

TACSO BiH Report on Educational Cycle on PCM/ Project Proposal Writing-towards domestic/local sources of funding based on using logical frame approach (EU application procedure)- Second Cycle

Sarajevo
May-June 2012

TACSO BiH Report on Educational Cycle on PCM/ Project Proposal Writing-towards domestic/local sources of funding based on using logical frame approach (EU application procedure) was prepared based on TACSO BiH staff observations and presence without participation of the Educational Cycle but also on findings of the reports on the educational cycle sent by the engaged trainers.



I Introduction

TACSO BiH Needs Assessment proved that BiH municipalities are single largest source of funding of civil society. In synergy with UNDP LOD 2 project findings it was confirmed that capacity building process of smaller and less experienced CSOs should be tailor-made for CSOs who apply for local sources of funding according to their needs and level of development.

How do we help small organizations grow? Led by these findings, TACSO BiH organized two education cycles on Project Proposal Writing-towards domestic/local sources of funding based on using logical frame approach (EU application procedure) for in total 154 representatives of 77 mostly rural civil society organisations from all over the Bosnia and Herzegovina. Eight tailor-made coaching workshops that were integral part of the educational cycle were organized in Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar and Sarajevo in period for February to June 2012.

Main achievements were related to enhancement of project proposal writing skills of 154 civil society organizations representatives located out of bigger centres but also to increase of the capacity of rural CSOs **in understanding administrative and evaluation criteria for selection of applications and to increase a number of small and rural CSOs to be able to diversify their fundraising portfolio.**

What makes this education cycle different from other trainings? Applied methodology considered tailor-made coaching workshops that were based on inputs provided by the CSOs in summaries of rejected project proposals and technical assistance provided through one-to-one mentorship focused on addressing specific needs of each CSOs.

Design of educational cycle enabled all CSOs representatives involved to receive feedback from the trainers on their rejected project proposals through one-to-one mentoring and later on, during the workshops, define their log-frames (vertical logic, indicators, assumptions, source of verification) and develop internal monitoring indicators system for their projects. Tested model of having two participants per CSO at the workshop proved to be successful for two reasons: project proposals were improved at the workshop through dialogue of the participants while at same time capacity of human resource- nucleus of CSOs' staff was improved.

According to the feedback of one of the training participants, approach that considered involvement of two representatives of single CSO in the educational cycle had double value in terms of enabling natural grow and capacity building of the organisation through dialogue of CSOs representatives and more effective transfer of knowledge to other organisation members.

II Overview of the Second Educational Cycle conducted in May- June 2012

According to the specific objectives of the educational cycle following outputs were produced through these activities:

- four three-day tailor- made workshops according to the findings related to the each of four groups (10 CSOs per each group) were organized;
- 37 CSOs received initial feedback from the trainers on their rejected project proposals;
- 37 CSOs filled out check/ inventory list describing in details in which segments their project proposals were improved.
- 37 CSOs defined their log-frames (vertical logic, indicators, assumptions, source of verification) at the three-days workshop;
- 37 CSOs received one to one on-line mentoring and brought their partly improved projects and their own commitment;
- 37 CSOs developed logframe matrices and monitoring indicators for their project;
- Tested model of having 2 participants per CSO at the workshop proved to be successful for two reasons:
 - a) project proposals were improved at the workshop through dialogue of the participants,
 - b) capacity of human resource- nucleus of CSOs' staff was improved.

Participant's feedback:

"I do believe that it is more useful to work on individual project proposals as it is easier to notice weaknesses to be improved."

The aim of the education cycle was to enhance project proposal writing skills of civil society organizations representatives in order to:

- increase the capacity of rural CSOs in understanding administrative and evaluation criteria for selection of applications;
- increase a number of small and rural CSOs to be able to diversify their fundraising portfolio.

Following themes were covered:

- Project Cycle Management
- Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP) and Logical Framework (LF)
- Budget of the project
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting.

After announcing the Open Call, TACSO BiH has received 85 CSOs applications for participation at in the education cycle with requirement to have two representatives of single CSO attending two-day coaching workshops that served as a test model of human resource development/CSO management within the particular CSO. In the first series of the trainings, 80 representatives of 40 mostly rural civil society organisations from all over of Bosnia and Herzegovina were involved in the training. Due to the high interest of both small and less-experienced but also those that are more experienced organisations, TACSO BiH has organised second cycle of education programme accepting applications and fulfilled selection criteria and sent requested set of documents.

Two short term experts/trainers engaged to conduct educational cycle were given following tasks:

- Assess the training needs, based on inputs from summaries of rejected projects received from CSOs;
- Design the training plan, tailor made to the needs of each group of participating CSOs;
- Develop the training material (handouts), annexed with the appropriate info documents;
- Deliver two three-day training courses for 20 participants (10 CSOs);
- Provide online mentoring support to each and everyone, as to review project adjustments and advice on further improvements, where appropriate;
- Report on findings, achievements and overall project results;
- Prepare Final Report, analytical and comprehensive, with related recommendations.

Educational cycle is based on TACSO Training manual "Developing and Managing EU Funded Projects".

II Design/ Structure of the Educational Cycle

Educational cycle was consisted of following:

- a) Mentorship/ One to One Coaching

First part of the educational cycle referred to the technical assistance (TA) provided through one –to-one mentorship to selected CSOs. Focus of the assistance was on addressing specific needs of each CSO involved (preparation of OOPP in-house session, further work on specific segments of project proposals: problem statement, goal, results, source of verification etc). Based on project applications recently rejected by local donor but also few proposals sent to foreign donors (including EC), consultants got an overview and acquired basic understanding of each project proposals sent by CSOs, made analysis and provided feedback on possible causes for failure of the proposals.

One to one on-line mentoring related to the projects improvements, review and guidance was focused on:

- re-design of the projects based on coaching and the group work results at the workshop;
- communication in relation to re-designed project with the trainers;
- transfer of knowledge and sharing information within the CSO.

Prior three day tailor- made trainings all CSOs representatives through online mentoring received feedback from the trainers on how to improve their project proposals and were required to revise their project proposal based on trainers' guidelines.

Trainers provided specific and clear instruction in which parts and how proposal could be improved. This process was followed by the check/ inventory list that reflected segments of project proposal for which CSOs got recommendation where proposals needed to be improved such as: problem analysis, target groups, project summary, general and specific objectives, results, activities, indicators, recommendations, log-frame and budget. By the end of the education cycle, representatives of all 37 CSOs described in details in **the check/ inventory list** how and which segments of the proposed they have revised.

Trainers' observation was that opposed to the methodology applied in the first education cycle one to one mentorship before the training proved to be a good notion. CSOs had enough time to go through the project and guidelines for improvements and discuss them in-house with the other members.



b) Three- Day Tailor- made Trainings focused on PCM and development of logframe matrices

Second part of the educational cycle referred to three day tailored made coaching workshop, based on inputs provided by the CSOs in their project summaries (with or without logframe matrix) sent within set of application documents and findings from one to one mentoring process. Requirement was to have two representatives per organization attending one of four workshops organised in Sarajevo.

Four three -day tailore- made trainings were organized in Sarajevo for 74 representatives of 37 CSOs from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina covering all geographical regions of BiH: Herzegovina, Northwest, Northeast and Central Bosnia:

- Sarajevo, May 23-25, 2012 for 9 CSOs
- Sarajevo, May 23-25, 2012 for 10 CSOs
- Sarajevo, June 06-08, 2012 for 9 CSOs
- Sarajevo, June 06-08, 2012 for 9 CSOs



Three- day tailor- made workshop – working group discussion



Three- day tailor- made workshop- presentation of results of working group discussions

By combining theory lectures, small groups discussions and analysis, direct feedback provided by the trainers and “learning by doing approach, three day workshops enabled participants to:

- improve knowledge and skills in PCM, focused on project idea development process;
- re- assess own project, using gained knowledge and shared experience;
- define possible gaps in development of further project ideas and project cycle manage
- develop monitoring indicators.

After the training participants succeed to:

- Improve knowledge on PCM – overall methodology and the structure;
- Improve understanding of critical success/failure points in project ideas applications;
- Familiarize themselves with the process of project proposals evaluation as a tool in pro-active analysis during the process of own ideas development;
- Advance problem analysis techniques, understanding and importance of its relevance to the entire project.

The training was structured around key issues in PCM, focusing on development of project idea, monitoring and evaluation criteria. As most of the training focused on key issues, like: problem and goals analysis, results and outcomes, logframe, indicators, assumptions and the budget.

During the course of the workshop, logframe was also presented to the participants, and the different levels and terminology discussed and where necessary, elaborated further in comparison to other donor descriptions of the same terms and meanings. The ‘logic’ of the logframe was discussed and the interrelationships that were developed in the analysis phase were described in relation to the different levels in the logframe.

Methodology used over three-day session was the combination of short lecturing and discussions applicable to real projects. Each day CSO’s had a chance to test and apply suggestions and acquired knowledge in own project improvements.

As per trainers observations, in comparison to the methodology applied in the first education cycle, having three- day workshop after one to one mentoring was apparently better choice. Though participants came from different background, with uneven experience and knowledge they were better prepared to communicate to the trainer, discuss the project and suggested improvements.

All workshop participants were given hard copy of the TACS Manual:”Developing and Managing EU Funded Projects”.



Three- day tailor- made workshop



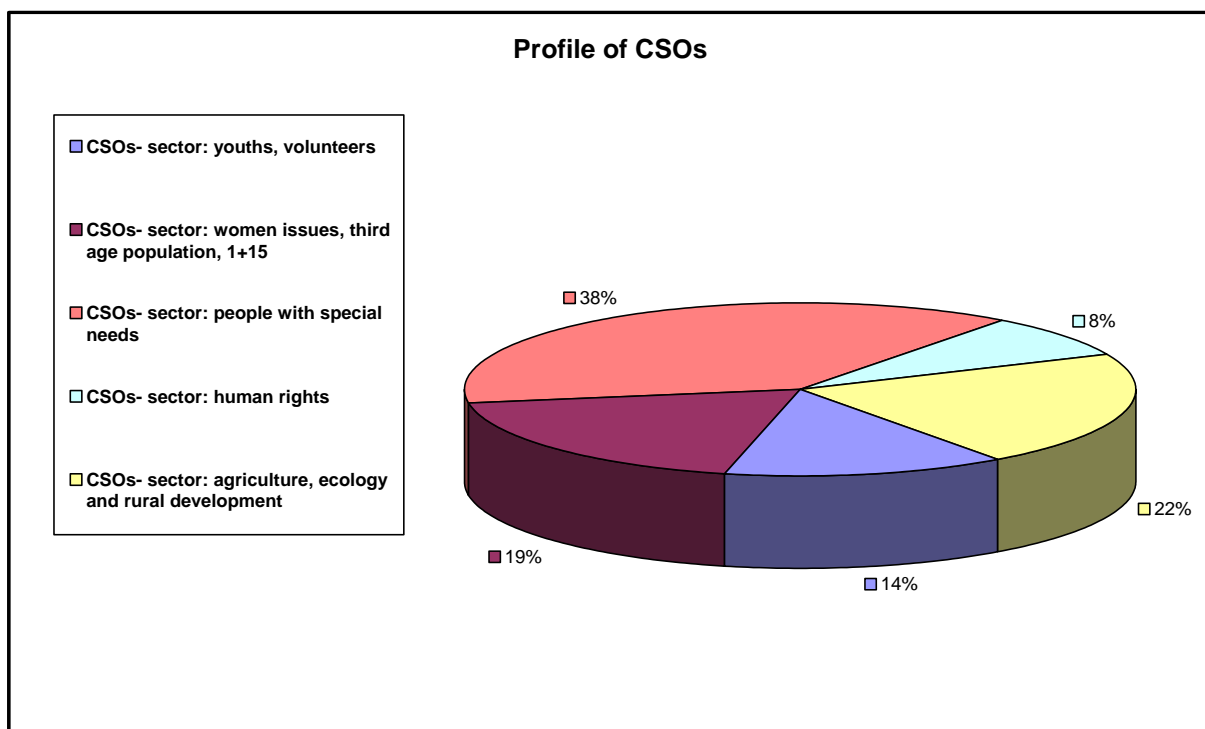
Three- day tailor- made workshop

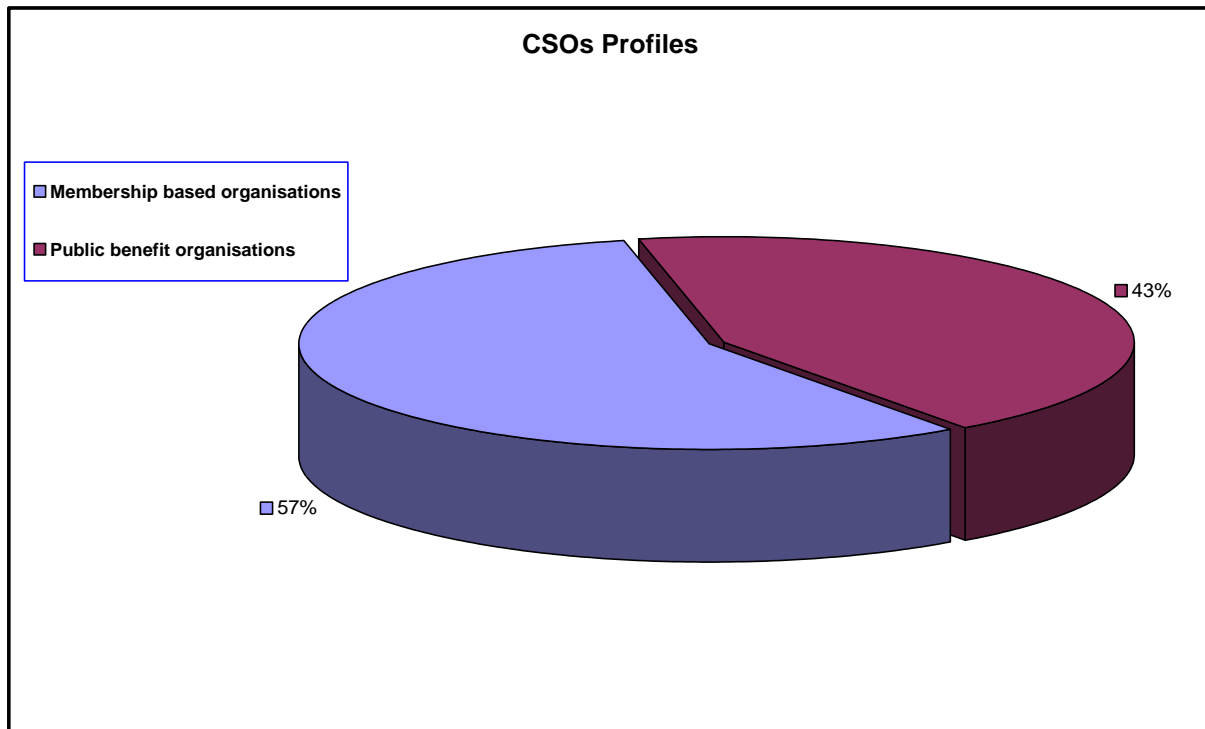


Three- day tailor- made workshop

VI Profile of CSOs

37 CSOs coming from different background were mostly involved in following sectors: youth and volunteers, women issues and third age populations, support to the people with special needs, human rights issues, ecology, agriculture and rural development. Both groups of CSOs membership based and public benefits were present at four workshops. Following diagrams reflect structure of participants according to their profile.



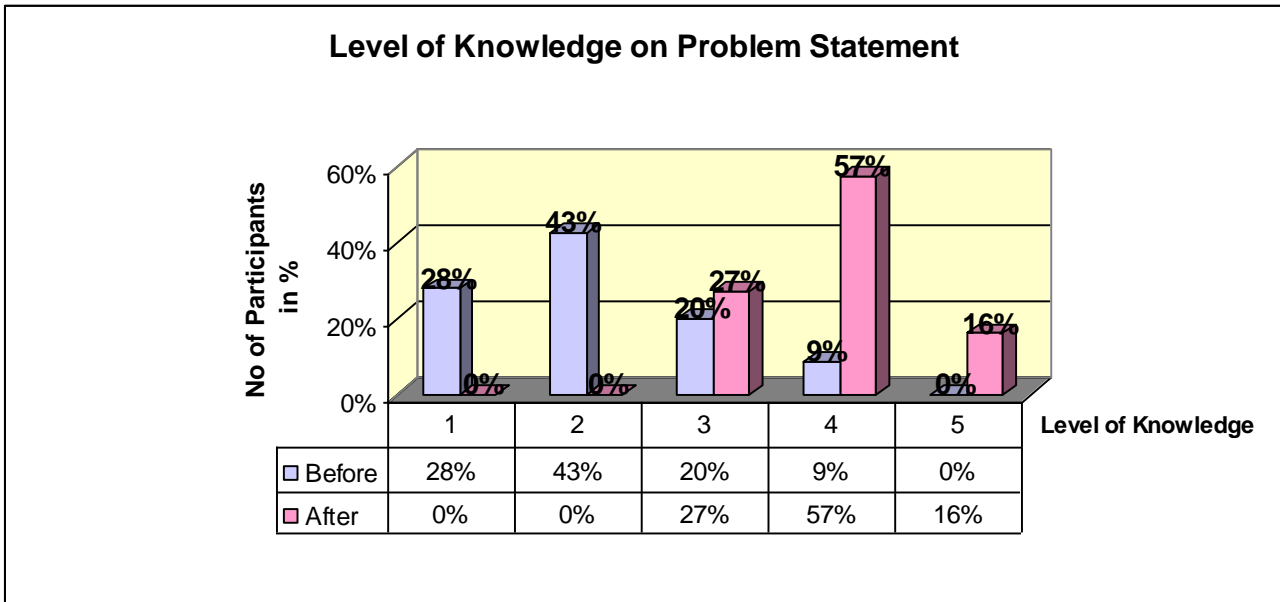


VI Evaluation

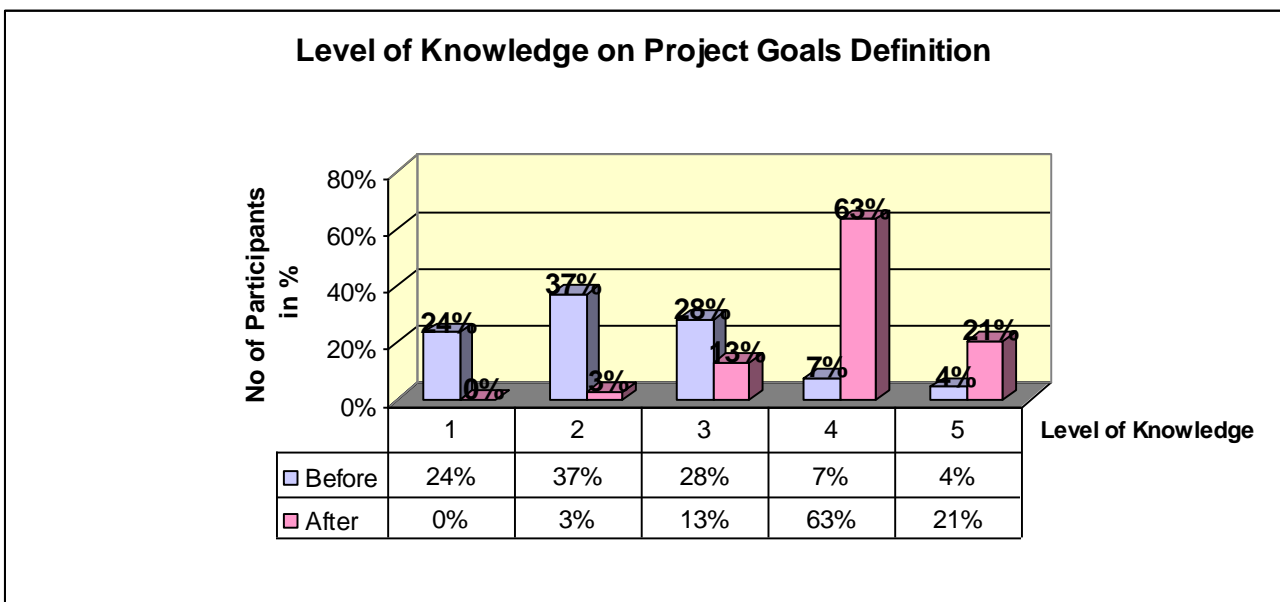
At the final evaluation session participants were asked to answer questions related to assessment of the following four aspects of the education cycle:

1. Level of project preparation related knowledge before and after the educational cycle;
 2. Approach to have two representatives of each CSOs involved in educational cycle;
 3. Source of funding improved project proposal will be sent to;
 4. Communication with TACSO BiH office;
 5. Working conditions during the training.
1. In the first part of the evaluation form participants scored level of their knowledge before before and after the educational cycle starting from one (1) as the lowest up to four (4) highest level. Level of knowledge was related to the following segments of project proposals covered during the training:
- a) Level of knowledge on problem statement;
 - b) Level of knowledge on project goals definition;
 - c) Level of knowledge on activities definition;
 - d) Level of knowledge on development of budget;
 - e) Level of knowledge and skills for development of overall project proposal.

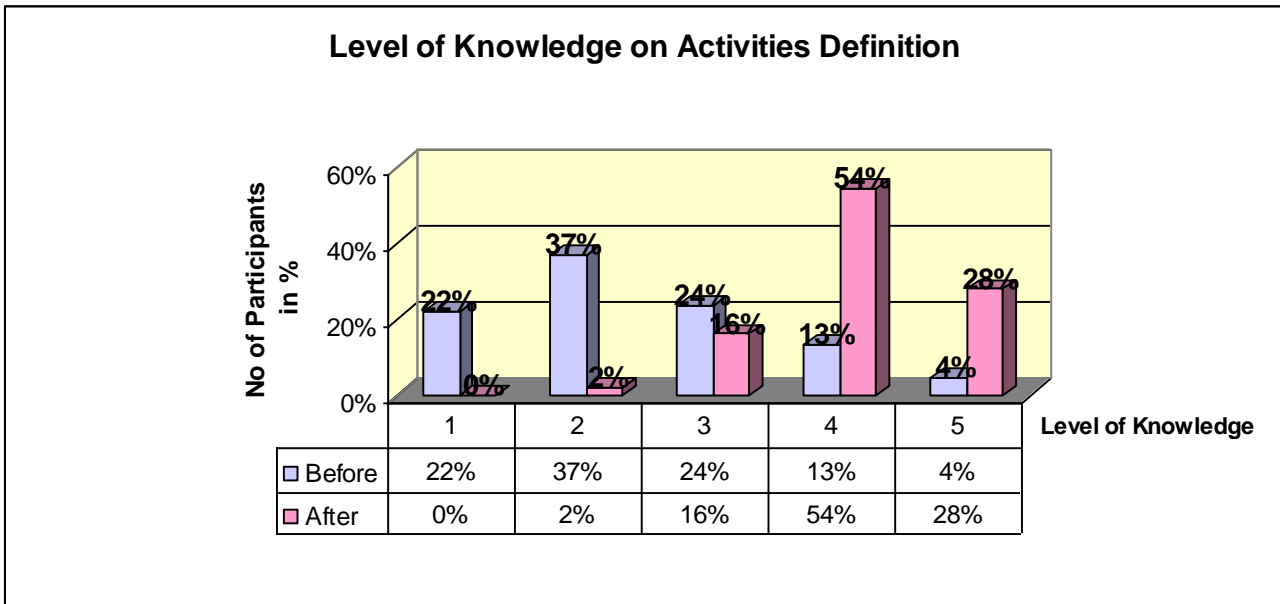
Following diagrams reflect how knowledge of participants on certain segments of project proposal increased after the education cycle.



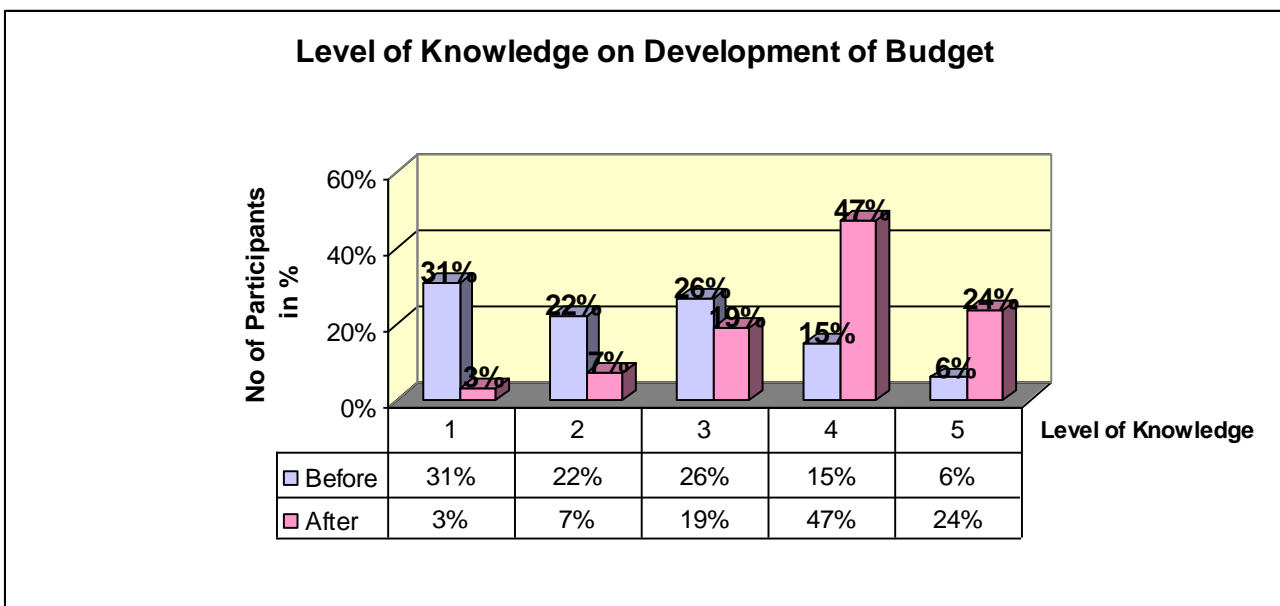
1. Level of knowledge on problem statement before and after education cycle



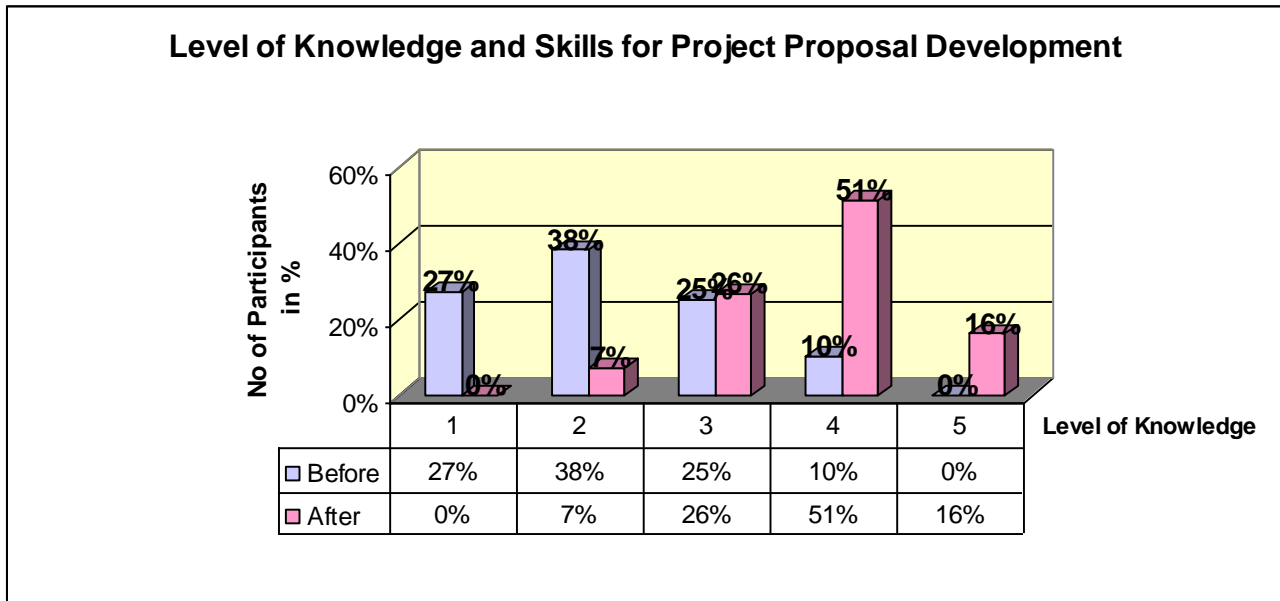
2. Level of knowledge on project goals definition before and after education cycle



3. Level of knowledge on activities definition before and after education cycle



4. Level of knowledge on development of budget before and after education cycle



5. Level of knowledge and skills on overall project proposal development before and after education cycle

2. Approach to have two representatives of each CSOs involved in educational cycle

Here are some comments related to this question given by the participants:

- a) *Excellent!*
- b) *Having two representatives from one organization is much better approach enabling better communication and possibility to exchange opinions.*
- c) *Everything was excellent. Teamwork helps always to learn much more and to be more efficient.*
- d) *This kind of approach is more useful for the teamwork within organizations.*
- e) *Approach is better than all previous approaches of my attended trainings.*
- f) *Approach is excellent, because two persons can learn much more than a person all alone.*
- g) *It's excellent to have two representatives from one organization at the training, but I'm very sorry that my colleague wasn't able to attend. However my other colleague and I, we'll do our best to make all necessary changes in our project proposal using the training material that we got at the training.*
- h) *It is very positive that you invited two persons from one organization because the project implementation is not job for an individual, it must be teamwork.*
- i) *The approach is excellent, because other organizations allow only one representative from one organization. Having two representatives from one organization we develop teamwork in organization itself.*
- j) *I think this approach with two representatives from one organization is very good, because it is much easier to make corrections on the project proposal with colleague, then alone.*
- k) *Great, to have two representatives from the organizations allow us supporting and facilitating each other.*

3. Source of funding improved project proposal will be sent to:

Source of funding improved project proposal will be sent to:

1. municipal level (38 PP)
2. cantonal level (11 PP)
3. entity level (16 PP)
4. state level (29 PP)
5. EU (26 PP)
6. Other donors (31 PP)

4. Communication with TACSO BiH office:

	No of participants
Bad	-
Good	8
Excellent	59

5. Working conditions during the training:

	No of participants
Bad	
Good	10
Excellent	57

V Follow up and Up-to-day Impact

According to the initial plan, TACSO BiH intends to conduct follow up in six- month time to assess successfulness of revised project proposal to be submitted to different donors. All CSOs attended the training will be asked to provide feedback on success of project proposals if submitted.

Up to date TACSO BiH received a feedback from one rural based CSO that reported their revised project proposal was accepted to be financed by a local foundation and World Bank.

Feedback received from the organisation representatives who attended the education cycle and whose project proposal was later on approved:

“We would like to thank you on behalf of our organisation and our volunteers for knowledge you transferred to my colleague and me during project proposal writing training held in Tuzla and Pale/ Jahorina. Namely, project proposal written according your guidance was submitted and approved by a local foundation and World Bank Office in a full amount proposed.”



Thanks certificates TACSO BiH received from Education cycle participants