with the Special Status of the region. (PM/MINDDEVEL)
- viii. Accelerate finalization of Personnel Policy (Statute de Personnel) and Organisational Chart of regional and local decentralised entities as well as that of the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator to enable the regularisation of staff employment.
- ix. Ensure an enabling environment for all council operations to return to their council areas to serve the population better as per Section 144 of Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities.
- x. The National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) should consider setting aside the penalties levied on councils of the North-West and South-West regions for delays in the payment of contributions until a period when their resources would permit.
- xi. Clarify the roles and competences of regional and council services, as well as the city and sub-divisional councils, especially in the areas of waste management, and issuing of building permits. In the same light, integrate sub-divisional and local councils in the Land Consultative Boards.
- xii. Ensure the timely production and distribution of civil status registration booklets to councils (PM/MINDDEVEL/BUNEC).
- xiii. Harmonize workers' conditions, especially in relation to salaries (PM/MINDDEVEL).

B. PERSPECTIVES

In 2024, the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator intends to:

- i. Realise the preliminary phase of engage the construction phase of the Public Independent Conciliator, North-West Region Head-office project in 2024.
- ii. Intensify the organisation of more mass media campaigns targeting remote and grassroots populations in hard-to-reach areas of the region. This also includes translating messages into audio and video spots and pidgin English, as well as selected national languages for broadcast over community radios. This will entail devising other means of reaching communities unreachable by radio or TV signals, especially working with community-based assistants engaged by the Office of the Public Independent Conciliator of the North West Region.
- iii. Continue with the education and sensitization of council stakeholders on the missions and functioning of the Public Independent Conciliator and the search for common grounds for partnerships. This will entail prioritising councils that have not yet had the sensitisation visit of the Public Independent Conciliator.
- iv. Intensify the organisation of awareness-raising and outreach programmes to bring information about the Public Independent Conciliator to the doorsteps of citizens in the region. This will entail expanding activities and devising the means of reaching the hard-to-reach communities.
- v. Continue to systematically monitor regional and local council functioning on the ground to ensure the active and effective participation of citizens.
- vi. Continue to nurture a collaborative rapport with council stakeholders, as well as accompany and strengthen them to be able to deliver on their missions.
- vii. Expand the presence of the Public Independent Conciliator on the ground by developing the capacities and equipping community-based assistants pending the possible creation of divisional representations and sub-divisional satellite offices of the institution.

The work of the Public Independent Conciliator has given us the unique opportunity of observing council workers, recognising and respecting their incredible work and the endless challenge of decentralisation as well as the influence that government entities have on citizens. The Public Independent Conciliator will continue to play its role in promoting local good governance, fairness, and accountability in the delivery of local development and services by decentralised entities of the Region to the population.

