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DR. MOISES DA COSTA GOMEZ



Empowering youth lifestyles
through participatory action research

Judith Sonder - University of Curacao

Wendy Scholtes

-Bos, Machteld van Lieshout (The Hague University of Applied Sciences)

Food Boost Challenge Curaçao

Introduction

Food Boost Challenge Curaçao

Promoting healthier lifestyle choices among youth

- ☛ Collaborative applied research project for youth by youth
- ☛ Conducted by the University of Curaçao and The Hague University of Applied Sciences
- ☛ Started by a Virtual International Collaboration project (VIS-subsidie) in 2023
- ☛ Funded by ZonMW call '*Strengthening public health and well -being on the ABCSSS islands*'



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Background

Research Curacao 2015 (GSHS) & 2017 (NGE)

- ☛ *In 2017, 65% of adults in Curaçao were overweight*
- ☛ *Over 50% of youth perceived their weight as “about right” (2015)*

Public Health Monitor Young Adults 16 -25 years (GMJV, 2024)

- ☛ *41% of young adults perceived their weight as healthy*
- ☛ *Similarly, 41% have a healthy weight based on BMI*
- ☛ *51 % of youth in Curaçao are overweight or obese (based on BMI)*
- ☛ *The prevalence of obesity among youth is 7% in the Netherlands and 28% in Curaçao*



WHY Food Boost Challenge?

- ☛ Unhealthy dietary habits among youth
- ☛ Improving dietary habits requires behaviour change
- ☛ Active participation is necessary
- ☛ Including all parties in food ecosystem
- ☛ Empowerment, growth of innovative capabilities
- ☛ Curaçao now takes the lead in translating and scaling this approach locally —together with partners across the island



Research Method

Target group

Youth 16-25



Research

Partners Professionals

Researchers and/or students



Model for behavioral change

COM-B Model:

- Capability - *Does the person have the necessary knowledge and skills?*
- Oppportunity - *Does the environment provide physical and social opportunities?*
- Motivation - *Is there reflective (conscious) or automatic (habitual) motivation?*

All three interacting components are essential for actual

Behavioural change to occur

Bron: Michie, S., van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011)

The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions.

HOW Food Boost Challenge

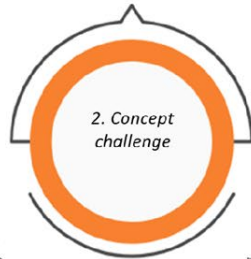


Ideation and design challenge for teams of students developing new concepts into one of four routes

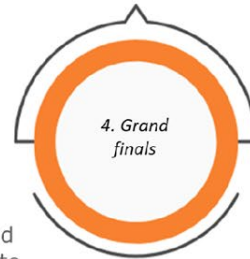
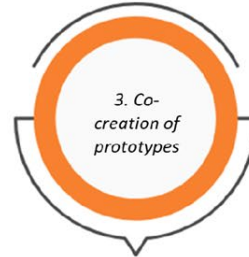
Pitch-event including tasting/experiencing prototypes of new concepts



Researching what seduces adolescents into adopting a healthier lifestyle and consuming healthier food products



Validation, co-creation and prototyping of concepts into one of four routes in consortia of students, partners and target group



Post-challenge exploration of high potential concepts in consortia aiming at implementation for impact

Exploration through peer research "what do adolescents need for change?"

**Social
Media**

Innovative strategies

Products

New food concepts

FBC Curaçao: 4 routes to solutions

Hotspots

**Places and/or events to influence
and improve the experience**

**New channels and/or ways
of presenting products**

**Routes
to
market**

Planning FBC Curacao



Phase 1
FEB-JUN 2026

Start

- Project kick-off - expert meetings
- Local adaptation of the project
- First research phase - exploring

Phase 2
AUG-DEC 2026

Preparing the Challenge

- Partner readiness
- Preparing materials
- Logistics

Phase 3
JAN-JUN 2027

Challenge phase

- Situational analysis
- Idea generation
- Co-creation
- Prototyping
- Pitches
- Finals

Phase 4
SEP-DEC 2027

Final phase

- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Upscaling



Phase 1: First results

1 - Exploring ideas & expectations of youth (SBO/HBO)

Wat eten jongeren op Curaçao dagelijks?



Door wie of wat worden jongeren verleid tot ongezonde keuzes in hun dagelijks leven?



Hoe kunnen jongeren geholpen worden om dagelijks meer gezonde keuzes te maken?



2 - Expert meetings

Education (SBO):

- Unhealthy food environment in and around school is a big problem
- Wish for tools and input for project -based education projects

Ministry of Health:

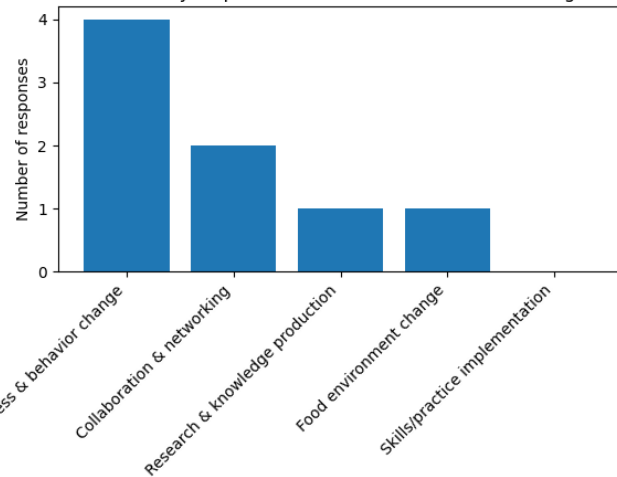
- Interested to partner up, to extend challenges to neighbourhoods (healthy communities)
- Comparison with social determinants

Prevention (Fundashon Prevenshon)

- Use of network & knowledge, role as advisor
- Role in expert & co-creation sessions
- Research partner - relation to NCD / lifestyle program
- Less overweight people in NCD programs



Thematic summary: Expected outcomes Food Boost Challenge Curaçao



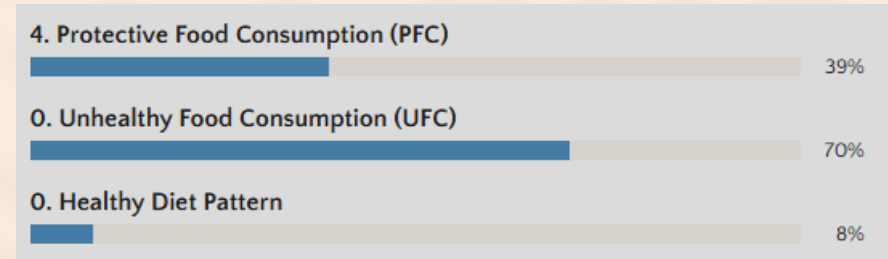
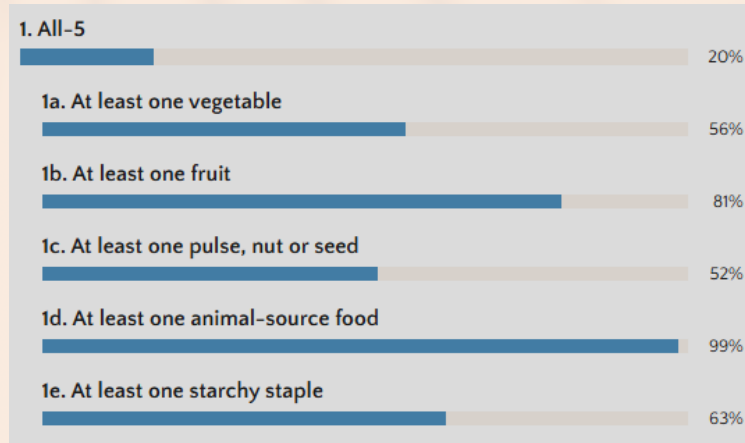
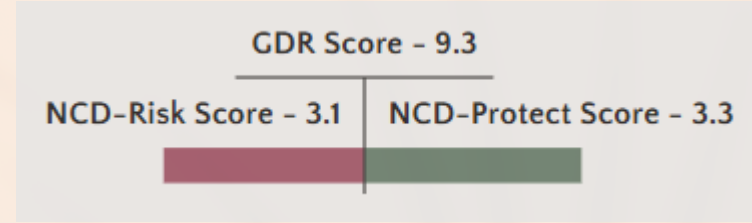
3 - Diet Quality

Conducted by student-researchers at UoC in 2026

143 respondents 16-24 years ($M=18.7$, $SD=1.7$)

19% HAVO | 81% SBO

32% Male | 68% Female





FOOD BOOST CHALLENGE
Recipe for a healthy next generation

**LET'S BOOST GOOD
FOOD TOGETHER!**

Thank you!



For more information:

Judith Sonder UoC

judith.sonder@uoc.cw

Food Boost Challenge Curaçao will **challenge as many young people from Curaçao as possible to participate** and generate the best ideas to inspire and boost good food!

Do you feel inspired and want to be a partner o r help us expand the FBC to the other islands? We invite you to take part (as a school, company, policymaker, or community partner), there is a role for everyone in the Food Boost Challenge!



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**Special thanks to our partners from
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