

TACSO BiH Technical Assistance

REPORT

TA - NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP session, 20 October 2011

TOPEER - INVESTMENT FAIR “Bosna River Basin”

TACSO BiH held a workshop session on Networking, Coalitions and Resource Centres during the Investment Fair “Bosna River Basin” in organization of CSO TOPEER from Doboj on 20 October 2011. The session was the frame for debate with participants from CSOs/CSO networks, Doboj Municipality representatives, business environment representatives and journalists.

TACSO BiH Resident Advisor was invited for introductory words at the Fair opening.

Purpose of Support

CSO TOPEER, the organizer of the Investment Fair invited TACSO BiH to organise a session on Partnership and Networking for the present CSO representatives, CSO networks, business representatives, resource centres and municipal representatives. The objectives were:

- to introduce participants with networking and partnership elements
- to provide a model on these topics to be presented to Resource Centres for further use

Applied Tools

It was a 2.5 hours moderated session based on objective oriented planning (objectives mentioned); TACSO BiH prepared aspects of networks related to main elements which were discussed by participants working in three groups through brainstorming on the most interesting issues.

Major Challenges

In order to have maximum input, each participant, even while working within his/her group was provided with several cards to write his/her own thoughts on the most important issues. Participants came up with many ideas; the group discussed the consolidating findings afterwards.

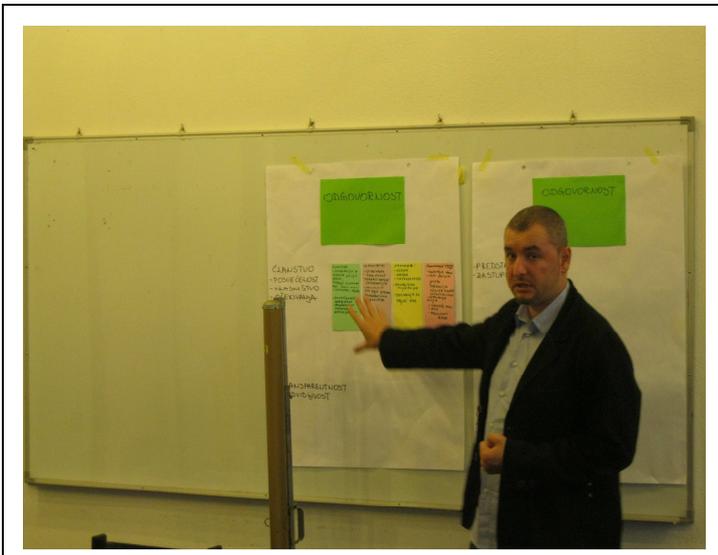
The major challenge was related to the fact that groups of participants were very heterogeneous and individual approach was used to enable each of them express himself/herself freely.

The following elements of networking listed in the table below were discussed. All groups’ findings were presented in plenary sessions.

First group	Second group	Third group
<u>Organisational Effectiveness</u> Strategic planning Leadership Capacity (functional and technical) Management Resources External relationship management	<u>Accountability</u> Membership and participation mechanisms Members’ commitment and ownership/management of expectations Members’ mutual trust and respect Transparency and predictability Representation	<u>Facilitation of ‘Sharing’ Information</u> Learning from experience and expertise Resources <u>Provision of ‘Servicing’</u> Capacity building Technical assistance Assistance in link creating <u>Channel for ‘Influencing’</u> Lobbying and advocacy Evidence research



Group working on Facilitation of 'Sharing', Influencing and Capacity Building of Networks' members



Presentation of the findings of the group working on Accountability

Major Achievements

Discussions on personal experience with partnership and networking in practice with reference points provided through exercise were very fruitful.

a) There are some examples of present participants' reflections (extracted from Minutes sent by CSO ToPeer) – valuable to be considered by TACSO BiH future activities in working with networks.

There some of the participants' findings related to networks management, membership and responsibility listed below:

Management

1. Management separated from the rest of the Network providing a working framework only.
2. Sharing responsibilities simplifies work
3. Management must clearly indicate commitment to the Network
4. Dictatorship behaviour

Added value of the membership of the network/coalition/resource

1. The value is in creating images of both the Network and the members themselves. Major effect is achieved when one can say that there are 21 organisations in the network, rather than only one.
2. Network membership, notwithstanding its joint work and influence, always creates the notion of power for its members; in an important moment (for member-organisation) the organisation can refer to network membership, anticipating stronger influence on the situation requiring changes.
3. Capacity building and empowering each member individually
4. All networks, successful and unsuccessful, led to empowerment of a number of organisations, thus the conclusion on necessity of OCD organising in networks.

Responsibility of Members

Very few networks or network members can equally responsibly fulfil what is expected from them. The fundamental or principle responsibility is upon the founder, the leader, i.e. the organisation financed by the donor to “keep” together a number of organisations prepared to invest their activities and make changes.

Present participants assessed that the underlying problem is the fact that CSOs join networks believing that some of their problems might be resolved that way; different motivation in this case does not lead to network development, certain results are achieved only due to fact that they are numerous. Mutual respect between network members is rarely publically demonstrated.

There is no transfer of responsibilities for two reasons:

1. Network members do not feel responsible for its development because they do not consider it a process of their own, but a process of network leader.
2. Network members lack information about fundamental objectives of network forming, i.e. which changes should the network initiate, therefore neither module nor activities are fully clear.

Present participants assumed that the above mentioned “observations” are not a negative aspect of network's activities, but impossibility to maintain a network due to inconsistent funding, thus there are very few organisations in BiH that can lead one of well-known networks without financial support.

b) The second achievement is the fact that trainers from ToPeer Resource Centre used the model (both the content and the approach to moderation) for their future activities as reported from their feedback.

Lessons Learnt

For a shorter session (like the 2.5 hours one) with different stakeholders among participants, brainstorming technique was an excellent tool to explore the topics.

The tentative list of participants (structure and provisional number) sent in advance by the organizer of the event would be of crucial importance for the service provider preparation.

Participants Feedback/ Session Evaluation

Opportunity for participation 4.85	Atmosphere at work 4.85
How much we got on perception of the networking issue 4.71	Appreciation for everybody's contribution 4.85

Feedback from ToPeer, CSO organizing the Investment Fair.

I would like to thank you in this informal way for the support provided and I do hope that the narrative I have sent meets your expectations. I did not write typical minutes, my intention was to reflect upon events of the day. While the Fair was still on, I have applied your model/technique and we have analysed the coalition, i.e. multidisciplinary team for prevention of juvenile delinquency.