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**REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE
ON DIETARY HABITS AND PRINCIPLES
IN PORTUGAL**



FoodLab project

From the ground to the plate

ASPEA, PORTUGAL 2022



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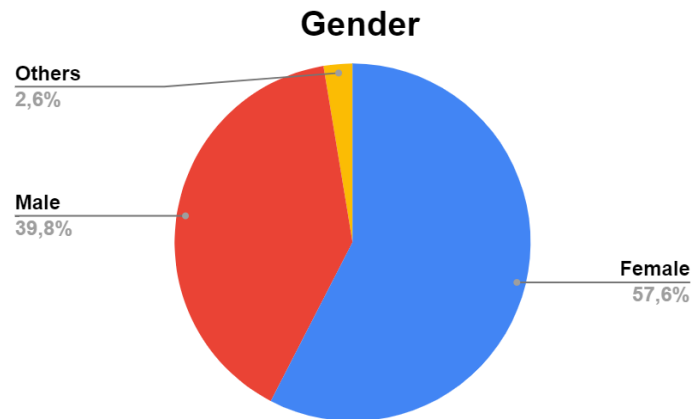
Introduction and profile of the participants

The purpose of this questionnaire was to carry out a field study on the eating habits and principles of young people in Portugal as a preliminary investigation to the activities to be developed by the FOOD LAB project.

Profile of the participants

The questionnaire was completed by 191 respondents of different age groups, all of them from Portugal. The questionnaire was carried out during the month of October 2022.

Regarding the gender of the participants, we can highlight that 57,6% of the participants are women, 39,8% are men and 2,6% chose Other.



The questionnaire was focused on youth, which is why the age ranges chosen were as follows:

16-18 years

18-24 years old

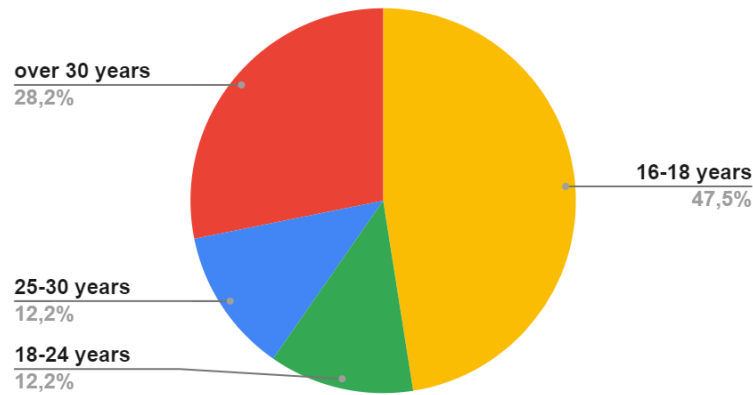
25-30 years old

Over 30 years old



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From wich age group are you?

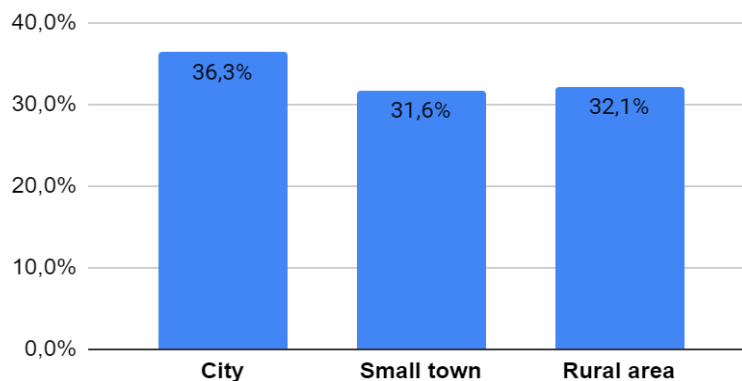


From the above table it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents are in the age group 16-18 years, representing 47,5% of the total sample, followed by 28,2% of the respondents above 30 years old and by equal representations of 12,2 % of the respondents in the age group of 18-24 and in the age group 25-30 years old.

We consider this aspect very positive because it indicates that we have a broad representation of all age groups, which was the objective in this part of the questionnaire.

An important aspect to have in mind when defining the profile of the survey participants is where they live. In this sense, we sought to survey both young people who live in the countryside and those who live in the cities. We considered that the results would be more representative if they covered both people living in the countryside and people living in the city. To the question whether they lived in a big city, a small town or in a rural area, the respondents answered as follows: 36,3% of them lived in a big city, 31,6% in a small town and 32,1% lived in rural areas.

The place where you live is considered:

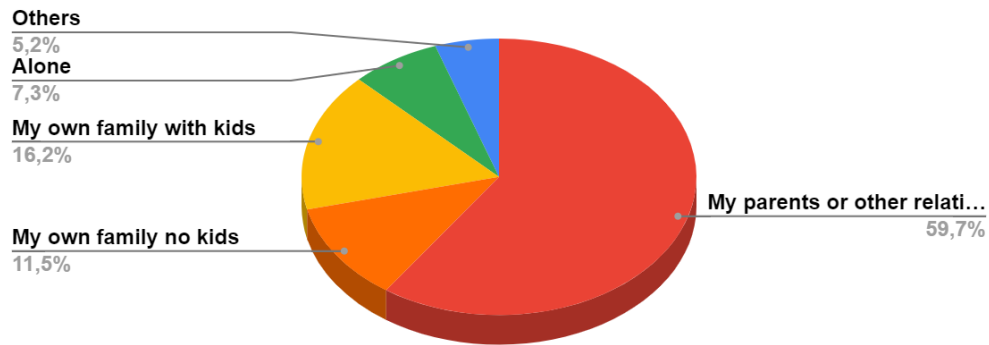




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Finally, regarding the profile of the participants, we wanted to know with whom they live: 59,7% lived with their parents and other relatives, 16,2% had created their own family and had children, 11,5% had created a family but they had no children yet and 7,3% lived alone. It means that more than half of them live with the family and the others have their own families.

I live with:



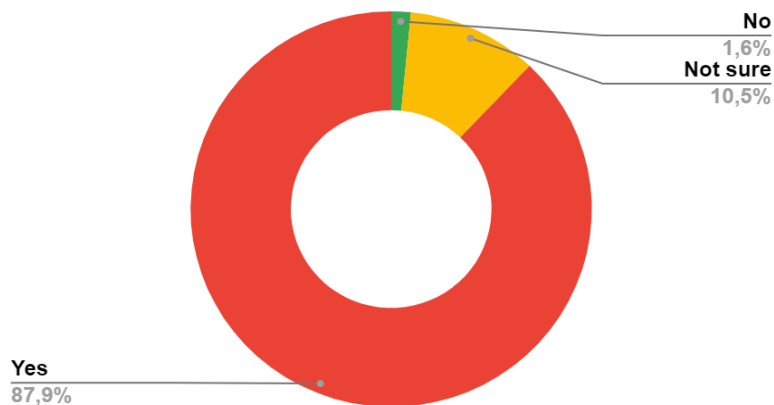
DATA ANALYZE OF THE RESPONDENT'S ANSWERS

Once we have the profile of the participants, we will analyze the answers obtained in the implemented survey.

Part 1.- FOOD AND HEALTH

The first part of the questionnaire was about the healthiness of the food that respondents are consuming, their awareness about healthy diets and their willingness to move to a healthier diet.

You know what a healthy diet consists of?

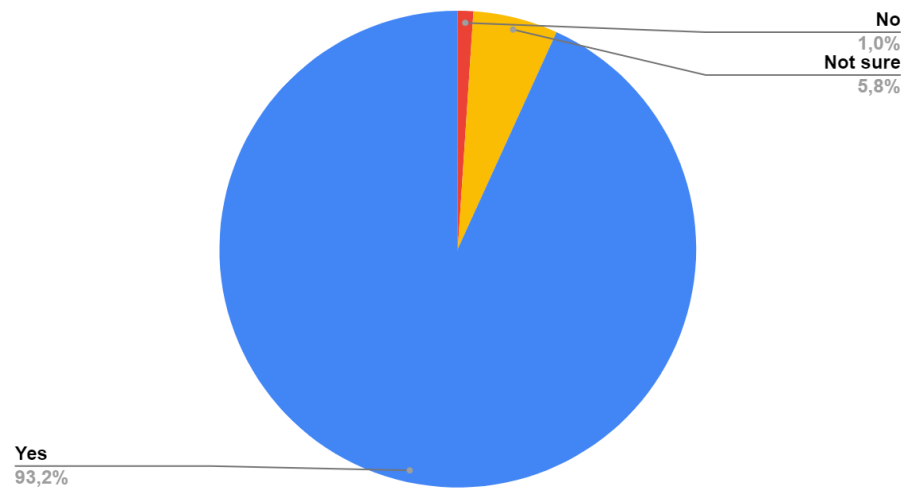




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The majority of the respondents, more than 80% of them answered that they know what a healthy diet consist of, while around 10% were not sure about it and only less than 2% didn't know what a healthy diet consists of. Almost the same answers we got for the question about the impact of diet on their health. 93,2% of the respondents said they know about the impact, 6% were not sure and only 1% didn't know about the impact of a diet on their health. So, more than 90% of the participants understand the impact that one's diet has on one's health. It means that we do not need to put much emphasis in this aspects in our awareness raising campaign.

You understand the impact that your diet has on your health?



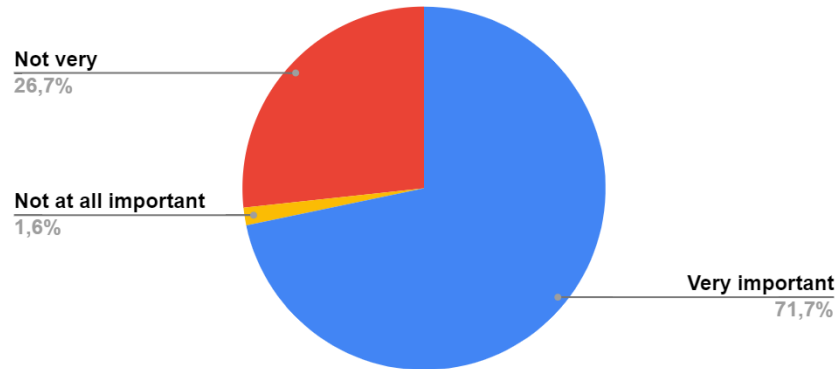
Concerning the question about: **How important is it to you personally to eat a healthy diet?**, the results do not correspond in the same proportion. For 71,7% it is very important to eat a healthy diet. For 26,7% it is not very important and for 1,6% it is not important at all.

It is curious how, despite the fact that more than 80% of the participants in Portugal do know what a healthy diet consists of and that more than 90% of the participants understand the impact that one's diet has on one's health, however, only 71,7% think it is very important to eat a healthy diet.



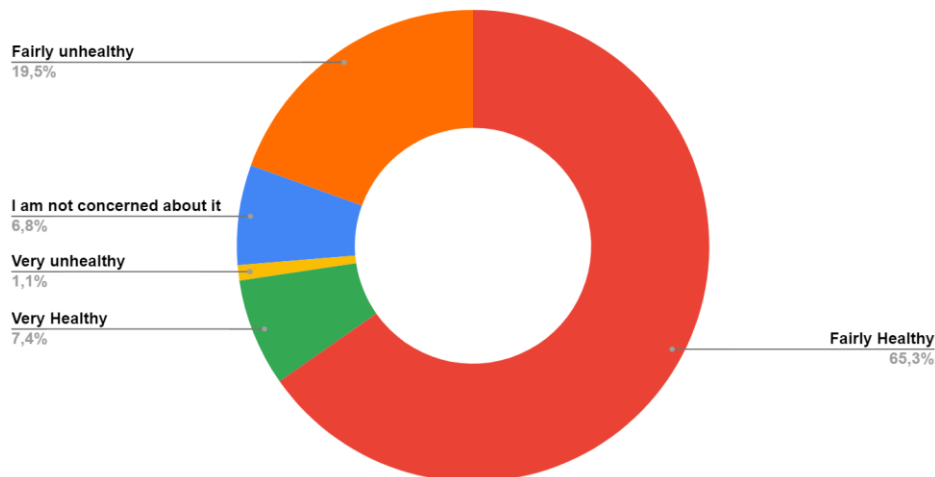
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How important or not is it to you personally to eat a healthy diet?



This is confirmed in the next question where around 20% of the respondents answers that what they usually eat is unhealthy, and 6,8% are not concerned about it. Still most of them, more than 50% eat usually fairly healthy food and 7,4% eat very healthy foods.

Thinking about the food you usually eat. Overall, would you say that what you personally eat is...



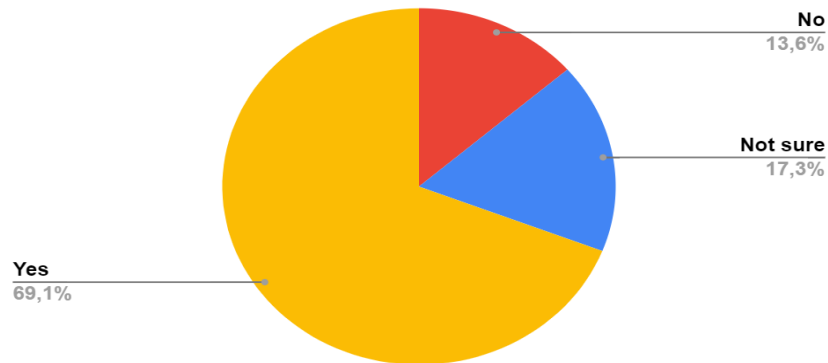
But when asked if they would like to change their diet to make it healthier, 70% of them would like to change their diet to make it healthier, while around 17,3% are not sure about that. Therefore, it seems that, although people know what a healthy diet consists of, a very low percentage are aware enough to put it into practice.

It seems good news to have a percentage of 70% of young people who would like to change their diet and make it healthier. This would be an important aspect to work within the project, support youth to face this challenge of changing their diet.



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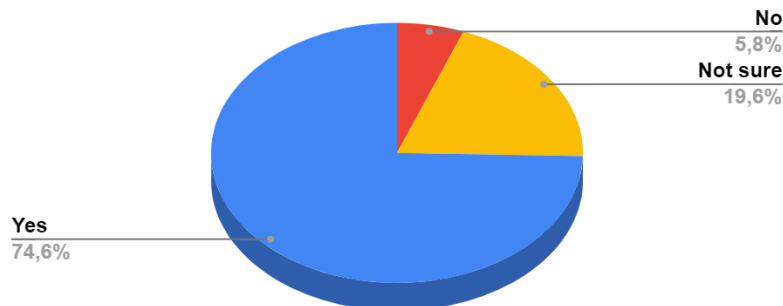
Would you like to change your diet, to make it healthier?



Part 2.- FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

The second part of the questionnaire was about the impact of the food on the environment. More than 70% of the respondents were aware of the impact that the diet can have on the environment, while around 20% were not sure about it.

Are you aware about the impact of the diet on the environment?

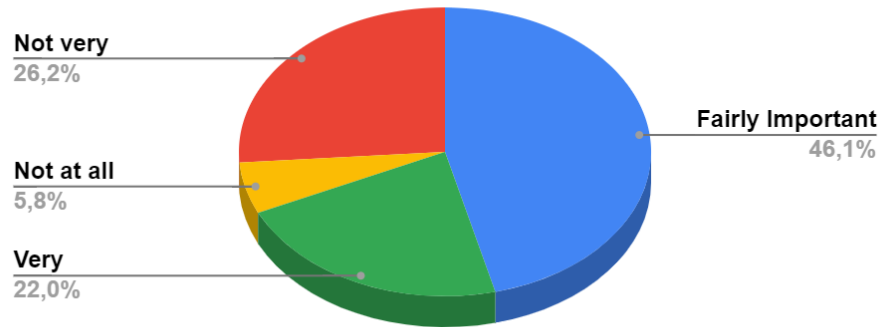


Therefore, we can conclude at this point that, although more than 80% of the participants in Portugal do know what a healthy diet consists of, only 74,6% are aware of the impact of the diet on the environment. This percentage is not big enough, more than 35% of the interviewees are not aware about this relation, in spite of the presence of this topic in the media due to the strong impact of fertilizers and pesticides in some geographical areas. It would be an important aspect to include in our awareness raising and training activities.



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How important is for you to buy food with a low environmental impact?



Following the theme of the relationship between food and the environment, the following question was asked: **How important is it for you to buy food with low environmental impact?**

For 22% it is very important to buy food with low environmental impact. For 46,10% it is quite important, for 26,2% it is not very important and for 5,8% it is not important at all.

As we can see, in general it is not very important for the participants to buy food with low environmental impact; for 26% it is not very important.

After posing the previous question, we decided to inquire about the particular diet of the participants with the following question: **Thinking about the food you usually eat, in general, do you think it is sustainable?**

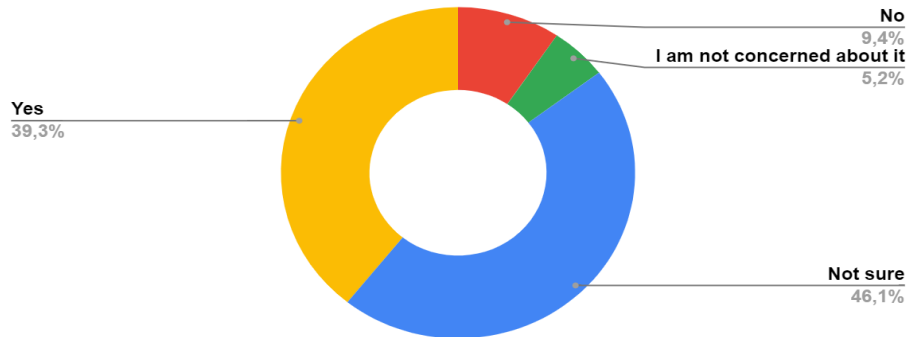
39,3% consider that the food they usually eat is sustainable, 46,1% are not sure, 9,4% do not think it is sustainable and 5,2% do not care.

It seems a weighty figure that 46% of the participants are not sure if the food they eat is sustainable. In other words, almost half of the participants are unaware of the concrete relationship that the food they eat has with the environment.



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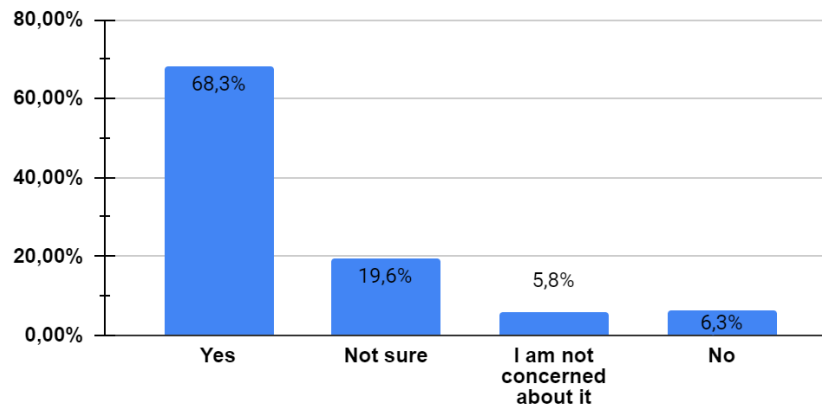
Thinking about the food you usually eat. Overall, do you think that it is sustainable?



Once asked if one believes that one's diet is sustainable, the next step was to find out if the participants would like to have a more sustainable diet, the question was: **Would you like to change your diet, to make it more sustainable or environmentally friendly?**

Almost 70% of the participants would like to make their diet more sustainable. Around 20% are not sure, 5,8% are not concerned and 6,3% would not like to make their diet more sustainable.

Would you like to change your diet, to make it more sustainable or environmentally friendly?



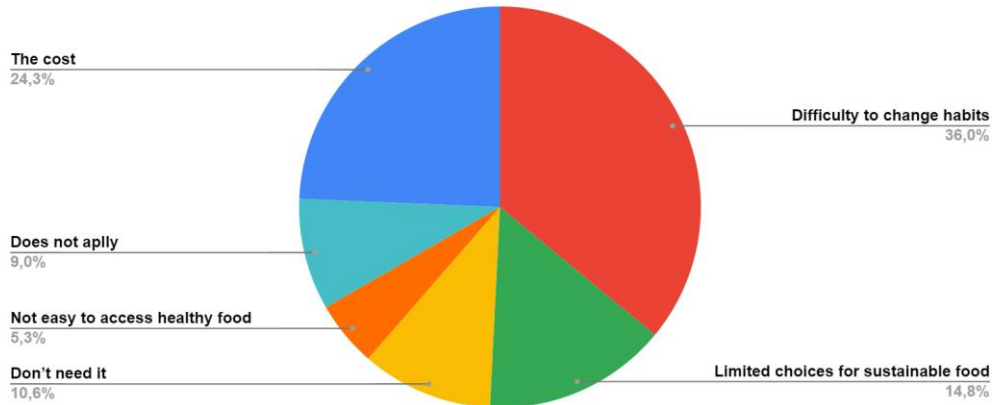
Following this study, it made sense to ask what is the reason...: **What is the main reason for not eating a sustainable and environmentally friendly diet?**

36% of respondents felt that the main reason was the difficulty in changing habits, while 24,3% found the reason to be the cost. 14,8% felt the reason was limited options for sustainable foods and 10,6% considered that the reason was that they did not need to change. Finally, 5,3% of the respondents didn't have an easy access to healthy food.



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What is the main reason for not eating a sustainable and environmentally friendly diet.

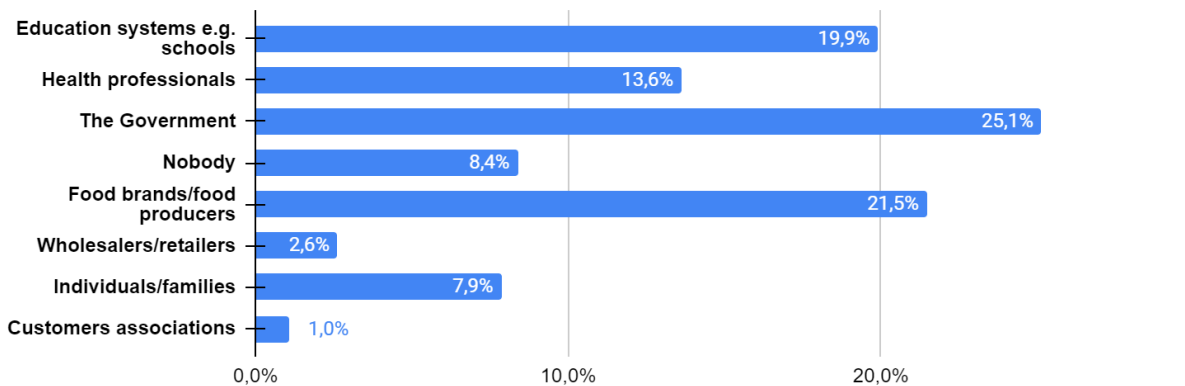


Part 3 - RESPONSIBILITY

Who is responsible for the eating habits and principles of the population?

In this part of the questionnaire, we wanted to see what the respondents thought about the institutions or persons responsible for the improvement of the healthiness and sustainability of the diets and in their opinion should the government create laws to force the development of sustainable agriculture.

In your opinion, who, if anyone, should be responsible for improving the healthiness and sustainability of diets in your country?



25,1% of the participants were of the opinion that the government should be responsible. 21,5% put the responsibility on food brands and food producers, 19,9% thought that the responsible party should be the educational systems, 13,6% the health professionals, and 8,4% felt that no one was responsible. 7,9% felt that it should be of the responsibility of the families and 2,6% of the responsibility of the wholesalers. Only 1% considered that the responsibility should fall on consumer associations.

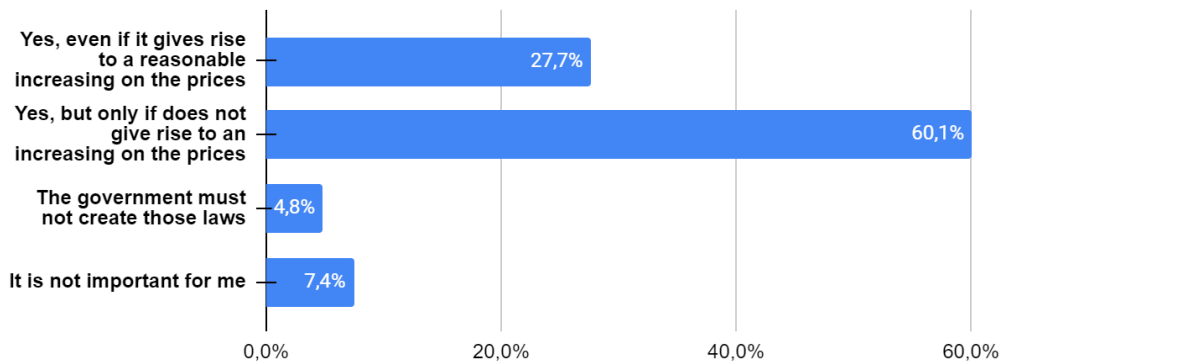


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Assuming that many people would bet on dropping the responsibility on the government, we posed the following question: **Would you agree that the government should create laws to force the development of sustainable agriculture?**

60,1% said yes, but only if it does not result in a price increase versus 27,7% who said yes, even if it results in a reasonable price increase. Some 4,8% considered that the government should not create such laws. And finally, 7,4% stated that it was not so important to them whether or not the government creates laws to force the development of sustainable agriculture. We can conclude that around 60% of the people in Portugal would like the government to force some developments on sustainable agriculture but they are afraid that this would lead to food prices rise and only around 1/3 of them would agree to pay a higher price for more sustainable food production.

Would you agree that government create laws to force the development of sustainable agriculture?



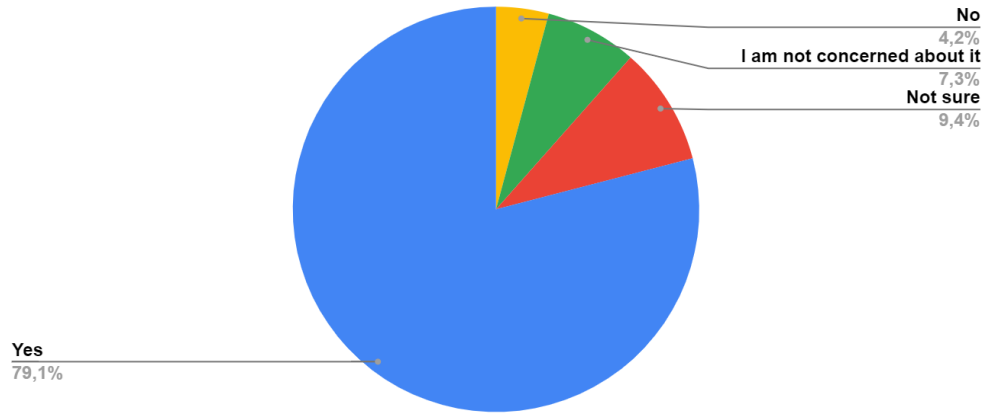
Assuming that another major system would bear some responsibility, we posed the following question: **Do you think schools should include content on sustainable agriculture and food?**

Here the consensus was resounding: 79% said yes. Approximately 9% said they were not sure, and very low percentages, about 4,2% said no and around 7,3% said they were not concerned. This again shows that people would like to know and learn more about the sustainability in the agriculture and food production, and this is where our project can have a strong impact.



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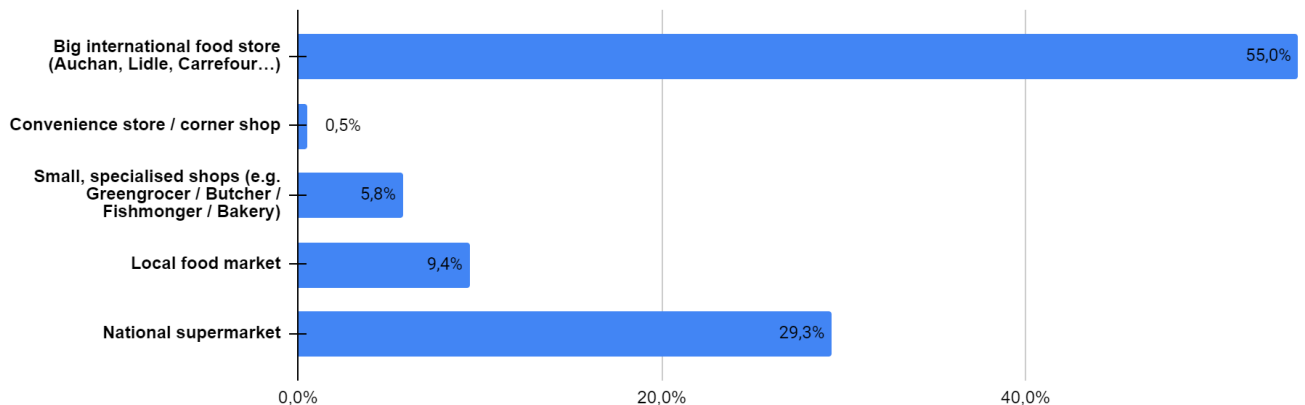
Do you think that the schools should include contents regarding sustainable agriculture and food?



Part 4 - PURCHASING FOOD HABITS

The last part of the questionnaire was about the purchasing food habits. We wanted to know where the respondents buy the food they consume.

Where is mainly bought the food you eat?



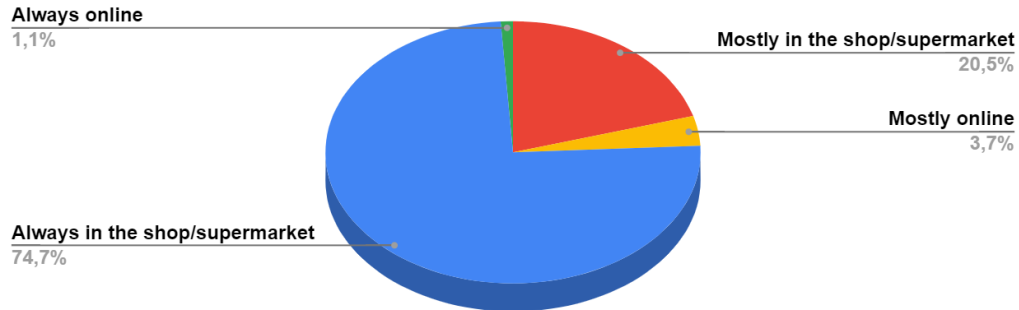
Not surprisingly, 55% do their shopping in large international food stores (Auchan, Lidle, Carrefour...) and 29,3% in national supermarkets. 9,4% shop in local food markets, 5,8% in small specialized stores (e.g. greengrocers / butchers / fishmongers / bakers) and 6.7% in local stores. There is virtually no representation of people buying on convenience store, accounting for less than 1%.

One of the last questions focused on online shopping: **Do you buy the food you eat in the store/supermarket or online?**



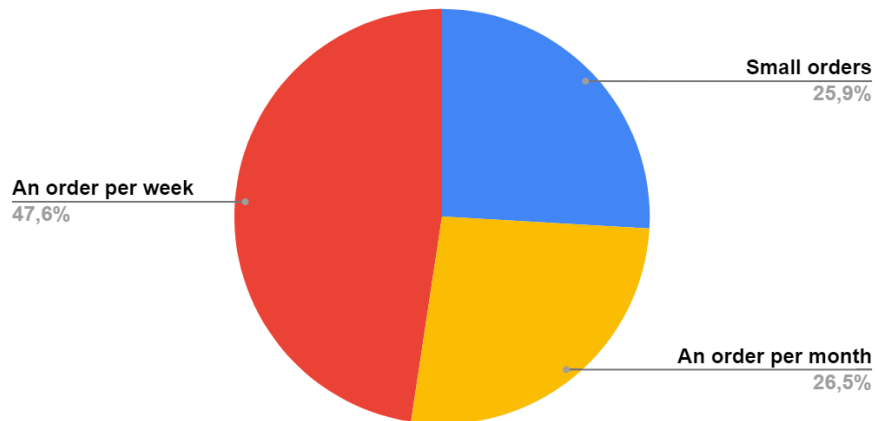
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The food you eat is bought in the shop/supermarket or is bought online?



It seems that in Spain people still continue to buy more in the shop/supermarket itself: about 75%. About 20% said that they mainly shop in the shop/supermarket (i.e., they sometimes shop online). About 3,7% said they almost always shop online and 1,1% said that they always shop online.

You buy your food in big or small orders?



The last question of the questionnaire has to do with quantity: **do you buy your food in large or small orders?**

47,6 % said they place one order per week, 26,5% place one order per month and 25,9% places small orders. That means that people in Portugal tend to buy their food by shopping more often and in small orders, which in terms means that the tendency is to eat more freshy food.



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CONCLUSIONS

With respect to the first block of the questionnaire, about food and health, we obtained a very large difference between what the respondents think and what they do.

It is a curious result that, although more than 80% of the participants in Portugal know what a healthy diet consists of and more than 90% of the participants understand the impact that one's diet has on one's health, nevertheless, only 71,7% think it is very important to eat a healthy diet.

In fact, it is even more curious (and alarming) that less than 10% of respondents consider that they eat very healthy.

We can conclude that, although young people know what a healthy diet consists of, they are not very aware of it, given that a very low percentage of them practice a healthy diet.

Do young people want to change their diet to make it healthier? Almost 70% said yes. It seems good news to know that more than half of young people would like to change their diet and make it healthier.

However, we must ask ourselves, why if more than 90% of young people surveyed understand the impact that a healthy diet has on health, not all of them (in fact, only about 70%) would want to change their diet to make it healthier?

Regarding the second block of the questionnaire dedicated to food and the environment, it is worth noting that more than 70% of respondents are aware of the impact that their diet has on the environment. Despite the fact that more than half of the respondents are aware of the impact of their diet on the environment, only for less than 30% is totally important to buy food with a low environmental impact.

Are the foods that respondents eat environmentally sustainable? 39,3% considered that the food they eat is sustainable and 46, 1% does not know. In spite of being aware (more than 70%) of the negative impact of their diets on the environment, less than 40% consider that the food they eat is sustainable. So, more than half of the participants are unaware of the real relationship that the food they eat has with the environment.

Even though they don't know much about the sustainability of the food they consume usually, a good hope is that they are willing to change their diet to make it more sustainable (around 68% of them).

But why don't people eat a sustainable and environmentally friendly diet? Two of the main reasons are: the difficulty in changing habits and the high costs of sustainable products.

The third block of the questionnaires dealt with the issue of responsibility, of who is responsible for improving diets in our country. Without unity in the answer, the government, the food brands and food producers and the educational systems were pointed out as responsible. In this sense, 50% of the respondents would consider that the government should create laws to force the development of



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sustainable agriculture only if it does not result in higher prices. In the case of education, there was a strong consensus: 80% said that schools should include content on sustainable agriculture and food.

In the last block, food shopping habits, it was observed that about 55% of the respondents shop in large international food stores compared to 29,3% who shop in national supermarkets. A very low percentage (9,4%) shop in neighborhood stores. Most of the shopping is done physically and not online.

The results show a complete and realistic picture of young people in Portugal in relation to food habits and principles.

The most relevant points of the analysis would be:

1. Most of the participants understand the impact that one's diet has on one's health.
2. More than half of the respondents think it is very important to eat a healthy diet.
3. However, less than 10% consider their diet to be very healthy. And only 39,3% considered that the food they eat is sustainable.
4. More than half of the respondents would like to change their diet to make it healthier and more sustainable. The reasons why they do not change it are, mainly:
 - (a) difficulty in changing food habits
 - b) the high costs of sustainable products.
 - c) limited access to sustainable food
5. In education we should receive training on food habits and principles.

The conclusions lead us to observe that there is such a big difference between what we think and what we do. In order to bring about a change in eating habits, we propose:

- To make a change in the education system right from the first class, and educate young generation about the sustainable and healthy diets and about the impact on the environment of such diets.
- The government should support more and even force by law the sustainable agriculture and food production.
- Helping to change healthy habits. As we know, changing habits is very difficult.
- Offer solutions that are not costly.
- Boosting and promoting local food production and local food stores.



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In this sense, we note that projects such as the one we are going to carry out, the FOOD LAB, are necessary for raising awareness among young people on issues of food habits and principles. We need a boost focused on raising awareness and helping to change habits through seminars, laboratories and exchanges.

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