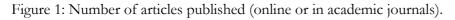# RAISING THE EXPERTISE OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS IN BELARUS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR BELARUSIAN BEGINNER RESEARCHERS
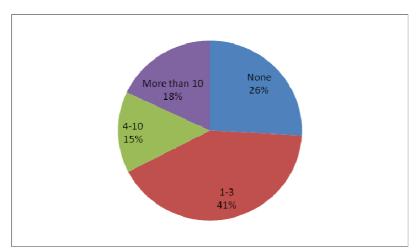
The survey was launched in order identify the thematic preferences of the beginner Belarusian researchers for the upcoming training (previewed on May, 10, 2013). It comprised of questions focused on research interests of the Belarusian researchers and their preferred topics for the training.

In total 138 respondents filled in the questionnaire. The age of respondents ranges mostly from 18 to 30 years (around 76%). The majority of them are currently residing in Belarus (73%).

31.5% of our respondents are working in NGO sector, 27% are studying. Others are working in research centres (16.9%), university (15.7%) and public institutions (9%). Almost half of our respondents indicated their highest academic degree as Bachelor's (47.2%) and nearly the same percentage have obtained Master's degree (49.4%).

Question number six in the survey asked respondents to indicate whether any of their research was published. 64% have answered affirmatively. When asked how many articles have been published, 41.6% responded with 1-3 articles, 14.6% indicated 4-10 articles, 18% indicated more than 10 articles (see Figure 1). Thus indicating that more than a half of the respondents could be considered as beginner researchers (up to 3 articles published) with the data collected through the survey indicating the preferences of our intended target group.

Figure 1: Number of articles published (online or in academic journals).

Question number seven asked respondents to specify their research interests giving the opportunity for the respondents to have multiple choice answers. Figure 2 below indicates that the most frequent answers were the following: education (36%), international relations (34.8%), political science (33.7%), social policy (33.7%) and economy (28.1%). Less popular research interests were gender issues/studies (21.3%), nationalism (21.3%), history (20.2%), cultural studies (20.2%), environment
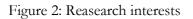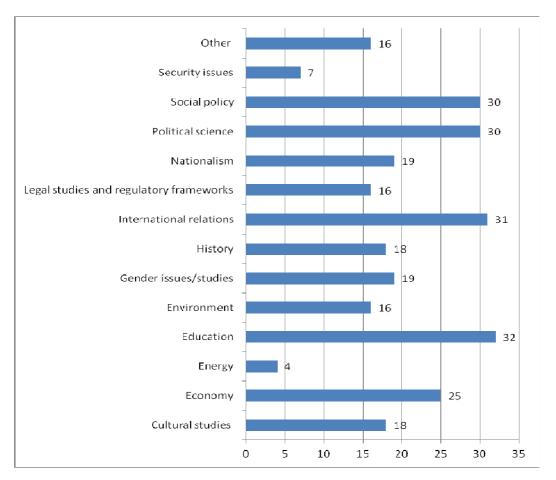
(18%), legal studies and regulatory frameworks (18%), security issues (7.9%), energy (4.5%). Other responses encompass tourism, ethnology, publishing, development studies, prognostic methods, public administration, NGOs of Poland and Belarus, sociology, psychology, literature, natural sciences, logistics, medicine, journalism, foreign languages, online advertising.

Figure 2: Reasearch interests

Question number eight asked respondents to indicate which topics for the training they prefer allowing the respondents to choose maximum 3 options. Figure 3 clearly indicates 4 prefered themes for the training: policy paper writing (article, brief, report, paper, etc.) (58%), fundraising for research - international donors and local sources (46.6%), research design and methodology (35.2%), research presentation tools: going beyond PowerPoint (30.7%). Less chosen responses were: evidence-based research (25%), social media (22.7%), data visualization methods (21.6%), research advocacy in Belarus conditions (18.2%), research communication and media relations (18.2%).
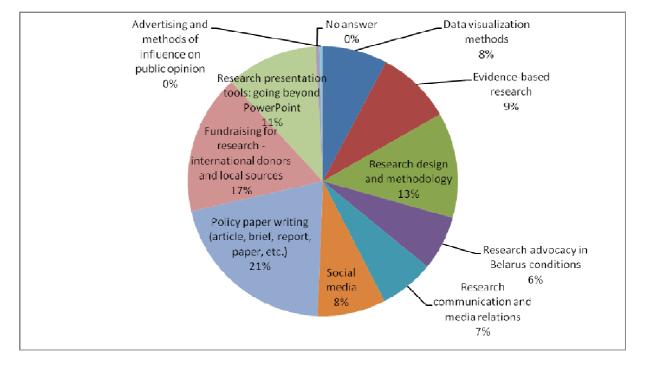
Figure 3: Preferred training topics.

Finally, question number nine asked respondents whether they intend to apply for the training "Raising the Expertise of Beginner Level Researchers in Belarus". The majority of them (89.9%) have responded affirmatively.

Conclusion

High number of answers received indicates that the training may receive many interested applicants.

The interests of the majority of the respondents lay in rather "traditional" areas, i.e. political science education, international relations, social policy and economy with security and energy issues almost untackled.

As for the training, it is clear that the majority of the respondents would be interested in the practical training enhancing their capacities and know-how in the area of policy paper writing as well as fundraising. The other two very popular themes- research design and methodology and research presentation tools: going beyond PowerPoint. As policy paper writing and research design/ methodology are 2 clearly very interrelated themes, the former tackling the practical issues and the latter more theoretical, we would suggest choosing these 2 themes and searching for the trainers capable of covering these 2 dimensions.