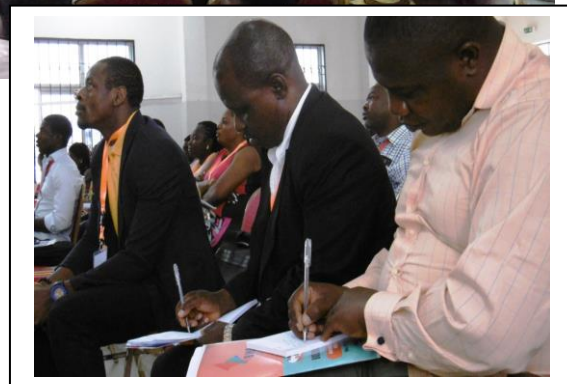


BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & PUBLIC SERVICE GOVERNANCE FELLOWSHIP

What Opportunities to Professionalize Cameroon's Informal Sector Youth Capital-the Case of BMF

Page | 1

...building integrity in acquiring & exercising public duty...



A STUDY BY IGI CAMEROON JUNE 2017

Stephen ASEK, Hoffman BETIKA, Achouna DIDERO and Cathy NAMONDO



Table of contents

	Page
1.1 Introduction	3-5
1.2 Country Issues	3 -4
1.3 Objectives of the study	5
1.4 Methodology of the study	6
2.1 Presentation of findings from the study	8-13
2.2 BMF Program study Fact Sheet	9-13
Survey Fact Sheet 2	14-22
3.1 Summary of significant findings	22-24
3.2 Conclusion and recommendations	25-26

Page | 2

<i>How will you rate the impact of the course on social change</i>	Fig.1.p9
<i>The module was conducted within the appropriate time</i>	Fi.2.p10
<i>The training equates to formal classroom learning</i>	Fig.3.p10
<i>Corruption is a serious challenge to secure employment</i>	Fig.4.p11
<i>After the training my skills where improved</i>	Fig.5.p11
<i>Are you interested in attending a follow up</i>	Fig.6.p12
<i>The modules were in alignment with BMF outcomes</i>	Fig.7.p12
<i>I have been able to use what I learned from the training</i>	Fig.8.p13
<i>The course is a good platform for youths to gain employment & professional skills</i>	Fig.9.p13
<i>Aspects learned in the course that is being applied in daily task</i>	Fig.10.p15-16
<i>Most important challenges experienced by new entrants into the job market & public service</i>	Fig.11.p17
<i>Training modules fellows found relevant to their daily task</i>	Fig.13a & 13b.p18
<i>What participants think was best about the modules</i>	Fig.14.p19
<i>Suggested follow up activities</i>	Fig.15.p20
<i>Looking back what will you like to change in the course</i>	Fig.16.p20
<i>Additional suggested topics to be covered in future BMF</i>	Fig.17.p21
<i>Rating of course handouts</i>	Fig.18.p21
<i>Rating of course overall content</i>	Fig.19.p21

1.1. Introduction

Cameroon holds the seventh largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa and is rich in natural resources and minerals. Despite numerous conflicts, past and present, yet it is regarded as an anchor of stability in a crisis-torn region.

However, Cameroonian society faces major challenges. Widespread corruption and the resulting unfavorable conditions for investment mean that much of Cameroon's development potential remains unexploited. As from 2007, the Government of Cameroon set out its ambitions in its Vision 2035, which aspires to make Cameroon an emerging economy by 2035. This therefore formed the basis for a Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), which replaced the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

Page | 3

The Government currently attaches great importance to infrastructural and economic development. However, 'upstream' sectors such as legal certainty and good governance are equally elaborated though not in detail in the GESP. The shortfall of structural capacity to follow through existing reforms aimed at promoting greater transparency and accountability, and the poor prioritization of good governance actions on state agenda, continues to delay the materialization of Cameroon's economic emergence. Organizations such as IGI help to push the boundaries of government's political will and commitment further with respect to application of good governance reforms and building of accountable institutions.

Since 2007 IGI has been engaged in Cameroon through its Focal Integrity Team [IGI-FITCAM] which carried out a series of good governance and anti-corruption institutional support activities until recently, when the Focal Integrity Team [FITCAM] was rebranded under the name of the mother organization International Governance Institute in Cameroon. With the expansion of IGI's reach nationally across the country, the institution is moving further into other socio-economic aspects of national life with intrinsic link to the country's current governance crises.

To do this IGI supports a public-private sector development approach [PSD] which collectively, with ordinary citizens and public institutions, work to foster accountability, integrity and transparency throughout the process of acquiring and exercising public duty on the one hand; and on the other hand offer value chain development platforms that could improve the managerial and employment skills of a vast majority of Cameroon's youth. The 'take off' point has been the creation of a pilot initiative, the municipal councils Business Management and good governance Fellowship [BMF] in collaboration with the local government council of Buea Municipality.

Country Issues and Concerns

Cameroon is a country with enormous resource potential and could further enjoy the opportunity and dividends of a huge youth demography, yet several factors such as; the quality of education [*which does not correspond to the skills it young people need to get integrated into contemporary job market*] and the magnitude of apparent corruption in the informal sector [where majority of the people who support the local economy work] signals a growing concern and real danger for this small central African country seen as an anchor of stability in a crises torn region.

More to that there is an overwhelming pressure on government to meet the growing demand for more learning centers by its growing youth population which constitutes a major assets for the country's future. According to the Strategic Document for the Education Sector in Cameroon the country is currently facing an increase in the population of its youth. Such an increase will likely culminate to an upsurge in the demand for education.¹

¹ Cameroon Strategic Document for the Education Sector 2013-2020: 2013 p.23-27

This increase in the demand for education on its part will require the government to respond with education policies and action programs, which facilitate access to education of quality. Yet the current proportion of skill mismatch prevalent among the population of young people who successfully complete the education process, is also worrying and plays a significant role notwithstanding in decreasing youth human capital productivity and performance locally.

Looking at the country's National Education Profile Update (2014) Cameroon has a total of 5,562,000 pupils enrolled in primary and secondary education. Of these cluster only 1,713,000 (31%) are enrolled in secondary education. This suggests that more than 60% of the overall eligible population to enroll in secondary education for instance is being left out of the education process. This is disturbing because it points to a massive failure in basic skill development for its poor [who later joint the informal sector in search for jobs] at the very start of their literacy career.²

Current statistics on the percentage of children of secondary school age (ages 12-18) in Cameroon who are out of school attest that, only 1% of youths ages 15-24 complete secondary education, while just 5% of the same age group continue with post-secondary education. According to the NEP update up to 55% in 2011 could not complete secondary education upon enrollment and approximately 10% of youth have no formal education and at most 20%, have attained incomplete primary education (Ibid). With an estimated 48% of its population living below the poverty line and growing, many youths in the hope of escaping from poverty are moving away from rural areas for urban city centers; thus swelling even further the majority of unskilled labor force in the informal sector locally.

Unfortunately in a country like Cameroon integration into the economy or civil service is the reserve of better educated people who remain in high demand. Yet, with the apparent urbanization and spread of corrupt practices going on unhindered, many pay their way through by means of godfathers or other connections to occupy public service positions in public and private sector bureaus where they lack corresponding training and skills. Consequently these public private sector service providers often serve poorly, making it increasingly difficult for the country to keep pace and secure the realization of its emergence aspirations.

Our Engagement and its Significance

But, following the initiation of BMF, IGI quickly realized from participants' respond and reaction during the pilot training program, that the magnitude of inappropriate skill sets and unemployment in the informal sector could be linked to training policies that neglect the needs of the local labor market including regulatory and unethical public service practices incited by lack of accountability and poor public governance.

In an effort to take a deeper look into how the employment and integrity challenges of young people in the formal sector can be further addressed, IGI with the support of Partnership for Transparency Fund, introduced a survey to revisit and collect post activity information of the BMF. This information could help to facilitate major professional skill uprate and empowerment of young entrepreneurs in the informal sector to deal with corruption and cumbersome business environment that they have to wrestle with to survive on a daily basis. Considering that the PSD strategy of IGI emphasizes an anti-corruption and good governance approach our efforts under BMF we prepare young people to navigate the bribery system with their integrity intact.

This is particularly important for IGI and its partners as we look into new ways of engaging ordinary citizens and public institutions to improve the performance of the country's national integrity systems; encourage innovative learning methods that could make education in Cameroon more relevant to employment and labor market demands. It is

² WORLD BANK (2014) *Cameroon National Education Profile 2014 Update* p.1-2 [Online] Education Policy and Data Center

important to note also, that the survey was conducted at a trying time when a civil unrest that turned violent had broken up in the south west region of Cameroon where the pilot BMF program was conducted. Internet access was also unsure; consequently a number of participants who were likely to participate in the survey could not be reached. However at the end of the exercise we were able to sample the opinion of more than 50% of overall former participants of the BMF program.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

As reflected in the statistics and analysis above a vast majority of Cameroon's growing population are youths. This places the country in a position wherein it could enjoy from the dividends of a youth majority; unfortunately this not yet possible as the current system of education and governance that ought to prepare this group of its population for the future are still ineffective.

This has become a worrying concern for Cameroon's young people who constitute the future of the country. Most essentially in a time when the country is fast urbanizing. In an effort to understand the implications of programs such as BMF, in addressing shortfalls in the education system and public service integrity, IGI was commissioned by PTF to conduct a post activity survey of the BMF program.

The purpose of collecting post activity information was set forth as follows:

- *Assessment of what previous BMF participants learned and applied in their daily work and implore suggestions for course update and next steps*
- *Gain insights into governance and legal and regulatory challenges encountered by young entrepreneurs and new entrants into civil service;*
- *Produce visual promotional materials of concrete follow-up activities, undertaken by former participants;*
- *Use information to adapt future BMF content and delivery.*

To achieve these objectives a number of survey questions were put forward for participants to strongly agree, agree, remain neutral, disagree or strong disagree.

1. *How you will you rate the impact of the BMF program on social change?*
2. *The modules were well paced within the allotted time?*
3. *The BMF training program can be compared to a formal classroom education sitting?*
4. *Is corruption a serious challenge to secure employment in Cameroon?*
5. *After the Training did you find your skills improved?*
6. *Would you be interested in attending a follow up training?*
7. *The BMF modules were in alignment with the program outcome?*
8. *Have you been able to use what you learned from the training?*
9. *The BMF program is a good way to obtain professional skills in the subject areas of business management and administration, accountability, anti-corruption and transparency?*

1.3. Methodology of the Study

To explain reality and the world views as perceived by previous BMF participants, an inductive approach wherein IGI collects and analyses evidence with the intention of using data to explain and bring out meanings of things studied was applied in the task of this survey.

Page | 6

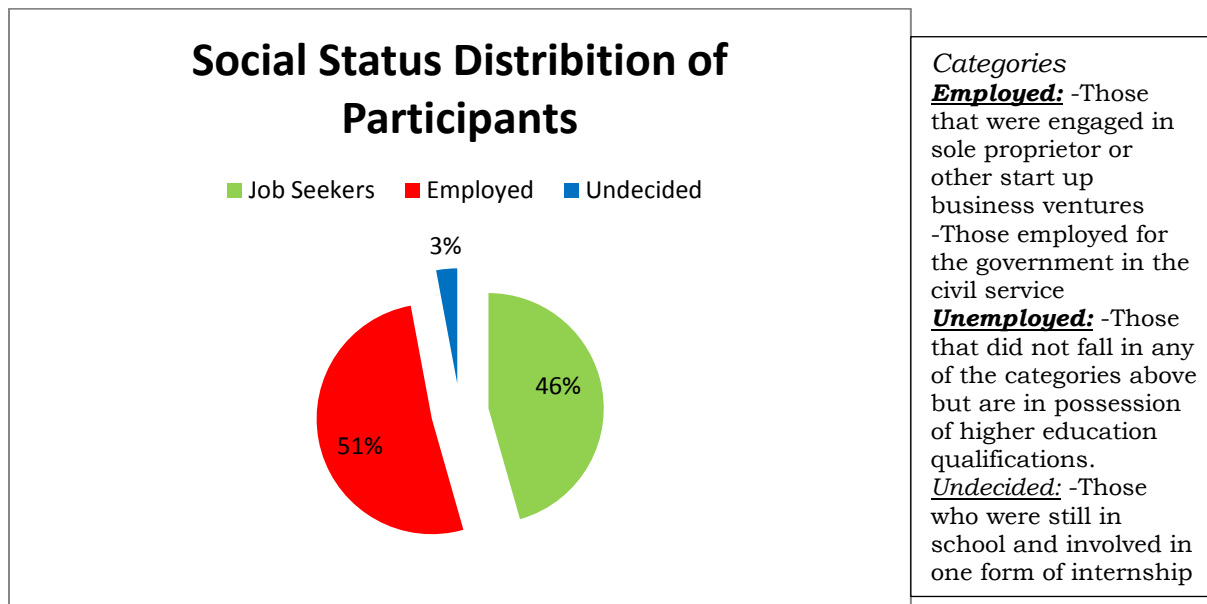
In so doing the study has been inspired by the interpretivist philosophy which considers the nature of reality as multiple and socially constructed instead of it being single and objectively determined; human interest constituting the main driver of knowledge. In this sense theoretical statements only emerge from findings and prior assumptions are not made. What this mean in essence is that, the formulation of a statement from this study only comes after analysis.

The research design is therefore exploratory and interpretive of phenomena which are analyzed largely through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative primary data using questionnaires [opened and close ended] based on a focus group; in this case previous BMF participants.

As with any social science research that deals with qualitative data IGI used frequency of responses from a specific question as statistics (quantitative data). This was then entered manually to display the findings graphically using chart functions in Excel. When this was done it became easy to analyze and interpret the perceived beliefs, views and results (in terms of percentages) which surveyed subjects attached to a particular area under review.

Overview of sampling size

In terms of the sampling size the survey involved a total of 73 participants within the following age group of 15-35 years spread across the following social status:



Out of the total of 221 participants who attended both the program opening and second day of activities [i.e. government officials, traditional leaders and other civil service intelligence personnel] approximately 144 participants completed the full training program which lasted for up to 5 days consecutively. Out of the 144 participants who participated in the full program we were able to reach out to, and survey a total number of 73 former participants of the BMF.

Notwithstanding a more sinister factor of importance to note, was the fact that the survey was conducted at a trying time when a civil unrest which had broken up and turned violent in the south west region of Cameroon [where BMF program was conducted] was still to be abated completely. The seemingly unsecured and tense atmosphere at the time had an impact on the team's ability to reach out to some respondents and vice versa. Internet access on the other hand had just been restored and remained unsure; consequently a number of participants who were likely to participate in the survey could not be reached.

Apart from that we found a noticeable pattern in the response rate. For instance the proportion of response from those who were employed was higher than those who were still seeking for jobs by a margin of 4%. Also there were those who were undecided with respect to their employment or job seeking status. This was because at the time they were either students or somewhat involved in some form of internship but not yet employed; however this category of respondents was very insignificant-3%.

Again it is also important to note that turn-out and retention during the 5 days training was equally impacted by the fact that some participants had travelled out of the region/town to attend the training and coupled with the fact that lodging throughout the 5 full days of the program was not provided for participants by the organizers making it difficult for some participants who did not reside in Buea to stay through.

However, it is our humble opinion that having employed the methodology set forth above, the results from this research should offer some prospects for generalization beyond the sample group.

2.1. Presentations of Findings from the Study



“The country has a vast number of growing small businesses & entrepreneurs, whose skill learning is critical to local wealth creation and economic development.



“It is vital that these private actors experience a system that is open to knowledge and best practice tools sharing, enabling them to achieve their potential, and providing an example of excellence at the start of their careers”.



2.2. BMF 2016 Program Study FACT SHEET

How Will You Rate the Impact of the Course on Social Change. **Fig 1**

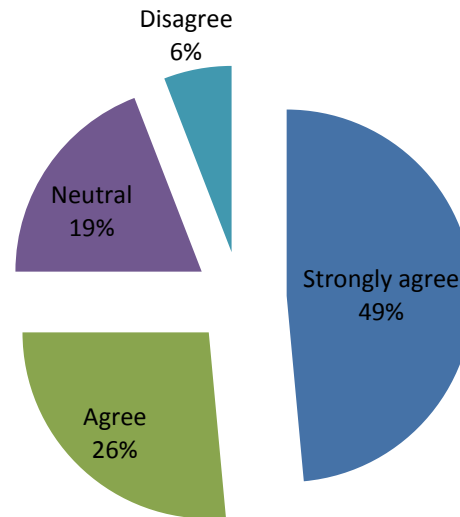


Fig.1. Rating the Fellowship on Business Management and Good Governance [BMF], 49% of beneficiaries strongly agreed that the program had a significant impact on social change; followed by an additional 26%. Only 6% of beneficiaries disagreed that the BMF program contributes a significant impact on social change. However 19% still remained neutral. Overall, the program had a 75% rating as a social change driver amongst its beneficiaries.

The Module was Conducted within Allocated Time. **Fig.2**

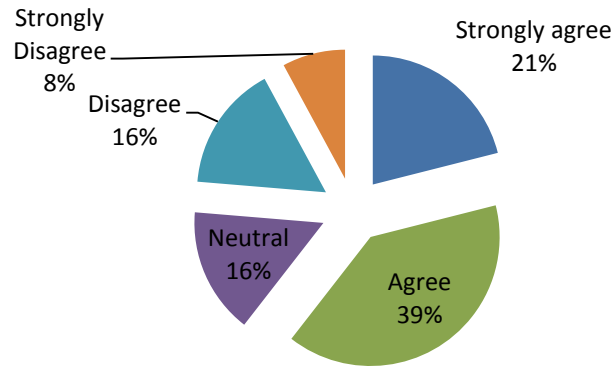


Fig.2. With respect to the timing of the modules, 8% of participants strongly disagreed while 16% of the same category were in disagreement that the program modules were conducted at the allocated time; making a total percentage of 21% who felt strongly, that the timing of the program modules needed to be improved. 16% were still neutral, while up to 21% and 39% respondent favorably with the conduct of the modules within the time allocated. This gives a total rating of 60% of participants who agreed favorable on the program timing

The Training equates to formal classroom learning. **Fig.3.**

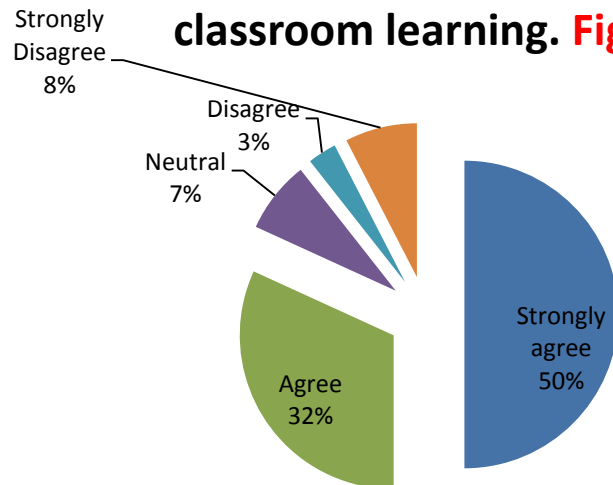


Fig.3. Comparing the BMF training to a formal classroom learning sitting, 50% strongly agreed together with an additional 32% who agreed. However only 8% strongly disagreed, followed by an additional 3% that disagreed. Yet 7% remained neutral. Overall the BMF program had a high rating of 82% as a training program whose learning equals what is being taught in formal classroom learning

Corruption is a serious challenge to secure employment. **Fig.4.**

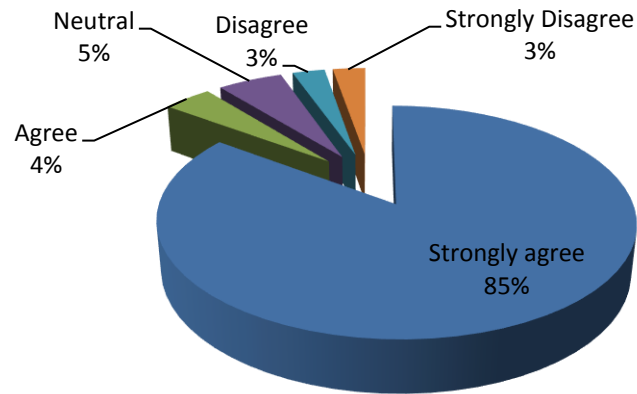


Fig.4. With regards to regulatory challenges facing new entrants into the job market and public service, participants single corruption as a major challenge to development and social equality. 85% of BMF participants agreed strongly, that to secure employment in Cameroon, the practice of corruption remains a major challenge. Only 4% plus an additional 3% of respondents felt the contrary. Overall 89% of beneficiaries agreed to have experience or witness corruption of some sort while seeking employment.

After the Training my Skills were improved. **Fig.5.**

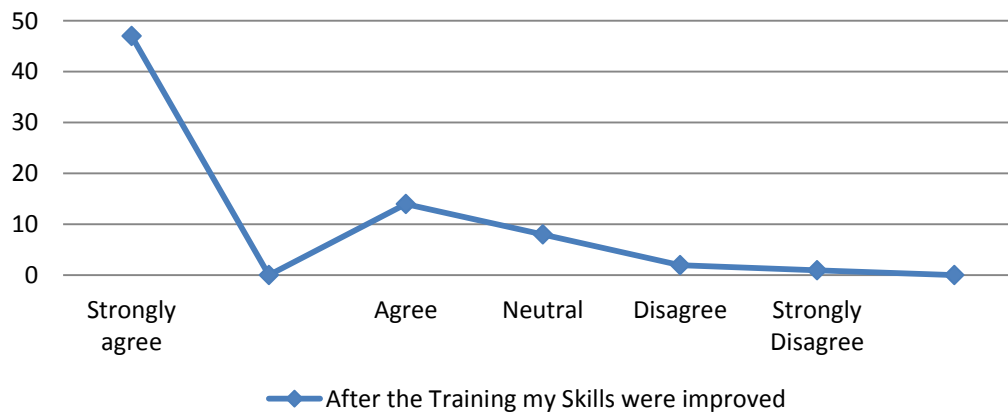


Fig.5. Following their attendance at the BMF 65% of participants agreed strongly that their skills were improved; including an additional 20% who also agreed. 1% strongly disagreed together with an additional 3% who disagreed. 11% were neutral as to whether their skills were improved after the BMF, though overall they all maintained that they would be interested in participating in a BMF follow up training exercise. In total 85% of participants who attended the BMF agreed that they had their skills improved following the fellowship program.

I am interested in attending a follow up. **Fig.6.**

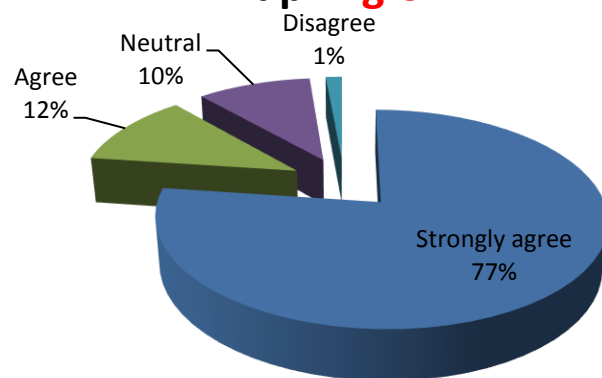


Fig.6. When asked if they would be interested in attending a BMF follow up program 77% strongly agreed. An additional 12% agreed while just 10% remained neutral. Only 1% disagreed. There was no record of any strong disagreement as to participation in a follow up BMF training program. Overall more than 89% of participants responded affirmatively that “ I am interested in attending a follow up” | 12

The modules are in alignment with BMF Outcomes. **Fig.7.**

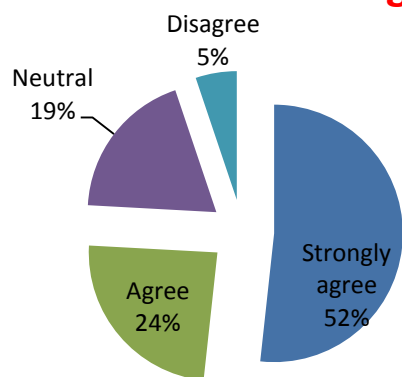


Fig.7. When it came to the program’s alignment with its intended outcome, 52% of beneficiaries strongly agreed, including an additional 24% who agreed. 19% remained neutral while just 5% were in disagreement.

I have been able to use what I learned from the training. **Fig.8.**

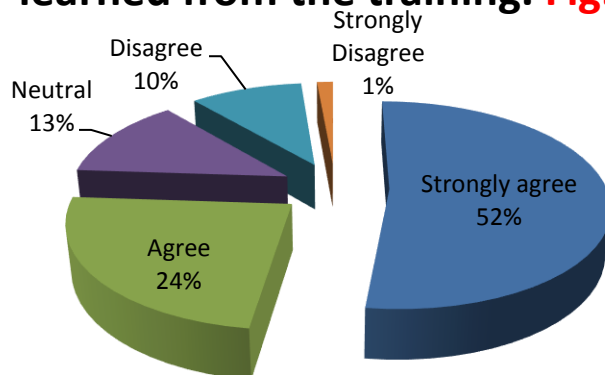


Fig.8. In terms of application and usefulness of the BMF training program in helping beneficiaries solve real life issues, 52% strongly agreed together with 24% [agreed] that they have used what they learn from the training in addressing real life issues. 13% were neutral while only 10% and 1% disagreed. Overall 76% confirmed that they were significantly empowered and were able to use the training they gained from the program

The course is a good platform for youths to gain employment & professional skills. **Fig.9.**

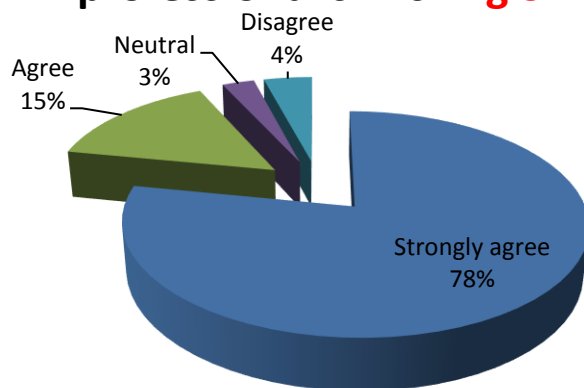
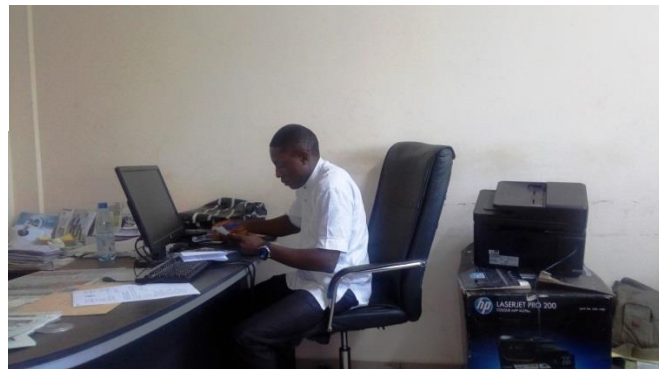


Fig.9. When asked if the Municipal Business and Governance fellowship was a suitable platform for young people to gain employment and professional skills, 78% of beneficiaries strongly agreed. 15% of additional participants surveyed agreed; meanwhile 4% disagreed while just 3% were neutral. Overall 93% of former fellowship beneficiaries surveyed, agree that the platform is a good place for young people to gain employment and professional skills



Municipal Council Good Governance Fellowship-SURVEY PART 2: Fact Sheet

Former BMF fellows, honing skills acquired from the course, in daily task at the local government workplace



Aspects learned in the course that is being applied in daily task.

Fig.10.

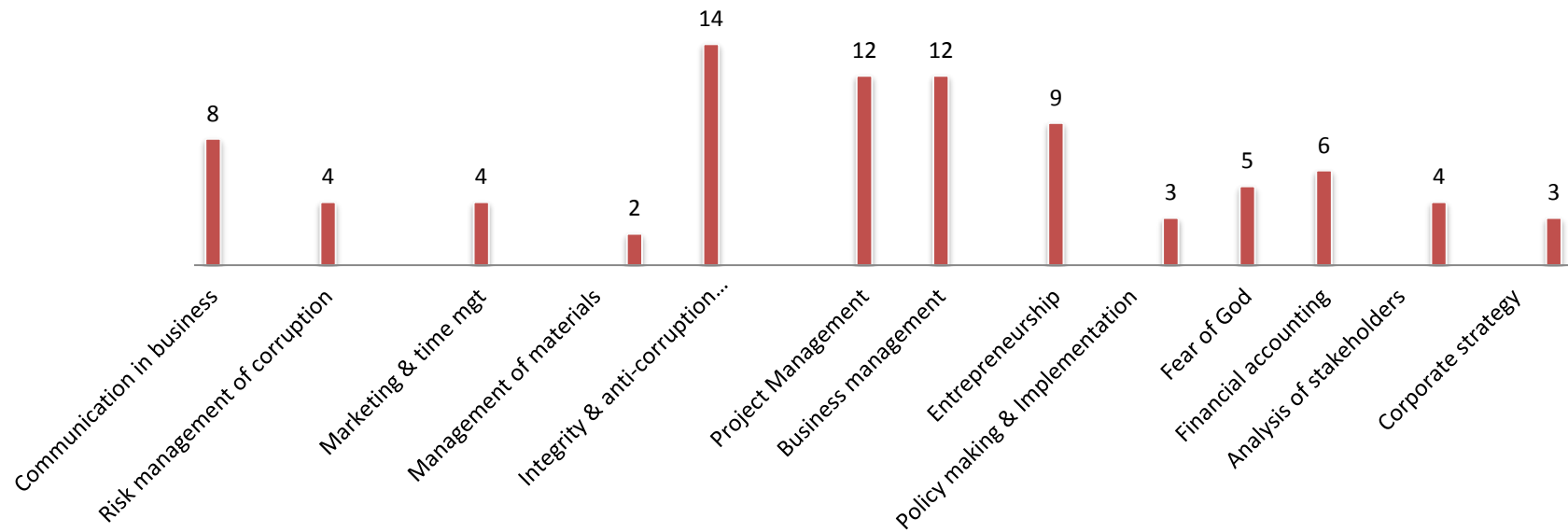


Fig.10. Among the 17 modules delivered at the fellowship, participants identified 13 aspects that they currently use in their workplace/daily task. Out of the 13 aspects identified integrity and anti-corruption education, project management, business management, entrepreneurship, business communication and financial accounting scored the highest rating of application in their daily task/workplace

Aspects learned in the course that is being applied in daily task.

Fig.11.

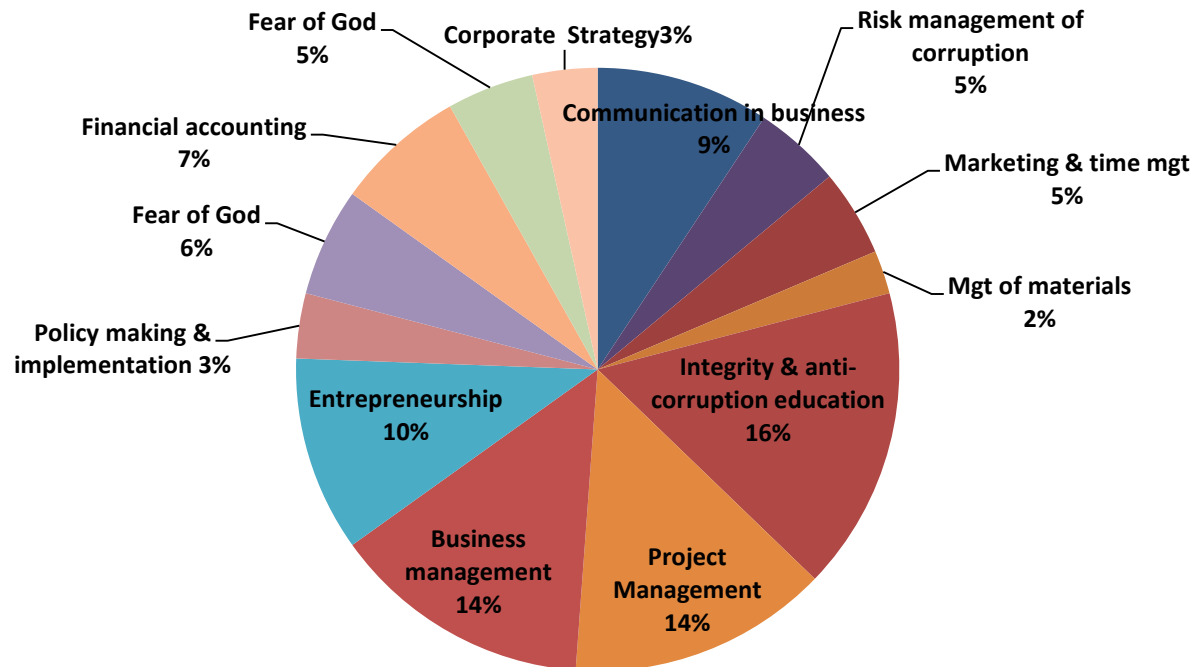


Fig.11. The pie chart diagram shows the percentage distribution of 13 aspects which are being used by fellows in their daily task/workplace. As far as the fellowship course update is concerned, the 13 aspects captured above should be given upmost priority [in terms of curriculum design] as they are found to be most useful to participants as they interact in the public space or work in their own business

Most important challenges experienced by new entrants into the job market & public service. **Fig.12.**

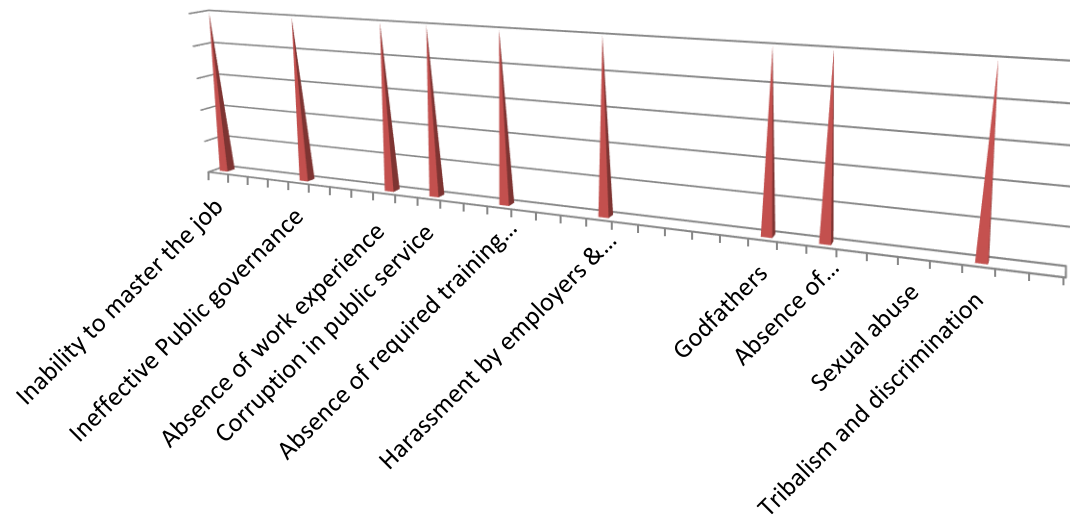
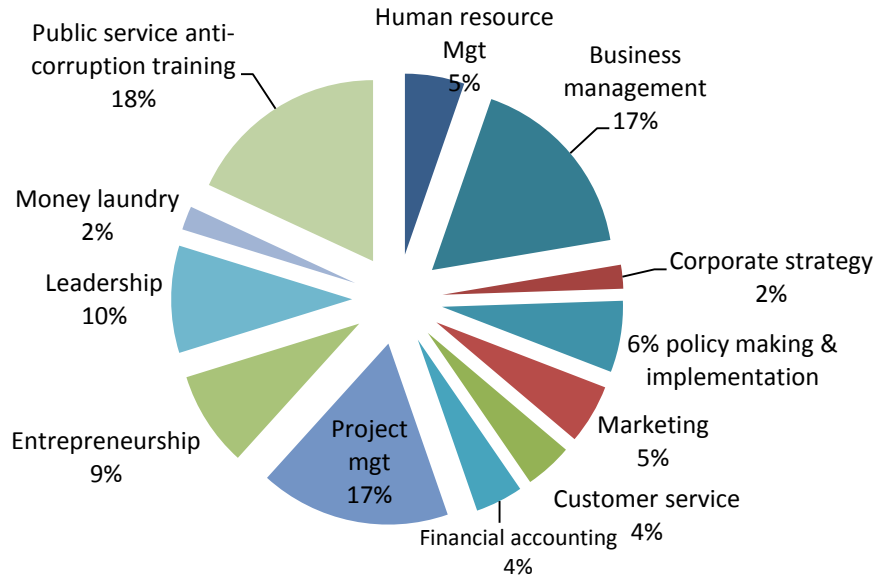


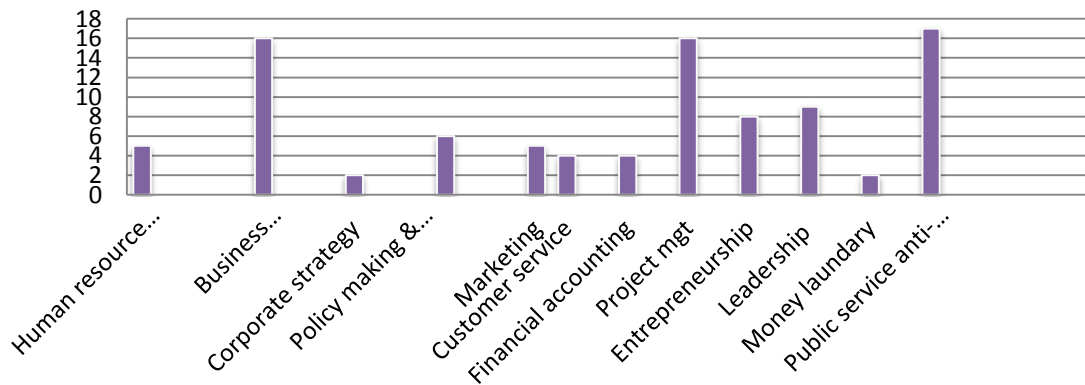
Fig.12. Insights from this aspect of the survey shed light on a 10 focal area of restraint, which will require governance, legal and regulatory frameworks to address. From this survey we were also able to discover a number of challenges, encountered by young entrepreneurs and new entrants into civil service necessitating legal and regulatory actions.

Going further, the study found the following to constitute critical challenges which new entrants into the job market or public service grapple with notably: inability to master the job, ineffective governance in the public service, absence of work experience, public service corruption, absence of required job market training skills, harassment by employers, absence of self-confidence, Godfatherism, lack of mentoring and coaching, sexual abuse, tribalism and discrimination. Program interventions or platforms such as the IGI fellowship could go a long way to play a significant role in easing integration of young people into the job market, including their ability to grow their enterprise and keep paid employment; as well as increase the number and effectiveness of new entrance into the job market and civil service.

Training modules Fellows found relevant to their daily task/job. **Fig.13a.**



Training modules found relevant to their daily task/job. **Fig.13b.**



R Fig.13. For a country that is seeking to become an emerging economy by 2035 and which ranks 145 out of 175 countries in TI's 2016 least corruption country index, it was interesting to find from the study a list of learning and training needs which both the unemployed and employed group of participants underscored as relevant to their skill needs.

These include as per their ranking:

- **Public service anti-corruption training 18%**
- **Project management 17%**
- **Business management 17%**
- **Leadership training 10%**
- **Entrepreneurship 9%**
- **Policy making& implementation 6%**
- **Human resource management 5%**
- **Marketing 5%**
- **Financial accounting 4%**
- **Customers service 4%**
- **Money laundry 2%**
- **Corporate strategy 2%**

This finding suggest the need for development organizations to focus human capital formation for development effectiveness among the top 6 skill need areas of the civil & business population

What participants think was best about the modules. Fig.14



Diversity of modules and trainers

Facilitators mastery and presentation

Skill training in project management

Simplicity of course delivery

Humility of facilitators

Explicit delivery transfer of knowledge

Teachings on how to fight corruption in the home

Training on money laundry

Improvement in their ability to manage a project

Lessons on effective leadership and the reward it gets from God

Patience and professionalism displayed by the team

Training on management of business

Availability of the audio tapes of training sessions

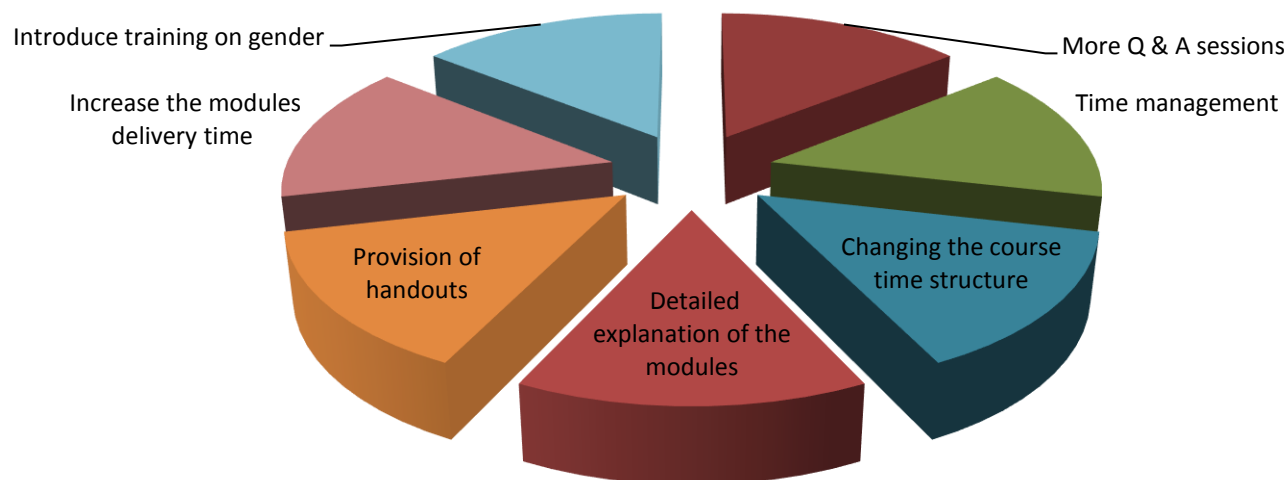


Suggested follow up activities. Fig.15

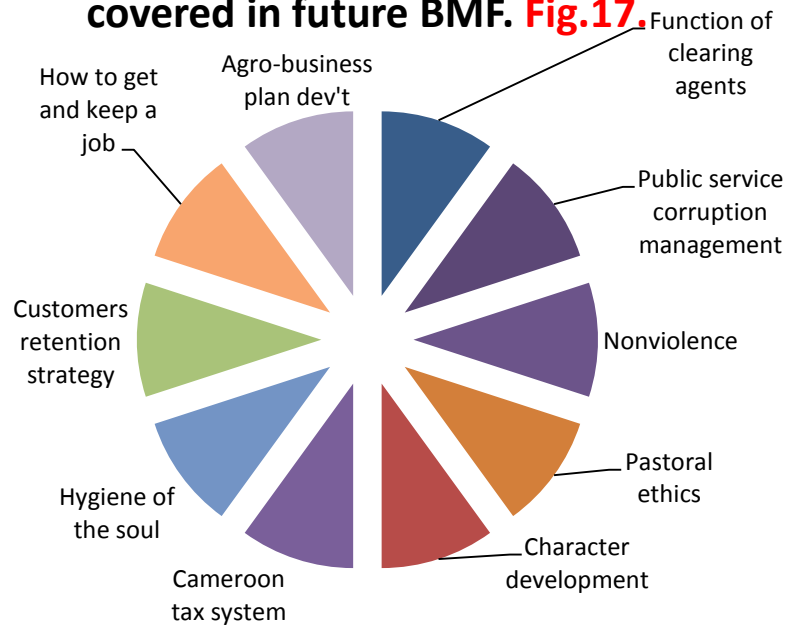


Increase the number of trainers & modules diversification
Follow up on how participants are applying the knowledge in their workplace
Email and text messaging
Time management
Counseling from experts on field challenges
Introduction of practical
Provision of handouts
Link participants to potential job opportunities
Linking spiritual and professional life
Creation of an interactive & networking site

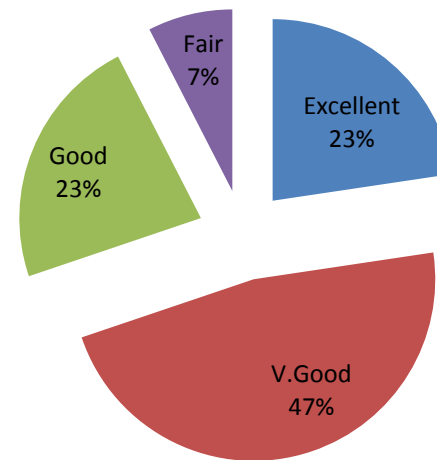
Looking back what will you like to change in the course. Fig.16.



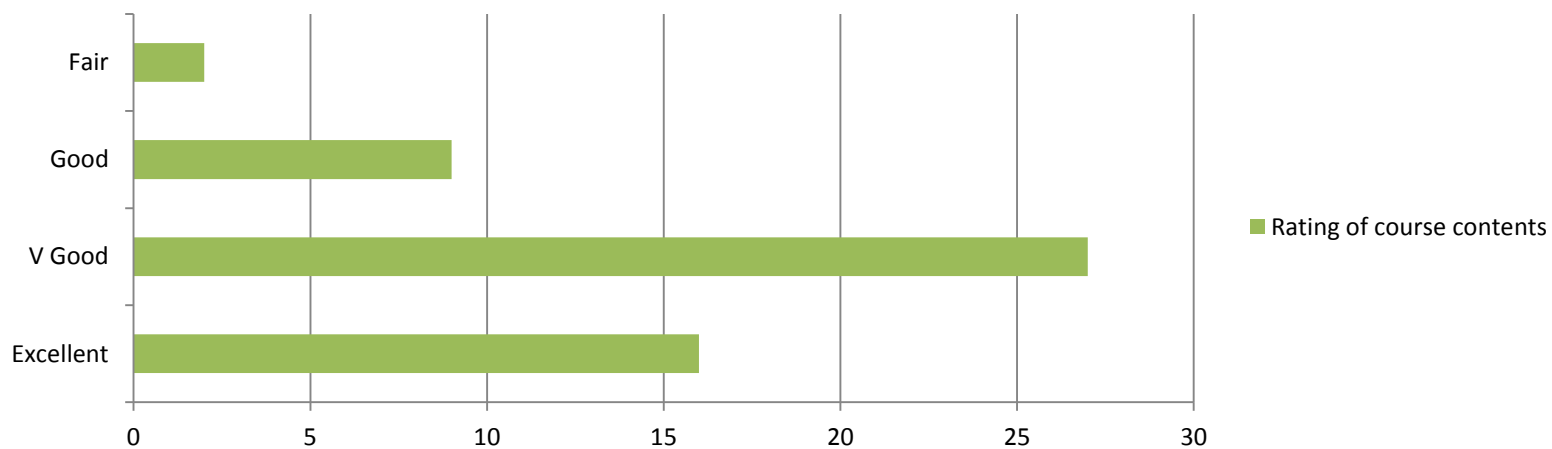
Additional suggested topics to be covered in future BMF. **Fig.17.**



Rating of course handouts. **Fig.18.**



Rating of Course Overall Content. **Fig.19.**



3.1. Summary of Significant Findings

In spite of the existence of a well-conceived strategic plan for the professionalization of human resource capital by the government of Cameroon, there are still significant barriers, which the current educational infrastructure will need to overcome to ensure quality professional education and retention of young people in learning centers [lifelong learning]. With many young people dropping out from school prematurely to support their families financially; and others failing to find paid employment because their skills do not match the requirements or demands of the labor market, this study finds that when it comes to *'applying what has been learned into practice'* education is not about certification but rather about preparing the young to fit into society.

Preparing the young to contribute to the much needed social change and economic growth in Cameroon, will mean looking beyond the current learning traditions and formal systems, by meeting young people who constitute majority of informal sector actors in Cameroon, with supplementary learning and training, concomitant to the demands of the current labor market and governance dynamics [going informal with professional training and skill development].

As one of the research subjects expressed, *"the public service integrity module has been my driving force at the office; because of the fear I now have for justice, it pushes me to treat everybody with respect and integrity"*. As captured in Fig.10, the research found 13 aspects of professional training, which are crucial to the everyday task and practice of professionals in the labor market and civil service- notably:

- 1. Training in public service anti-corruption 18%**
- 2. Training in project management 17%**
- 3. Training in business management 17%**
- 4. Training in leadership 10%**
- 5. Training in entrepreneurship 9%**
- 6. Training in policy making& implementation 6%**
7. Training in human resource management 5%
8. Training in marketing 5%
9. Training in financial accounting 4%
10. Training in customers service 4%
11. Training in anti-money laundry 2%
12. Training in corporate strategy 2%

Appropriating this evidence along with the activities of young people in the informal economy locally, there is a real sense why the top 6 skill-sets above, are considered crucial to the effectiveness of young entrepreneurs and new entrants into Cameroon's local economy. Majority of them operate micro enterprises and manage small scale projects; they encounter challenges and difficulties with their employers and the regulatory system; they need to know how and when to complaint, how to navigate the system and get their businesses running. [See highlight of a plethora of challenges encountered by new entrants into the local job market and public service from this study in Fig.12]

Though government has introduced entrepreneurship as a supplementary module for business management students, the findings of this research indicates that, more needs to be done, in terms of creating space and access within the informal sector, for those who may not have the statutory qualification and resources to benefit from these formal learning platforms to do so.

With the demand for better educated people and skilled professionals growing, as the country urbanizes, platforms such as BMF help ordinary citizens overcome shortcomings in their development potential, from aspects as distant as; financial accounting, to public service anti-corruption, public policy making, marketing, customer service, stakeholders analysis and strategic change leadership; project and business management. The BMF platform is inclusive and undermines the qualification and cost barriers, which often eliminate majority of small business actors and the unemployed, from supporting their skill development. A handful of former participants have gone ahead to use their certification from the fellowship, to obtain paid employment, gain admission for continued education in local and foreign universities.

With regards to regulatory challenges facing new entrants into the job market and employment into the public service in Cameroon; participant's single corruption as a major impediment to development, integration and social equality [Fig.4]. Though more than 85% of research subjects find corruption to be destructive of trust, resulting to unfavorable conditions for investment, and resultant stalling of the country's development potential; corruption is no longer news. How to undercut its obstruction to accountability, transparency and government's effectiveness and bring about the much needed investment for the development of the country's untapped potential preoccupies the current youth generation.

When asked to provide instances of corruption in their experience while seeking employment or other related growth opportunities; one of the respondents lamented that *"I applied for an agricultural grant and was selected, when I went to collect it, the director in-charge asked me to pay a bribe before I could be given the grant"* another said *"I have been harassed by my employer twice"*. Not knowing how to go about it and what to do to defend against these acts; many continue to find it difficult to break through the thick walls of unethical and professional practices in the public service.

Going further into governance, legal and regulatory challenges encountered by young entrepreneurs and new entrants into the civil service [as shown in Fig.12.], this study gives insight into some of the broader issues facing new entrants into the public service that will require training and learning on anti-corruption, effective governance, legal and regulatory interventions to circumvent and mitigate. These include aspects such as:

- Young entrepreneurs and new entrants into the job market's inability to master their job
- Ineffective governance in public service
- Absence of work experience
- Corruption in public service
- Absence of required training skills
- Harassment by employers
- Employees' lack of self confidence
- Godfatherism
- Absence of mentoring/coaching
- Sexual abuse
- Tribalism and discrimination

For a young economy seeking to reduce poverty to a socially acceptable level, becoming a middle income country by 2035, consolidating democracy and strengthening national unity and integration; great importance should be attached to addressing these socio-cultural, political and economic constraints seen as obstructive, by a growing number of both the educated, and uneducated youth population who are looking forward to integration into the local economy and utilization of their untapped potentials.

Likewise the study permitted IGI to view and understand the challenges of the Cameroonian society, from an angle of those who suffer from a problem, away from the customary outlook of the system as a separate problem entity. Nevertheless, with its youthful human capital endowment, rich natural and mineral resources, it is possible for the country to attract investment, accelerate its growth and achieve its development goals, if the government continues to introduce and promote innovative and tested approaches that contribute to effective government and modernization of its untapped youth human capital struggling to remain active in the informal sector.

3.2. Conclusions and recommendations

The results of the survey of former BMF participants reinforces the statement that, the program maintains a strong essence and importance, in addressing the employment and professional development needs of both, the working and non-working class groups of Buea municipality; most especially at a time when the cosmopolitan town is fast urbanizing and gaining credence as a pivot for academic studies in the English speaking part of the country. It thus offers an unparalleled opportunity, to those who have not acquired formal training in business management, public ethics and good governance to do so while in pursuit of job opportunities or management of micro enterprises.



Again the study is an eye opener to the actual challenges encountered by young people seeking employment as well as those already active in the job market. The employment and unethical challenges they face while seeking entrance into the job market or while trying to support the growth of their private enterprise has been learned in great detail. This itself will necessitate a fine-tuning of the 'wide curriculum' delivered at the initial BMF fellowship by IGI to accommodate the noticeable issues that new entrants into the job market and public service are facing as captured by the study in Fig 12.

Systematically the survey results give a high plus to BMF in terms of providing an alternative platform which meets the growing need and demand for employment and professional training.

Compared with traditional educational systems, it leverages an edge not just because it is inclusive of those who lack the basic qualification for entry into traditional learning centers, but more also, because it associates a near zero burden and cost to take part in the fellowship.

Thus it offers opportunities and hope that collective orientation of multiple segments of the Cameroonian society, could lead to far-reaching gains in terms of more knowledge for ordinary citizens as regards how to maneuver the regulatory and legal systems and change the traditional way of doing business in the country. This on its own will allow for an even greater majority of job seekers and working population in the public service, to understand and engage collectively in improving integrity and governance practice in their respective fields; as noticed with some participants who are already using the knowledge acquired from the fellowship to reform their place of work.

The expertise of BMF itself can also be sort to provide supplementary learning and expert training to university and high school students in the nontraditional subject areas of anti-corruption, public ethics, entrepreneurship, project and business management, ethical leadership and strategic administration-just to cite a few-. In an economic system where the educational infrastructures are currently lagging behind in equipping young people with employment and market driven skill sets, BMF offers a real possibility to undercut, the current gaps in professional knowledge and labor market skill-sets, vital to improve productivity, bring innovation and stimulate growth of the local economy.

The scalability of the model is a reasonable next step. This is essential to ensure that challenges in curbing inefficiency in public service, and professional skill gaps of young entrepreneurs, job seekers and new entrants into civil service and leadership positions in Cameroon are mitigated in a cost effective, highly inclusive and practical manner. More about the program can be found on the program website here www.bmfbuea.org.

For IGI the results of the survey is a useful find as it provides a deeper look into other socio-economic aspects of national life with intrinsic link to the Cameroon's current governance crises. The results of the survey provides a clear direction as to how under IGI's public-private sector development approach [PSD] the institution can collectively mobilize citizens and public institutions to work together to foster accountability, integrity and transparency for the building of strong public institutions on the one hand; and on the other hand provide labor market driven professional skill development platforms that could improve the managerial and employability opportunities for a vast majority of Cameroon's youth now involved in the informal sector.

With the persistent shortfall of capacity amongst civil society organizations in Cameroon to provide concrete strategies to deal with corruption and cumbersome business environment facing young people; the uniqueness of IGI in employing a combination of collaboration and non-confrontational approach, could be very instrumental in strengthening the capacity of CSOs to lobby government officials and press for efficient structures and reforms that are beneficial to young people and resource management in Cameroon in the foreseeable future.

Done in Buea
6/14/2017

Stephen N. Asek
Country Representative
International Governance Institute |
Cameroon
S. www.igi-cameroon.com
E. Cameroon@igi-integrity.com

