USAID | KYRGYZSTAN

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS IN KYRGYZSTAN PROGRAM EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2012

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Submitted to:
USAID/Kyrgyzstan

Prepared by:
Sean Roberts, Ph.D.
Zumrat Salmorbekova, M.A.

Contractor:
Democracy International, Inc.
4802 Montgomery Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
Tel: 301-961-1660
www.democracyinternational.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of USAID/Kyrgyzstan, Democracy International, Inc. (DI) conducted a performance evaluation of Freedom House's Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program, a cooperative agreement between Freedom House and USAID/Kyrgyzstan that began in March 2010 and is presently scheduled to continue until late 2013. This agreement initially had a modest budget of $629,730 for a period of two years (March 2010–February 2012), but it was more recently extended for an additional nineteen months (February 2012–September 2013) along with a budgetary increase of $800,000.[1] The evaluation will be useful to USAID/Kyrgyzstan for strategic planning and program management and design; to Freedom House for informing future programming; and to the human rights development community for tracking developments in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation is based on mixed-method, evidence-based research and included semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, focus groups with average citizens in Kyrgyzstan, and an online survey of Freedom House training participants.

The evaluation team consisted of Dr. Sean R. Roberts, as Evaluation Team Leader, and Zumrat Salmorbekova, as Host Country Expert. Gulzada Azhetova of USAID/Central Asia Region joined the team as part of an evaluation practicum for the majority of the fieldwork period. The fieldwork for the evaluation took place in Kyrgyzstan from July 17, 2012 to August 6, 2012. While the team was based in Bishkek, they traveled outside the capital to assess the program's regional impact. The team spent one day in Maevka in Chuy oblast and five days in southern Kyrgyzstan, primarily in Jalalabad and Osh.

The evaluation's Statement of Work (SOW) included three questions focused on evaluating the impact of the project on its three objectives (see Annex F). In drawing up its workplan, however, the evaluation team modified these questions and presented two more general questions about Freedom House's work that relate to assessing present performance and evaluating strategic approach respectively across all three objectives: (1) How has Freedom House performed in fulfilling the obligations of its cooperative agreement with USAID?; and (2) Are Freedom House's existing activities the most appropriate intervention for addressing the present situation of human rights protection in Kyrgyzstan? As a result, the questions asked in interviews and focus groups sought to gather information both about the extent and effectiveness of Freedom House's activities as well as about the general human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan today.

The team found that the development of human rights is at a critical juncture in Kyrgyzstan. On the one hand, the evaluation demonstrated that Kyrgyzstan presently has substantial opportunities for improving the enabling environment of human rights in the country due to the democratic reforms that have transpired on the national level since April 2010. On the other hand, data from the evaluation suggested that most of these reforms made little difference in the protection of citizens' rights at the local level, especially in the south of the country. In fact, the evaluation shows that the human rights situation in southern Kyrgyzstan, particularly in Osh and Jalalabad, is worse than prior to 2010, as many ethnic Uzbeks continue to suffer from arbitrary arrests, torture, and unfair trials. The divergence between the human rights situation in Bishkek and in the south of the country is so acute that the evaluation team considers it a threat to the stability of the country.

The team found mixed results regarding Freedom House's performance, both in its fulfillment of the existing cooperative agreement and its activities' potential to impact the current human rights

[1] The entire budget of the project for three years and seven months (March 2010–September 2013), therefore, is $1,429,730.

situation in the country. While Freedom House has taken advantage of the opportunities to have substantial input on legislation and policies at the national level, it has had less impact, however, in other activities outlined in its original agreement. Freedom House has also not had much impact on the protection of human rights in the south over the last two years, which is one of the biggest problems facing human rights in the country today. The team determined that Freedom House's lack of impact was at least in part due to its lack of resources for programming as well as a result of a cooperative agreement designed before 2010, but implemented in a completely different context. As a result, the program is not based on a clear theory of change appropriate to the present context and does not have a logical framework that links proposed impacts to the outcomes of planned activities.

Despite these shortcomings, the team also found that Freedom House has made contributions to human rights in Kyrgyzstan. Freedom House continues to have significant potential to be influential in the country given its generally positive reputation amongst human rights organizations and its perceived value as an internationally recognized protector of human rights. The evaluation report provides a variety of recommendations for how Freedom House can improve its impact during the remainder of its current program as well as a series of recommendations for USAID as it considers future interventions to consolidate the observation of human rights.

Recommendations for the remainder of the present cooperative agreement include:

- Freedom House should work to raise its public profile and present a more "public face" to the people of Kyrgyzstan.
- Freedom House should pursue the creation of a "community of practice" for human rights lawyers and a national referral system in lieu of capacity building trainings.
- Freedom House should seek ways to direct its present programming to the south where the human rights situation is in dire need of attention.
- Work with human rights monitors should focus more on how to use findings from monitoring reports to promote reforms.
- Legislative and policy work should pay particular attention to the reform of law enforcement and the judiciary, in coordination with other USAID projects and partners.
- Freedom House must create a sustainability plan for its activities.

Some of the most important recommendations for future human rights programming include:

- USAID/Kyrgyzstan should develop a theory of change and logical framework regarding strengthening human rights in Kyrgyzstan that can be employed in designing future work.
- In addition to monitoring and reporting of human rights abuses, future programming should also support protection measures for victims of rights abuses.
- Future programming must find a way to address ethnic discrimination, most likely through a combination of public education and legislative and policy work.
- Future programming should also support public education about human rights
- Future work with local human rights groups should include building the capacity of local organizations in order to eventually allow them to receive direct assistance from USAID as per the initiatives of USAID Forward.
- USAID/Kyrgyzstan should review its development portfolio and consider how future programming across sectors can promote the reform of law enforcement and the judiciary.

INTRODUCTION

At the request of USAID/Kyrgyzstan, Democracy International, Inc. conducted a midterm performance evaluation of the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program implemented by Freedom House. The core purpose of the evaluation was to undertake a detailed examination of the progress, effects, relevance, achievements, efficiency, and sustainability of the program's activities. This evaluation aims to provide USAID/Kyrgyzstan with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and achievements of the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program and to help guide future human rights, civic advocacy, and rule of law reform programming in Kyrgyzstan.

The evaluation team consisted of Dr. Sean R. Roberts as Evaluation Team Leader and Zumrat Salmorbekova as Host Country Expert. Gulzada Azhetova of USAID/Central Asia Region joined the team as part of an evaluation practicum for the majority of the time the team was in country. Fieldwork took place in Kyrgyzstan from July 17, 2012 to August 6, 2012. While the team was based in Bishkek, they also traveled outside the capital to assess the program's regional impact. The team spent one day in Maevka in Chuy oblast and five days in southern Kyrgyzstan, primarily in Jalalabad and Osh.

The evaluation sought to answer two primary questions: (1) How has Freedom House performed in fulfilling the obligations of its cooperative agreement with USAID?; and (2) Are Freedom House's present activities the most appropriate intervention for addressing the present situation of human rights protection in Kyrgyzstan? In answering these questions, this report aims to provide a thorough analysis of the progress the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program has achieved towards its three objectives: (1) to improve the quality of human rights monitoring and reporting; (2) to bolster the capabilities of defense lawyers working in the area of human rights; and (3) to enhance the capacity of organizations addressing women's rights. The team assessed where the program was successful and where it was not, identified factors that affected program implementation, highlighted remaining obstacles to program success, and examined the effect of the program on the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan. The report also discusses the relevance of Freedom House training activities to its recipients and the degree to which Freedom House's approach is addressing the problems in law enforcement and the justice system that appear to be among the most critical obstacles to the protection of citizens' rights in the country today. The report concludes by presenting a set of recommendations for changes in the program's approach through the end of the program in 2013 as well as recommendations for future USAID human rights programming.

METHODOLOGY

Before their arrival in country, the evaluation team reviewed documentation from USAID and Freedom House, as well as other relevant documents. Consistent with the terms in the Task Order, DI submitted a detailed workplan to USAID before arriving in Kyrgyzstan. The workplan summarized initial findings from the team's primary desk analysis, including the current human rights situation in the country, Freedom House's program goals and approach, factors affecting program implementation, program achievements, and issues to consider during fieldwork. The workplan also included the evaluation's methodology, fieldwork activities and timeline, and an illustrative list of individuals the evaluation team planned to interview. Upon arrival, the evaluation team met with USAID to present the results of its desk review, finalize and approve the workplan, and identify additional interviewees.

Fieldwork took place between July 17, 2012 and August 6, 2012 and included extensive research in the capital city of Bishkek, a day trip to Maevka in the Chu Valley, and five days in the south of the country, primarily in the cities of Jalalabad and Osh. The evaluation team engaged several human rights stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan, including representatives from international organizations, government officials, members of parliament, local human rights defenders, local human rights organizations, Freedom House trainees and implementing partners, journalists, and average citizens.

The evaluation team adopted a mixed-methods approach to its research that utilized both qualitative and quantitative data and included an online survey, semistructured interviews (both in person and on the phone), and focus groups. By using a mixed-method approach, the team sought to gain a robust understanding of the program's impact, constraints, successes, and failures while also using comparable and evidence-based data. While quantitative data collection allowed the team to disaggregate stakeholders' opinions about the program, qualitative data collection offered richer information for analysis and helped to answer specific questions about program implementation and impact. Furthermore, qualitative data analysis provided the team with a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, gender, political, and economic factors affecting the human rights situation in the country.

The online survey was conducted through Survey Monkey and targeted recipients of Freedom House trainings. Found below in Annex B, the survey consisted of multiple-choice questions with space provided for comments regarding the trainings' quality and usefulness. From lists provided by Freedom House with 355 trainees over the past two years, the team contacted 53 trainees who had submitted email addresses as their primary means of contact. Of the 53 trainees who received invitations to take the survey, 25 trainees completed all questions. As the team was only able to interview trainees with access to email, the survey was not drawn from truly random sample. Nevertheless, the sample was fairly representative and included trainees who had participated in 13 of the 15 trainings conducted by Freedom House since the beginning of its current cooperative agreement.

In the team's semistructured interviews, respondents included Freedom House's local staff, core grantees, and subgrantees, as well as other human rights activists, human rights defenders, government officials, the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, defense attorneys, journalists, international human rights organizations, other USAID implementing partners, representatives of ethnic minority cultural centers, and independent human rights experts. During the course of the evaluation, the team interviewed 51 individuals, including 31 women and 20 men. As stated above, the evaluation team selected respondents based on program documents, recommendations

from USAID staff members, Freedom House's list of grantees, and local and international partners. Figure 1 demonstrates respondents' relationship to Freedom House, location, and ethnicity. A complete list of interviewees can be found in Annex A. While slightly more than half of the respondents were based in Bishkek, a significant proportion were located elsewhere, primarily in Jalalabad and Osh. Complete results of the online survey can be found below in Annex C.

The semistructured interviews were broader in their focus than the online survey and included questions about the general human rights situation, the contribution of Freedom House to strengthening human rights in the country, and the quality of the program. The evaluation team tracked frequent answers to compare results across stakeholders and disaggregated respondents by location, ethnicity, gender, and relationship to Freedom House. While most questions were open-ended, the interview questionnaire also included several questions where respondents were asked to answer within a predetermined scale. These interval questions were followed by more open-ended discussions of the respondents' answers. As such, the semistructured interviews provide both quantitative and qualitative data on the general human rights situation in the country and on the performance of Freedom House's program.

Figure 1: Interviewees by relationship to Freedom House, location, and ethnicity *(Percentage)*

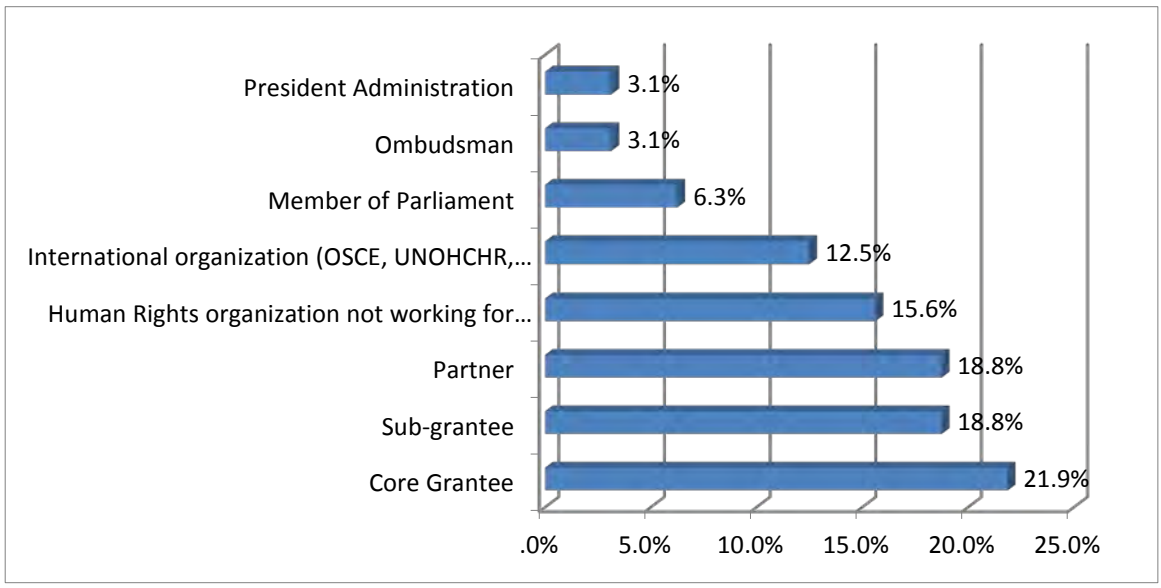


Figure 1(a): Relationship to Freedom House

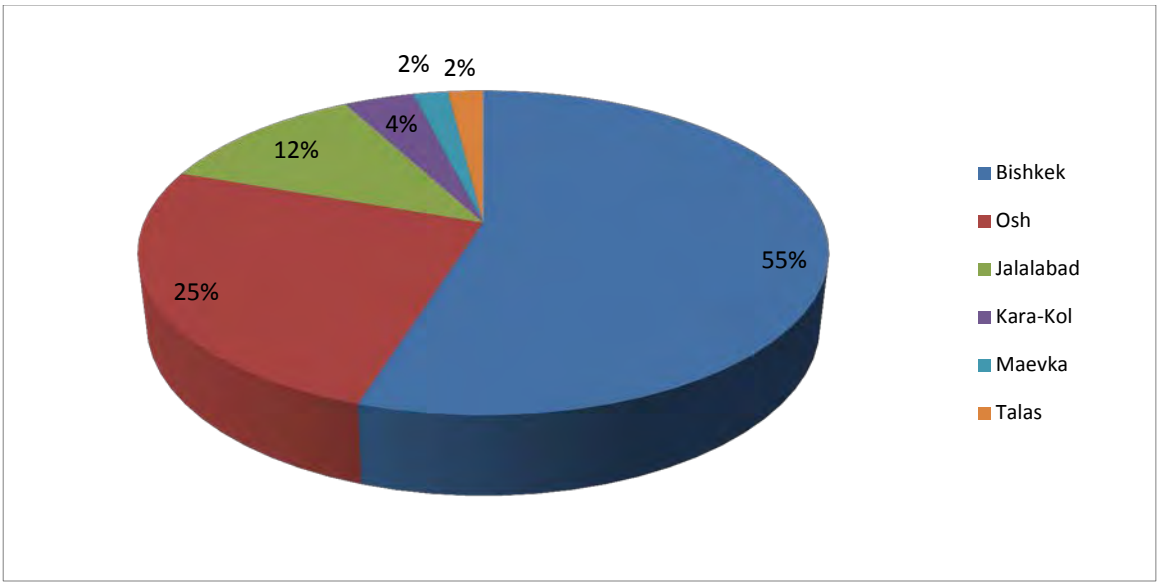


Figure 1(b): Location

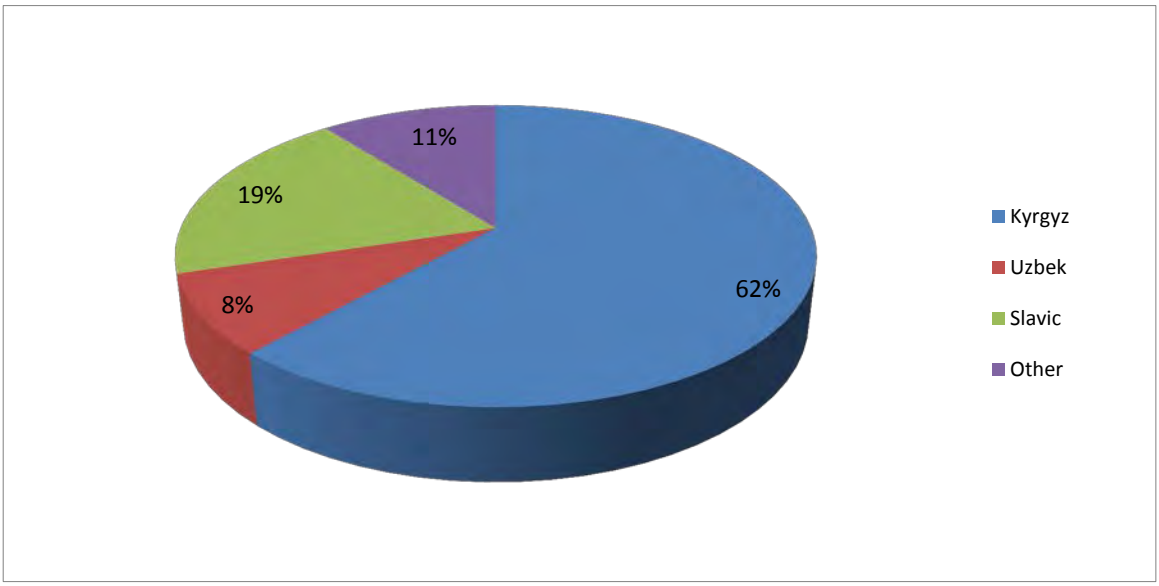


Figure 1(c): Ethnicity

The evaluation team also conducted focus groups with citizens to understand the impact of USAID-sponsored human rights programming in the country. The team conducted three focus groups in Bishkek and two focus groups in Osh to understand regional variation in attitudes toward human rights issues. The team worked with SIAR, a private firm in Kyrgyzstan that specializes in social research, to conduct the focus groups. SIAR screened the participants, organized the focus groups, and recorded and transcribed the sessions. Ms. Salmorbekova facilitated and moderated the focus groups. In total, the team conducted five focus groups with a total of 47 participants.

The criteria for focus group respondents were people who do not work for human rights groups or other civil society organizations and are not activists or members of political parties, are not journalists and do not work for government officials. In other words, the team gathered information

from citizens who are not directly involved in human rights work, media, politics, or international development. Given the ethnic tension in the south of the country and sensitivity of ethnic minority rights issues, the team organized two focus groups in Osh by ethnicity. One focus group consisted entirely of ethnic Kyrgyz, and the other group included representatives of non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups. About 80 percent of participants in the non-Kyrgyz group were of Uzbek origin. Both groups in Osh had balanced gender, professional, and social representation. In Bishkek, focus groups were screened to provide a representative sample of the population of the capital city. Two focus groups were mixed by gender, age, ethnic, and professional backgrounds. The third group consisted exclusively of young women and men and comprised a representative sample of citizens aged 18-35 years old, mixed by ethnicity and profession.

The focus groups provided the team with a better understanding of the impressions of average citizens regarding the human rights situation in the country and the impact of international organizations and local human rights defenders. Discussions focused on participants' perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan, their understanding of the protection of their own rights, and their views regarding the usefulness of human rights organizations and activists.

Overall, the team was able to meet with a wide array of stakeholders, including Freedom House's primary local partners, numerous additional human rights activists, several counterparts of the program within the government, the leading international organizations working on human rights issues, and representative samples of average citizens. Despite the range of data collected during the evaluation, there are always limitations on data collection and analysis done over a three-week period of fieldwork. Focus groups were limited to the Osh area and Bishkek and did not include people from elsewhere in the country. Semistructured interviews did not include all stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan's human rights situation or even in Freedom House's program. Online survey respondents only included training participants who provided an email address as their primary means of communication. Nonetheless, given the range of stakeholders consulted and the rigorous methods of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis undertaken, the team is confident that this evaluation provides a well-researched, evidence-based evaluation of Freedom House's performance and the appropriateness of the program's activities.

GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

The human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan today is seemingly contradictory. On the one hand, democratic reforms enacted since April 2010 have created an enabling environment where human rights can be better protected. On the other hand, since the June 2010 ethnic violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh and Jalalabad, the human rights situation in southern Kyrgyzstan has deteriorated to a point not seen since the country's independence. The country's human rights situation is so geographically divided that the north and south feel like two separate countries.

Data from the evaluation's semistructured interviews demonstrates this contrast. When asked whether the human rights situation had improved, three-quarters of those in the north said the situation was "better" or "much better." In the south, however, nearly half of all respondents stated that the situation was "worse" or "much worse" (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Interview responses to the question of whether the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan had improved since 2010 *(Percentage)*

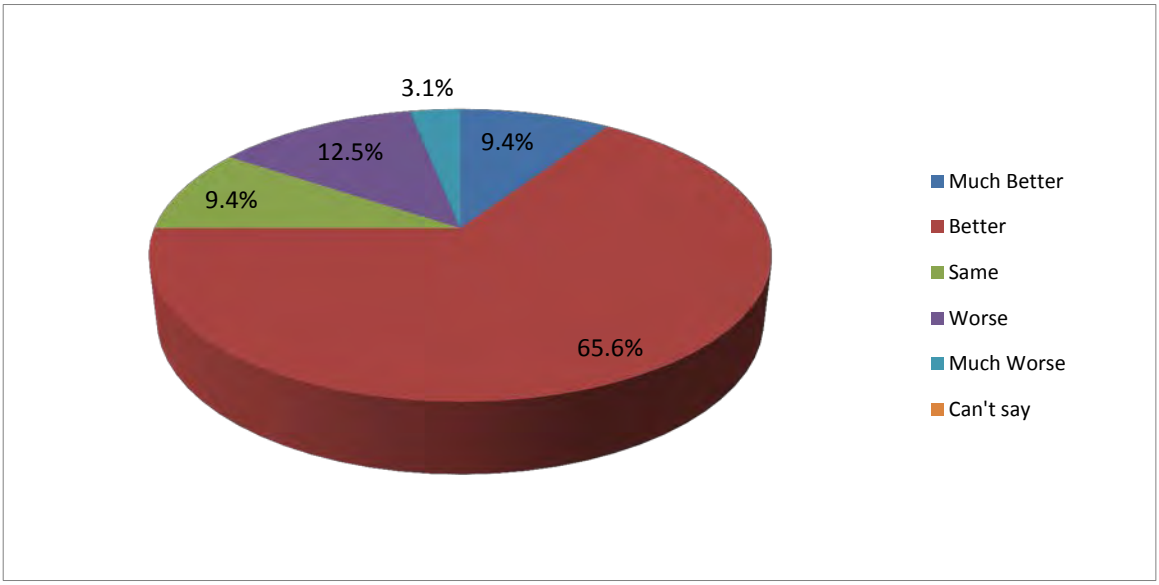


Figure 2(a): Northern Kyrgyzstan

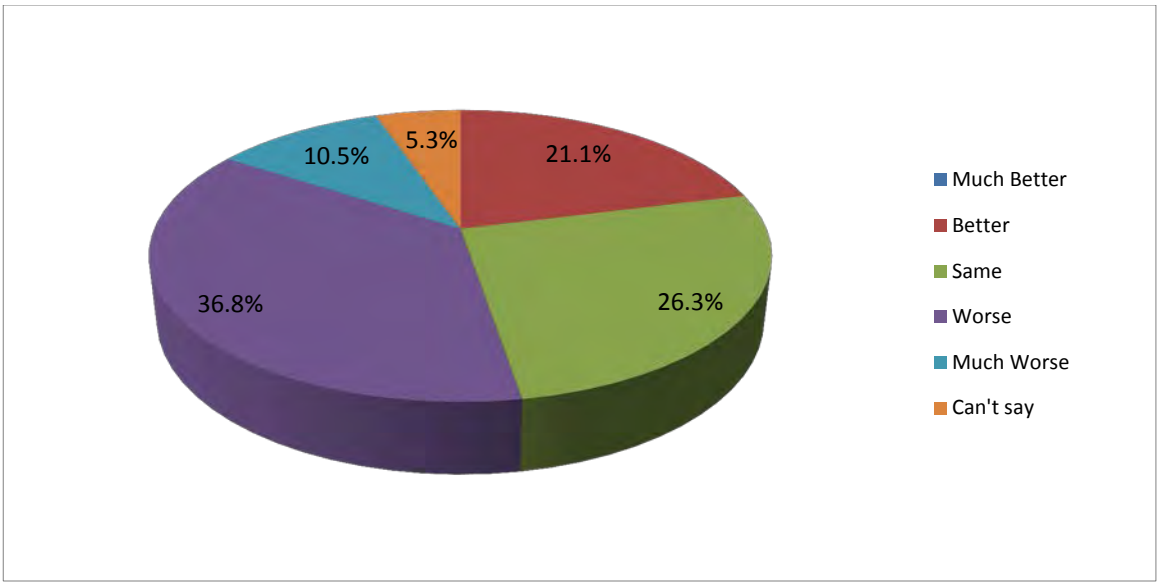


Figure 2(b): Southern Kyrgyzstan

Since 2010, there have been significant improvements in the enabling environment for national human rights observation. For example, a significant majority of human rights activists in the north and almost half of those in the south said that their working relationship with government was either better or much better than it was before 2010 (see Figure 3). In Bishkek, in particular, many respondents mentioned that they now have unprecedented access to the highest levels of government to address human rights issues. They also noted that several important legislative and policy changes have helped to improve the protection of human rights, such as the sections of the new constitution dedicated to human rights, the new Law on Peaceful Assembly, the Memorandum of Understanding between government institutions and human rights activists on access to detention centers and prisons, and the creation of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture. Respondents also suggested that the citizen oversight committees attached to state ministries, while not all equally effective, have had a positive effect on oversight of human rights abuses. Finally, interviewees said that for the first time in Kyrgyzstan's history, they felt like partners with government rather than enemies who, under previous regimes, were under surveillance and frequently harassed by security organizations.

Figure 3: Working relationship with the government today vs. before 2010 *(Percentage)*

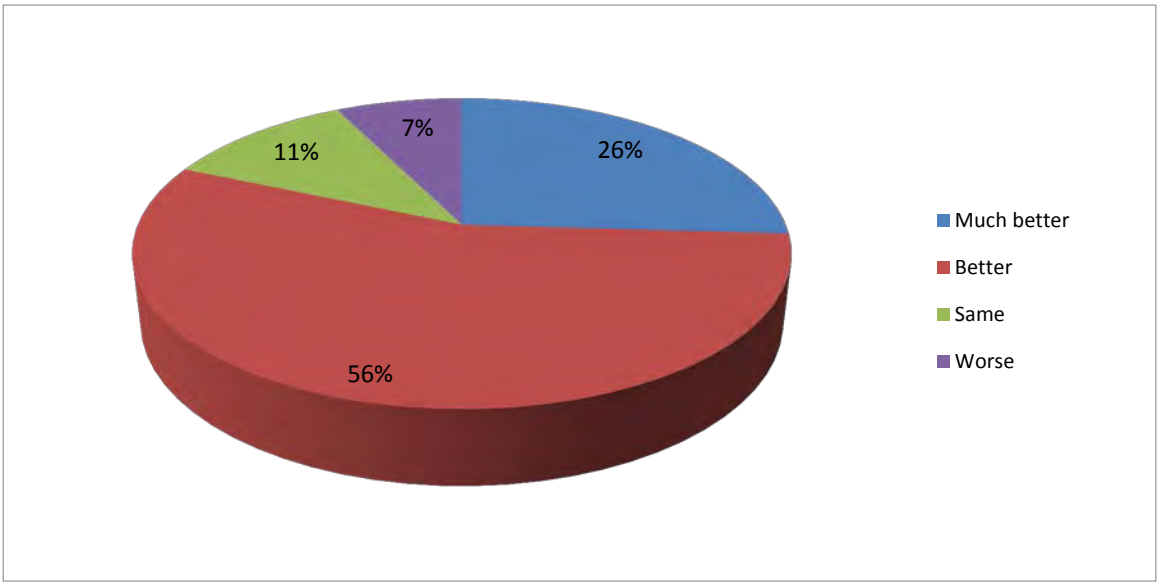


Figure 3(a): **Northern Kyrgyzstan**

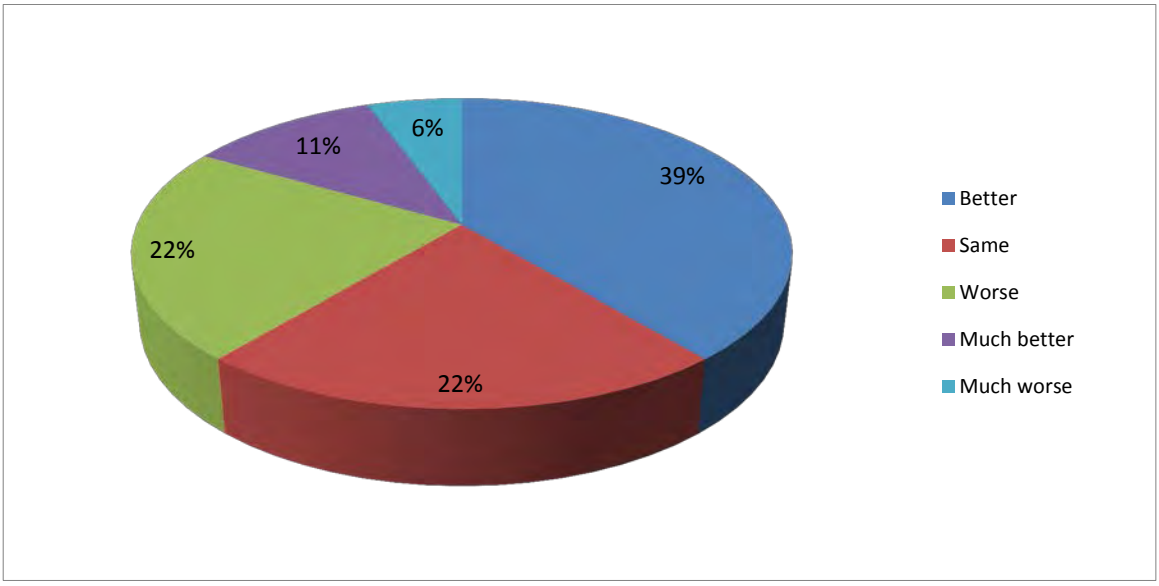


Figure 3(b): Southern Kyrgyzstan

None of these national-level reforms, however, appear to have a significant effect at the local level, particularly in the south. Local governments in southern Kyrgyzstan have tended to defy the federal government and hinder the implementation of national-level reforms. Two years after the tragic ethnic violence in the south of the country, the police in Osh and Jalalabad continue to arbitrarily arrest young Uzbek men accused of participating in the June 2010 riots. According to human rights activists and Uzbek citizens in the south, these arrests are frequently followed by instances of torture intended to force confessions and frequently appear to be excuses for the police to extract large bribes from Uzbeks.

The focus group with non-Kyrgyz citizens in Osh further substantiated the widespread nature of these practices and demonstrated that ethnic minorities in the south of the country feel an incredi-

ble sense of helplessness and lack a sense of allegiance to the state. They stressed that discrimination and human rights abuses based on ethnicity are ongoing problems with no foreseeable end. Non-Kyrgyz focus group participants overwhelmingly suggested that they do not know whom to turn to for help if their human rights are violated. One focus group participant declared, "These days, I live in fear; we are afraid to turn for help to anybody" (60 year old male, Tatar, Osh). Another respondent remarked, "We have the right to be respected, but our rights are not respected… What if [the police] come and arbitrarily arrest my son?" (female, 37, Uzbek, Osh). Another respondent stated, "We do not expect to be protected; we live in constant fear; [in Osh] it is very difficult to get justice if one is a minority" (female, 58, Uzbek, Osh).

The evaluation team believes that the growing divergence between the human rights situation in the north, primarily in Bishkek, and the human rights situation in the south threatens the stability in the country on many levels. First, it makes it difficult for the international community to recognize and support the positive reforms being undertaken in Bishkek when the human rights situation in the rest of the country continues to deteriorate. Second, it undermines local support for democratic reforms. Third, it is further dividing the country, which, if allowed to continue, could eventually threaten the stability of the state writ large. It should also be noted that a perceptible rise in ethnic Kyrgyz nationalism in both the north and the south has exacerbated this situation. Since April 2010, Kyrgyz nationalist attitudes in rural and smaller urban areas have become considerably more pronounced. Ethnic Kyrgyz in these areas are largely disenfranchised and have been mobilized for political purposes numerous times over the last seven years. They feel that they deserve more from the state and view economically successful ethnic minorities as obstacles to state assistance. Nascent Kyrgyz nationalism was mentioned in semistructured interviews and focus groups as a threat to stability. In particular, many people noted that Kyrgyz-language media has been making incendiary attacks on ethnic minorities, frequently employing hate speech.

However, ethnic Kyrgyz nationalism and the north-south divide are not the only serious obstacles to the consolidation of democratic reforms and the protection of human rights in the country. The team also found that, throughout the country and among Kyrgyz and ethnic minorities, average citizens are not experiencing any concrete benefits from positive national-level reforms.

Focus groups illustrate a very weak awareness and understanding of human rights among average citizens. In fact, few focus group participants were able to articulate their rights. When asked to reflect on the concept of human rights, participants often referred to economic, social, and cultural rights, which they felt were better protected during the Soviet period, rather than political rights. In Bishkek, only one focus group participant could name a single human rights organization. (Incidentally, the organization he was able to name was Freedom House. However, he thought that Freedom House was an agent of Western influence and that the organization had helped the Uzbeks rather than the Kyrgyz during the violence of June 2010.) Even in Bishkek, focus group participants did not know whom they should turn to if their rights are violated. Participants expressed no trust in the police or the courts, and most did not trust any government institutions. Perhaps most importantly, focus group participants did not believe that there was any justice in Kyrgyzstan, and they generally believed that an authoritarian leader would provide justice better than a democracy.

Interview respondents named torture and arbitrary arrests, followed by discrimination of ethnic minorities, as the most widespread human rights abuses (see Figure 4). As such, when asked about the biggest obstacles to the observance of human rights in the country, respondents focused on issues related to law enforcement and the justice system (see Figure 4). Focus group participants reinforced these findings, frequently characterizing law enforcement and the judiciary as corrupt "rights abusers" rather than "rights protectors." As one respondent noted, "Anywhere you turn—state services, police, the courts—only money and contacts decide everything, not rule of

law" (female, 28, Kyrgyz, Bishkek). Another respondent said, "Judiciary and police humiliate human dignity; there is no order and integrity among them" (female, 22, Kyrgyz, Osh).

Figure 4: Analysis of human rights abuses *(Number of mentions)*

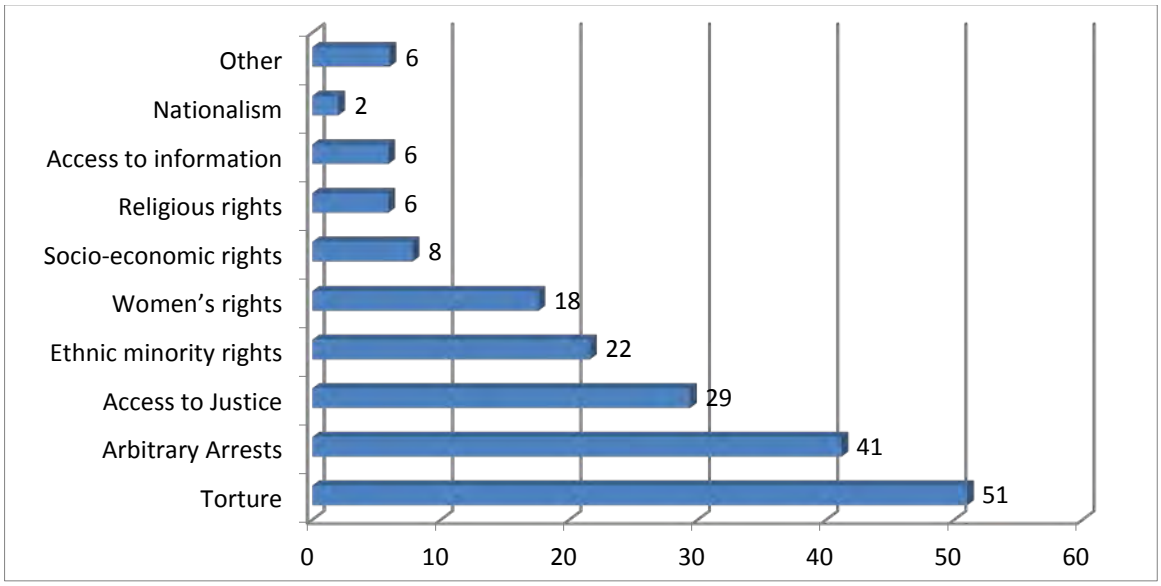


Figure 4(a): Most widespread abuses of human rights

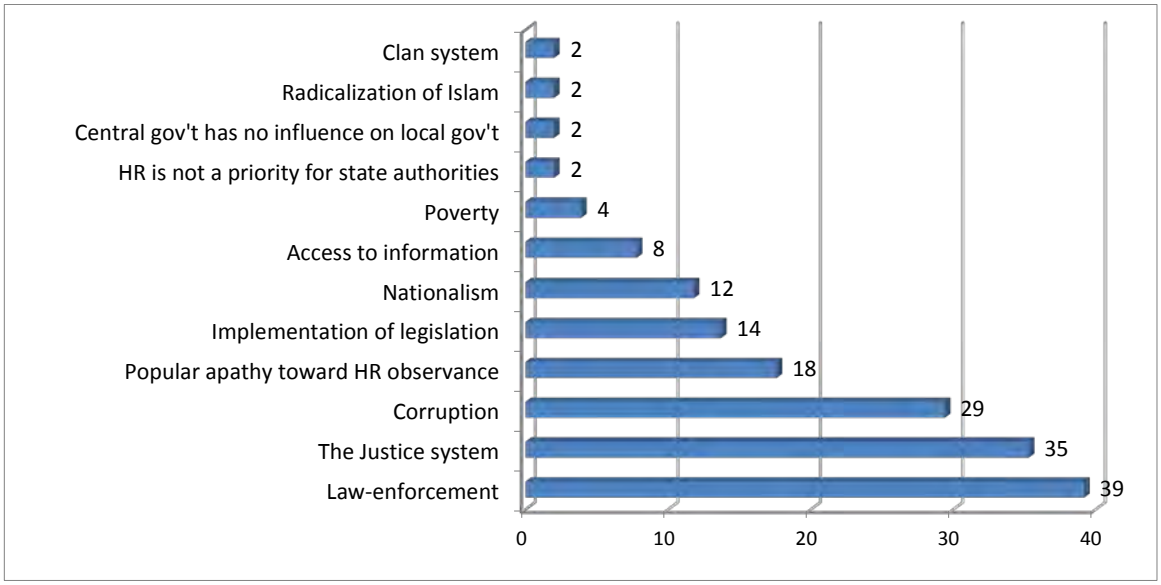


Figure 4(b): Biggest obstacles to human rights

These strong negative feelings towards law enforcement and the judiciary suggest that reforms undertaken by the parliament through the establishment of laws are unlikely to be felt among the populace until citizens perceive that these institutions have been genuinely reformed. While government officials suggested that they were aware of this issue, they are more focused on economic growth. However, human rights and economic growth are interrelated, since without the reform of the police and judiciary, it will be difficult to build a vibrant private sector in the country. Furthermore, given citizens' strong desire for justice, one could argue that the reform of the police and justice system may be an even more important priority than immediate economic growth.

The human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan is at a critical juncture. The government appears to have the political will to improve the situation, as evidenced by the legislative changes and policies it has already undertaken to foster an enabling environment for the protection of human rights. At the same time, however, legislative measures and policy changes do not necessarily affect the general public without steps to ensure implementation. Many local administrations, especially in the south, do not appear to be willing to implement reforms initiated at the national level. Moreover, there is widespread consensus that the police and court system are corrupt and cannot be relied upon to enforce the rule of law. Therefore, human rights protections are presently not guaranteed. Due to citizens' strong desire for fair and equal access to justice, such guarantees may be critical to the survival of the current system of governance in Kyrgyzstan.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

As noted in the introduction, this evaluation examines two separate questions related to the performance of the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program: (1) How has Freedom House performed in fulfilling the obligations of its cooperative agreement with USAID?; and (2) Are Freedom House's present activities the most appropriate intervention for addressing the present situation of human rights protection in Kyrgyzstan? The first question focuses specifically on the organization's performance in fulfilling the terms of its present cooperative agreement, conducting the activities it has pledged to undertake, and meeting the targets of its performance indicators. The second question is more strategic and focuses on the relevance of Freedom House's current activities to the human rights situation in the country.

PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Freedom House's current cooperative agreement began in March 2010, one month before the revolution that resulted in the country's new parliamentary system of governance and three months before the outbreak of intense ethnic violence in the south between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks. As a result, the program was designed for a much different context. The program's initial objectives were modest and aimed to strengthen and maintain a human rights activist community that was under siege from the Bakiyev regime. With the subsequent revolution and ethnic violence, however, the program recognized the need to seize opportunities for constitutional and legislative change while also addressing a highly sensitive human rights crisis emerging from the June violence.

The program's objectives have not changed since the original cooperative agreement; activities related to these objectives, however, have changed over time. In the initial agreement, activities related to Objective 1 were:

- Developing a comprehensive monitoring system for tracking, recording, and analyzing human rights violations in Kyrgyzstan;
- Developing and implementing a "rapid response" mechanism for reporting human rights abuses;
- Training Kyrgyzstani nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to document and collect evidence surrounding human rights violations;
- Developing synergies between NGOs that report on human rights and think tanks that analyze human rights-related data and produce findings and recommendations; and
- Reviewing draft laws and regulations concerning human rights.

The initial activities related to Objective 2 were:

- Conducting a needs assessment for a training module focused on the international human rights framework, fundamental principles of human rights law, and the UN institutions as they relate to Kyrgyz law;
- Establishing a national referral system to address the increasing need for legal counsel among individuals and groups whose rights have been violated;
- Monitoring new draft laws and disseminating the findings of an analytical project reviewing draft legislation to create a bar association in Kyrgyzstan; and
- Training lawyers on strategic litigation and writing complaints to UN treaty bodies.

Finally, the initial activities related to Objective 3 were:

- Equipping local organizations with the tools to combat and spread awareness about gender-based violence (e.g., bride kidnapping, unregistered marriages, and domestic violence);
- Continuing cooperation with the Association of Civil Society Support Centers (ACSSC) and assisting the ACSSC to hold information sessions for men and boys on women's issues and gender-related violence; and
- Training local partners in monitoring and reporting on women's rights.

The evaluation team found that Freedom House did not fulfill all of these activities or meet the targets of all of its original performance indicators. In light of the tumultuous events of 2010, Freedom House's attention was understandably pulled in different directions. Furthermore, given their approval of subsequent workplans, the Mission appears supportive of Freedom House's general approach. Further detail is provided below regarding the relative success and failure of each of the objectives during the first two years of the agreement.

Under Objective 1, Freedom House conducted some capacity building activities for partner human rights organizations and activists and provided support for monitoring efforts. However, after the April revolution, the program's primary activity quickly became to review draft laws and regulations concerning human rights.

Successful: Freedom House appears to have played an important role in providing input on the new constitution and on a variety of legislation, including the Law on Peaceful Assembly. As these efforts involved multiple organizations, it is difficult to attribute the successful adoption of these constitutional changes and legislation to Freedom House alone. USAID/Kyrgyzstan, for example, notes that the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law—not Freedom House—was the primary USAID partner that contributed to the Law on Peaceful Assembly. Nevertheless, local human rights organizations, regardless of their involvement with the program, suggested that Freedom House has played a critical role in legislative issues and listed legislative input as one of the organization's greatest contributions to human rights strengthening in the country (see Figure 5). When asked why Freedom House was successful in providing legislative input, local and international human rights organizations frequently suggested that Freedom House's local staff had particularly good relationships with key players in the government and parliament.

Freedom House also conducted important additional activities under Objective 1 related to the ethnic violence in the south that were not originally anticipated. These activities included trainings in Osh and Jalalabad in late 2010 related to the personal security of human rights activists and lawyers. Freedom House also worked with the Russian organization Memorial on a well-researched chronology of events surrounding the June 2010 violence in Osh.

Limited Success: Freedom House also was successful in establishing networks of human rights monitors throughout the country on a variety of important rights issues, including torture and equal access to justice. However, the evaluation team found that these efforts were not sufficiently inclusive. The evaluation team found that these networks were driven by a few core grantees located in Bishkek and typically utilized a single staff member from local organizations. As such, Freedom House seems to be only tangentially involved in these networks. Furthermore, the evaluation team did not find any evidence of a sustainable system for "rapid response" reporting. In addition, Freedom House had limited success with capacity building. While participants found Freedom House trainings to be useful, nonrepetitive, and appropriate to their needs (see Figure 6 and 7), Freedom House did not offer many of these trainings, particularly in the south, suggesting that this effort had limited impact within the human rights community as a whole.

Under Objective 2, Freedom House provided training to lawyers and offered some technical assistance related to drafting legislation to create a bar association in Kyrgyzstan. The program also worked to create a national referral system that connects lawyers to citizens and groups in need of counsel related to human rights.

Limited Success: Lawyers taking part in Freedom House trainings were overall constructive and stated that the trainings were useful, did not overlap with trainings offered by other organizations, and changed their approaches to their work. Nevertheless, Freedom House only offered a limited number of trainings, and there was no evidence that these trainings affected the legal profession as a whole.

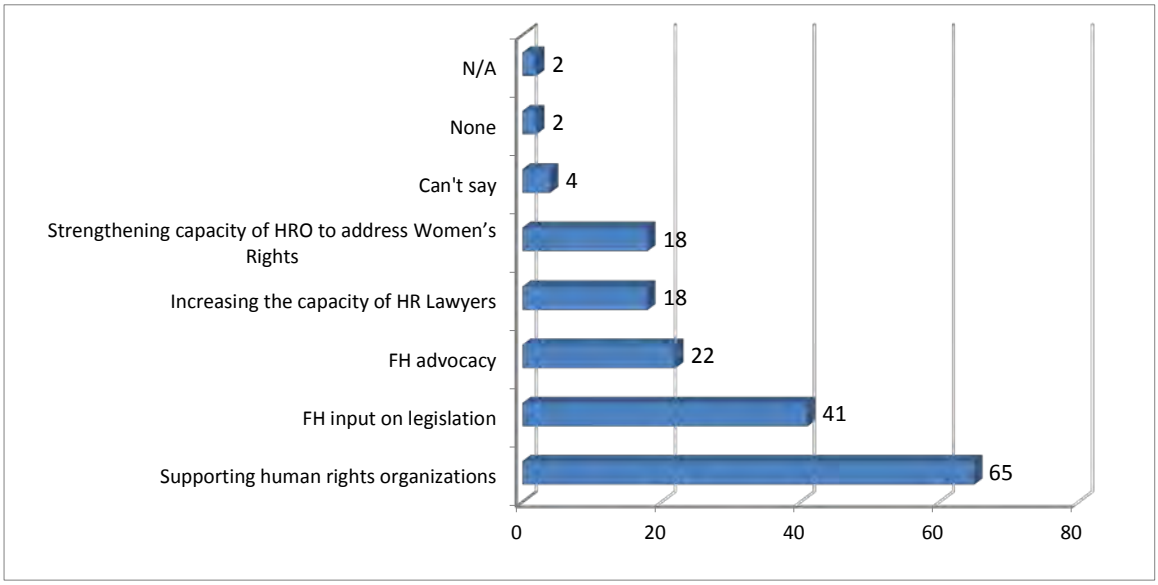
Unsuccessful: Efforts to assist with the drafting of legislation to create a bar association was largely unsuccessful. Although Freedom House did provide some assistance to this process, several people noted that disputes between Freedom House and representatives of the American Bar Association over what the legislation should include severely weakened the process. At the moment, no legislation has been adopted to create an official bar association in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, although Freedom House worked on a national referral system to connect lawyers to victims of human rights violations, the evaluation team could find scant evidence of this system, suggesting that this effort was not sustainable.

Under Objective 3, Freedom House provided training to local organizations and collaborated with the ACSSC on work intended to combat domestic violence, bride kidnapping, and unregistered marriages. Freedom House focused much of its work on a few pilot projects committed to combating these abuses at the local level in Maevka, Kara-Su, and Bazar-Kurgan.

Limited Success: Though these pilot projects yielded positive effects in the short-term, they lacked additional follow-up measures to ensure long-term sustainability.

Overall, during the first two years of its cooperative agreement, Freedom House was only partially successful in fulfilling its stated objectives. Freedom House concentrated most of its work on the legislative aspects of Objective 1 at the expense of achieving Objectives 2 and 3. In fact, aside from Freedom House staff and direct local partners, few people interviewed for the evaluation were aware that the organization has been working with lawyers and women's organizations. Interviews with program stakeholders substantiated Freedom House's primary focus on Objective 1. As seen in the chart below, when asked which program activities have had the most impact on the human rights situation in the country, the vast majority of respondents mentioned support for human rights organizations and input on legislation, both of which are activities under Objective 1 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Which of Freedom House's activities have most affected the human rights in Kyrgyzstan? *(Number of mentions)*



The evaluation team does not believe the program's budget was sufficient to achieve its initial objectives. A $315,000 annual budget is not adequate to support program activities, operating expenses, indirect costs, and program staff, including an expatriate Chief of Party. Freedom House may have been more productive during the first two years of the cooperative agreement if the program had been entirely focused on Objective 1.

Following the government transition and ethnic violence in 2010, USAID and Freedom House agreed, through the drafting and approval of workplans, to shift the program's focus to Objective 1. The evaluation team feels that this reprioritization was appropriate, especially given the program's limited budget, and believes that the program could have further concentrated its activities. Although a legal referral system could have ameliorated the human rights situation in the wake of the June 2010 ethnic violence by assisting victims of unlawful arrests in the south, this system was not fully implemented.

Although Freedom House did not fully meet its objectives, overall, its activities have positively contributed to the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan. These activities include technical assistance to drafters of the country's new constitution, input on other legislation, and cooperation with the OSCE in securing a Memorandum of Understanding on access to detention centers and prisons. Additionally, despite a lack of sufficient resources to support local human rights organizations to the extent they had previously, Freedom House's training efforts appear to have been successful. The online survey of training participants demonstrates an overwhelming appreciation for the trainings and suggests that trainings have been practical, appropriate to trainees' needs, not duplicative, and useful (see Figures 6 and 7 as well as Appendix 2).

Figure 6: Trainees' assessment of duplicative nature of training *(Percentage)*

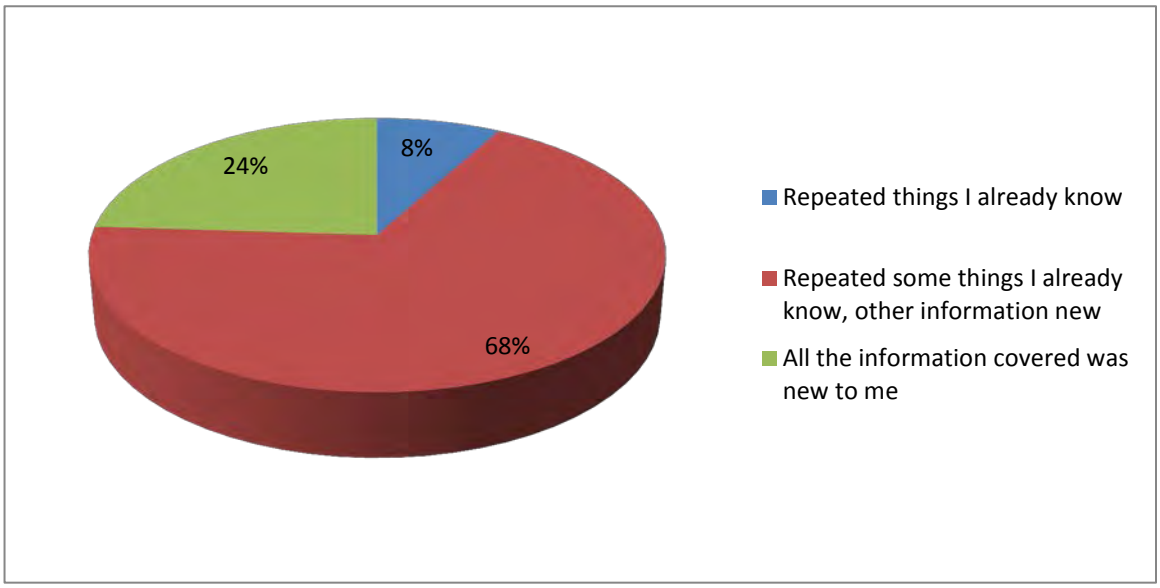


Figure 7: Trainees' assessment of usefulness and practical nature of trainings *(Percentage)*

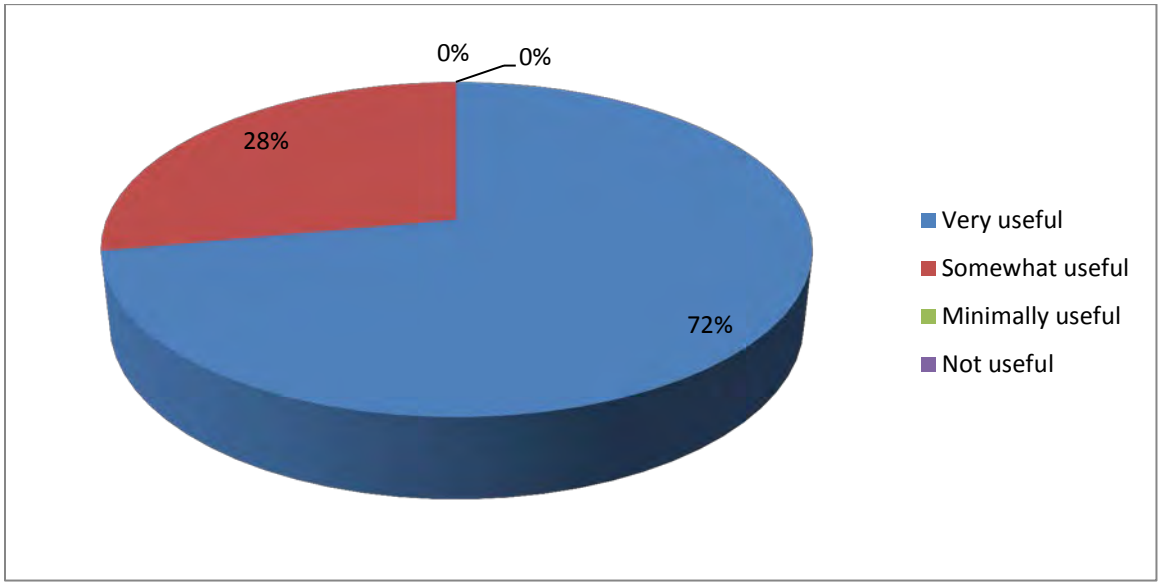


Figure 7(a): Usefulness

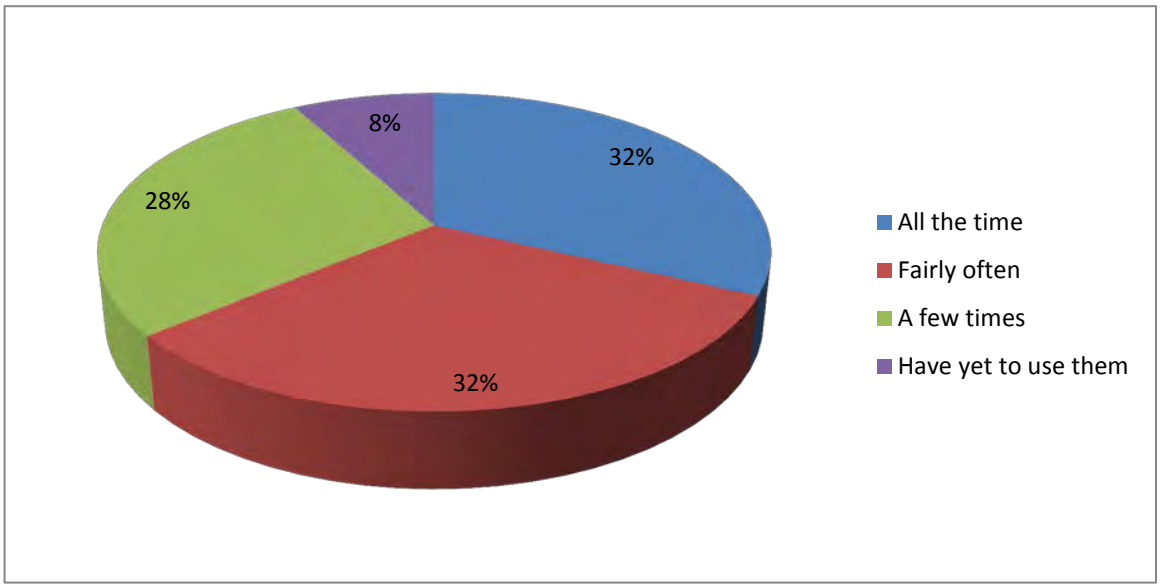


Figure 7(b): Frequency that trainees use skills learned

While the extension and amendment of the cooperative agreement did not change the program's objectives, it placed more emphasis on activities related to legislative and policy engagement and allocated additional resources to pursue activities under Objectives 2 and 3. For the remainder of program, therefore, the revised activities related to Objective 1 are as follows:

- Improving the credibility and quality of human rights monitoring and reporting;
- Developing a nationwide trial monitoring network to conduct observation and reporting on court proceedings and to advocate for transparency, fairness, and respect for the right to a fair trial; and
- Supporting legal frameworks on key human rights issues to improve targeted legislation and facilitate constructive engagement with the government and parliament.

Freedom House has issued subgrants to networks of human rights monitoring to conduct the first two activities under this objective.

The revised activities for Objective 2 are as follows:

- Pairing inexperienced lawyers with experienced lawyers;
- Offering special classes on the defense of human rights to junior and senior law students; and
- Cooperating with the Advocates Training Center and Judicial Training Center to conduct more advanced trainings for experienced defense attorneys and judges on the use of local mechanisms for processing human rights-related cases and engaging international human rights mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Finally, the revised activities for Objective 3 are as follows:

- Addressing issues of bride kidnapping, unregistered early marriages, and domestic violence and equipping local organizations with the tools to combat and spread awareness about gender-based violence;
- Training local partners in monitoring and reporting on women's rights; and
- Assisting local partners to liaise with educators to develop curricula for afterschool programs at both secular institutions and *madrasas* on the women's issues.

Most of the activities in Objective 3 will also be implemented through a subgrant to a local partner organization.

Although the extension of the present cooperative agreement between USAID/Kyrgyzstan and Freedom House has only recently commenced, it appears that Freedom House is mostly on track to fulfill its proposed activities and performance indicators under Objectives 1 and 3. Under Objective 1, Freedom House is currently able to provide more substantive support to networks of monitors focused on issues of torture and equal access to justice. However, using a core grantee located in Bishkek to anchor these networks continues pose challenges to address these issues outside the capital. Under Objective 3, additional funds were allocated to support monitoring efforts and women's rights activities through local subgrantees. These activities are more expansive than during the program's first two years and should result in more sustained impact.

Success under Objective 2, however, is less certain. Freedom House staff remain unsure how to best engage human rights defense lawyers who can defend human rights cases. In its workplan for 2012, Freedom House states it will conduct trainings through the Advocates Training Center and Judicial Training Center, but this has yet to occur. Moreover, special classes for law schools in Kyrgyzstan are not mentioned in the workplan or in the most recent quarterly report. During the evaluation, Freedom House suggested that it is uncertain whether it can implement the proposed mentoring program. Elaborated below in the recommendations section, the evaluation team suggests that this activity be rethought and refocused to establish a sustainable system for legal referrals for victims of human rights abuses.

In addition, the evaluation team feels that both the initial cooperative agreement and its extension do not present a sufficient logical framework for results-oriented performance. Neither document provides a clear link between the program's planned use of resources and its desired results (i.e., input, process, output, outcome, and impact). This is understandable for the initial agreement, which was envisioned as continued support for a human rights community under siege. However, the post-2010 environment requires a more strategic approach that works to seize opportunities for lasting structural change and addresses the substantial regional variation in the human rights situation, especially in the south. The report will further address this issue below as it seeks to answer the question of whether Freedom House's current activities are the most appropriate to the human rights situation in the country.

APPROPRIATENESS OF ACTIVITIES

As noted above, the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan is at a critical juncture. Most people the team interviewed acknowledged a window of opportunity exists to establish a sustainable and effective enabling environment for the protection of human rights. The government is offering unprecedented access to decisionmaking and oversight functions for civil society actors, including human rights groups. The parliament has also passed important legislation that can have a positive impact on human rights. While much more must be done to ensure the implementation of these legislative changes, the current government is seemingly more willing than any previous government in Kyrgyzstan's history. In stark contrast to previous regimes, the current government has defined itself as focused on democratic reforms and experiences more citizen oversight.

However, several factors continue to hinder effective human rights observation. The team's focus groups demonstrate that the general public has a poor understanding of human rights issues, virtually no awareness of the work of local human rights defenders, and extremely low confidence in the government to provide justice and protect the rights of its citizens. In addition, the north-south divergence in the protection of human rights complicates matters significantly and can become a serious barrier to the equal protection of human rights in the country. Ethnic Uzbeks are increas-

ingly experiencing extreme discrimination and growing ethnic Kyrgyz nationalism is creating an environment of ethnic intolerance.

Addressing all of these issues requires more than the current Freedom House program—or any single organization—can undertake. The current human rights situation calls for more public education on human rights, increased engagement by human rights defenders with victims at the local level, police and judicial reform, and a focus on the rights of ethnic minorities, including equal and fair access to justice. Ultimately, the Kyrgyzstan government must embrace an inclusive political culture that encourages ethnic minorities to be equal and active participants in society and politics. Given limited resources, the Mission must make strategic choices regarding the most important interventions to support as well as areas where USAID may have a comparative advantage. The Mission will need to consider these questions as it engages in strategic planning following the conclusion of the program in 2013. Freedom House should prioritize its focus on the most pressing issues affecting human rights observation in Kyrgyzstan.

As discussed above, the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program has three objectives: (1) improve the quality of human rights monitoring and reporting; (2) bolster the capabilities of defense lawyers working in the area of human rights; and (3) enhance the capacities of organizations addressing women's rights. Below, the report examines the strategic appropriateness of these objectives and their related activities to the current situation in the country.

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

As noted above, the majority of activities undertaken by Freedom House under Objective 1 include: (1) legislative and policy work related to strengthening the enabling environment for human rights in the country; (2) the establishment of networks for the monitoring of detention centers and prisons as well as of court trials; and (3) the provision of targeted trainings in a variety of monitoring and reporting skills as well as limited financial support for monitoring and reporting activities.

Among these activities, the legislative and policy work has likely had the most impact on the human rights situation in the country. This work has also represented a proactive approach by Freedom House in capitalizing on the opportunities presented by constitutional reform and a government that is more conducive to civil society input on legislation. Unfortunately, this work has not yet included local advocacy to ensure the implementation of these policies.

Freedom House's work with networks of local human rights activists in promoting monitoring and reporting has also been largely effective, especially in the monitoring of torture and politically charged court trials. This team's online surveys suggest that these trainings were well-targeted and appropriate on specific monitoring and reporting skills as well as limited support to human rights groups undertaking monitoring and reporting. The primary shortcomings in the monitoring and reporting work have related to helping local human rights groups use the findings of their monitoring to advocate publicly for specific changes in law enforcement and the judiciary. According to an interviewee from an international human rights organization, this is the next needed step in the capacity building of local human rights defenders. With regards to the financial support of monitoring efforts, the evaluation team also found that Freedom House's approach of supporting Bishkek-centered networks left regional human rights groups, especially those in the south of the country, feeling only marginally supported. In fact, human rights groups in Osh and Jalalabad that Freedom House listed as local partners indicated in interviews that they presently did not work with Freedom House. Given the critical role that local human rights groups should be playing in the south of the country, this lack of attention to the needs of these groups in Freedom House's program is a subject of concern.

Most importantly, however, none of these activities directly address the critical issue of providing protection services to citizens whose rights are violated, especially in the south where violations have increased substantially. While several of Freedom House's partner organizations claimed to provide assistance to those who seek it, they also admitted that they do not proactively advertise these services to the public. Furthermore, none of the focus group participants knew of any local human rights groups in their cities they could go for assistance and advice when their rights are violated. These are services are desperately needed, particularly in the Osh and Jalalabad regions, and should be included in Freedom House's work during the remainder of program.

OBJECTIVE 2: BOLSTER THE CAPABILITIES OF DEFENSE LAWYERS WORKING IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Under Objective 2, Freedom House's activities have included a few trainings for human rights defense lawyers and a largely unimplemented national referral system to link lawyers with victims of human rights abuses. More recently, Freedom House has planned to pair experienced and less experienced human rights lawyers in a mentor-mentee relationship and conduct trainings through the Advocates Training Center, Judicial Training Center, at law schools. By Freedom House's own admission, however, the organization has had difficulty implementing the mentoring program and there is little evidence that it is making progress regarding the various planned trainings.

Overall, with the present human rights situation in the south of the country, support for defense lawyers in the area of human rights is increasingly important. Furthermore, interviewees generally suggested that such support is critical and likely unsustainable at this juncture without international donors.

The evaluation team believes that Freedom House could better target its assistance to human rights defense lawyers, particularly in the south. For example, a lawyer in Osh stated that she had no support network and was under constant harassment from ethnic Kyrgyz nationalists for defending Uzbeks. Similarly, focus groups demonstrated that victims of human rights violations are unaware of existing legal resources. In this context, rather than strengthening legal capacity in Kyrgyzstan through trainings, Freedom House should leverage existing capacity and establish and publicize a network of human rights defense lawyers. This activity was included in the original agreement, but not the extension, but apparently led to no sustainable referral system.

OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCE THE CAPACITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESSING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Under Objective 3, Freedom House's activities to date have included training and small-scale projects to address domestic violence and bride kidnapping. In particular, Freedom House has promoted the development of local committees to address domestic violence concerns and fostered local pilot initiatives to deter bride kidnapping. As discussed above, the evaluation team found that these activities have had limited sustainable impact on the protection of women's rights. Moreover, there are several other donors addressing these issues in Kyrgyzstan and there is a well-developed network of local women's groups currently working in this field. As such, Freedom House does not have a comparative advantage in this particular area vis-à-vis other organizations.

However, a local umbrella organization is now implementing women's rights activities on a more systematic basis in various areas around the country. As this organization can better coordinate with other local women's groups, the evaluation team agrees with Freedom House's assessment that women's rights activities may prove more successful in the future. As such, it would be ill advised to halt this activity now since resources have already been expended and future work is anticipated to have more impact.

Nevertheless, the question remains whether these activities are the most appropriate given the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan. Although women's rights are unequivocally a critical issue, other priorities may take precedence in future USAID human rights programs. Significant opportunities and needs still exist to consolidate structural reforms that could have cross-cutting impact on all human rights. Furthermore, given the abysmal and potentially volatile situation of ethnic minority groups' rights in Kyrgyzstan, especially in the south, the evaluation team was surprised that no donors are directly addressing this issue while multiple donors are focused on women's rights. Thus, it may make more sense to shift activities under Objective 3 towards minorities understood more broadly, including women and ethnic minorities.

OVERALL

The evaluation team found that Freedom House's existing activities are of mixed appropriateness to the present human rights situation in the country. On the positive side, Freedom House has done an exemplary job in responding to opportunities for legislative and policy changes during a period of transition in Kyrgyzstan's governance. Its staff and partners were able to utilize their respect and contacts among the transitional government to have substantial input on critical legislation and policy adoptions that have helped to greatly improve the enabling environment for human rights observation in the country. This work has been appropriate and continues to be appropriate to the present situation in the country. That said, however, Freedom House has been less involved in promoting reforms in the implementation of such legislation and policies. This is an area where Freedom House's reputation as a respected international human rights organization could be important in facilitating a broad-based advocacy campaign for police and justice reform, coordinated with other USAID projects focused specifically with the reform of the judiciary.

Furthermore, Freedom House's activities related to Objectives 2 and 3, working with defense lawyers involved in human rights cases and supporting organizations working on women's rights respectively, are likely not the most appropriate for the current situation. The assistance to lawyers at present is envisioned as establishing a new generation of human rights legal professionals, but the needs today are more related to the maintenance and protection of the existing lawyers working in this field as well as the creation of a sustainable and accessible referral system to help citizens whose rights are violated. Most interviewees noted that such support for lawyers was needed, but this is not what is presently being provided through the existing Freedom House program. As for the activities supporting women's rights organizations, they are certainly important and contribute to the observation of human rights in the country, but the evaluation team considered them not to be among the top priorities in addressing the present situation, particularly given the coverage of women's rights by other donors.

Finally, to reiterate a point made above, the present Freedom House program does not have a strategic theory of change or a logical framework that outlines that how that change could occur. Given the critical situation of human rights in the country as described in section 2 of this report, USAID should seriously consider its theory of change and logical framework for strengthening human rights as it plans any follow-up work in this area. The recommendation section of the report elaborates upon this point.

OTHER PERFORMANCE CONCERNS

Although this evaluation has set out to answer the two questions addressed above, the team feels it is important to note some other concerns about the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program that were expressed in interviews with stakeholders.

First, there was a general perception among many human rights activists that Freedom House had greatly narrowed its circle of local partners. Several interviewees suggested that over the last two

years Freedom House had shifted from being a support organization for all human rights activists to representing and supporting the work of a smaller group of core partners. As most of these organizations are located in Bishkek, there was a sense that Freedom House was no longer engaging other regions of the country, particularly in the south where the greatest human rights problems currently exist.

Second, many interviewees declared that Freedom House's public profile in Kyrgyzstan has waned over the last two years. They noted that this was an issue of particular concern because they view one of the most important features of Freedom House in Kyrgyzstan to be its dual role as an international human rights organization with a long history and a strong reputation of monitoring and reporting as well as a support organization supporting the development (i.e., capacity building) of local human rights groups. As such, many activists look to Freedom House as a source of international protection when they need to address particularly sensitive issues such as discrimination of Uzbeks in the south. Activists insisted that they were less able to rely on this "cover" over the last two years. They also suggested that this lack of a public profile made it problematic to determine which initiatives and public opinions should be attributed to Freedom House and which should be attributed to its core partners and its technical staff, some of whom have their own public profile beyond that of Freedom House.

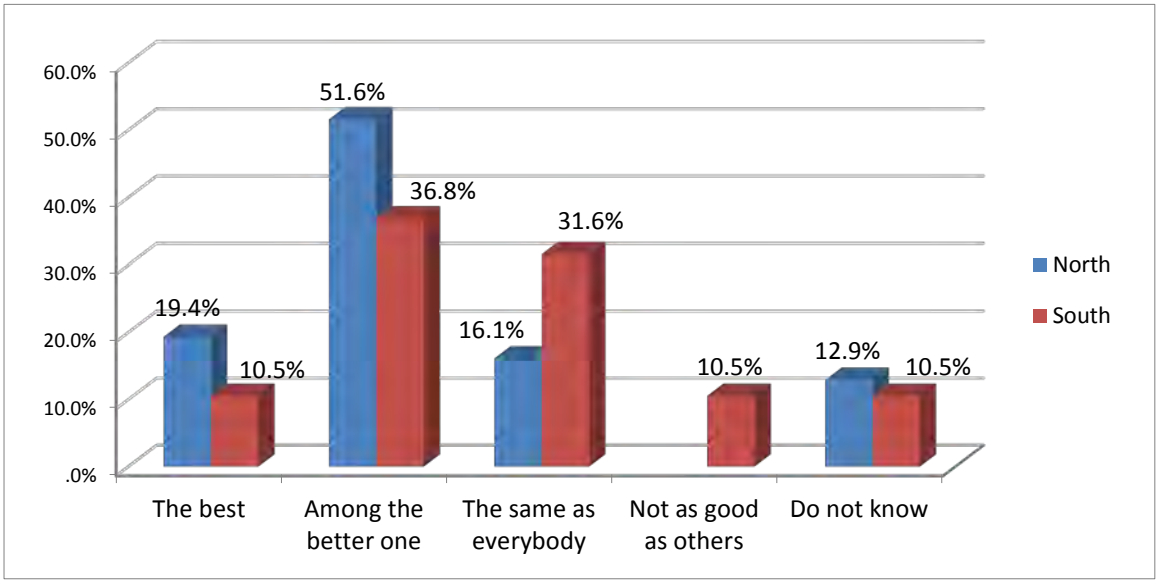
Finally, neither the original cooperative agreement nor its extension includes any focus on sustainability. The present situation in the country provides opportunities to consolidate gains in human rights. Given Freedom House's long tenure in Kyrgyzstan, its activities should more proactively address sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the evaluation team found that the performance of the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program over the past two years has been mixed. On the one hand, Freedom House has adapted to address important opportunities to be involved in structural improvements to the human rights situation despite having adequate resources. On the other hand, however, the program retained objectives from its initial agreement that were of lesser relevance and priority during a critical time of change. As a result, Freedom House was only able to have limited impact on these objectives. Ideally, USAID or Freedom House should have addressed this issue and sought to substantially modify the program's statement of work. Nevertheless, this evaluation offers an opportunity for both sides to consider adjustments to the current program and for USAID to undertake a more strategic approach to its human rights programming.

The team found that Freedom House continues to have an important role to play in human rights programming. For instance, when interviewees were asked to evaluate Freedom House's effect on human rights in Kyrgyzstan in comparison to other organizations, a substantial majority of respondents in the north and a significant number of respondents in the south suggested that Freedom House was either the best or one of the best international organizations working in this field (see Figure 8). In particular, local human rights groups found that Freedom House to be especially valuable as the only international organization in the country with an exclusive mandate to address human rights issues, and thus was not compromised by other development agendas.

Figure 8: Rating Freedom House's effect on human rights in Kyrgyzstan compared to other international organizations *(Percentage)*



Human rights remain a critical issue in Kyrgyzstan. USAID should continue to support human rights programming in Kyrgyzstan and consider implementing these programs through an organization that has an exclusive mandate to address human rights issues (i.e., rather than an organization that supports numerous objectives not related to human rights). Below, the team offers a se-

ries of recommendations to improve the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program and to inform USAID's planning for follow-on programming in this area.

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

With 12 months remaining in Freedom House's present cooperative agreement, it would be counterproductive to drastically change the objectives of the program or reverse ongoing activities, many of which are just beginning to have impact. Nevertheless, there are several adjustments that can be made to Freedom House's present activities to address some of the concerns raised in this report. The team presents a set of recommendations for the Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan program below.

- Freedom House should work to raise its public profile and present a "public face" to the people of Kyrgyzstan. The Chief of Party should also seek to be more present in the media and at public events. A local technical staff member could be trained to eventually take on this role.
- Capacity-building work with human rights lawyers should be refocused to concentrate on the creation of a "community of practice" of lawyers who work on human rights cases to facilitate information sharing and foster a mutual support network for lawyers under duress. This network should also include the development of a national referral system to link citizens whose rights have been violated with appropriate lawyers as envisioned in the original cooperative agreement.
- Freedom House should seek ways to direct its programming to the south where the human rights situation is in dire need of attention. This might involve more support for local partners in the south and to ensure that citizens know whom they can turn to when they are victims of human rights abuses.
- The subgrant to the Agency for Social Technologies (AST) for women's rights promotion should continue. Freedom House should provide AST with guidance on how to leverage work being done by others in this field.
- If resources allow, Freedom House should seek to provide more public education on human rights, particularly on issues of ethnic discrimination.
- Freedom House should work with networks of monitors to ensure that they use the results of their monitoring for more active and evidence-based advocacy for reforms, particularly in the areas of law enforcement and the judiciary, in coordination with other USAID projects working on these issues.
- Legislative and policy work should pay particular attention to promoting the reform of law enforcement and the judiciary in coordination with other USAID projects and partners.
- All program activities should have a sustainability plan to ensure that Freedom House leaves behind structures and behaviors that promote human rights in Kyrgyzstan beyond the end of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMMING

USAID/Kyrgyzstan should continue to address human rights. These issues will be critical to the sustainability of current democratic reforms in governance and the stability of the present govern-

ance structure as well as the country more broadly. Below, the team presents a set of recommendations for future human rights programming:

- USAID/Kyrgyzstan should begin to work on a theory of change and logical framework aimed at establishing a more sustainable environment for human rights observation. This effort will be critical to developing follow-on programs, whether they are explicitly focused on support for human rights organizations or on associated reforms, such as law enforcement or the justice system.
- Future programs should base their activities on a clear theory of change and have a logical framework for tracking impact. USAID/Kyrgyzstan should use this logical framework to continually test and refine its theory of change.
- In addition to monitoring and reporting human rights abuses, future programming should support protection measures for victims and involve public dissemination of information about organizations and lawyers who can assist victims of human rights abuses. Future programming should also strengthen the capacity of these organizations and lawyers and ensure they are able to fulfill requests for protective measures.
- Future programming must find a way to address ethnic discrimination, most likely through a combination of public education and legislative and policy work. These efforts must not be perceived as supporting a particular minority group, but instead should be coupled with more general efforts to promote fair and equal access to justice for all citizens.
- The Mission should seriously consider supporting human rights training for entry-level law enforcement officials in Kyrgyzstan, perhaps delivered by local human rights organizations. While it does not guarantee that officials will adopt practices they learn, this training would serve as an entry point to promote a culture of human rights within law enforcement.
- Future programming should also support public education about human rights. Adopting best practices from social marketing, this training should provide citizens with information about their rights and local human rights groups they can contact if their rights are violated.
- Future work with local human rights groups should include building the capacity of local organizations to eventually allow them to receive direct assistance from USAID. In keeping with the initiatives of USAID Forward, for example, the most experienced and effective domestic human rights organizations should be supported in their attempts to cultivate the next generation of human rights activists.
- USAID/Kyrgyzstan should review its development portfolio and consider how future programming can promote the reform of law enforcement and the judiciary. These issues are important not only to strengthening human rights but also to promoting a more vibrant private sector and increased foreign investment.

ANNEX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Location	*Name*	*Position and organization*
Bishkek		
	Stuart Kahn	Country Director, Freedom House
	Almaz Esengeldiev	Senior Program Officer, Freedom House
	Aigul Kasymova	Program Officer, Freedom House
	Irina Tislenko	Finance Officer, Freedom House
	Nurbek Toktakunov,	Director, Partner Group Precedent
	Burul Makenbaeva,	Executive Director, Mental Health and Society
	Fabio Piano	Senior Human Dimension Officer, OSCE
	Sabine Machl	UN Women Resident Representative
	Sardar Bagishbekov	Executive Director, Public Foundation "Golos Svobody"
	Elmira Esenamanova	Coordinator, Public Foundation "Golos Svobody"
	Tolekan Ismailova	Leader, Human Rights Center ”Citizens Against Corruption”
	Aida Baijumanova	Executive Director, Human Rights Center ”Citizens Against Corruption”
	Atyrkul Alisheva	Director, Institute for Regional Studies
	Aida Kurbanova	Senior Officer, Association of Civil Society Support Center
	Vyachaslav Goncharov	Director, Public Foundation "Door Media"
	Olga Korzhova	Assistant to Coordinator of Monitoring Program, Psychologist, Youth Human Rights Group
	Natalia Ablova	Director, Human Rights Bureau
	Zulfia Marat	Senior Officer, Human Rights Bureau
	Abdumomun Mamaraimov	Coordinator, Voice of Freedom
	Ravshan Djeenbekov	Member of Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, Leader of political party "Democratic Alliance"
	Elena Voronina	Freelance Human Rights Expert
	Anara N. Niyazova	Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Head of Department of Civil law and Procedure. Head of Directors Board Innovative Solutions Inc.
	Azamat Kerimbaev	Country Director, ABA Rule of Law Initiative
	Aziza Abdirasulova	Director, NGO “Kylym Shamy”
	Zulfiya Kochorbaeva	Director, Social Technologies Agency
	Evgeniy Grechko	Program Coordinator, Social Technologies Agency
	Dinara Oshurahunova	President, Public Union “Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society”
	Mira Karybaeva	Head, Department of Ethnic, Religious Policies and Interaction with Civil Society, President’s Office of the Kyrgyz Republic

	Natalya Seitmuratova	Human Rights Officer, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
	Asiya Sasykbaeva	Vice-Speaker of Kyrgyz Republic Parliament, “Ata-Meken” Faction
	Tursunbek Akun	Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic
	Elmira Nogoibaeva	Head of "Polis-Asia" Center
	Dinara Sayakova	President, Independent Human Rights Group
	Dmitryi Kabak	Director, NGO “Open Position”
	Murafadin Sakimov	Chairman, Turks Cultural Center, People’s Assembly of Kyrgyzstan
	Sumar Nasiza	Chairman, Dungan Cultural Center, People’s Assembly of Kyrgyzstan
Maevka, Chuy Oblast		
	Yahmat Isaeva	Head, NGO “Territoriya Mira I Razvitiya”
	Local Police Officer	Member of Committee on Domestic Violence Prevention
	Head of local Medical Center	Member of Committee on Domestic Violence Prevention
Osh		
	Husanbay Saliev	Lawyer-Attorney, Human Rights Center “Citizens Against Corruption”, Osh Office
	Ikbol Bakhramova	Manager, Development and Cooperation in Central Asia, Osh branch
	Akylbek Tashbulatov	Director, Center for Support of International Protection
	Asanov Tair	Defense Attorney
	Jenish Toroev	Director, Human Rights Advocacy Center
	Tatyana Tomina	Defense Attorney
	Dooron Myrzabaev	Manager, Public Foundation for International Tolerance
	Sadykjan Makhmudov	Chairman, Human Rights Protection Center “Luch Solomona”
	Renate Frech	Coordinator, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mission to Osh
	Gulgaky Mamasalieva	Manager, Osh Resource Center, International Center “Interbilim”
	Nilufar Ismanova	Coordinator, Women's Support Group, Human Rights Advocacy Center
	Jamilya Kaparova	Leader, NGO Ensan Diamond
	Graziella Polone	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Field office in Osh
	Oktam Gaziev	Senior Legal Assistant, OSCE, Field office in Osh
Jalalabad		
	Gulshair Abdirasulova	Coordinator, “Kylym Shamy”, Women’s Support Group in Jalal-Abad
	Valentina Grizenko	Director, Human Rights Center “Justice”
	Janna Saralaeva	Director, “The Association of Women Leaders of Jalal-Abad,” NGO
	Chinara Yusupova	Coordinator, Civil Society Support Center

	Janlybaeva Anara	Journalist
	Evgeniy Pogrebnyak	Journalist, “Voice of Freedom”
	Gulnara Nurmatova	Director, School of Leadership, Education, Religion
Kara-Kol		
	Banur Abdieva	Director, NGO “Leader,” phone interview
	Kamil Ruziev	Leader, NGO “Ventus,” phone interview
Talas		
	Svetlana Bozhkova	Director, “Union of Unity,” phone interview

ANNEX B: INTERNET SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Which Freedom House trainings have you participated in? (Choose all that apply)

1. Training on Human Rights Monitoring and principles of documenting Human Rights violence in crisis situation (July 2-3, 2010)
2. Training on Public Monitoring of Detention Facilities in Bishkek (July 26-27, 2010)
3. Training on Information Security for HRD and CSA (September 07-11, 2010)
4. Training for 19 lawyers and CSA from Osh and Jalalabad (October 30, 2010)
5. Training on prevention of violence in relation of girls and women in Mayevka village (December 21, 2010)
6. Training on prevention of violence in relation of girls and women in Mayevka village (December 24, 2010)
7. Training with participation of representative of local government, law enforcement, school administration, Mayevka village (March 14, 2011)
8. Training on monitoring of freedom of assembly in the Kyrgyz Republic (May 30 - June 1, 2011)
9. 1st training on developing instruments for monitoring of detention centers (July 8-9, 2011)
10. 2nd training on developing instruments for monitoring of detention centers (August 18-19, 2011)
11. 1st training for journalists (December 8, 2011)
12. 2nd training for journalists (January 30, 2012)
13. 1st training on effective medical documentation on torture an abuse in KR (February 27, 2012)
14. 2nd training on effective documentation on torture and abuse in KR (April 12-13, 2012)
15. Training for young lawyers (June 23, 2012)

2) Where do you conduct most of your work? (Choose One)

1. Countrywide
2. Bishkek
3. Osh Oblast
4. Jalalabad Oblast
5. Naryn Oblast
6. Issyk Kul Oblast
7. Talas Oblast
8. Elsewhere in Northern Kyrgyzstan
9. Elsewhere in Southern Kyrgyzstan

3) Was the information in the training in which you participated new for you or did it repeat things you already know? (Choose one)

1. Repeated things I already know (no new information)
2. Repeated some things I already know, other information new
3. All the information covered was new to me

4) How useful was the information covered in the training for your work?

1. Very useful
2. Somewhat useful
3. Minimally useful
4. Not useful

5) How often have you used the skills learned in the training in your work?

1. All the time
2. Fairly often
3. A few times
4. Have yet to use them

6) How would you rate the content of the trainings in which you participated in terms of their depth and appropriateness?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Average
4. Bad

7) How would you rate the trainers in terms of their knowledge and expertise in the field on which they provided training?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Average
4. Bad

8) How would you rate the trainers in terms of their ability to convey the subject matter in a manner that was understandable and useful for your work?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Average
4. Bad

9) How have you shared the knowledge learned in this training with others? (give concrete examples in box for commentary)

1. Conducted training for colleagues
2. Mentored others through shared work
3. Shared training materials from training with others
4. Disseminated information about skills learned through articles, via internet, or social networks
5. Other (explain below)

10) Which other trainings would you like Freedom House to offer in the future?

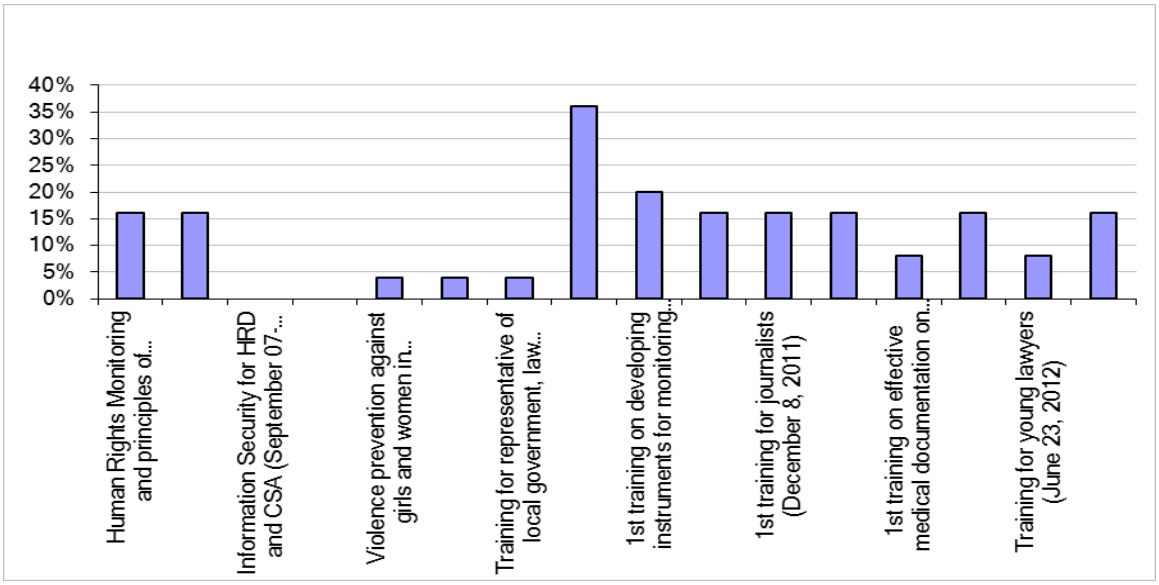
1. Monitoring and protecting rights of ethnic minorities
2. Monitoring and protecting Freedom of Religion
3. Conducting urgent action advocacy campaigns
4. Monitoring social, economic, and cultural rights
5. Other (specify below)

11) Do you have any recommendations for Freedom House's future work? (Specify in box below)

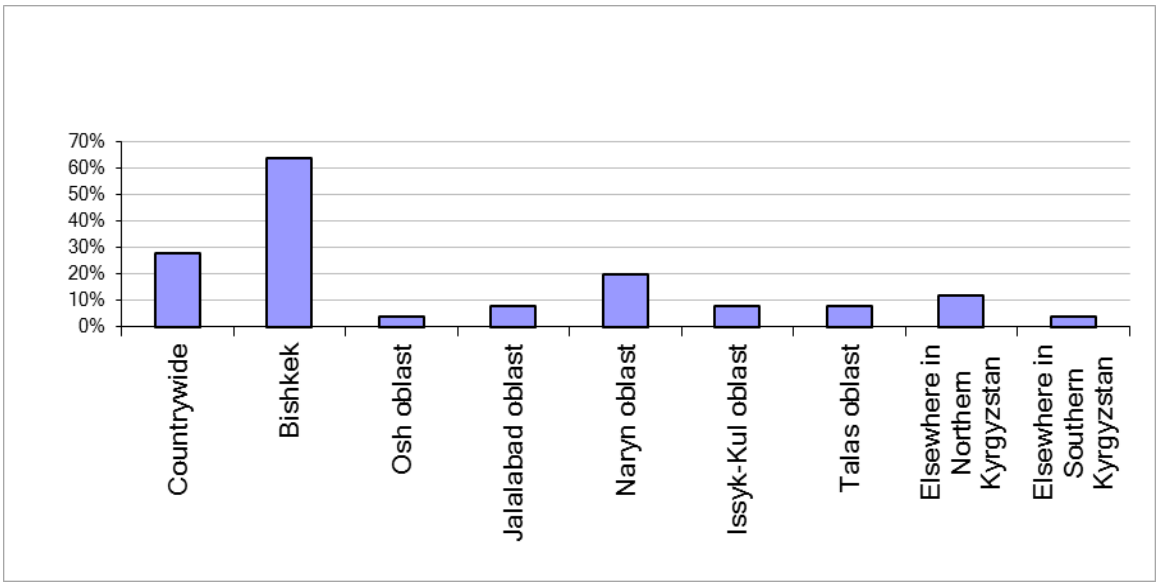
1. Yes
2. No

ANNEX C: ONLINE TRAINING SURVEY GRAPHS

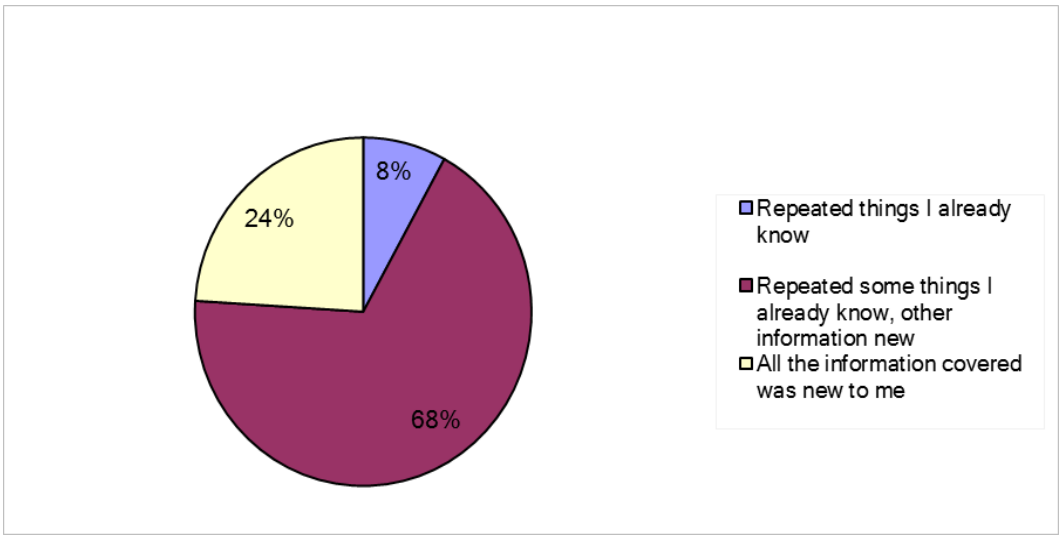
1. Which Freedom House trainings have you participated in? (Choose all that apply)



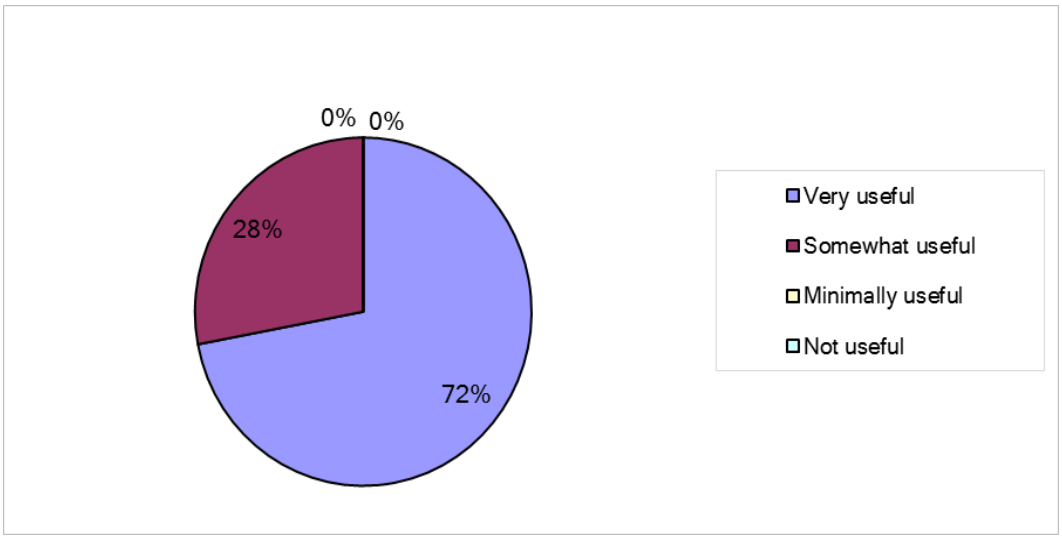
2. Where do you conduct most of your work? (Choose one**)**



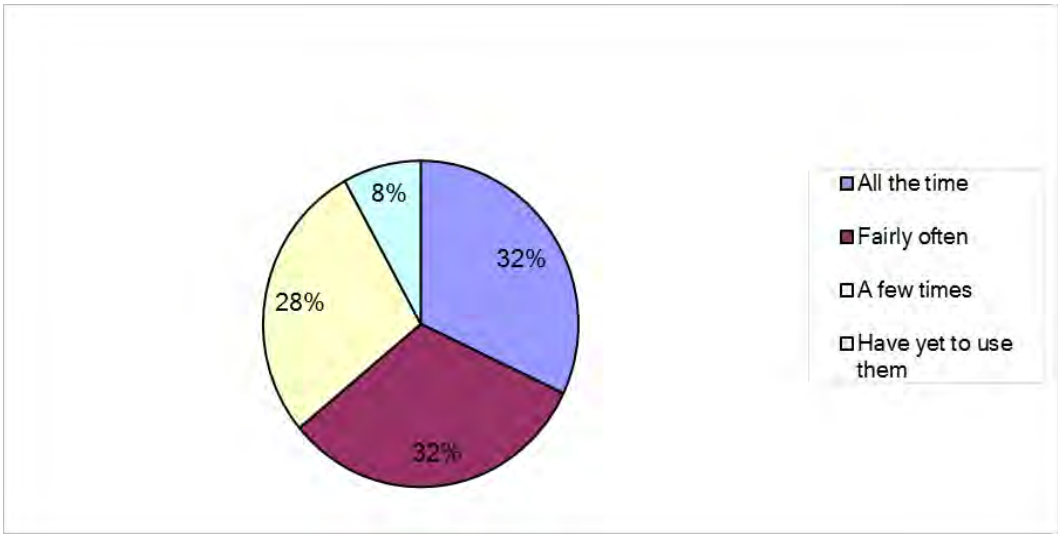
3. Was the information in the training in which you participated new for you or did it repeat things you already know? (Choose one)



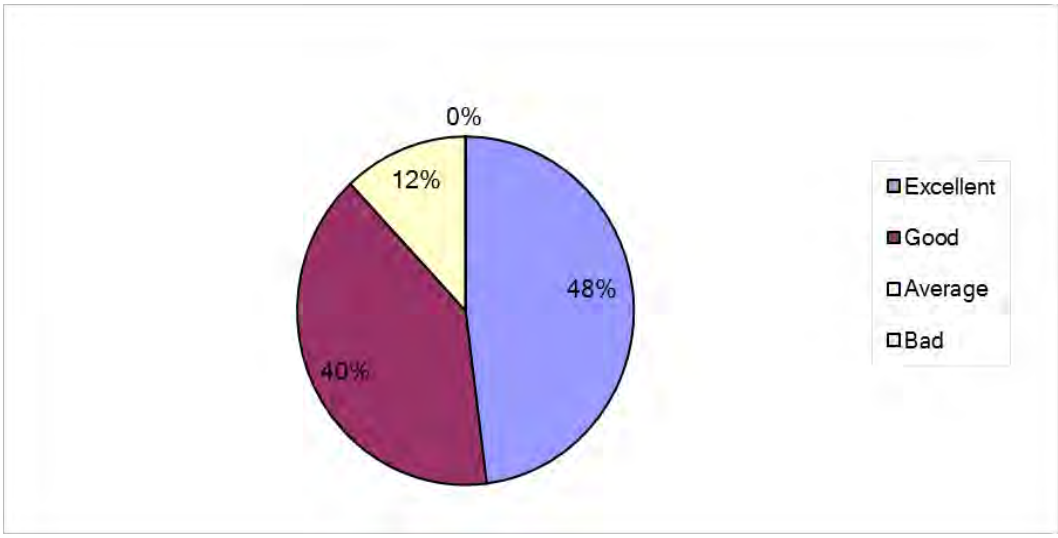
4. How useful was the information covered in the training for your work?



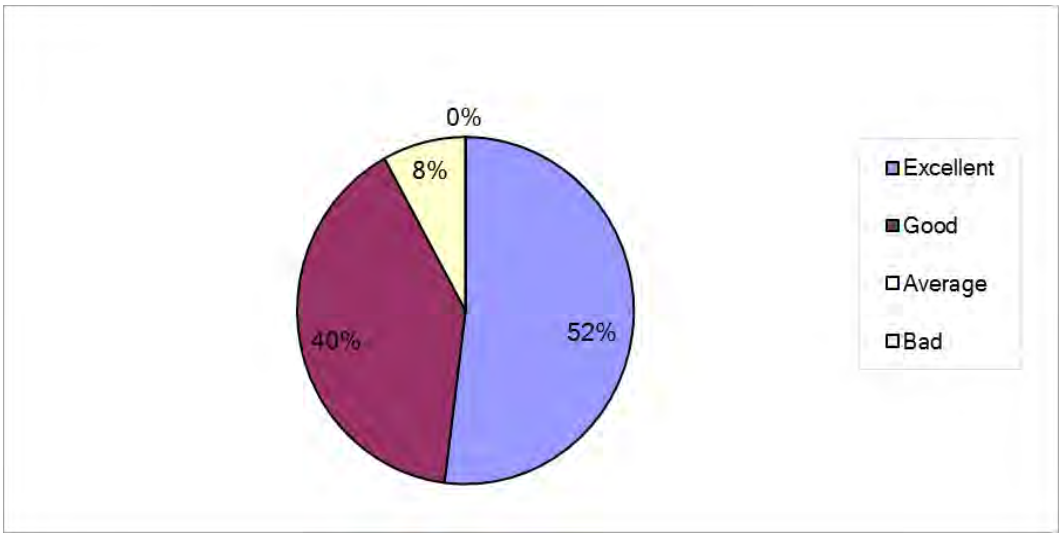
5. How often have you used the skills learned in the training in your work?



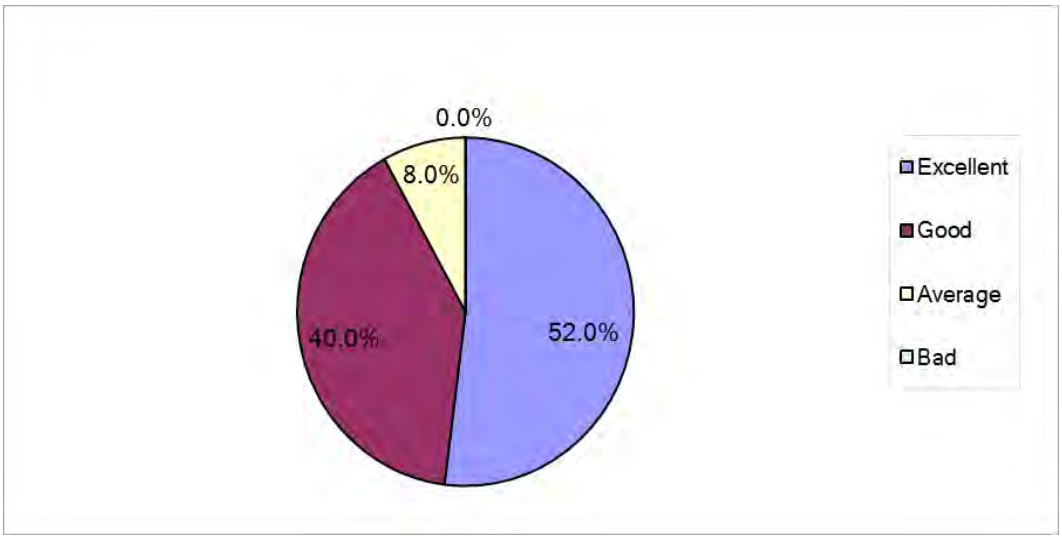
6. How would you rate the content of the trainings in which you participated in terms of their depth and appropriateness?



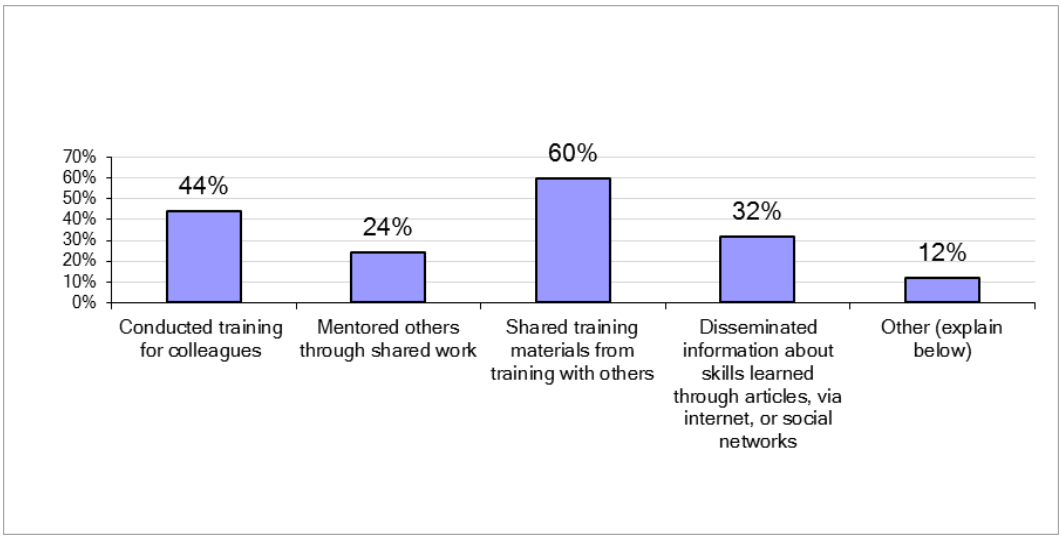
7. How would you rate the trainers in terms of their knowledge and expertise in the field on which they provided training?



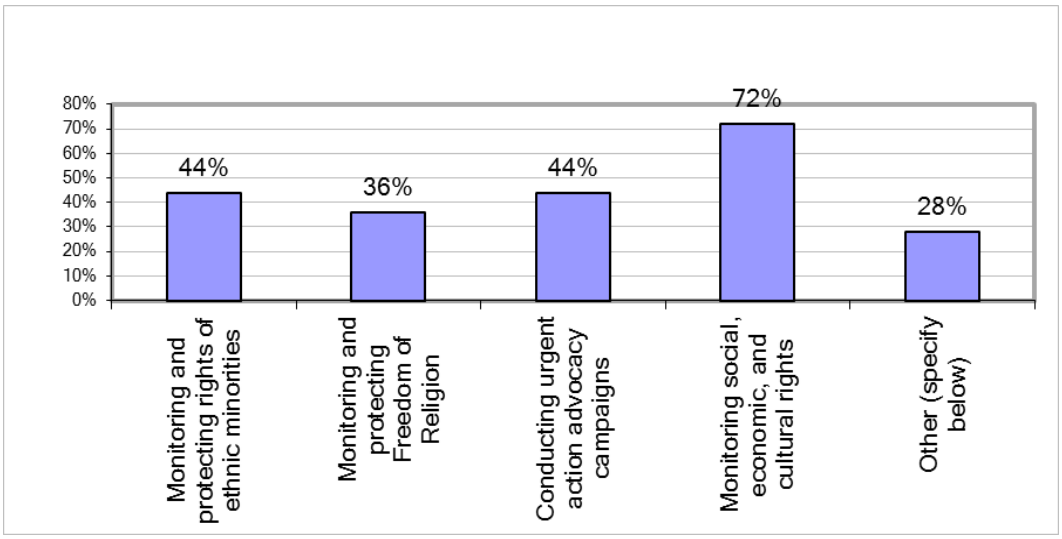
8. How would you rate the trainers in terms of their ability to convey the subject matter in a manner that was understandable and useful for your work?



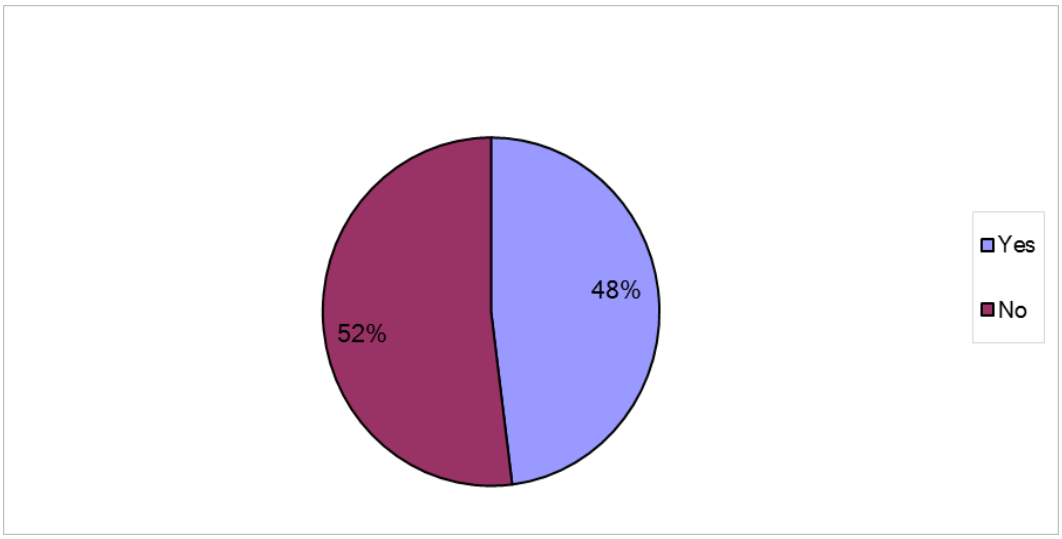
9. How have you shared the knowledge learned in this training with others? (Give concrete examples in box for commentary)



10. Which other trainings would you like Freedom House to offer in the future?



11. Do you have any recommendations for Freedom House's future work? (Specify in box below)



ANNEX D: SEMISTRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

ORGANIZATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

#_____

1. Date: _____ 2. Year established_____

3. Organization: _____

4. Location: 1. Bishkek; 2. Maevka; 3. Tokmok; 4. Osh; 5. Jalalabad; 6. Kara-Kol; 7. _____

5. Gender of interviewee: 1. Female; 2. Male

6. Type:

1. Core Grantee
2. Sub-grantee
3. International organization (OSCE, UNOHCHR, Soros, EU, etc.)
4. Human Rights organization not working for program
5. Other_____

7. Activities involved:

1. HR monitoring and reporting;
2. Increasing the capacity of HR Lawyers;
3. Strengthening capacity of HRO to address Women's Rights
4. N/A

8. Coverage:

1. Countrywide
2. Bishkek
3. Osh
4. Jalalabad
5. Talas
6. Issyk-Kul
7. Chuy
8. Naryn
9. Batken

9. How long you have worked with Freedom House? _____

10. Do you have a grant from Freedom House? If so, since when _____

1. Yes
2. No
3. N/A

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN KYRGYZSTAN

11. How would you compare the protection of people's human rights in Kyrgyzstan now and prior to April 2010? Why?

1. Much Better
2. Better
3. Same
4. Worse
5. Much Worse

12. How would you compare your organization's ability to impact human rights in Kyrgyzstan now and prior April 2010? Why?

1. Much more
2. More
3. Same
4. Less
5. Much less

13. What is the biggest obstacle to the observation of human rights? Why?

1. Law-enforcement
2. The Justice system
3. Corruption
4. Access to information
5. Implementation of legislation
6. Other_____

14. Which human rights abuses are most widespread in Kyrgyzstan?

1. Torture
2. Arbitrary Arrests
3. Ethnic minority rights
4. Religious rights
5. Women's rights
6. Other_____

15. Do you work with the government on human rights issues? If so what government bodies?

1. Yes
2. No

16. How would you compare your working relationship with the government on human rights issues now and prior to April 2010? Why?

1. Much better
2. Better
3. Same
4. Worse
5. Much worse

17. Does Freedom House help facilitate your engagement with the government? If so, how?

1. Yes
2. No

FREEDOM HOUSE PROGRAM

18. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to the protection of human rights in Kyrgyzstan? Why?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Adequate
4. Not good
5. Can't say

19. How would you rate your interaction with Freedom House in terms of programmatic work?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Adequate
4. Not good
5. Can't say

20. How would you rate working with Freedom House staff on logistical issues such as grant process, reporting and communication?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Adequate
4. Not good
5. Can't say

21. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to the strengthening human rights in comparison with other international organizations? Why?

1. The best
2. Among the better ones
3. The same as everybody
4. Not as good as others

22. Which of Freedom House's activities has had the most impact on the strengthening of Kyrgyzstan's human rights situation? Why?

1. Supporting human rights organizations
2. Increasing the capacity of human rights lawyers
3. Strengthening capacity of human rights organizations to address women's rights
4. Freedom House input on legislation
5. Freedom House advocacy

FREEDOM HOUSE TRAINING

23. Have you participated in Freedom House trainings? If so, which ones: _____

1. Yes
2. No

24. Did Freedom House training provide you with new skills and knowledge that are important to your work? If, so which ones:

_____

1. Yes

2. No

25. Have you used the knowledge gained in this training in your activities? If so, how? Please give us an example?

1. Yes
2. No

SUSTAINABILITY

26. Which activities supported by Freedom House among human rights defenders would continue even if the Freedom House project was no longer active in the country? Why?

1. Court monitoring
2. Detention Center monitoring
3. Freedom of Assembly monitoring
4. Input on legislation
5. Training for lawyers, journalists, human rights defenders
6. Support for women's rights
7. Networking among human rights defenders and observers
8. Legal referral system
9. None

27. If USAID would stop funding FH and instead give money directly to local human rights organizations, how would this affect the impact of USAID support for human rights? Why?

1. Increased impact
2. No change
3. Less impact
4. Do not know

FUTURE PROSPECTS

28. Is there anything you want Freedom House to do for Human rights organizations that they are not doing now?

_____

_____

_____

29. Do you believe that the situation in Kyrgyzstan will improve in 5 years? Why?

1. Better
2. Same
3. Worse
4. Do not know

GOVERNMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

#_____

1. Date: _____

2. Government institution: _____

3. Location: 1. Bishkek; 2. Maevka; 3. Tokmok; 4. Osh; 5. Jalalabad; 6. Kara-Kol; 7. _____

4. Gender of interviewee: 1. Female; 2. Male

5. What has been your relationship to Freedom House?

1. Partner on Legislation
2. Partner on policy implementation
3. No relationship
4. Other

6. How long you have worked with Freedom House? _____

7. Government level:

1. National
2. Local
3. Members of Parliament
4. Ombudsman's office

8. Activities involved:

1. Human rights monitoring and reporting
2. Increasing the capacity of human rights lawyers
3. Strengthening capacity of HRO to address women's rights
4. N/A

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN KYRGYZSTAN

9. How would you compare the protection of people's human rights in Kyrgyzstan now and prior to April 2010? Why?

1. Much better
2. Better
3. Same
4. Worse
5. Much worse

10. What is the biggest obstacle to the observation of human rights?

1. Law enforcement
2. Justice system
3. Corruption
4. Access to information
5. Implementation of legislation
6. Other:_____

11. Which human rights abuses are most widespread in Kyrgyzstan?

1. Torture
2. Arbitrary Arrests
3. Ethnic minority rights
4. Religious rights
5. Women's rights
6. Other _____

12. How is the government addressing these violations?

_____
_____
_____

13. How is your work addressing human rights issues in Kyrgyzstan?

_____
_____
_____

14. In what areas can civil society assist the government in improving the protection of human rights in Kyrgyzstan?

1. Human rights monitoring
2. Improving legislation
3. Capacity building
4. Other: _____

FREEDOM HOUSE PROGRAM

15. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to the protection of human rights in Kyrgyzstan? Why?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Adequate
4. Not good
5. Can't say

16. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to the strengthening of human rights in comparison with other international organizations? Why?

1. The best
2. Among the better ones
3. The same as everybody
4. Not as good as others

17. Which of Freedom House's activities has had the most impact on strengthening the human rights situation? Why?

1. Supporting human rights organizations
2. Increasing the capacity of human rights lawyers;
3. Strengthening capacity of human rights organizations to address women's rights
4. Freedom House input on legislation
5. Freedom House advocacy

SUSTAINABILITY

18. What activities does Freedom House do with HR organizations now that you think would be continue to be done even if USAID stopped funding Freedom House? Why?

1. Court monitoring
2. Detention Center monitoring
3. Freedom of Assembly monitoring
4. Input on legislation
5. Training for lawyers, journalists, human rights defenders
6. Support women's right organizations
7. Networking among human rights defenders and observers
8. Legal referral system
9. None

19. If USAID would stop funding FH and instead give money directly to local human rights organizations, how would this affect the impact of USAID support for human rights?

1. Increased impact
2. No change
3. Less
4. Do not know

FUTURE PROSPECTS

20. Is there anything you want Freedom House to do for Human rights organizations that they are not doing?

_____

_____

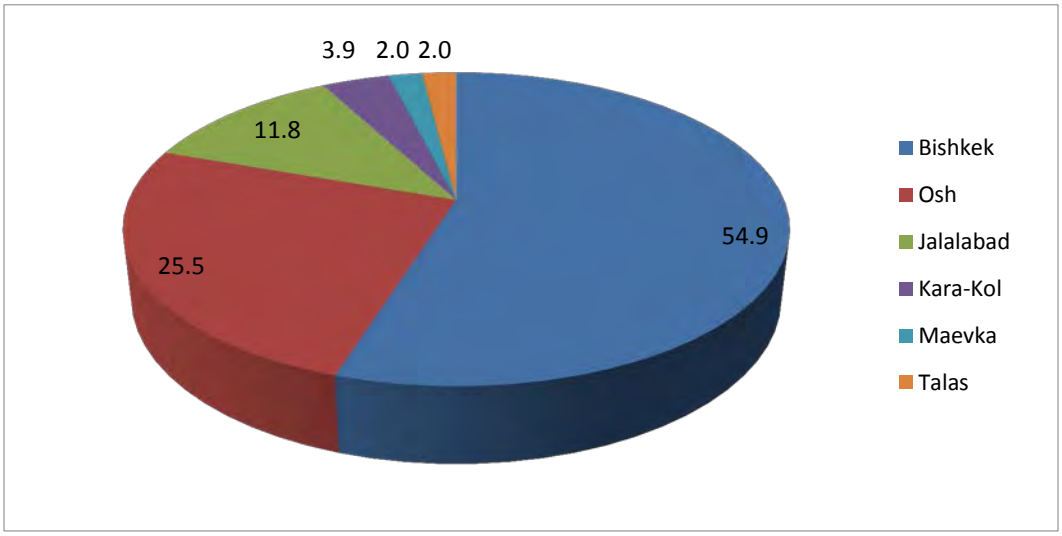
_____

21. Do you believe that the situation in Kyrgyzstan will improve in five years? Why?

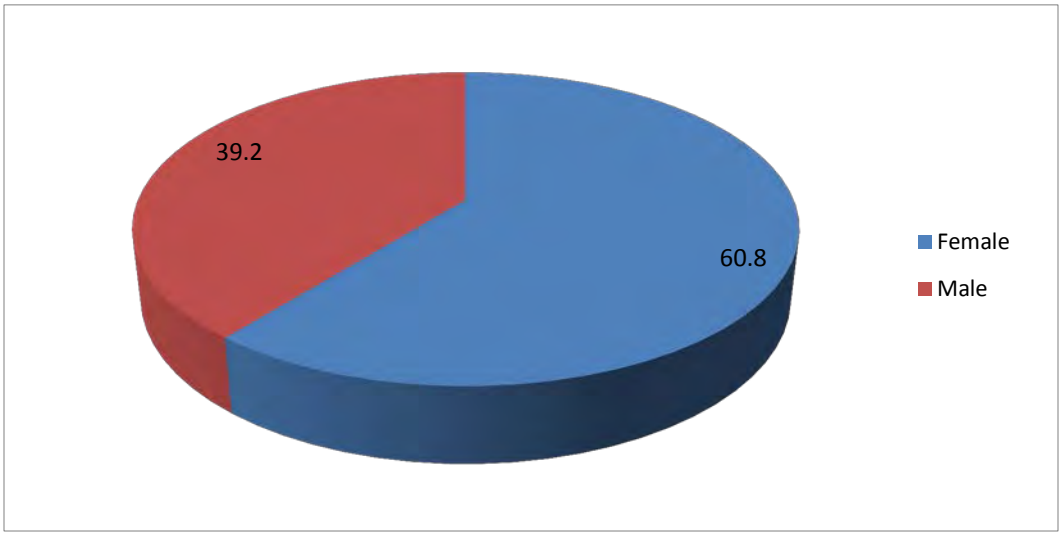
1. Better
2. Same
3. Worse
4. Do not know

ANNEX E: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS GRAPHS

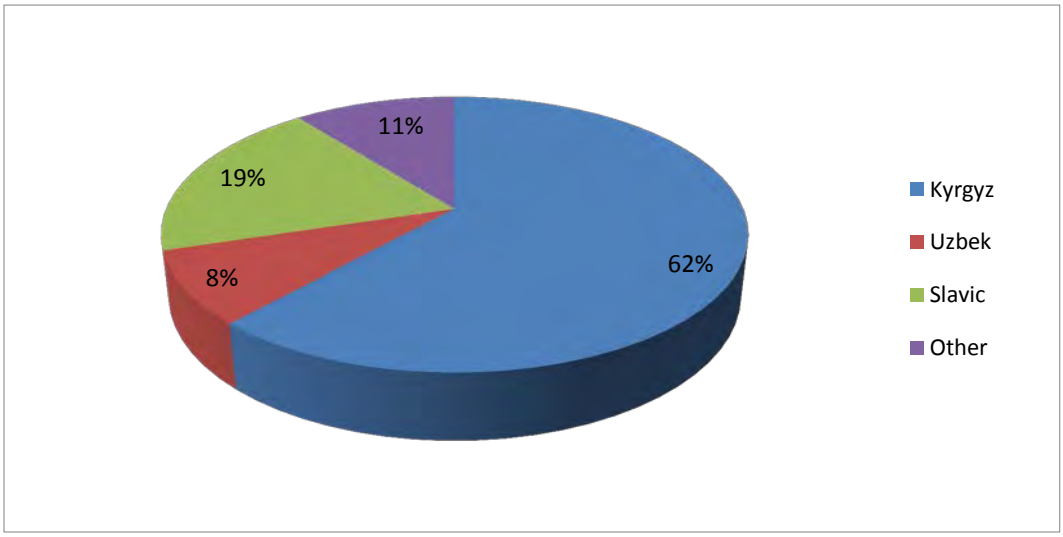
Q4. Location (Percentage)



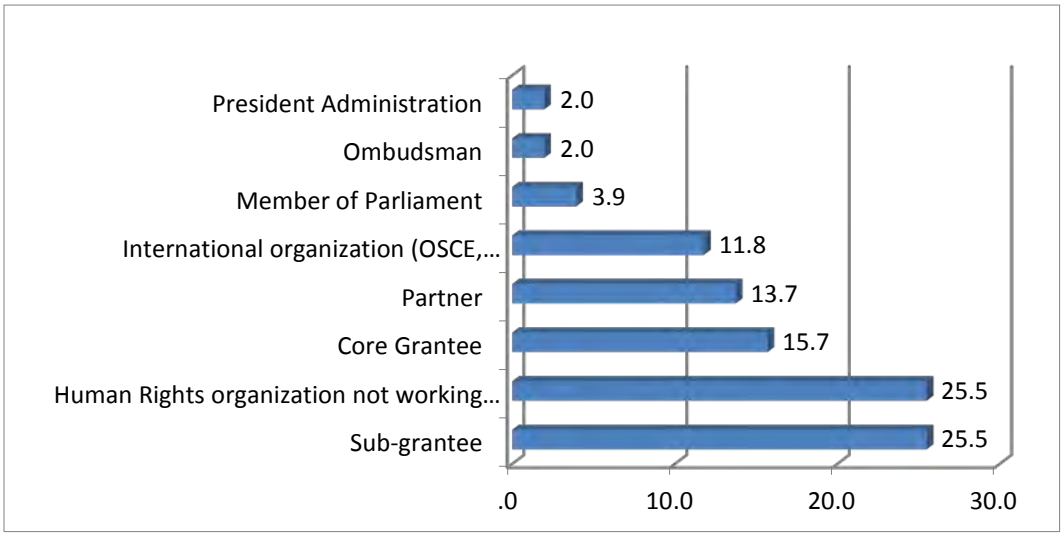
Q5. Gender of Interviewee (Percentage)



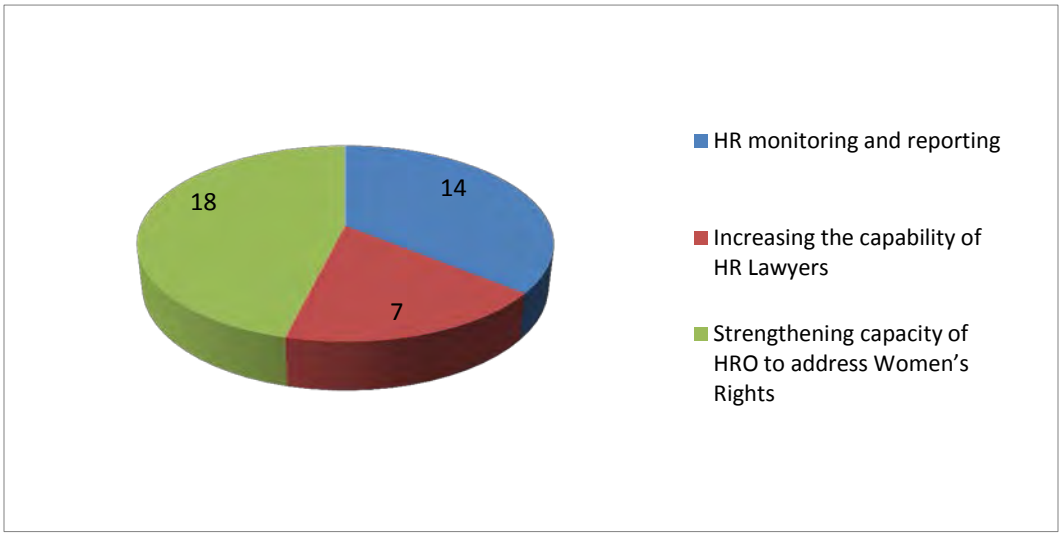
Q5A. Ethnicity of interviewee (Percentage)



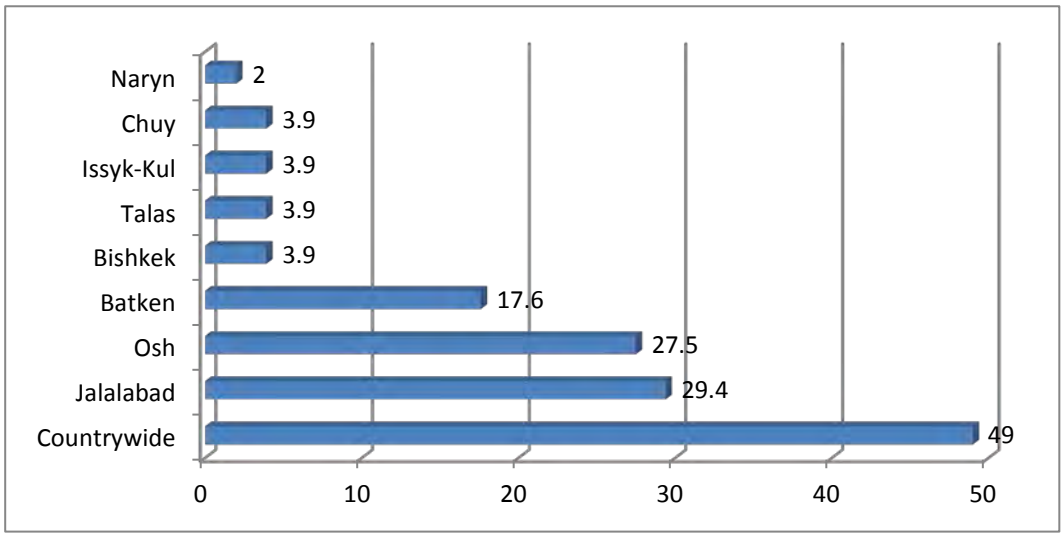
Q6. Interviewees' Relationship to Freedom House (Percentage)



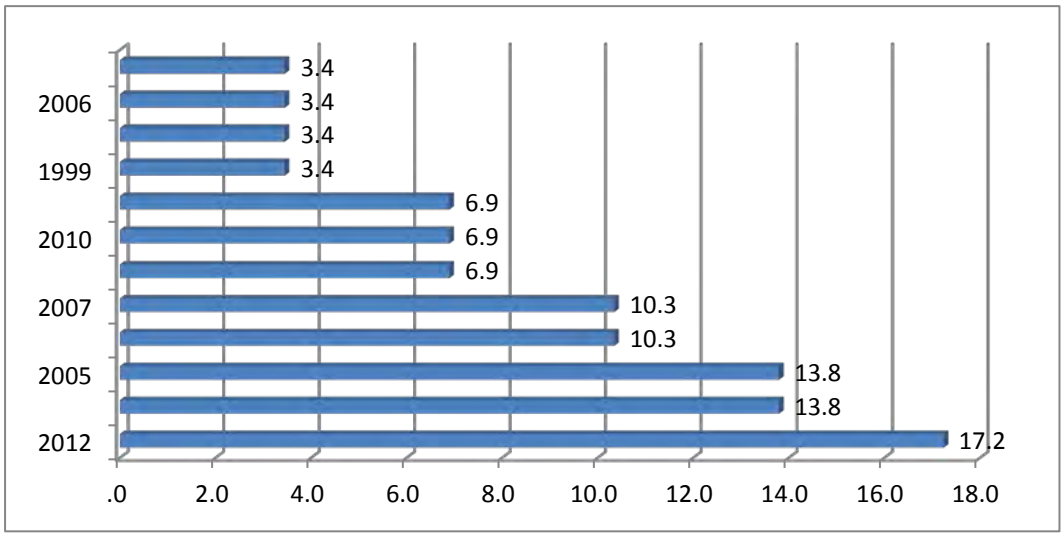
Q7. Involvement in program's activities (Number of mentions)



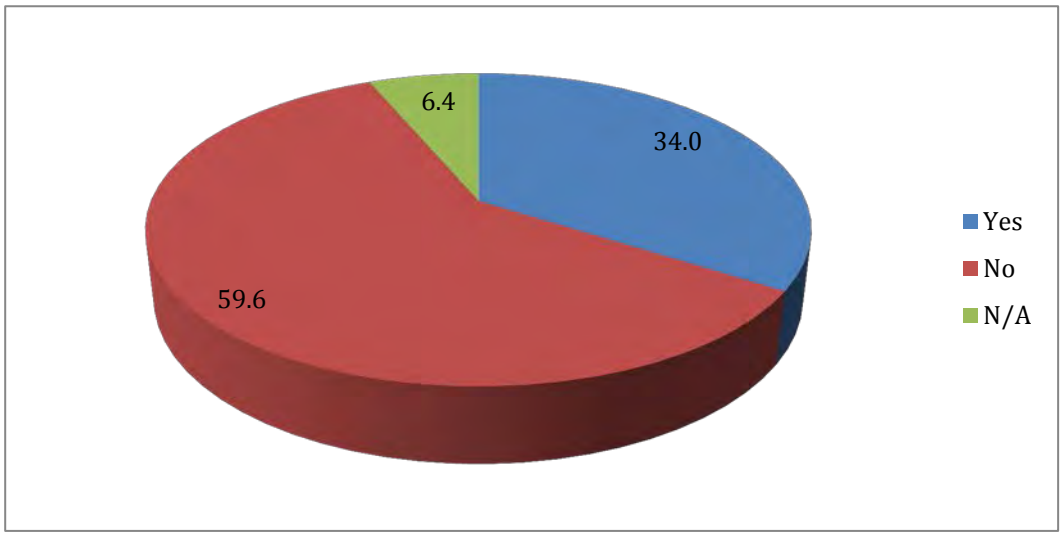
Q8. Coverage (Number of mentions)



Q9. How long you have worked with Freedom House? (Percentage)

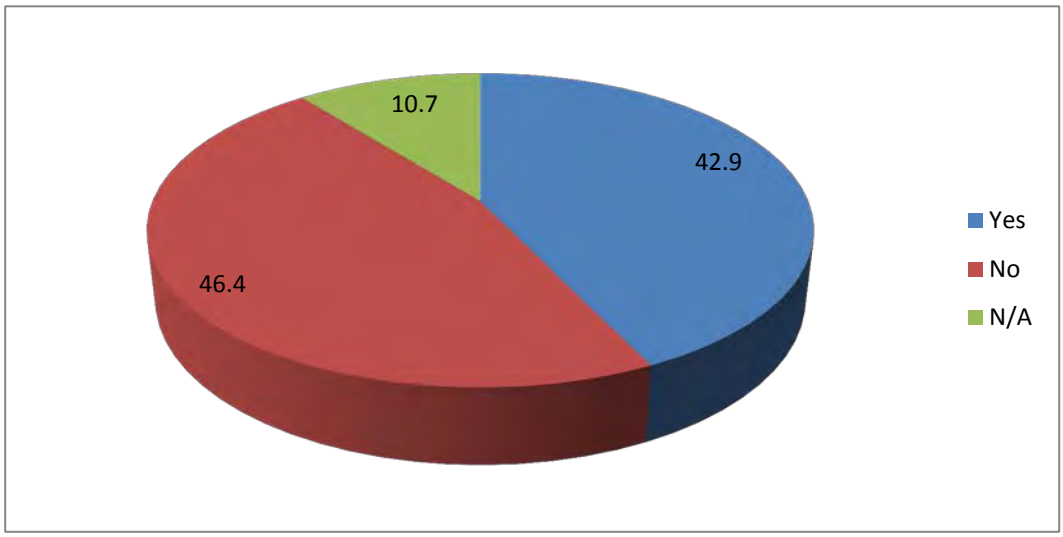


Q10. Do you have a grant from Freedom House? (Percentage)



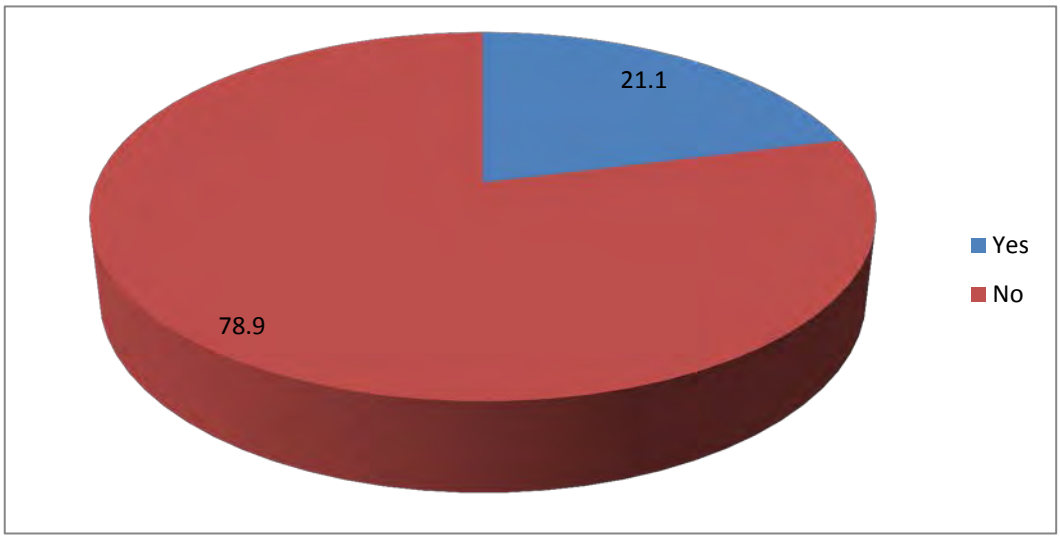
Q10. Do you have a grant from Freedom House? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



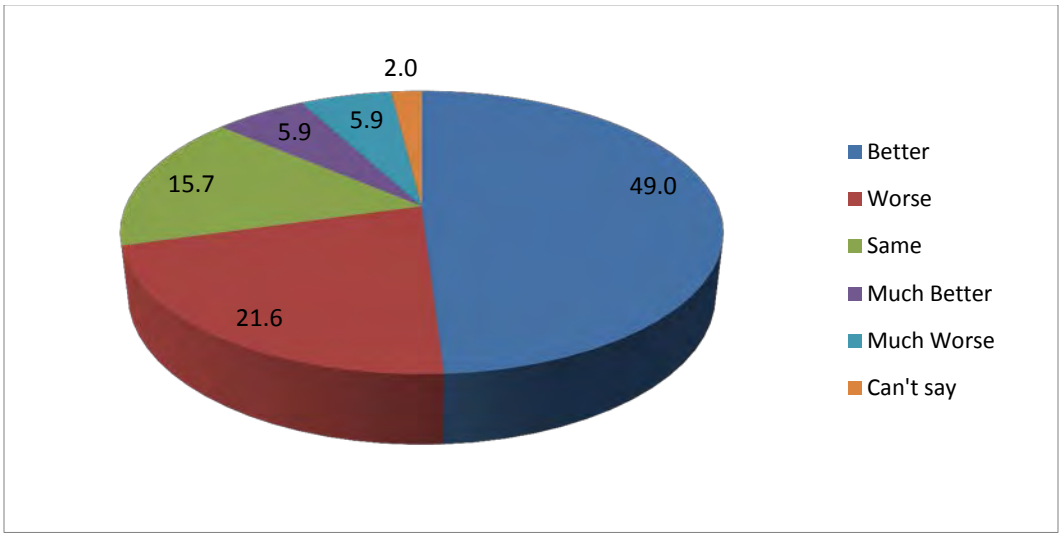
Q10. Do you have a grant from Freedom House? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



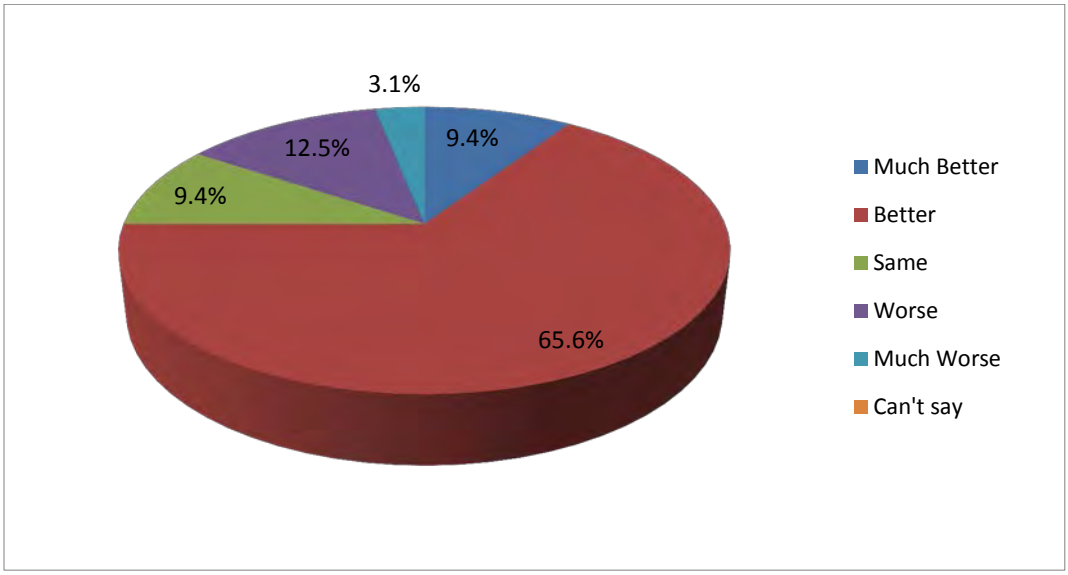
Q11. How would you compare the protection of people's human rights in Kyrgyzstan now and prior to April 2010? (Percentage)

Total



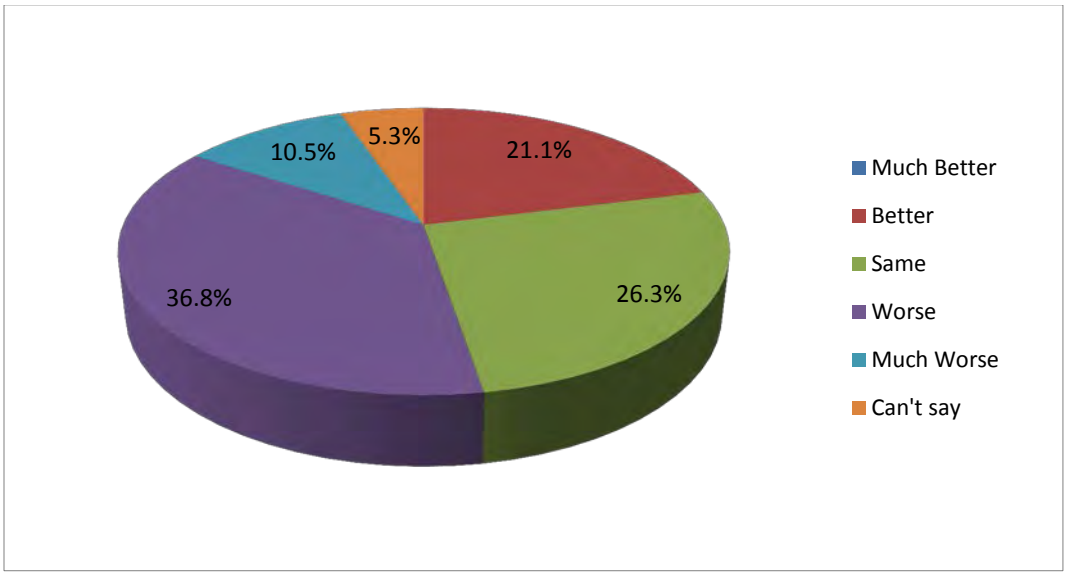
Q11. How would you compare the protection of people's human rights in Kyrgyzstan now and prior to April 2010? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



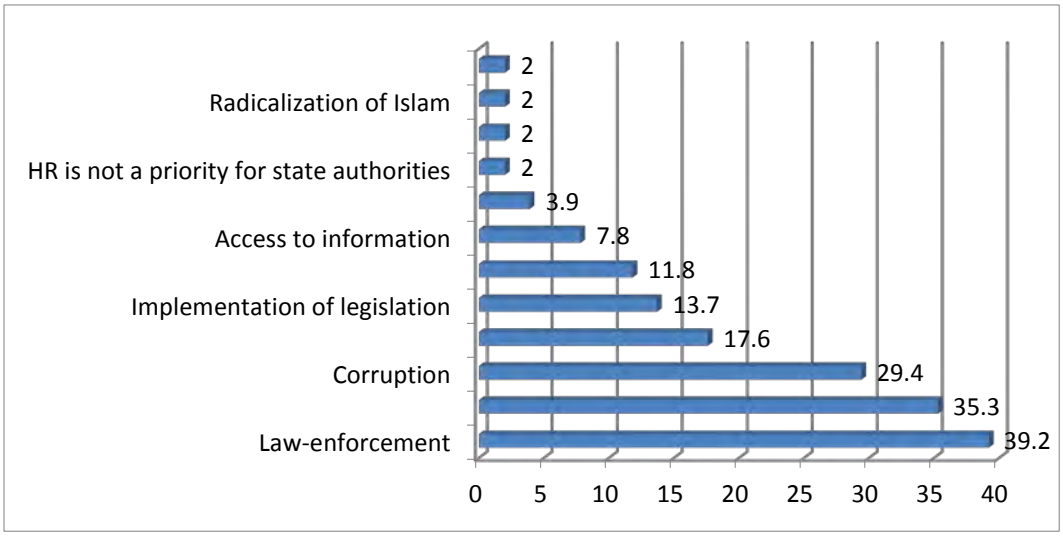
Q11. How would you compare the protection of people's human rights in Kyrgyzstan now and prior to April 2010? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



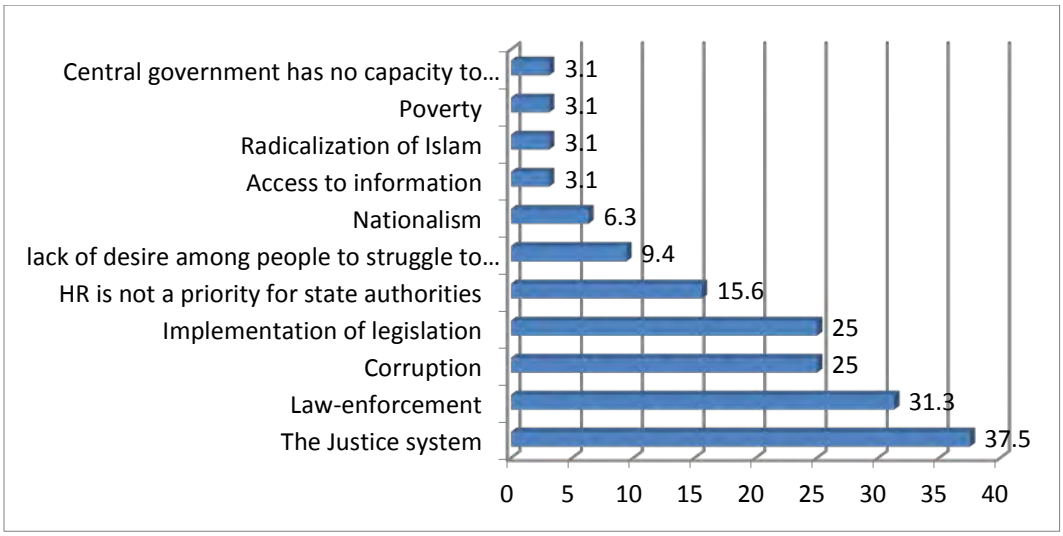
Q13. What is the biggest obstacle to the observation of human rights? (Percentage)

Total



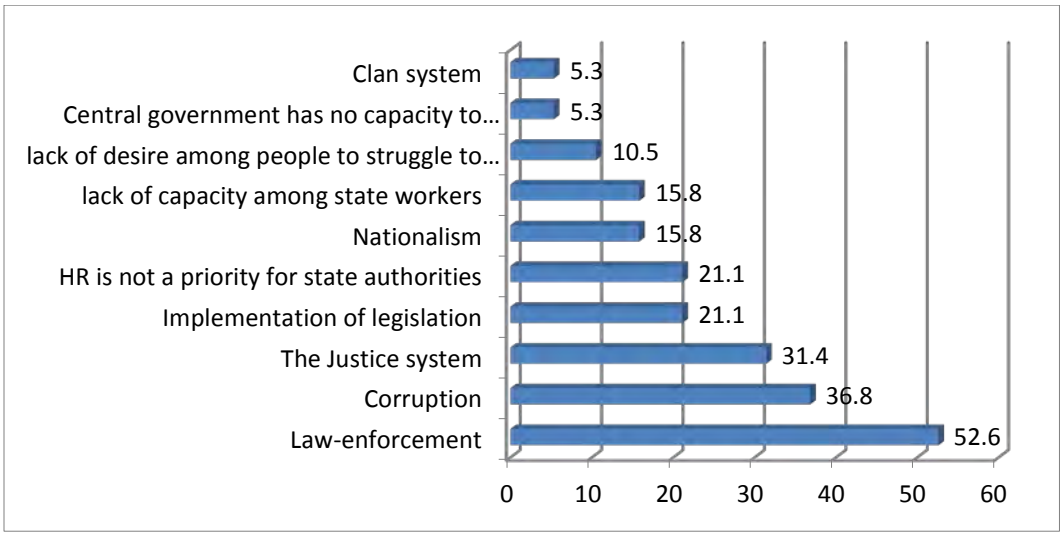
Q13. What is the biggest obstacle to the observation of human rights? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



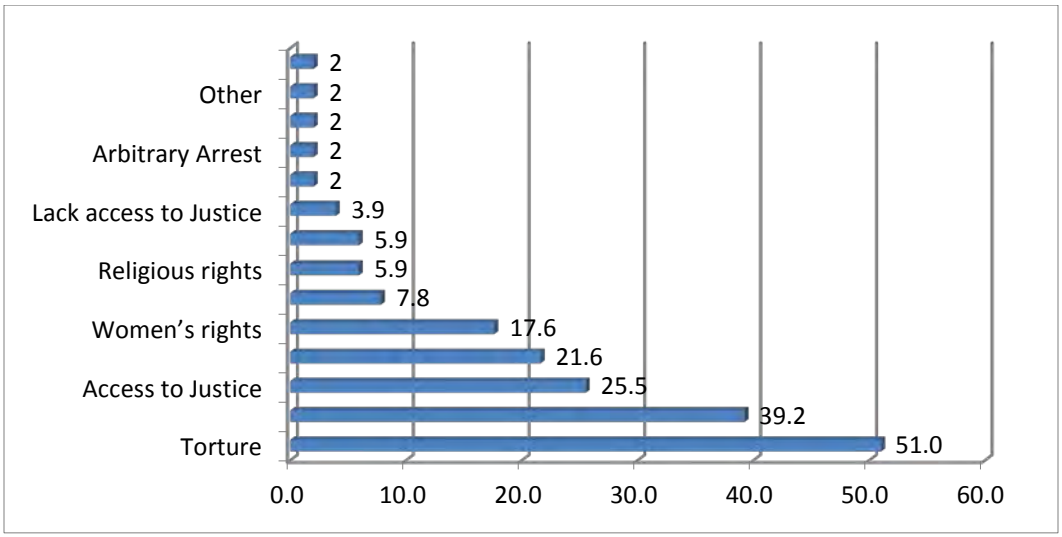
Q13. What is the biggest obstacle to the observation of human rights? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



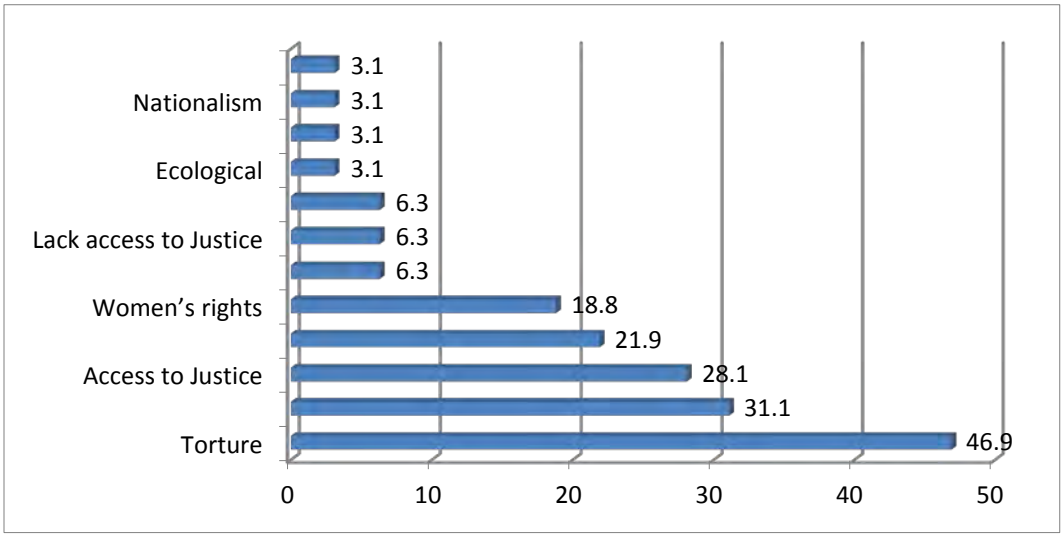
Q14. Which human rights abuses are most widespread in Kyrgyzstan? (Percentage)

Total



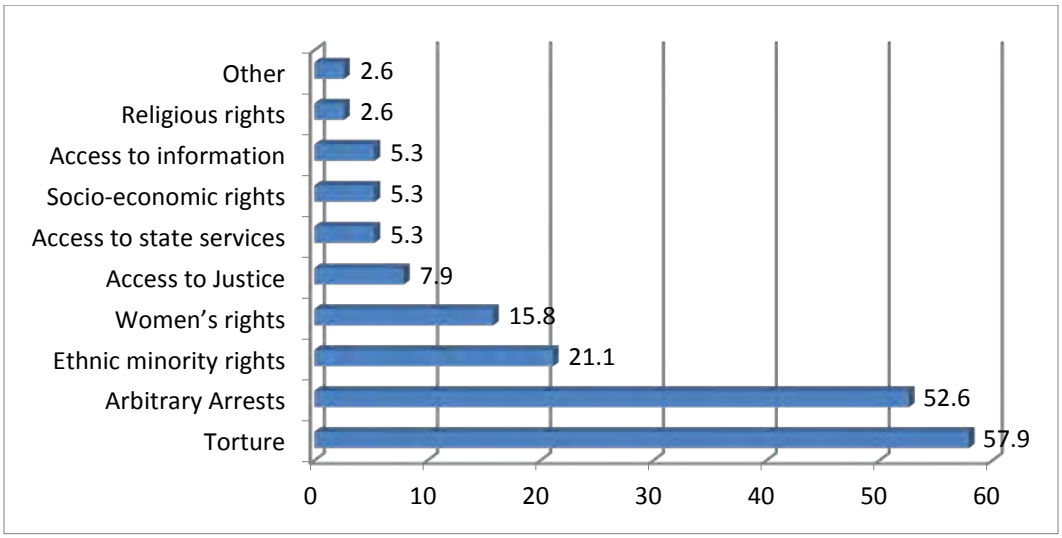
Q14. Which human rights abuses are most widespread in Kyrgyzstan? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



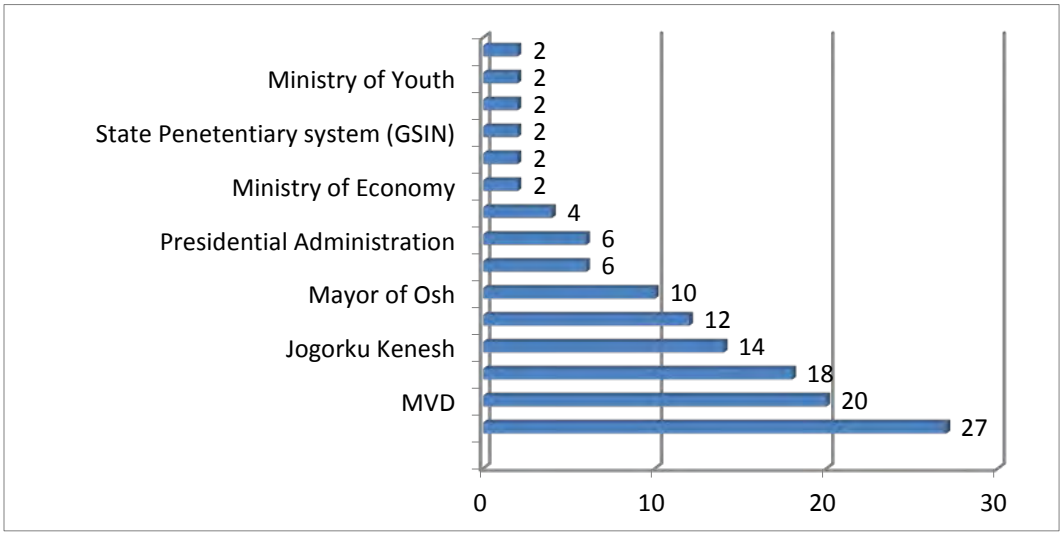
Q14. Which human rights abuses are most widespread in Kyrgyzstan? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



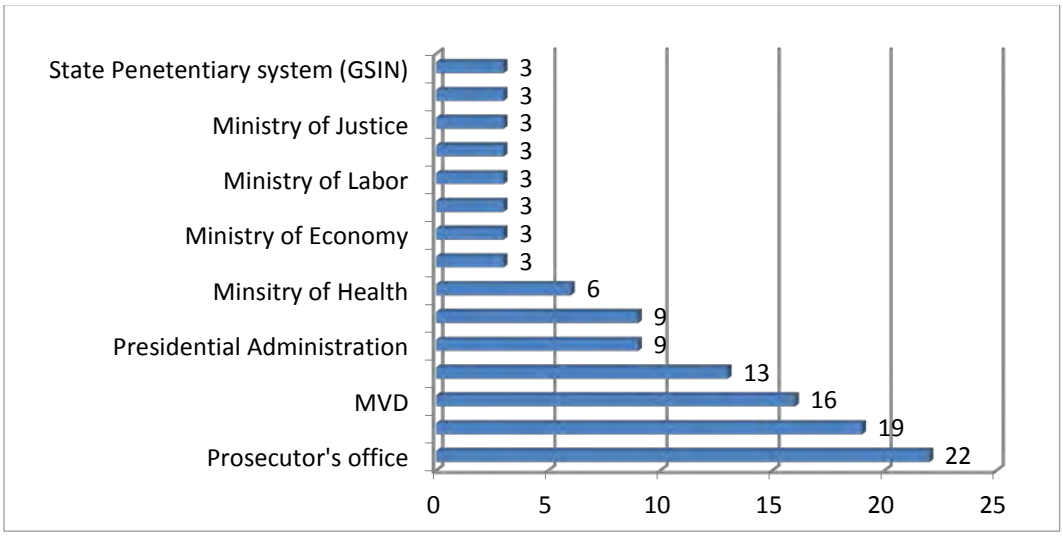
Q15. What government bodies do you work with on human rights issues? (Number of mentions)

Total



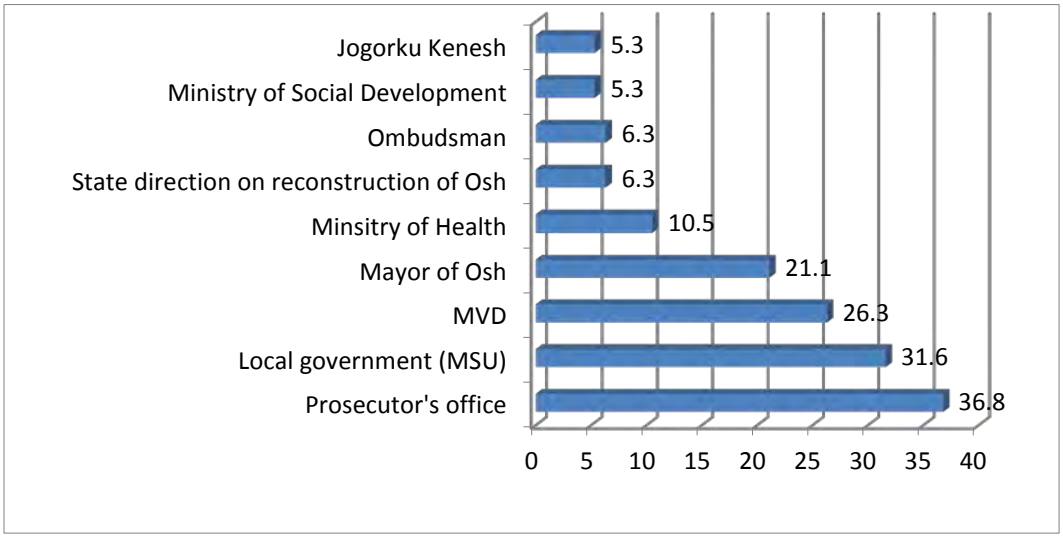
Q15. What government bodies do you work with on human rights issues? (Number of mentions)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



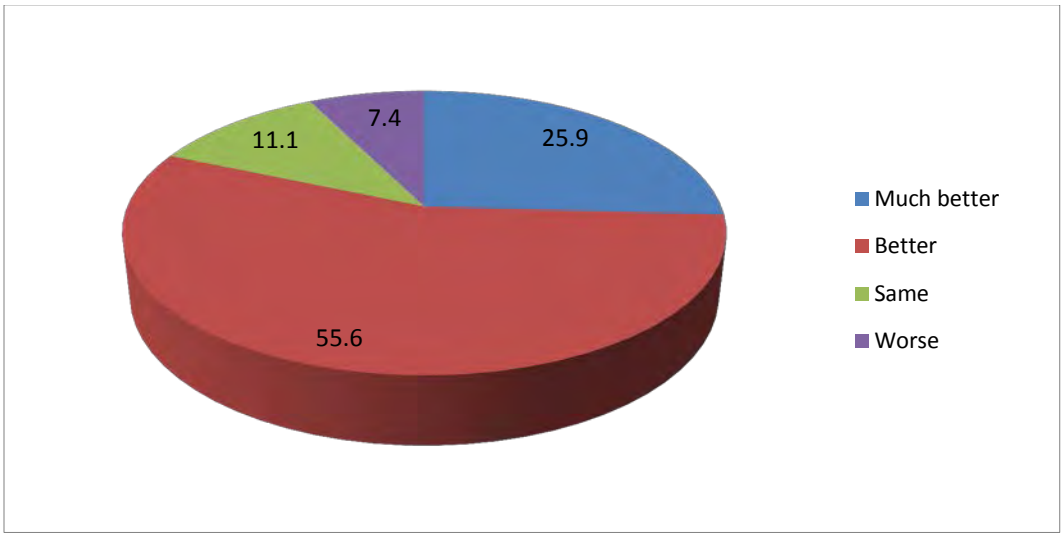
Q15. What government bodies do you work with on human rights issues? (Number of mentions)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



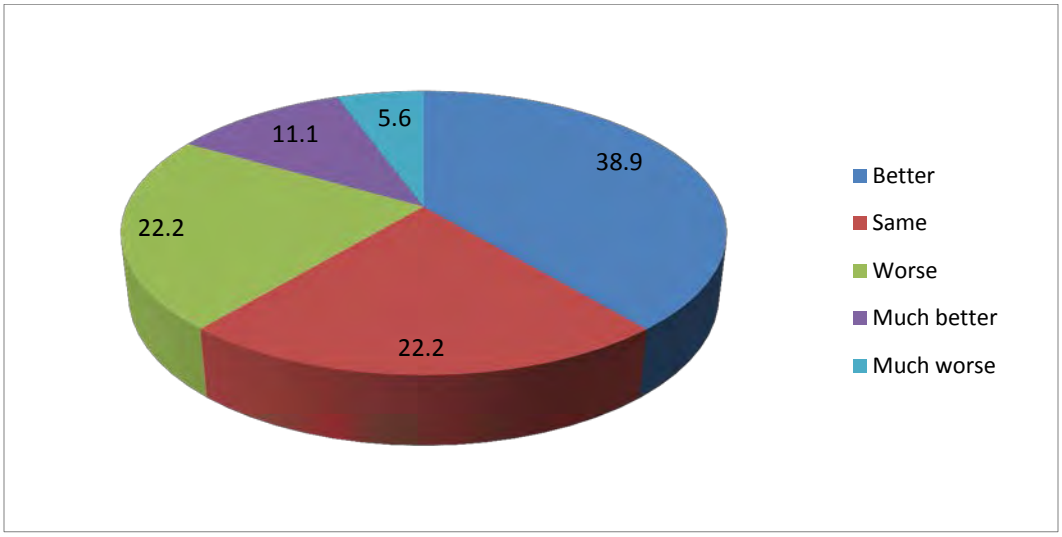
Q16. How would you compare your working relationship with the government on human rights issues now and prior to April 2010? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



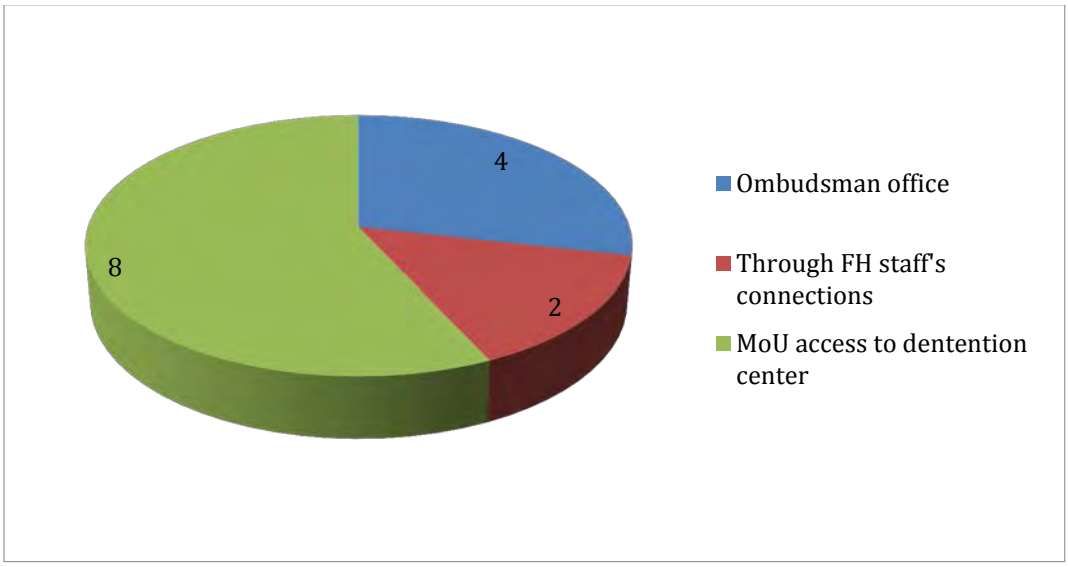
Q16. How would you compare your working relationship with the government on human rights issues now and prior to April 2010? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



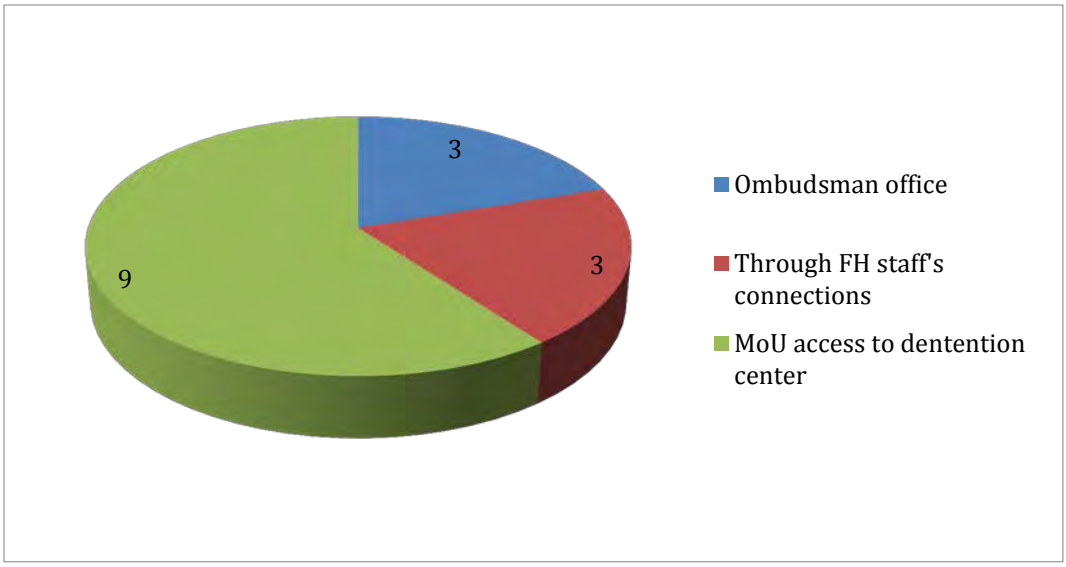
Q17. How Freedom House helps facilitate your engagement with the government? (Percentage)

Total



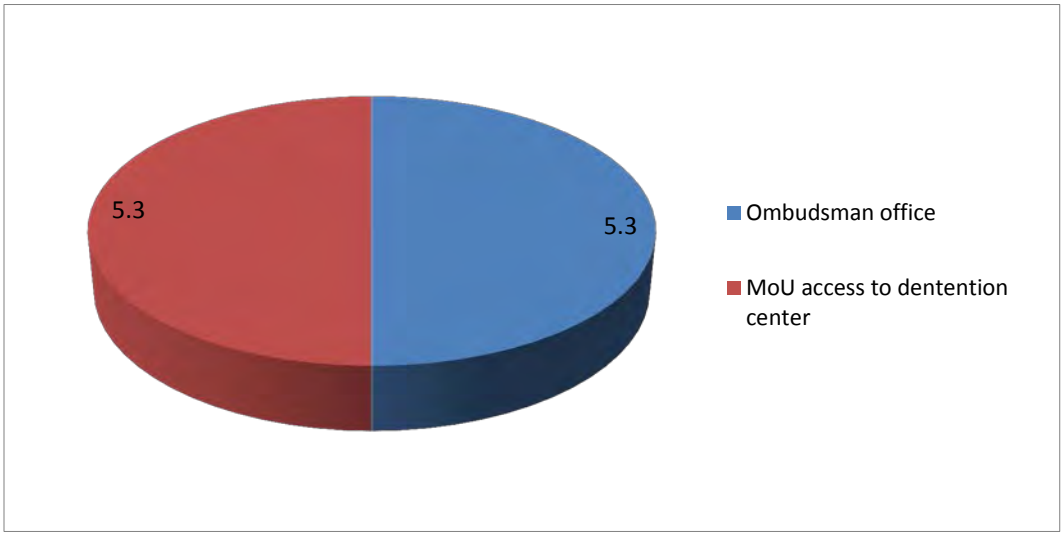
Q17. How does Freedom House help facilitate your engagement with the government? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan

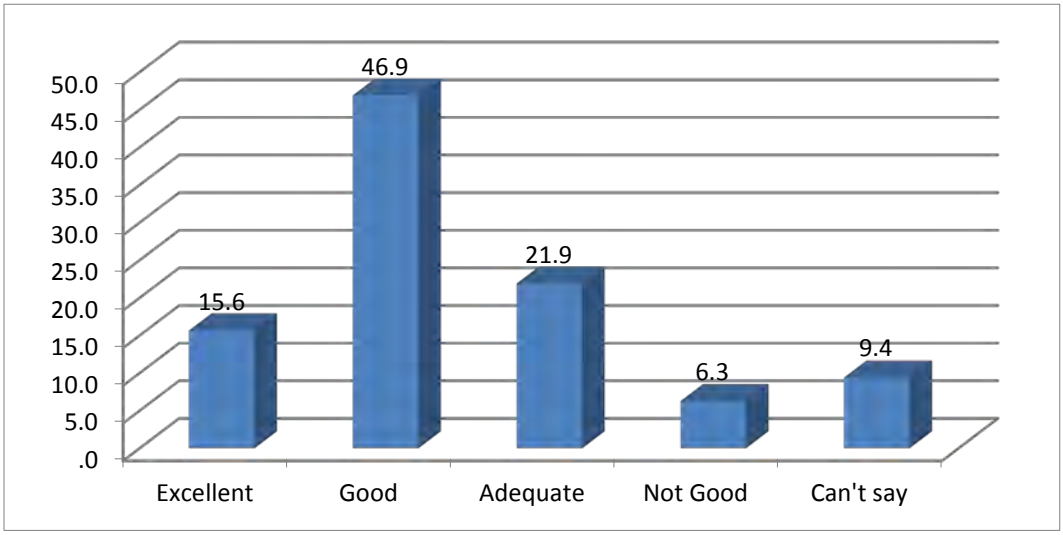


Q17. How does Freedom House help facilitate your engagement with the government? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan

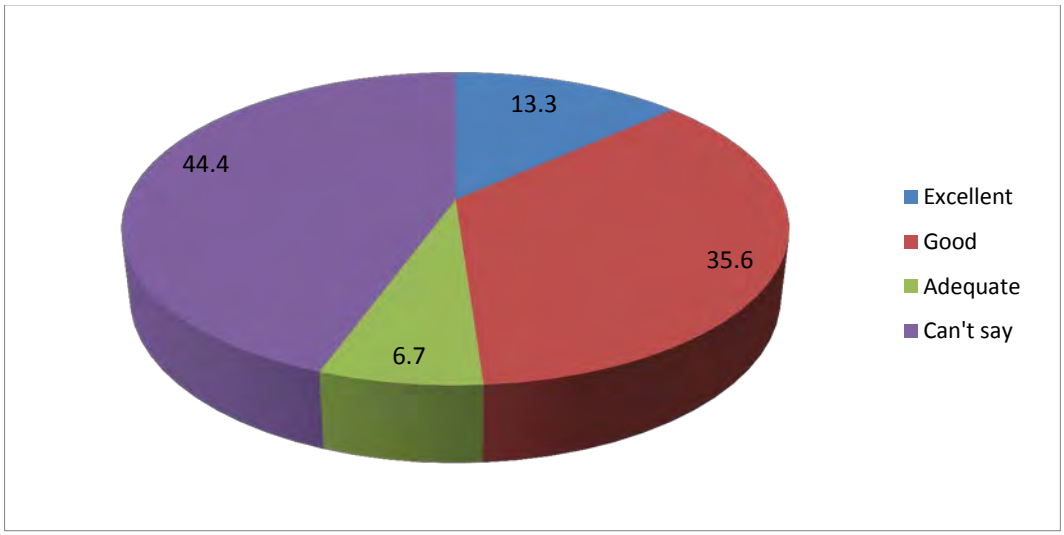


Q18. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to the protection of human rights in Kyrgyzstan? (Percentage)



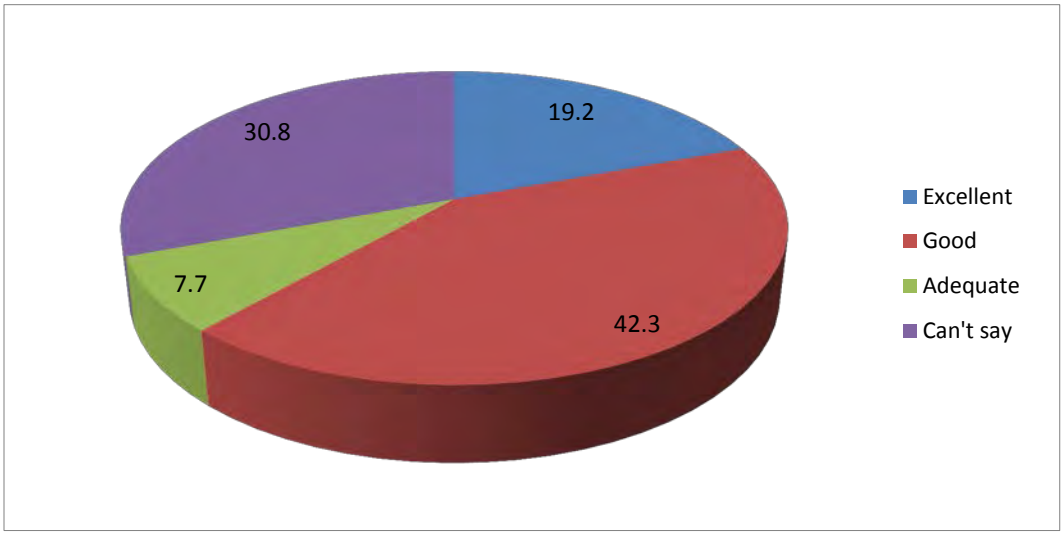
Q19. How would you rate your interaction with Freedom House in terms of programmatic work? (Percentage)

Total



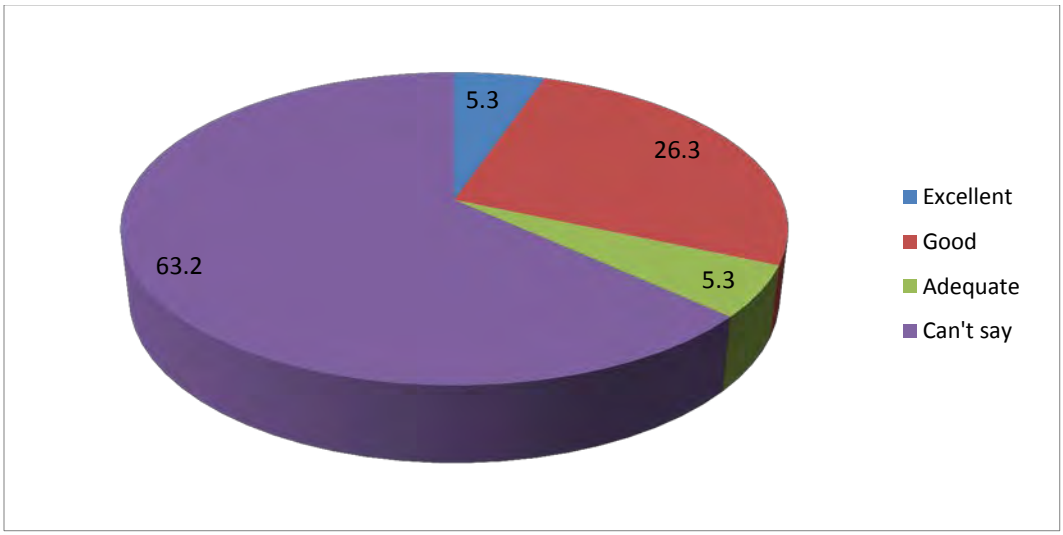
Q19. How would you rate your interaction with Freedom House in terms of programmatic work? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



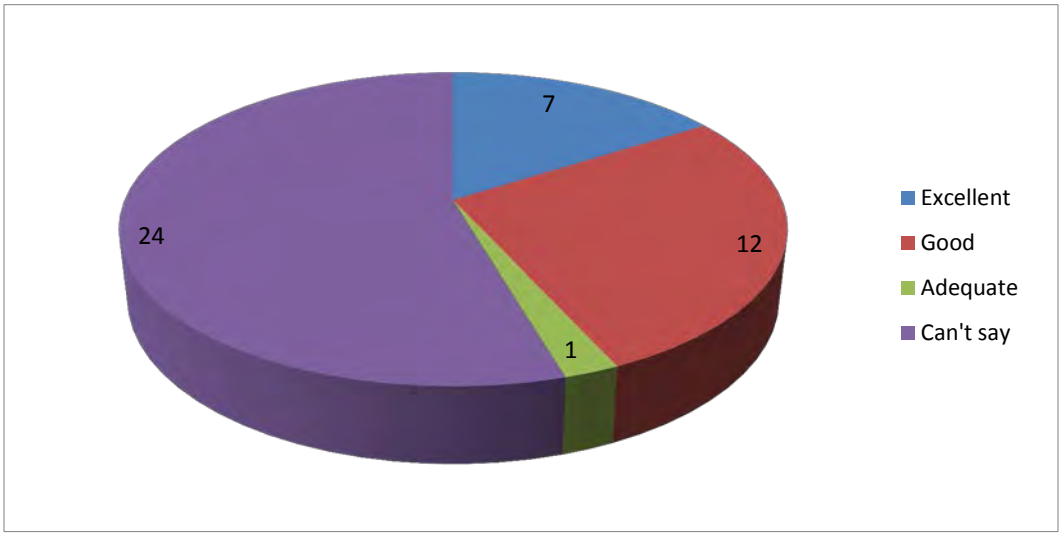
Q19. How would you rate your interaction with Freedom House in terms of programmatic work? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



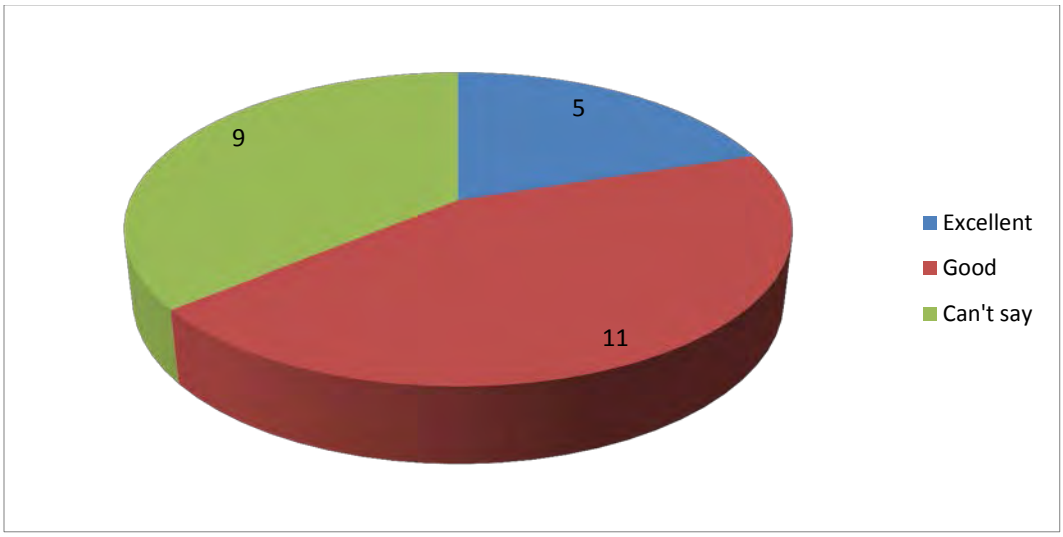
Q20. How would you rate working with Freedom House staff on logistical issues such as grant processing, reporting, and communication? (Number of mentions)

Total



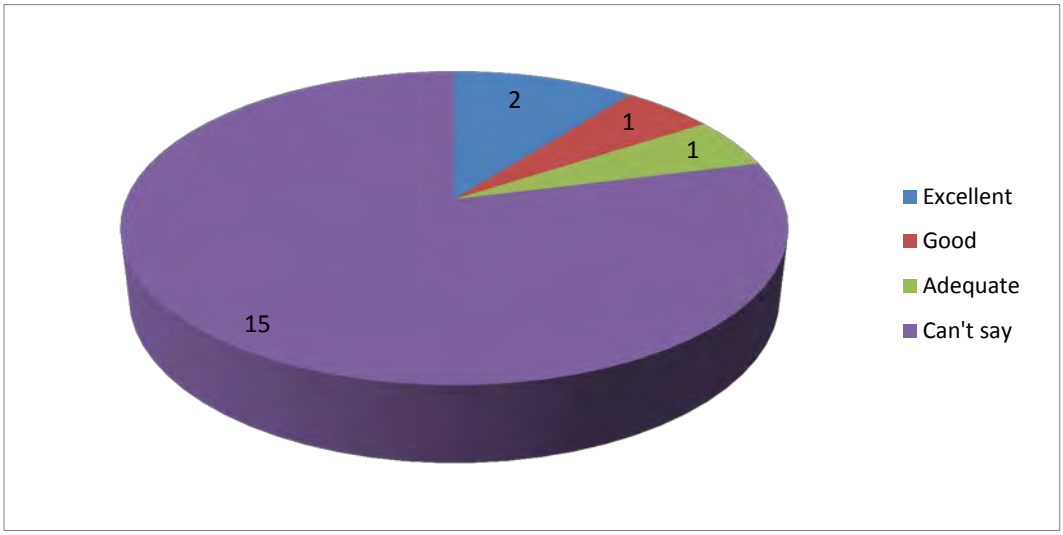
Q20. How would you rate working with Freedom House staff on logistical issues such as grant processing, reporting, and communication? (Number of mentions)

Northern Kyrgyzstan

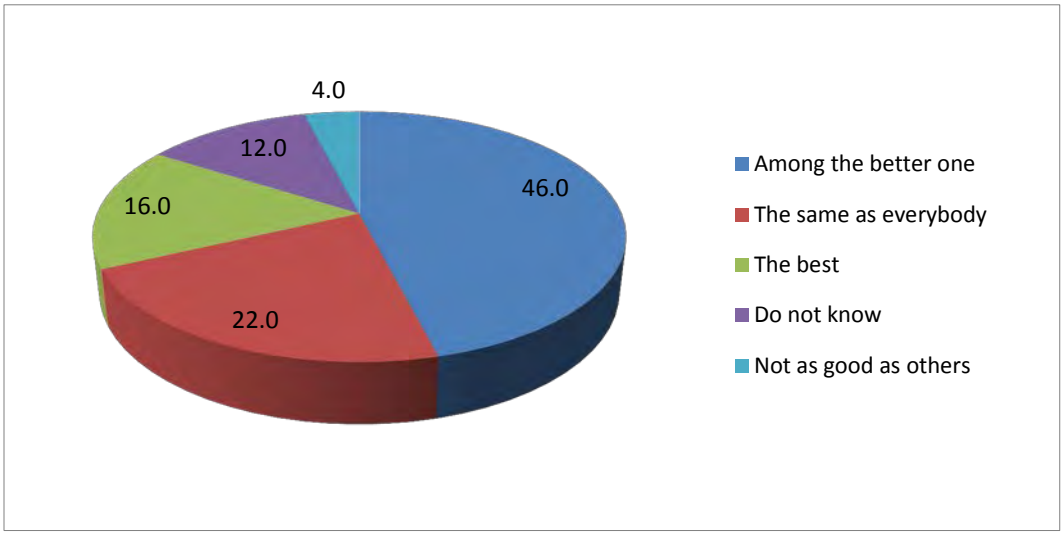


Q20. How would you rate working with Freedom House staff on logistical issues such as grant processing, reporting, and communication? (Number of mentions)

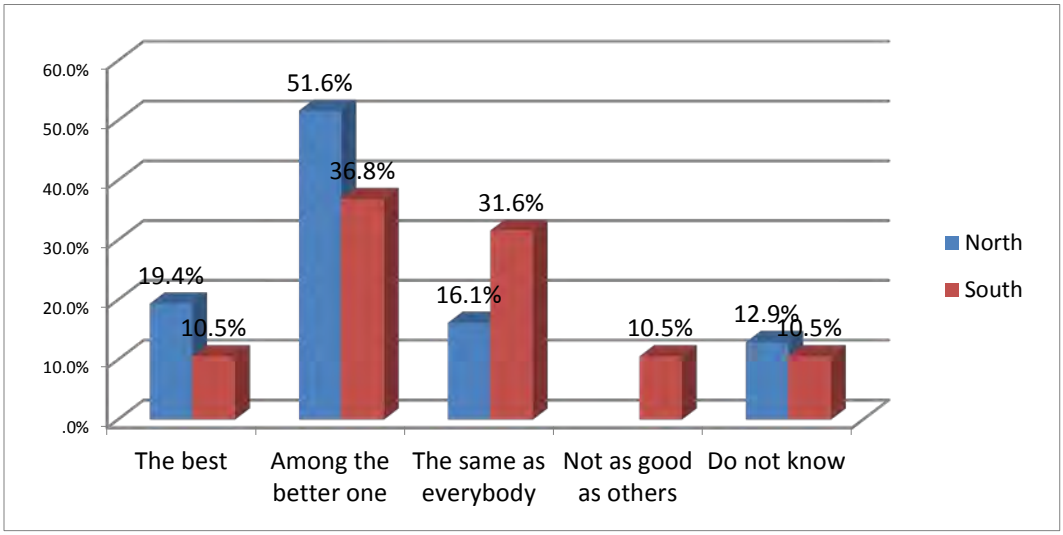
Southern Kyrgyzstan



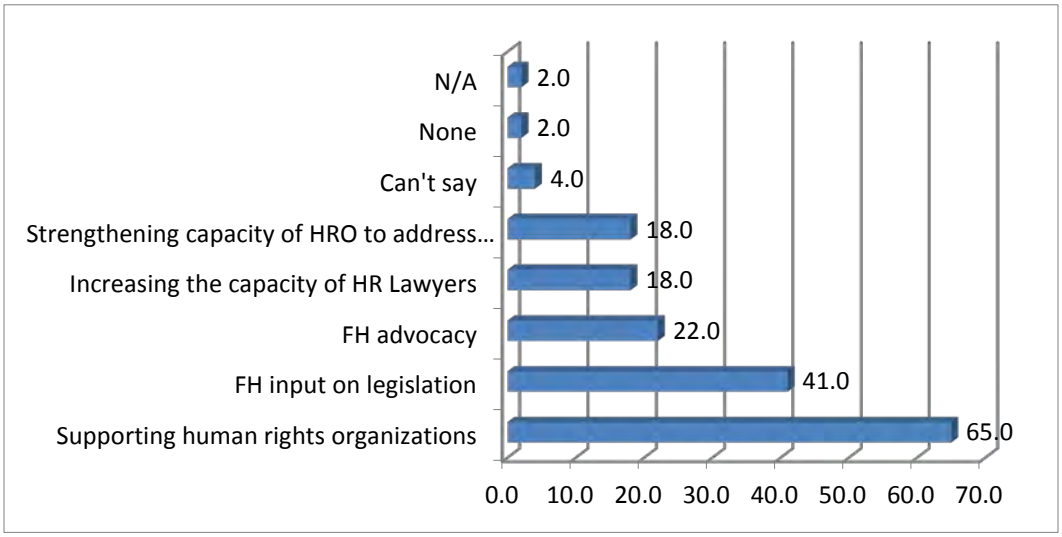
Q21. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to strengthening human rights in comparison with other international organizations? (Percentage)



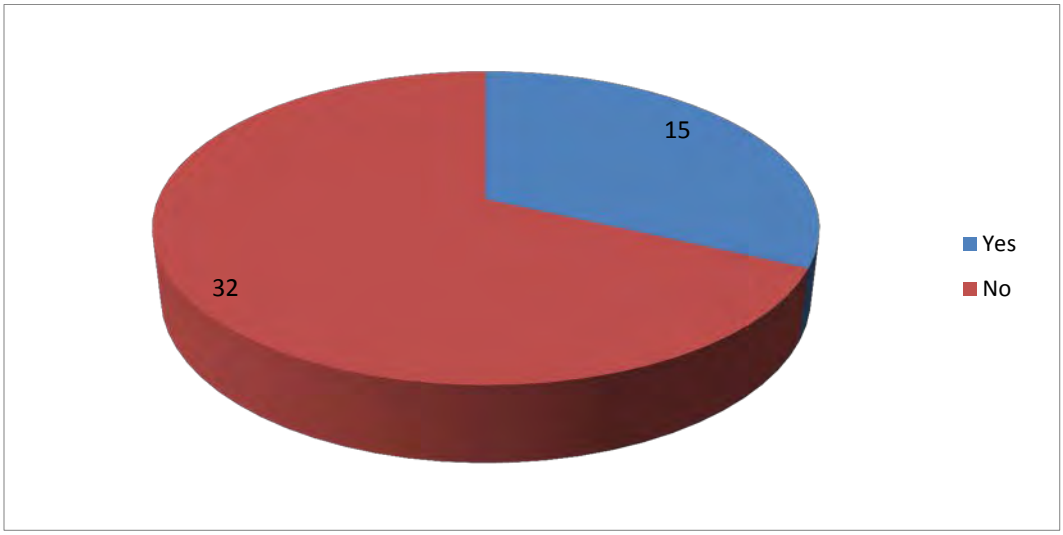
Q21. How would you rate Freedom House's contribution to strengthening human rights in comparison with other international organizations?



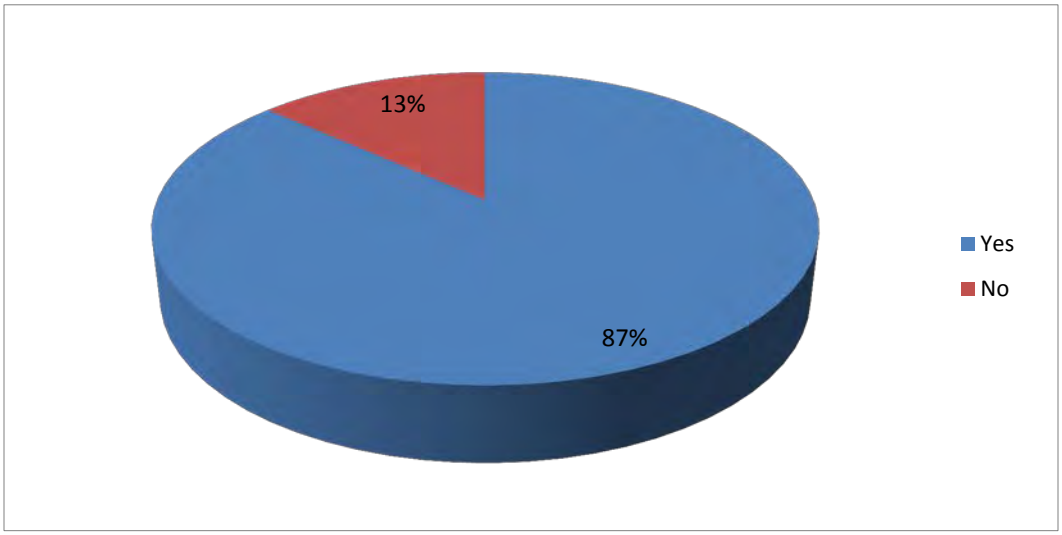
Q22. Which of Freedom House's activities has had the most impact on the strengthening of Kyrgyzstan's human rights situation? (Number of mentions)



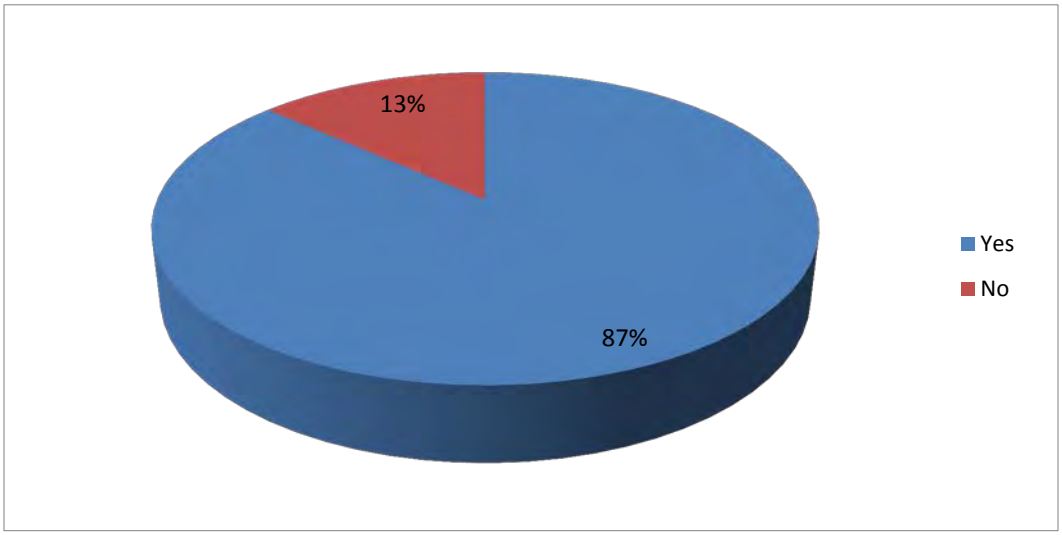
Q23. Have you participated in Freedom House's trainings? (Number of mentions)



Q24. Did Freedom House's training provide you with new skills and knowledge that are important to your work? (Percentage)

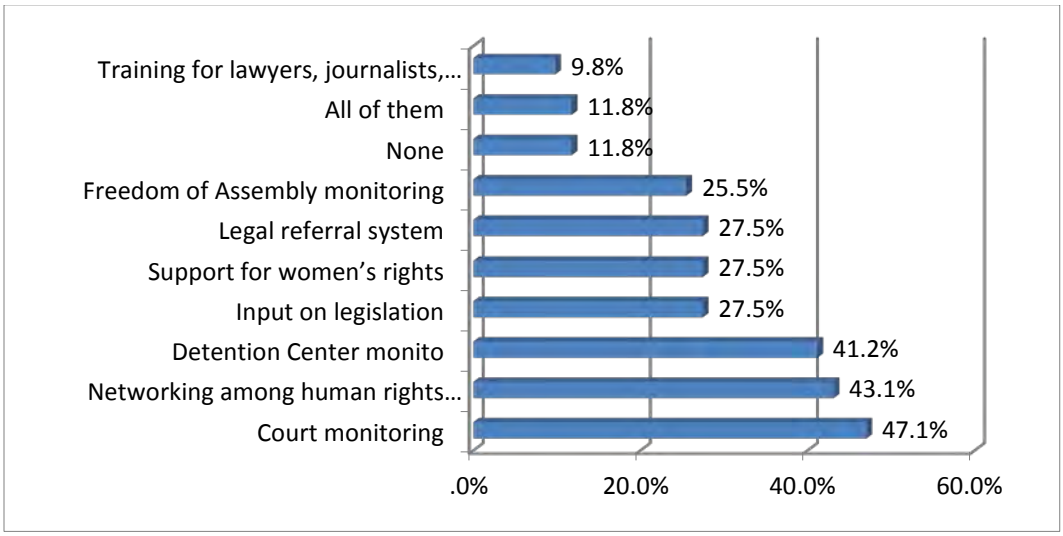


Q25. Have you used the knowledge gained in this training in your activities?



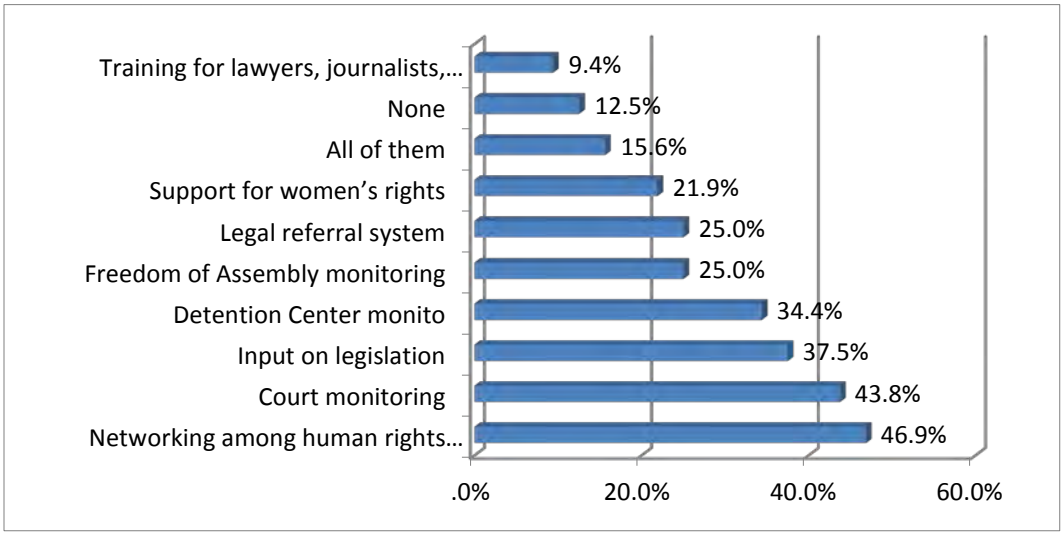
Q26. Which activities supported by Freedom House among human rights defenders would continue even if the Freedom House project was no longer active in the country?

Total



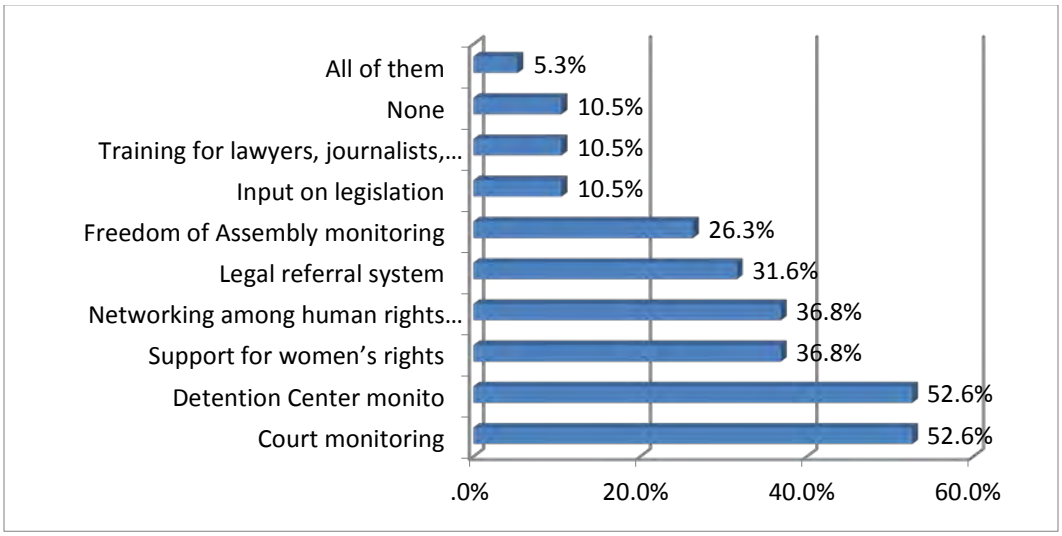
Q26. Which activities supported by Freedom House among human rights defenders would continue even if the Freedom House project was no longer active in the country?

Northern Kyrgyzstan



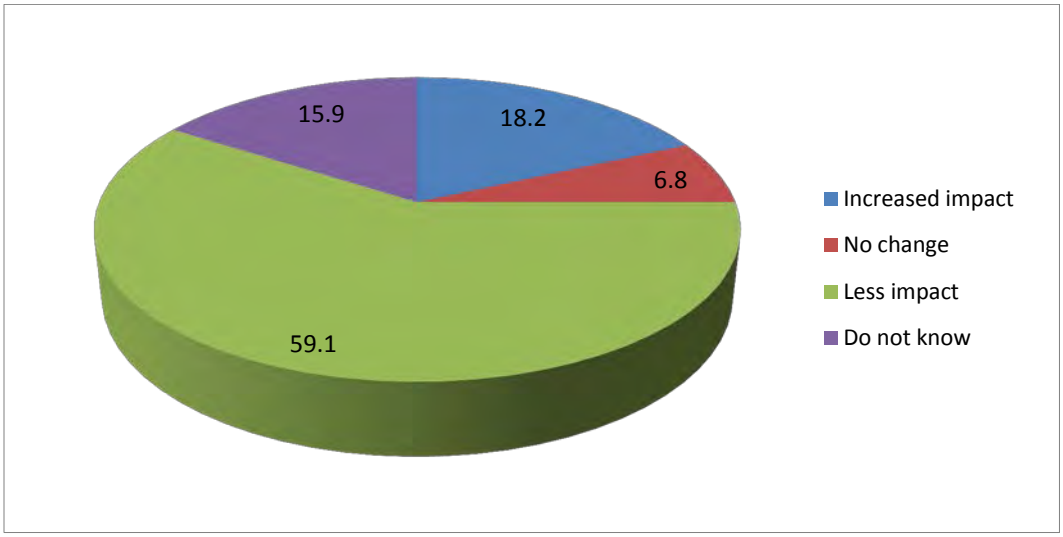
Q26. Which activities supported by Freedom House among human rights defenders would continue even if the Freedom House project was no longer active in the country?

Southern Kyrgyzstan



Q27. If USAID would stop funding Freedom House and instead gave money directly to local human rights organizations, how would this affect the impact of USAID support for human rights? (Percentage)

Total



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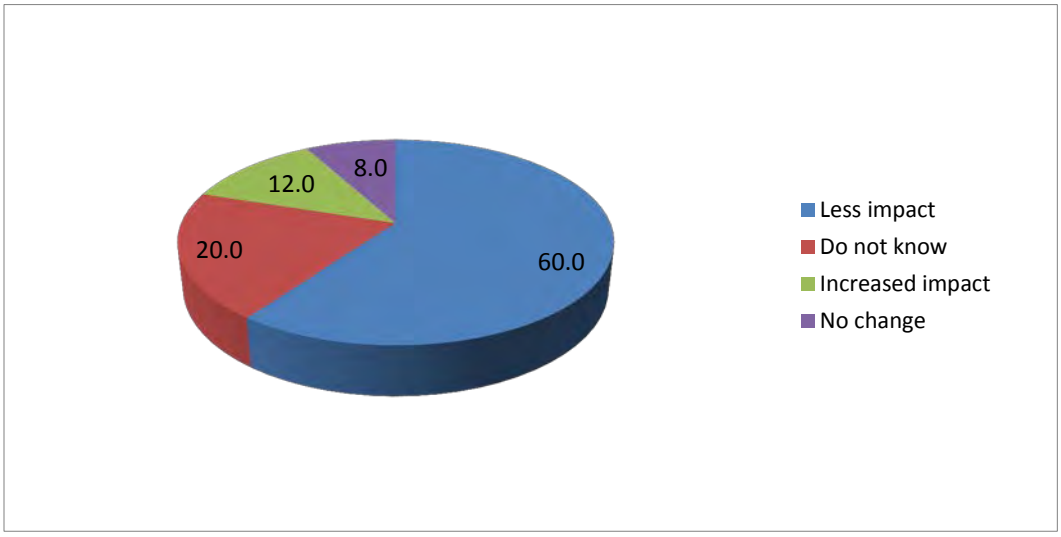
Northern Kyrgyzstan



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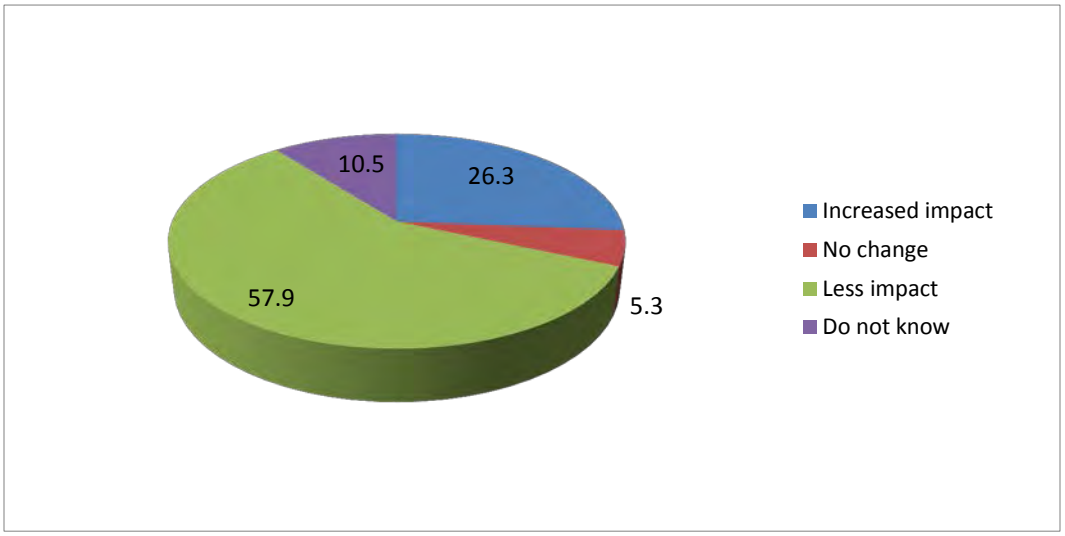
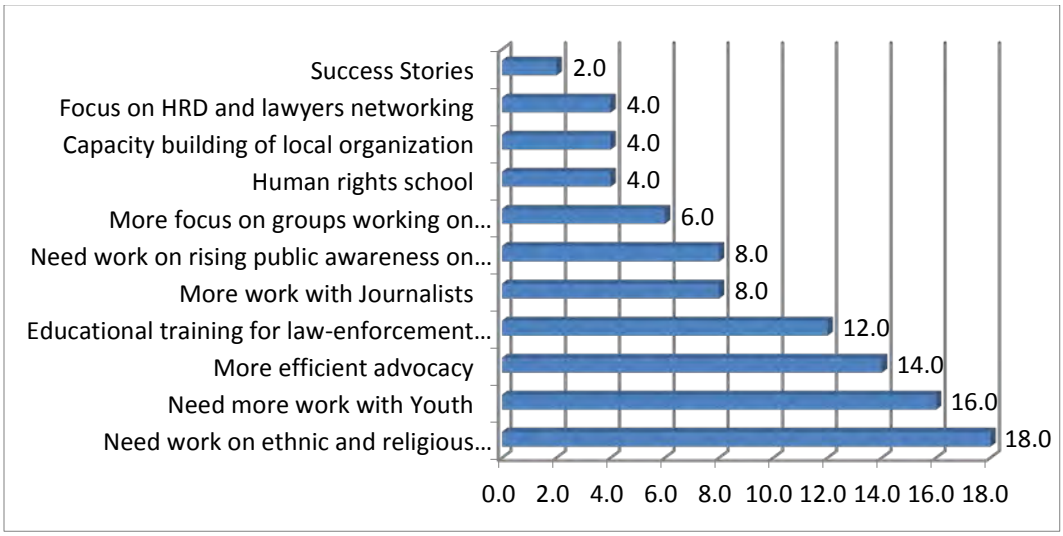
Southern Kyrgyzstan



Q28. Is there anything you want Freedom House to do for human rights organizations that they are not doing now? (Number of mentions)

Total



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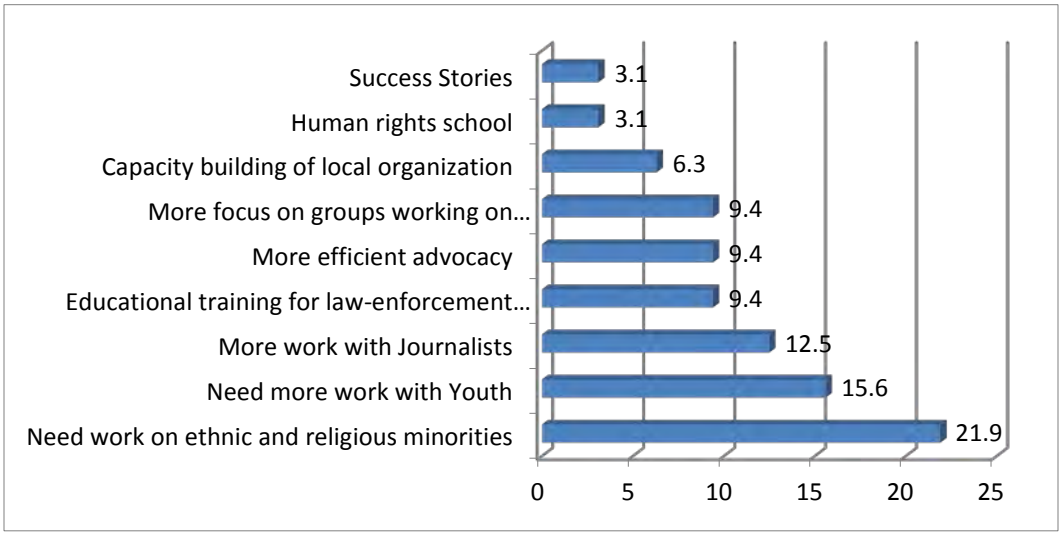
Northern Kyrgyzstan



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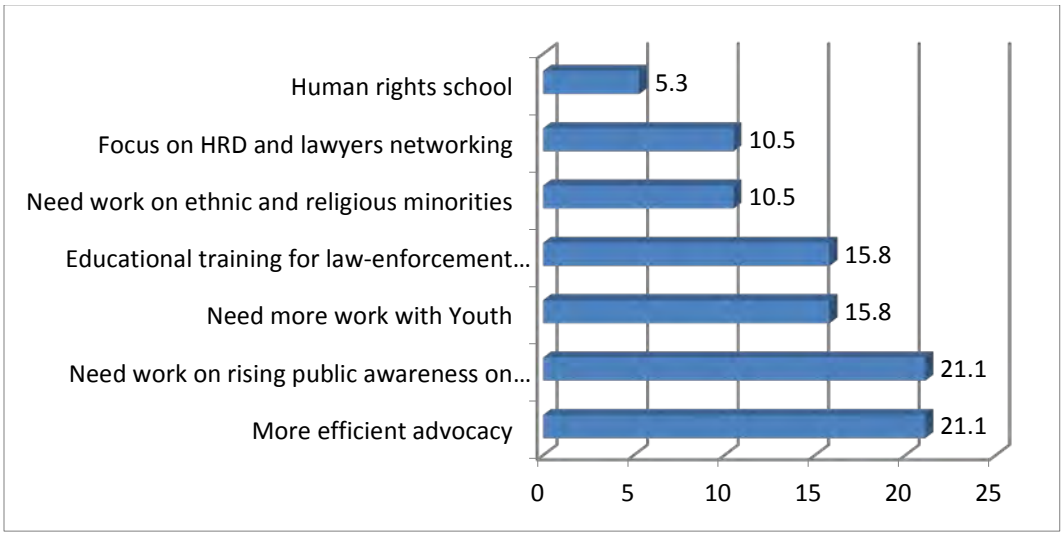
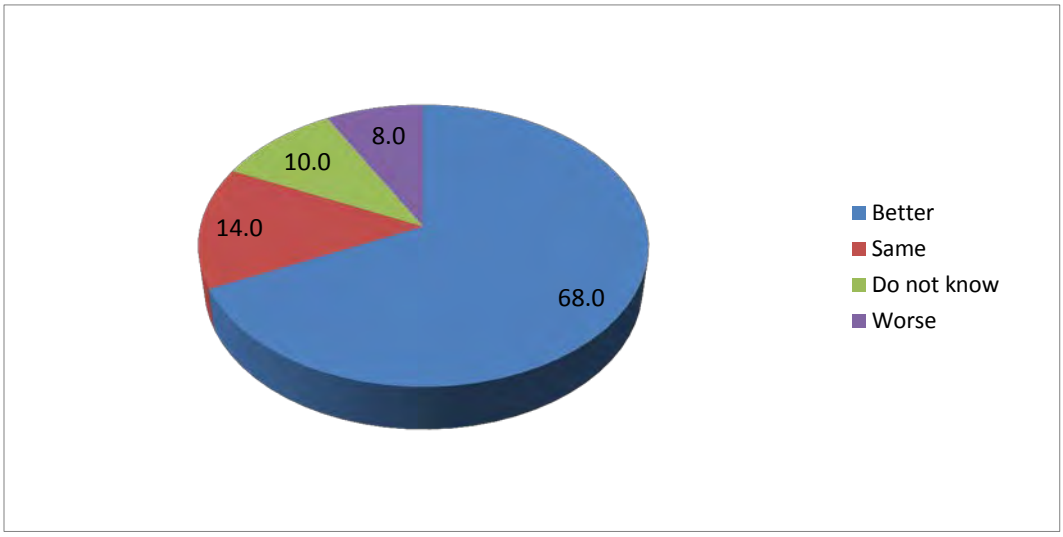
Southern Kyrgyzstan



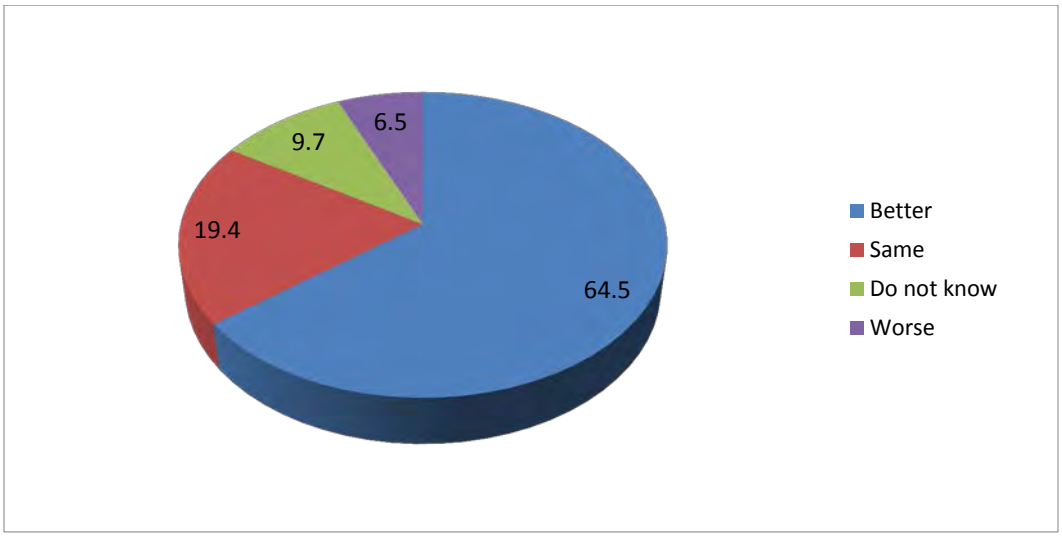
Q29. Do you believe that the situation in Kyrgyzstan will improve in five years? (Percentage)

Total



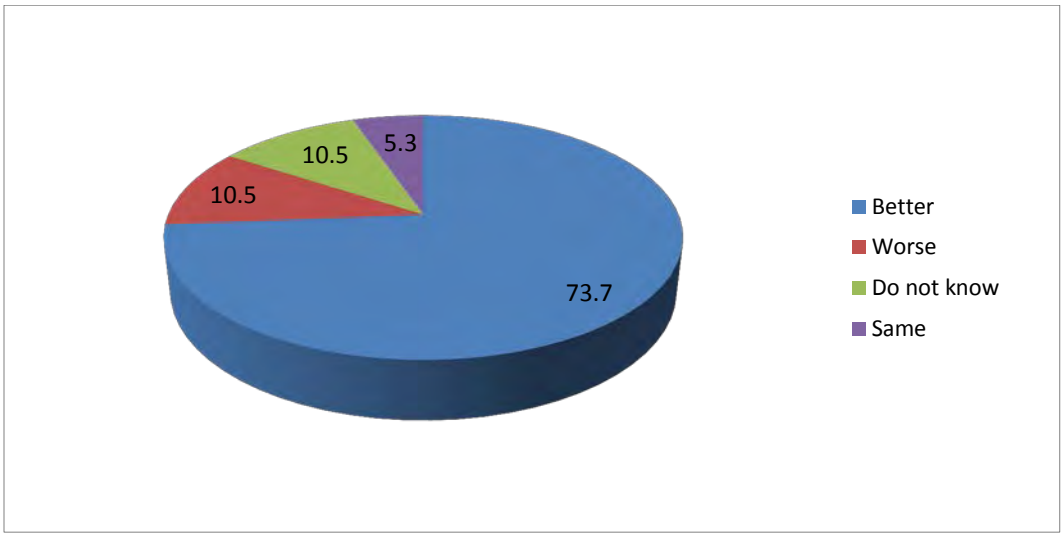
Q29. Do you believe that the situation in Kyrgyzstan will improve in five years? (Percentage)

Northern Kyrgyzstan



Q29. Do you believe that the situation in Kyrgyzstan will improve in five years? (Percentage)

Southern Kyrgyzstan



ANNEX F: STATEMENT OF WORK

C.1 TITLE

USAID - Evaluation of the "Strengthening Human Rights" program in Kyrgyzstan

C.2 PURPOSE

USAID/Kyrgyzstan seeks to conduct a mid-term performance evaluation of the Strengthening Human Rights in

Kyrgyzstan Program for the purposes of:

a. ascertaining the quality of the performance of the program, its effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the domestic human rights defense system;

b. analyzing program management and coordination; and documenting lessons learned and best practices to improve future program design;

c. assessing the main strengths, weaknesses and any constraints to the implementation process and suggestions for management of the remainder of the program; and

d. ascertaining the influence of the program on the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan.

This information will assist USAID/Kyrgyzstan in the management of its human rights and civil society portfolio and help the partner understand its strengths and areas where technical, administrative and management efforts could be improved.

C.3 BACKGROUND

Freedom House has worked in the area of human rights in Kyrgyzstan for over a decade. The "Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan" Program was initiated in Kyrgyzstan in early 2009, prior to the dramatic events that took place there in April and June 2010. The program was designed with the following objectives:

- Objective 1: Improve the quality of human rights monitoring and reporting;
- Objective 2: Bolster the capabilities of defense lawyers working in the area of human rights; and
- Objective 3: Enhance the capacity of organizations addressing women's rights.

Initially intended as a two year program, it has since been extended by an additional 19 months and will be completed in September of 2013.

The "Strengthening Human Rights Program in Kyrgyzstan" Program was designed over the course of 2009, a time when several factors led Freedom House, in its annual Freedom in the World survey, to downgrade Kyrgyzstan for the first time to `Not Free.' While a regression in political freedoms owing to the snap re-election of President Kurmanbek Bakiev was one such factor, this backsliding was also mirrored in the larger human rights landscape. Most pointedly, the murder of a prominent journalist in late 2009 had a chilling effect on freedom of expression in

the country. This tragic event was preceded by many instances of intimidation of journalists through nominally legal and extra-legal means. Presidential amendments in 2008 to the Law on Freedom of Assembly imposed new limitations on the ability of civil society to protest in the central square in front of the government building, and when religious groups sought to demonstrate in Nookat in 2008, the government used a national security pretext to aggressively disband the assembly. As 2009 drew to a close, Kyrgyzstan's own human rights ombudsman cited significant decline.

2010 was a watershed year in Kyrgyz politics marked by the overthrow of the authoritarian President Kurmanbek Bakiev and ethnically charged violence in the south of the country, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives, destruction of property and forced displacement.

Since 2010 Kyrgyzstan has experienced one of the most significant political shifts among the former Soviet republics. Under the Provisional Government, a new constitution created a parliamentary democracy and set into a motion a series of electoral and other political tests, concluding with the October 2011 presidential elections which marked the first peaceful transition of power through elections in Central Asia. In many ways, Kyrgyzstan has passed these firsts tests as a new democracy: elections have been on aggregate calm and conducted in keeping with international commitments; in the nearly two years since Bakiev fled the country a plethora of new political parties have formed; vibrant media voices have proliferated; and citizens seem to have largely accepted the system of parliamentary democracy.

The consequences of inter-ethnic violence which took plane in the south of Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 continue to adversely affect the volatile human rights situation in the south, as well as the overall stability of the country. According to press reports and human rights observers, harassment of ethnic Uzbeks in the south continues, and the atmosphere of fear among that population has not been adequately addressed. According to the General Prosecutor's Office, over 5,000 criminal cases stemming from the events in the south of the country have been initiated. 4,000 of those cases are going to be suspended by the office of General Prosecutor, subject to further closer monitoring. In addition, there have been terrorist attacks in Bishkek, followed by a number of arrests of alleged "jihadists/separatists". Some human rights defenders are concerned that the alleged terrorist threat is being used by the government as a pretext to curb civil liberties.

In the June 2011 report "Distorted Justice", Human Rights Watch detailed the abuses within the judicial system in response to the events of June 2010. The report can be downloaded at http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/kyrgyzstan0611webwcover.pdf.

Within this context Freedom House is USAID/Kyrgyzstan's implementing partner for this program. Freedom House is undertaking the following activities in support of the program's objectives:

Objective 1: Improve the quality of human rights monitoring and reporting

- Developing a comprehensive monitoring system for tracking, recording and analyzing human rights violations in partnership with International Human Rights Group (IHRG), the human rights defenders network Voice of Freedom (VoF), and the Institute for Public Policy (IPP).
- Assist grantee organizations in developing strong, effective human rights monitoring and evaluation capacity.
- Provide targeted training to human rights monitors on the methods to be used when monitoring the details of the case, including nature of the charges and relevant press reports in-

formation, on how to approach challenges to court access issues expected to be raised during the trial(s), and policies regarding sharing information.

- Support efforts to publicize the findings and analyses of the trial monitors and make recommendations to government and/or legal representatives when trials do not follow international human rights laws.
- Organize live television and internet discussions to promote and advance freedom of assembly or other human rights topics in Kyrgyzstan.

Objective 2: Bolster the capabilities of defense lawyers working in the area of human rights

1. Provide training programs on human rights to defense attorneys with varying levels of experience.
2. Organize meetings of defense attorneys for the purpose of sharing experiences and best practices.
3. Organize a conference of defense attorneys and judges on international mechanisms for the protection of human rights

Objective 3: Enhance the capacity of organizations addressing women's rights

4. Provide targeted training to women's rights organizations on behavior change techniques.
5. Provide small grants to women's rights groups to develop awareness campaigns targeting youth (in particular young men and boys).
6. Provide awareness activities for women of their rights and representation, especially in case related to family law, divorce, land/inheritance rights, and protection from domestic violence.
7. Work with the religious leaders on the issues of un-registered marriages.

C.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The main goal of this research is to rigorously evaluate the performance of Freedom House and if they are meeting their stated objectives. To this end, the following three main research questions should be addressed:

1. In what ways has the "Strengthening Human Rights Program in Kyrgyzstan" Program affected Human Rights monitoring and reporting?
2. To what extent have the capabilities of defense lawyers been bolstered?
3. How could women's organizations be more effectively included in "Strengthening Human Rights Program in Kyrgyzstan" activities?

The following illustrative sub-questions listed below are examples that will assist in addressing the three main questions above:

- What is the main contribution of the "Strengthening Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan" Program within the area of human rights promotion in Kyrgyzstan?
- Which activities, if any, have contributed most to improved capabilities of defense lawyers? Why?

- How appropriate are the content of training materials, structure of the trainings, and the trainers themselves for the needs of women's orgs and/or human rights lawyers?
- What is the main contribution of the "Strengthening Human Rights" Program towards the work of the human rights defenders in Kyrgyzstan
- What improvements in independent monitoring, investigation, case management and reporting of HR violations are attributable to Freedom House support?
- What is the perception of the Human Rights NGOs and activists in regards to the work of Freedom House? What are recommended areas for improvement?
- What is the ability of Freedom House to handle women's rights and related projects under Objective 3

The Contractor will have access to the following key informants, if requested:

- USAID/Kyrgyzstan DG staff and other staff as recommended
- Key members of donor community engaged in human rights. USAID shall provide guidance on contacts
- Freedom House staff in Washington, D.C. and Freedom House field staff
- Beneficiaries of Freedom House training and technical assistance
- Beneficiaries of Freedom House's legal assistance
- Key GoKG, civil society and NGO partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders, including a visit to at least two regions where Freedom House has implemented activities.

If possible, the Contractor shall also attend one or more project activities that take place during the evaluation fieldwork.

[END OF SECTION C]

U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523
Tel: (202) 712-0000
Fax: (202) 216-3524
www.usaid.gov