

The situation of the civil society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan



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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and IWPR, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Norwegian MFA.

IWPR - is an international media development organization that supports local reporters, citizen journalists and civil society activists in three dozen countries in conflict, crisis and transition around the world. IWPR has been operating in Central Asia since 1999 with the regional head office in Bishkek.

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Abstract



The aim of this study is to analyze the capacity of the civil society formal (organizations) and informal (online social activists groups), independent experts to develop and provide locally defined and relevant expertise and advocacy, visibility of the civil society on local, regional and international key issues, the capacity of the civil society to engage and utilize the media as an instrument for change and the civil society development perspectives in 3/5 year in four Central Asian countries (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).

The data was collected through online survey questionnaire on Survey Monkey and face-to-face in-depth interviews with journalists in four countries. Collected quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS24 and qualitative data was analyzed through discourse analysis.

Research Questions



RQ1: What is the capacity of the civil society formal (organizations) and informal (online social activists groups), independent experts to develop and provide locally defined and relevant expertise and advocacy in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan?

RQ2: What is the level of professional standards of independent journalists in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan?

RQ3: What is the visibility of the civil society on local, regional and international key issues in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan?

RQ4: the capacity of the civil society to engage and utilize the media as an instrument for change in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan?

RQ5: What are the civil society development perspectives in 3/5 year in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan?

Methodology

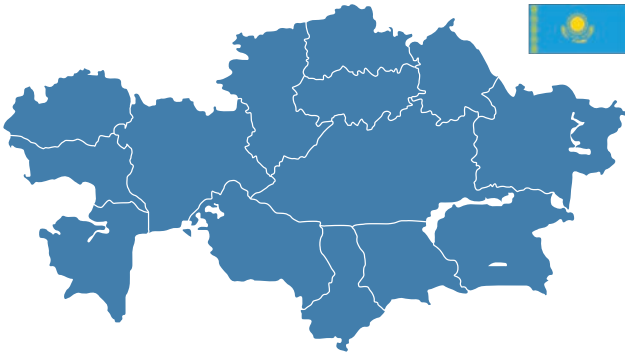


This study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The data was collected through online survey questionnaire on Survey Monkey and face-to-face in-depth interviews with representatives of civil society organizations in four countries. Collected quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS24 and qualitative data was analyzed through discourse analysis.

The inquiry draws on a survey of representatives of civil society organizations conducted in February-March 2018. All in all, **235** representatives of civil society organizations were surveyed who work in civil society organizations in four countries. In Kazakhstan **41**, in Kyrgyzstan

76, in Tajikistan **35** and in Uzbekistan **83** representatives of civil society organizations were surveyed. We conducted face-to-face survey interviews with total **35** representatives of civil society organizations in four countries using snowball sampling method. In Kazakhstan **7**, in Kyrgyzstan **7**, in Tajikistan **11** and in Uzbekistan **10**.

KAZAKHSTAN



What's your gender?

Overall 41 representatives of civil society organizations took part at survey in Kazakhstan.



Male
56,1%



Female
43,9%

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	23	56,1	56,1	56,1
	Female	18	43,9	43,9	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

Who are you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NGO	34	82,9	82,9	82,9
	Civil activist	3	7,3	7,3	90,2
	Human rights defender	2	4,9	4,9	95,1
	Online activist	2	4,9	4,9	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

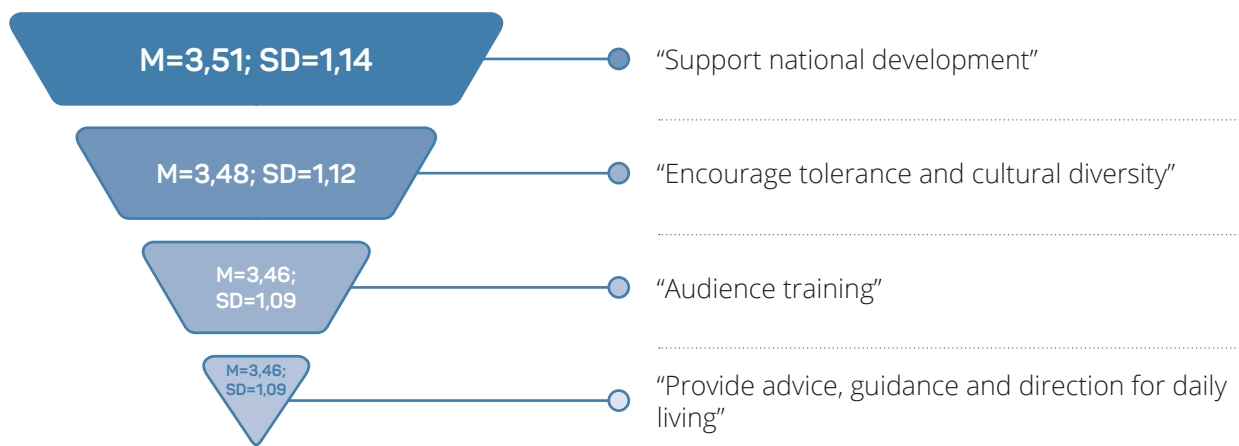
What is your occupation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Environment	9	22,0	22,0	22,0
	Education and Research	5	12,2	12,2	34,1
	Health	5	12,2	12,2	46,3
	Human rights protection and advocacy	4	9,8	9,8	56,1
	Culture	3	7,3	7,3	63,4
	Social services	3	7,3	7,3	70,7
	Charity	3	7,3	7,3	78,0
	Development of local communities	3	7,3	7,3	85,4
	Religious	2	4,9	4,9	90,2

Professional or business association	2	4,9	4,9	95,1
Other	2	4,9	4,9	100,0
Total	41	100,0	100,0	

The type of activity of more than one fifth of respondents (22%) is environment. 12,2% work in education and research area and another 12,2% in health area.

The five important functions that civil society organizations fulfill in Kazakhstan

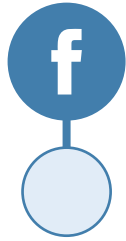


Does your organization have its own website?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	70,7	70,7	70,7
	No	12	29,3	29,3	100,0
Total		41	100,0	100,0	

Most respondents (70,7%) indicated that their organizations have own websites.

In which social networks is your organization represented in?



Facebook
65,9%

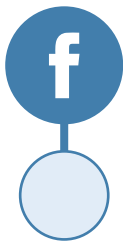


Twitter
31,7%

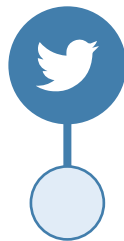


Instagram
36,6%

Which social networks do you use?



Facebook
65,9%



Twitter
31,7%



Instagram
36,6%



Odnoklassniki.ru
4,9%

Information sources for CSOs in Kazakhstan

Frequently used information sources for civil society organizations in Kazakhstan



News in
Facebook



News in
Twitter



Newspapers



TV



News
sites

Least used information sources for civil society organizations in Kazakhstan



Radio
news



News in
Blogs

Where (and how) do you check the information received?



People («living sources») **95,1%**



Publications in other media **58,5%**



Web sites **43,9%**



Social networks **58,5%**

How do you collaborate with the media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I take part in various TV and radio programs	29	70,7	70,7	70,7
	I am writing column / rubric in the media	8	19,5	19,5	90,2
	Initiate an interview for the media	3	7,3	7,3	97,6
	I send press releases to the media	1	2,4	2,4	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

Majority of respondents (70,7%) take part in various TV and radio programs, about one fifth (19,5%) write column/rubric in the media in order to collaborate with media.

Civil society organizations in Kazakhstan collaborate

More effectively with:



Proficient experts



Young experts



Print media



Online news agencies



Narrowly specialized experts

Less effectively with



Bloggers



TV channels



Radio stations

Respondents of the NGO find that the media pay less attention to NGOs comparing with the publications of previous years and now.

It is when you need some feedback on events. In such information, it is possible to briefly talk about the activities of our NGOs.

Media is very sparsely covering the activities of NGOs, I do not even know the reason. Maybe the female theme is not so popular. In general, I see that the newspapers cover the activities of NGOs,

but very rarely. Apparently the NGOs themselves need to have their own edition to talk about their activities.

Unfortunately, this is a very laborious process. I would not be able to finance or somehow help the media in covering my activities.

Very bad, the publications are rare.

Media coverage of the activities of NGOs is only of an informational nature. It is very rare, more often in the days of the holidays or the day of the protection of children.

From personal experience: media coverage of the activities of NGOs is only of an informational nature.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects more

Affects more



Respondents think that NGOs in Kazakhstan collaborate with journalists rarely and they are not satisfied with media coverage of their activities. Usually NGOs pay for media coverage of their activities and events, but sometimes NGOs are restricted by their charter rules to finance publication in mass media.

Sometimes invited to a telecast, but training always requires a lot of strength and patience. In the end, you do not always get satisfaction. There is always a shortage of airtime.

It is difficult to call cooperation. We send out press releases, we are waiting for them to be published. If there is even a little information, we are happy to post it on the information stand. Still, official recognition through the media is important.

When events occur related to the City Day or with interesting dates, journalists themselves can call. Often I gave an interview by phone. That is, there is no system in communication.

I have a lot of work experience; therefore, strong ties and personal trust relationships with journalists and newspaper editions have long been established. Unfortunately, it becomes difficult for them, as the competitive environment requires financial expenses, so now materials about entrepreneurship in NGOs have become more rare. According to the charter, we are not supposed to spend much on PR publications. Sometimes we find sponsors, which help to place advertising.

Previously, I often talked with reporters. Often performed on the radio. But now communication has become rare

NGOs in Kazakhstan contact media one or two times a month.

It happens sometimes twice a month and sometimes once every two months. But we ourselves go with the information to reporters. If it is difficult to get them published, then we use social networks.

NGOs in Kazakhstan think that their collaboration with media does not help to achieve their goals, because media do not cover their activities.

It does not influence, we work on our own, and journalists do not think about us. They need sensations.

I do not think that the media can influence the achievement of goals. This is primarily our own work.

Does not affect.

The impact of media cooperation is only of an informational nature.

Affects less

M=2,48;
SD=0,92

“Resolution of social issues at the country level”

M=2,56;
SD=0,94

“Resolving social issues at the family level”

M=2,60
SD=0,89

Making political decision

An expert from Kazakhstan believes that the process of communication between NGOs and the media is not sufficiently active, it requires more active participation of NGOs in establishing communication with journalists and the media.

The decision-making process at the state level in Kazakhstan is not open sometimes. Accordingly, assess whether research and expert advice is taken into account by decision-makers and, if taken into account, to what extent, is practically impossible.

One of the respondent believes that the mechanism of cooperation between experts and decision-makers in the public sector does not always work.

Each country has its own approach to this problem. In Kazakhstan, for NGOs, significant financial support allocated by the state has been created. In addition, a number of NGOs are supported by grants, including support from local and foreign institutions. The environmental NGOs are especially active and have achieved certain results. For example, that Almaty residents can check the air quality in real time by using the mobile application AUA (Almaty Urban Air) and “Zhasyl Zhurek”, movement that cares about zero waste. They actively share educational information online and through social networks.

Expert from Kazakhstan believes that it is important to create new effective mechanism for cooperation between mass media and NGOs. The NGOs should actively share information about their activities in social media and mass media.

At present, a «massive» impact approach has been adopted in Kazakhstan: in a situation where it is necessary to try to influence the decision-making process, specialists try to use all possible channels - conferences, mass media, citizens' appeals, preparation of analytical reports and so on. However, one cannot always be sure that even under «massive» pressure, it will be effective.

Respondents think that NGOs in Kazakhstan do not always understand the importance of collaboration with media and do not actively collaborate with media.

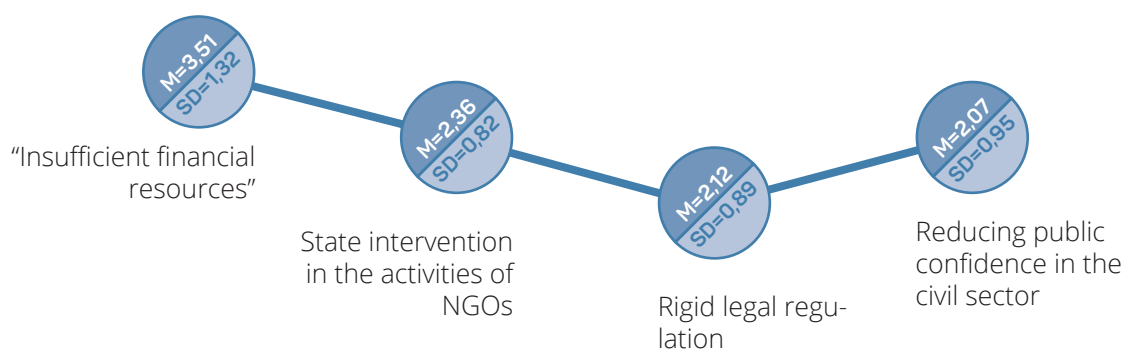
The civil sector does not always show itself actively. Probably the reason is that the media cannot always talk about the complexities of our work. New legislative restrictions can act the work of the media, make even more cautious. On the other hand, the media should know that they are accountable to the community. Now they talk a lot about fakes, that is fictitious information, which can expose the person to reputational risks.

Has the effectiveness of your activity changed recently?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It is as effective, as it was before	33	80,5	80,5	80,5
	The efficiency of the activity decreased significantly	3	7,3	7,3	87,8
	The efficiency of the activity decreased slightly	2	4,9	4,9	92,7
	It became ineffective	2	4,9	4,9	97,6
	Other	1	2,4	2,4	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

Majority of respondents (80,5%) believe that their organization is as effective, as it was before.

Main barriers for the development of the civil society organization in Kazakhstan



How optimistic or pessimistic are you about the future of the civil sector in your country?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	16	39,0	39,0	39,0
	Pessimistic	12	29,3	29,3	68,3
	Optimistic	9	22,0	22,0	90,2
	Very optimistic	3	7,3	7,3	97,6
	Very pessimistic	1	2,4	2,4	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

More than one third of respondents (39%) are "Neither optimistic nor pessimistic" about the future of the civil sector in Kazakhstan and about one third (29,3%) of respondents are "pessimistic" about the future of the civil sector in Kazakhstan.

In your opinion, what will happen to the civil sector in the next 3-5 years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Will develop	19	46,3	46,3	46,3
	Without changes	10	24,4	24,4	70,7
	Other	4	9,8	9,8	80,5
	Become pro-government	3	7,3	7,3	87,8
	Will close	2	4,9	4,9	92,7
	Will cease to be popular	2	4,9	4,9	97,6
	Become backstreet	1	2,4	2,4	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

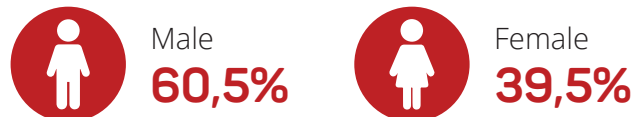
About half of respondents (46,3%) think that civil sector in their country will develop, about quarter (24,4%) think that there will be no changes in civil sector in their country.

KYRGYZSTAN



What's your gender?

Overall 76 representatives of civil society organizations participated in survey in Kyrgyzstan.



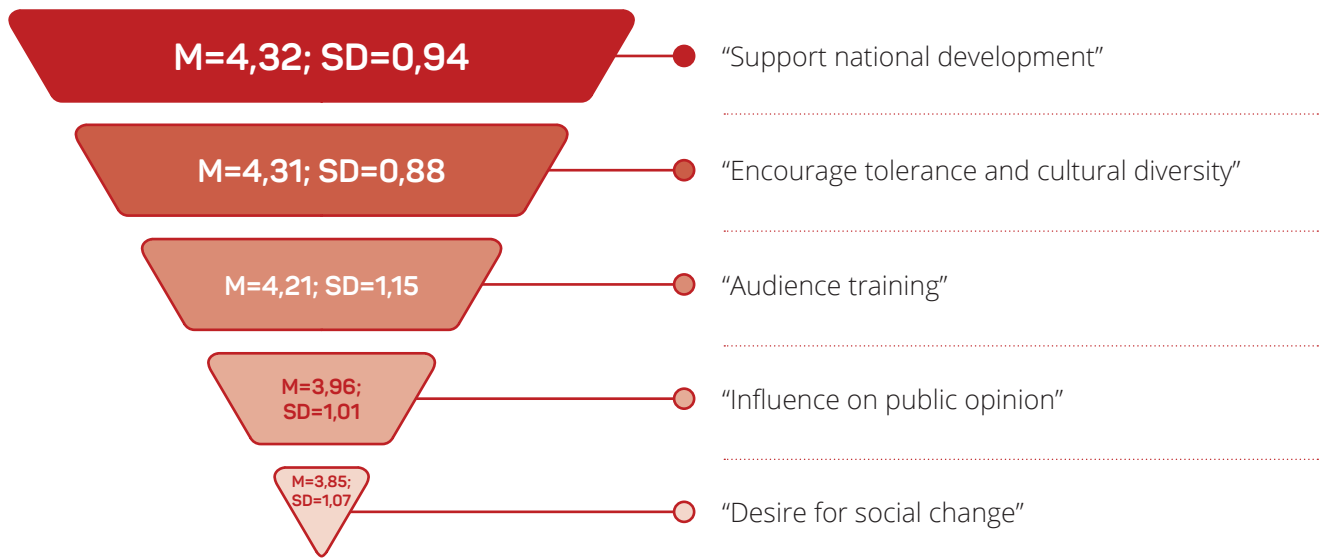
Who are you?

		Percent
Valid	NGO	47,4
	Online activist	22,4
	Civil activist	14,5
	Human Rights defender	7,9
	Other	7,9
	Total	100,0

What is your occupation?

		Percent
Valid	Education and Research	23,7
	Environment	11,8
	Human rights protection and advocacy	11,8
	Culture	10,5
	Local communities development	10,5
	Health	7,9
	Professional or business association	6,6
	Other	6,6
	Social services	5,3
	Charity	5,3
	Total	100,0

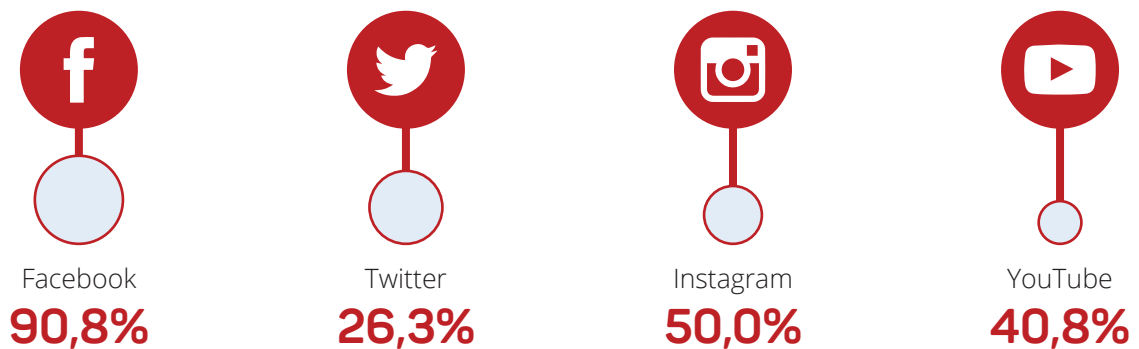
Five important functions that civil society organizations fulfill in society in Kyrgyzstan



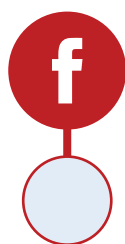
Does your organization have its own website?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	63,2	63,2	63,2
	No	28	36,8	36,8	100,0
Total		76	100,0	100,0	

In which social networks is your organization represented in?



Which social networks do you use?



Facebook
94,7%



Twitter
64,5%



Instagram
28,9%



YouTube
27,6%



Odnoklassniki.ru
9,2%

Information sources for CSOs in Kyrgyzstan

Frequently used information sources for civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan



News in Facebook



News sites



TV news



News in Blogs

Least used information sources for civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan



Magazines



Newspapers



News in Twitter



Radio

Information verification



Publications in other media
73,7%



Web sites
64,5%



Social networks
63,2%



People
52,6%

How do you collaborate with the media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I take part in various TV and radio programs	35	46,1	46,1	46,1
	I am writing column / rubric in the media	15	19,7	19,7	65,8
	I send press releases to the media	14	18,4	18,4	84,2
	Initiate an interview for the media	10	13,2	13,2	97,4
	I invite media to events	1	2,6	1,3	100,0
	Total	76	100,0	100,0	

Civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan collaborate

More effectively with:



proficient experts



online news agencies



young experts



local government bodies



narrowly specialized experts

Less effectively with:



Print media



Press services of state bodies



National government bodies



Radio stations

Civil society organizations think that civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan are more active and developed than in the neighboring countries such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. They think that civil society organizations do not need media because they have social media accounts and websites where they can post information about their activities.

Well, what do we have in the media now? Well, do you know the latest situations that are happening in the country, right? Situation with Naryn Ayip, Kaktus. These are such demonstrative lessons for all journalists, for media professionals, how to behave. That is, it's like in history. They take one comrade and broadcast demonstratively. And naturally this is a great lesson for all, how to behave, how to work, against whom you can go, against whom you cannot go. Thus, now our journalists are very neat. Nobody wants to give away their apartment, which they have been saving for years. Because of one article, no one wants to say goodbye to the apartment. Therefore, journalists become more or less accurate or do not touch any sharp topics ... The civil sector in our country is itself active. Even if we compare with neighboring countries, we can see how we have left forward. That is, the third sector - the NGO sector is far ahead than in neighboring countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan). It seems to me that our NGOs fulfill their role very well, solve many social problems. And I think they are already self-illuminated. That is, many NGOs now do not need any journalists. Many of them have their own websites; pages in Social Networks, news portals, there are community media. This means that the third sector is more or less independent. And they are directly printed.

Some respondents think that it depends on journalist not on media. Journalists' professional background and qualification is important in covering topics not media outlet's ownership.

It does not depend on – what kind of media it is. It depends mostly on – what is the qualification of certain journalist. Does he/she obey norms and rules of journalism on unbiased and balanced information broadcasting? How qualified is journalist – this is the reason of biased non-professional presenting.

Civil society organizations think that media is biased in covering their activities.

Very, very weak. And most importantly, it's not interesting. Either with a frank run-off and bias, or dry facts, which are so well known. But most often, about nothing and very dry.

Respondents stated that the main problems of collaborating with media are that media interprets messages differently and not in the light the NGOs want them to cover. Also NGOs need to have personal contacts with media in order to invite them to their events to cover them. Media also tend to make mistakes in texts and in names of interviewees. Linguistic problems are another barrier, as media mostly Kyrgyz-language.

NGOs always try to work with the media, write a bunch of press releases, invite to their events. Most often, when we need to lobby something, raise the relevance of the topic, or when we hold events. But again, journalists come to events where there are any persons. For example, we held an event, invited a well-known expert. The media came not to cover the event, but to interview this expert. But not the fact that they will interview on the topic that we want to cover.

Most often, communication goes through e-mail, we write press releases, to which they rarely respond and react. Secondly, you can also publish information about the event in special groups in social networks, for example, groups for events, etc. Third, through personal contacts. But I do not like to do that, because even the familiar journalists are not interested in all the topics.

In cooperation with the media, we are also faced with such complexity as the linguistic aspect. Most often Kyrgyz-language media come, so they need an interview in the Kyrgyz language. But to me personally and to my colleagues due to inadequate possession of it, it is difficult to give full-fledged interviews.

Another aspect - journalists interview, interpret in their own way, they rarely make any mistakes in the text. At the same time, when you call and ask for clarification of information and change the text – they do not change. In practice 3-4 times I can list specific cases. Errors can be in elementary things - like names, although names were sent to them through press releases.

During in-depth interviews one of the experts indicated that they usually cooperate with civil society organizations and media as a source of expert information.

As a rule, my interaction with the civil sector occurs in connection with my professional work - as a researcher in the field of security in Central Asia. This interaction goes in the following directions: - execution of research works for the order of certain funds, as well as participation in research and public events organized by foundations and NGOs (roundtables, conferences);

- cooperation with the media (articles and comments on events of interest to the audience of interested media).

Some experts tend to think that some NGOs are being used by donors for money laundering and they avoid collaborating with such NGOs.

Cooperation with the civilian sector in most cases depends on the direction of the activities of the NGOs and funds themselves. If the activities of NGOs are aimed at studying the problem in society, then they find partners for the implementation of a particular project. For example, at one time the funds of Friedrich Ebert, the Dialogue, the Soros Foundation and so on were very active. But if NGOs are used by donors for money laundering, which often happens, then no one will work with such organizations.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects more



Respondents think that in Kyrgyzstan media and civil society organizations are already working together and that they are "on the same side of the river" and support each other. They think that civil activists initiate the discussion topics and media takes over these discussions. They also noted that civic journalism in Kyrgyzstan is developing. People are posting information on social media about problems in the country and informing public and media.

In our country, the third sector and the media are on the same side of the river. They support each other. Many problems they solve together. Let's assume the same problems in Bishkek: cutting down trees, roads. That is, someone from civil society begins to discuss this topic, and then journalists start their work. Now, civic journalism is becoming very popular in our country. Almost everyone has smart-phones. People can make a photo and shoot a video of something, quickly it's analyzed, seen, etc. I think we do not have a big market, there are not many events. Not long ago we did a short survey. Previously, if the family in the regions were allowed to buy several newspapers, now they have reduced. Because, all media write about the same news.

Respondents stated that the main problem in civil society and media collaboration is that media asks for a fee to cover civil society organizations' activities thinking that NGOs are grantees. NGOs do not know how to do publicity, too.

It seems to me that the main problem in the NGO sector in the Kyrgyz Republic is that journalists and the media in general do not cover the work of non-governmental organizations or cover it properly only for a fee. That's why it seems that NGOs are slackers who are grantees and only know what to spend money on. In fact, they do a lot of work, and useful, but do not know how to talk about it, write. That is, they do not have the skills of storytelling. Therefore, they do not write about themselves, and no one writes about them either.

As I have already noted, journalists write for free only about «hot news». Let's say whether it's politics or about some kind of large-scale event. None of them write voluntarily about the NGO sector, but only for payment. Once I worked with journalists and then through intermediaries, this is when we arranged a press tour, and based on my experience, I cannot say anything good about journalists.

Well, we cooperate with them not on bare enthusiasm. That is, if we attract them as experts, naturally all this is paid for. And when there is some kind of fee, this is the most effective way of working. Man does with great pleasure. And so there are organizations (UNESCO) that try to collect journalists together. For example, on May 3rd on the day of the media.

There are articles of those projects that have a good budget. In some projects there is a separate item for media and PR publications. I can distinguish an article that is for money. This is most often any projects related to the mining industry, or environmental projects. Also, I often see the effect of personal contacts between PR specialists and specific journalists. But in this sense, this is the professionalism of these PR specialists. Well, again, the relevance of the topic matters. It is necessary to get into the wave.

Civil society organizations think that collaboration with media helps them to reach their goals and to make a change in society by disciplining authorities and demanding from them reaction to issues.

The same situation in Sokuluk – after showing this and covering by 24.kg and Akipress municipal authorities have changed their attitudes. Without media those changes could not be expected at all. Media broadcasting disciplines authorities.

Respondents think that 'superstar' NGOs are to blame for creating a stereotype that NGOs in country are 'grantoyedi' because they have been paying money for media coverage. Also donors do not support NGOs collaboration with media by cutting the budgets and not providing funds for media coverage and PR campaigns.

Some NGOs under-estimate the role of media. Another opinion – there are several 'superstar' NGOs, which were working with media since long time ago. They have bigger funds, established relations and communications, hire professional PR specialists and have a long history of financially based relations with certain media. New and small NGOs technically are not able to participate in contests and projects financed by donors. They have no reliable grant-history and specialists to compete and further implement projects. These NGOs, in my opinion, are responsible for such negative labels as 'grantoyedy'. Also, in fact donor organizations do not support NGOs with budgets for PR-campaign and collaboration with media. Moreover, if donors see such costs-sheets they simply cut funds.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less



Civil society organizations think that media in Kyrgyzstan is divided into two camps, pro-governmental and private media. They think that pro-governmental media such as KTRK do not cover such issues as public protests and demonstrations and private media always supports activities of NGOs.

I have experience of work as journalist. I was working in KTRK and left about 10 years ago. Now I'm working in NGO focused on energy-issues. I know this topic from both sides. I divide Kyrgyz media on pro-governmental state channels and private media companies. I have a real case happened in my field of work in NGO in one of the districts of Sokuluk town. It was in winter. The whole district was without energy. People living in there said they would block road through Sokuluk if nothing changes. I asked my colleagues from different media agencies to come and broadcast. I called KTRK to do so, however by some unexplained reasons; one of the vice-presidents of KTRK denied my proposal. That does not mean state media ignore our NGO's actions, because at the same time EITR – another one state TV-channel has sent us its reporters and provide info about that situation. Most of private media usually friendly help us in our actions.

Respondents think that Kyrgyz-language media's coverage of civil society organizations is mostly negative and they create stereotypes about NGOs that they are 'grant-eaters'.

In Kyrgyz media there exist two lines of behavior: those media which are supported by donors provide enough info on NGOs' activities. In the other hand, other media, especially Kyrgyz-language based, mostly broadcast negatively. They describe NGOs as 'grant-eaters' and state there are no positive actions done by donors. NGOs spend lots money on consultants' service. That is the reason of negative attitudes towards NGOs and donors.

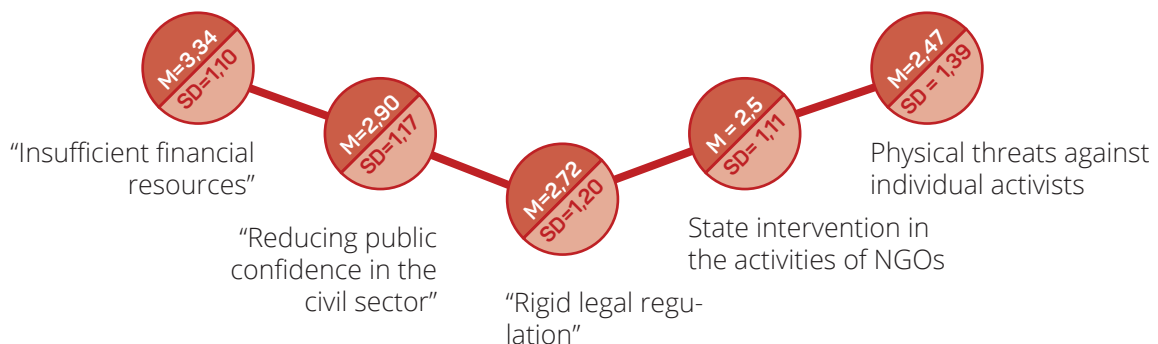
Pro-governmental media channels mostly in negative way present NGOs' and donors' actions. They reveal cases of incompetence of NGOs supported by external donors. For example, when the Freedom House prepared biased inappropriate studies and report on some situation in South regions of the KR; or another recent case on sexual-education activities conducted by one of Kyrgyz local externally supported NGOs, where they even did not contact the Ministry of Education to do these events.

Has the effectiveness of your activity changed recently?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It is as effective, as it was before	48	63,2	63,2	63,2
	The efficiency of the activity decreased slightly	12	15,8	15,8	78,9
	The efficiency of the activity decreased significantly	10	13,2	13,2	92,1
	Other	5	6,6	6,6	98,7
	It became ineffective	1	1,3	1,3	100,0
	Total	76	100,0	100,0	

Majority of respondents (63,2%) believe that their organization is as effective, as it was before.

Main barriers for the development of the civil society organization in Kyrgyzstan



During the in-depth interview one of the experts stated that 90% of NGOs exist on paper:

The civil sector is in decline, watching the outflow of personnel, a lack of funding, a narrowing of the sector of activities, coverage of areas. 90% of NGOs are actually on paper, many do not close just because it's easier to take out empty reports than to go through closing procedures. Most likely, the conditions for the closure of NGOs are so complex because the government does not benefit from mass closure of NGOs, as this will spoil statistics and immigration abroad.

Respondents think that media can be bought and NGOs can create a desirable image by paying media.

It seems to me as it is, so it is formed. I cannot say, there are some specific channels that allow the third sector and the oppositional ones on the contrary. The civil sector itself is not very «attractive.» These are people who are trying to solve some problems. They find the funds themselves. Now many NGOs themselves shoot videos, order good journalists, they make you a good story and write an article. Here I would say more business relations, if you order, they will write. And if some great event happens, then they themselves come.

Civil society organizations think that state-owned media is creating stereotypes about them that they are 'grant eaters' and function for external donors money to destabilize situation in the country.

I have several cases when we were inviting different media and authorities in conferences. After that they were broadcasting materials with words of deputies, especially state-media, where they named NGOs as 'grant-eaters' (grantoedy). They say especially in state-channels that we are agencies financed by other governments and functioning to destabilize situation in the KR. I would like to say I completely disagree with this statement! If it is so, why don't they reveal that our government and authorities are financed by external 'destabilizing' funds? Those deputies, ministries and even state-media channels are financed by external 'destructive' ADB, World Bank, European Union and etc.

Respondents think that social media are also creating stereotypes about NGOs by disseminating rumors about NGOs activities in a negative tone. They think that opinion leaders among journalists and activists also contribute to this negative public opinion through social media networks.

Today audience mostly prefers the internet. And not only special content frames public opinion. And NGOs experience now more pressure and negative attitudes in comments and in social media rather than in direct media broadcast. People in oblasts with lack of media literacy form their attitudes on such biased gossips, which they could find in comments to events or in social media.

Respondents stated that media is concentrated mostly on one-time events and not on sustainability. They would prefer media to report on the development of the issues and inform public about the outcomes.

If the media really set out to popularize the activities of the civil sector, to show the necessary and important initiatives not selectively, but planning, demonstrating growth, progress or vice versa, showing difficulties and seeking help. But I have a feeling that everything happens in snatches. I will say this fashionable word - «try to catch the HYPE» on everything - on cutting down trees, on the problems of the Botanical Garden and so on. But after the publication of the article, the problems do not go away and it is important that the media show the development of the situation, since once they took to cover the topic. That's when we can talk about the formation of opinion. Now, only one opinion is formed - the indifferently work of the media. By the way, I will give an example of the reverse process. When the media finally showed the development of the situation. In this case, for all the tragedy of the situation, the behavior of the media is respected for having enough professionalism to adequately understand the situation and inform the readers.

Respondents complain that media creates intentionally negative opinion about activities of NGOs.

More negative than positive. I can tell by example. We held a crowdfunding campaign for the elderly. One media wrote «An NGO collects money for some kind of share.» I do not know why this happened - deliberately, because of the skepticism or unprofessionalism of the journalist, but as a simple reader having read such a headline, I would not give money.

How optimistic or pessimistic are you about the future of the civil sector in your country?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	31	40,8	40,8	40,8
	Optimistic	20	26,3	26,3	67,1
	Very optimistic	14	18,4	18,4	85,5
	Pessimistic	8	10,5	10,5	96,1
	Very pessimistic	3	3,9	3,9	100,0
	Total	76	100,0	100,0	97,6
	Become backstreet	1	2,4	2,4	100,0
	Total	41	100,0	100,0	

More than one third of respondents (40, 8%) are “Neither optimistic nor pessimistic” about the future of the civil sector in Kyrgyzstan and more than quarter (26,3%) of respondents are “optimistic” about the future of the civil sector in Kyrgyzstan.

Respondents suggest to systematically collaborate more with media and to create high quality professional content for media.

I would like to emphasize once again the importance of cooperation with the media, as with the main component in shaping public opinion. Sometimes some organizations do not attach much importance to working with journalists, they believe that people will find out about their work, but this is not so. We need to work systematically in this direction, because at this time, in the Internet age.

Materials related to human rights - for example, there are a lot of cases of bride kidnapping. But the further fate of this issue is not covered, that is, there is no endeavor. Most often the fact itself, and then the statistics below. There are cases of human torture, but all this on a superficial level, again, the case of resolution of the situation will not be illuminated.

But the quality of the materials themselves, as a simple reader, I will not draw conclusions.

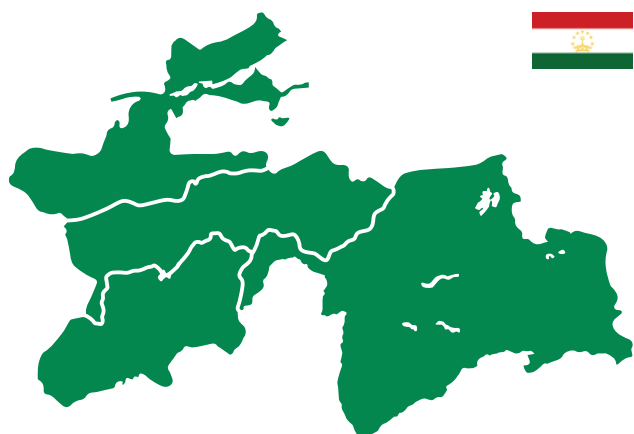
If it's text - read diagonally. If this pictures - it's better photos than infographics. If this video - scroll. The simplest thing of course is to have a text with photos.

In your opinion, what will happen to the civil sector in the next 3-5 years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Will develop	36	47,4	47,4	47,4
	Without changes	19	25,0	25,0	72,4
	Become pro-government	8	10,5	10,5	82,9
	Will cease to be popular	6	7,9	7,9	90,8
	Will close	5	6,6	6,6	97,4
	Become backstreet	1	1,3	1,3	98,7
	Other	1	1,3	1,3	100,0
	Total	76	100,0	100,0	

About half of respondents (47,4%) think that civil sector in their country will develop, quarter (25%) think that there will be no changes in civil sector in their country.

TAJIKISTAN



What's your gender?

Overall 35 representatives of civil society organizations took part in survey in Tajikistan.



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	17	54,3	48,6	48,6
	Female	16	45,7	45,7	94,3
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Who are you?

Majority of respondents (71,4%) identify themselves as NGO.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NGO	25	71,4	71,4	71,4
	Civil activist	4	20	11,4	82,9
	Human rights defender	2	5,7	5,7	97,1
	Other	1	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

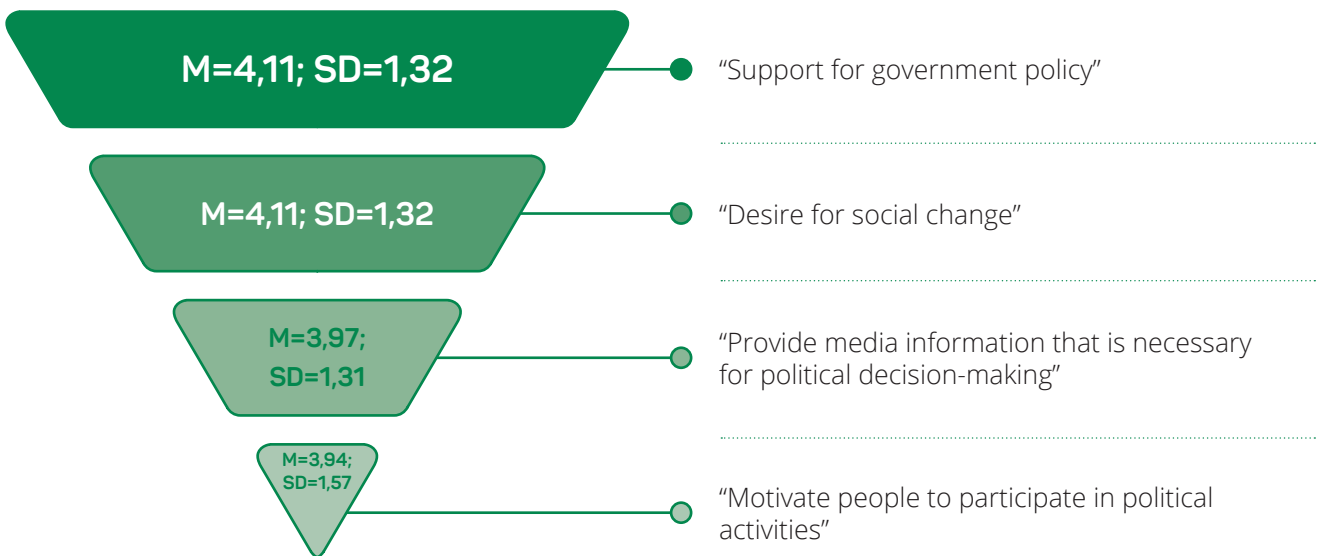
What is your occupation?

The type of activity of more than one fifth of respondents (22,9%) is "Development of local communities" and of one fifth's (20%) is "Protection of rights and advocacy".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Local communities development	8	22,9	22,9	22,9
	Protection of rights and advocacy	7	20,0	20,0	42,9
	Health	4	11,4	11,4	54,3
	Environment	4	11,4	11,4	65,7
	Education and Research	3	8,6	8,6	74,3

Social services	3	8,6	8,6	82,9
Other	3	14,3	8,6	91,4
Professional or business association	1	2,9	2,9	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

The five important functions that civil society organizations fulfill in Tajikistan



Does your organization have its own website?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	57,1	57,1	57,1
	No	14	42,9	40,0	97,1
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

In which social networks is your organization represented in?



Majority of respondents (77,1%) answered that their organization have account on Facebook.

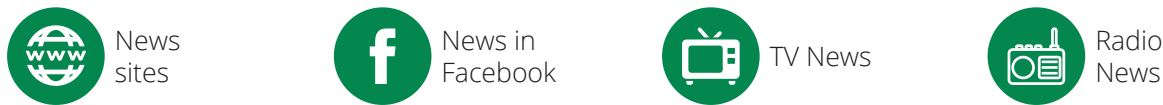
Which social networks do you use?



Majority of respondents (91,4%) answered that they use Facebook.

Information sources for CSOs in Tajikistan

Frequently used information sources for civil society organizations in Tajikistan



Least used information sources for civil society organizations in Tajikistan



Respondents think that media and civil society organizations are cooperating very little in their country. Media in Tajikistan requires money for publications about activities of civil society organizations.

Very little cooperation, it would not be bad if the cooperation was more close.

Very weak. Many media outlets do not distinguish commercial advertising from social advertising, so I always require a fee.

Media are not sufficiently involved in the coverage of NGO activities in Tajikistan. A lot of different projects are being implemented in the country. Many projects are very interesting and important. The coverage of information about start up can bring many benefits, both to the organizations that implement these projects, and to the beneficiaries. But, despite the importance and interest of content, the media do not show initiative themselves, they publish only paid materials.

Neither, very rarely, and only if paid, and not all publications can publish material about NGOs. More information about NGOs can be learned from electronic publications and independent media or by NGOs themselves.

Where and how do you check the information received?



How do you collaborate with the media?



Civil society organizations do not know how to collaborate with media.

The media covers the activities of NGOs to some extent; however, the cooperation of the media and NGOs is at a low level today. This is due to the fact that not all public organizations have an idea of how to establish communication with the media and in what directions it is better to do so. To ensure that the activities of public organizations are covered in the media, the leaders of these organizations should show more of the work they have done for the benefit of society. This coverage should not be for the purpose of showing its donors and investors, but rather with the goal of seeing how, and in what directions, public organizations improve their lives.

Based on our practice, what is connected with the Khatlon region, we closely cooperate. To illuminate our projects, events, we invite journalists, but sometimes it happens that journalists are not interested and require a fee for coverage, and in this case, we cannot use their services.

However, it is worth mentioning that they can also publish for free. For example, if I need Khatlon TV to attend one or another event, I write an official letter to the director for a week, pay for the time of the broadcast, they give me receipts and checks, and at the appointed time they come, shoot and broadcast.

Differently. In the Sughd region, the organization Dasty Ozodihoyi Shahrivandi (Access to Civil Liberties) was not long ago a project in the course of which every NGO on television talked about its activities. And so, basically there are advertisements from the same NGOs, however, I did not particularly analyze the media materials on this topic and cannot answer in more depth.

Civil society organizations in Tajikistan collaborate

More effectively with:



Local government bodies



Regional public authorities



Proficient experts



National government bodies

Less effectively with:



Young experts



Narrowly specialized experts



Press services of state bodies



Bloggers



Print media

Civil society organizations invite media to their activities and events, however the latter usually do not come.

We invite media representatives to our events, but they rarely cover our activities.

If the project is laid, some event with journalists, then cooperation will happen, if not, then there is no cooperation.

I have been working in the civil sector for more than 20 years now, and in close cooperation with public organizations and the media we have the opportunity to cover our activities. In particular, our organization, which is a journalistic organization, has no problem with the media. However, experience in this area shows that representatives of public organizations themselves have no idea how to establish contact with the media, and they themselves accuse media representatives of incompetence.

I can say that it is cramped. We invite them to cover our events. However, I would like that, on their part, we also had some interest in covering not only the events, but also the «week-days» of our projects, including the «Center for Women with Disabilities,» where our participants knit, weave and do different things.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects more

M=3,20;
SD=1,27

“The activities of public organizations and activists”

M=2,85;
SD=1,41

“Resolving social issues at the family level”

M=2,85;
SD=1,41

“Resolving social issues at the community level”

In some cases, it gives its positive feedback. For example, in some cases conducted by our organization, we can not obtain information from law enforcement agencies, but after the publication of the material «the case is in progress», that there is a positive cooperation in protecting the rights and interests of our principals.

Respondents think that NGOs collaboration with media is not effective in Tajikistan since the media is not interested in covering NGOs activities especially human rights issues.

It is not effective.

It is ineffective, since the media is not interested (the majority) in publishing our information, since we are a human rights organization and work in the region.

As an individual, it is very effective, because on some issues relating to my activities I act as an expert, but how with the organization is not so effective.

Some respondents tend to think that it positively affects their goals because after media coverage of some issues the problems start to be solved.

Favorable. For example, 2 years ago in each village, in every family there was a radio, and we tried, as part of our project «Prevention of Domestic Violence», to cover fragments of interviews with those women who were subjected to violence against the Tselbyu so that the listeners could learn about it, and in case they have a similar situation, they turned to us for help.

Of course, they influence the promotion of some issues, probably at the state level to resolve some issues. I can give an example about the case two months ago, when our migrants were stuck, they were

taken off the Aksaray sky train, between the borders of Kazakhstan and Russia, the relatives of these migrants addressed us, we turned to the media. Public outcry, after the media wrote about it, so the problem was solved. The problem was noticed and the ministries responded, in general, the migrants were returned. It seems to me that this is a very good example of how they react to media publications and what public resonance is obtained.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less



“Resolution of social issues at the country level”



“Changes in legislation”



“Making political decision”

Expert from Tajikistan believes that government in Tajikistan needs only those experts whose opinions and advices support the decisions already taken. That is why he does not see the future for independent expert and independent media in the country.

The Tajik government now needs only experts and analysts who would bring the scientific base, write a rationale and adjust the statics to the decisions already taken. At present, there are already quite young and not very experienced specialists in government structures and scientific institutes who successfully implement this task. All decisions important for the country are first taken, and then justified. Therefore, I personally do not see the future for independent expert co-reporting and media in our country. In the future, all scientists and experts (journalists, intellectuals), in demand on the international market, will leave, the rest will fit into the current coordinate system.

Respondents think that it negatively affects because there is no independent media in Tajikistan.

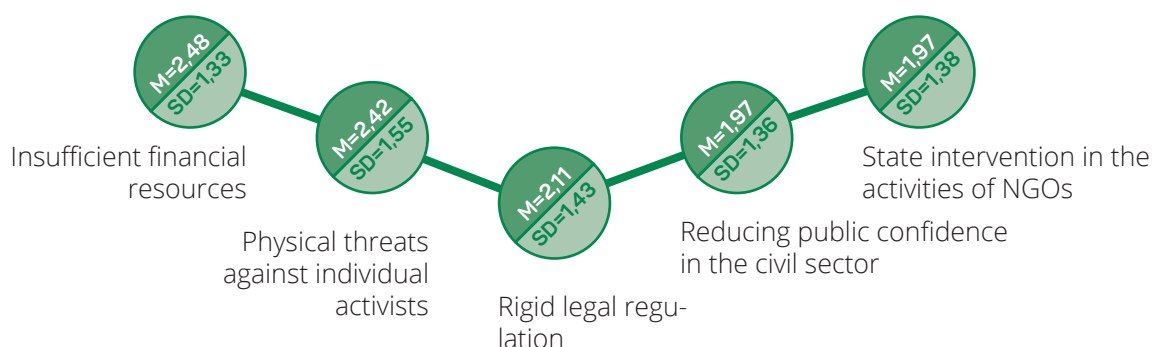
Very negatively affects, as very little is conducted as PR-activity. We want more publications about the work or people's problems, but, unfortunately, we work in the region, and we practically do not have independent media in the region. Sometimes it's negative.

Has the effectiveness of your activity changed recently?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It is as effective, as it was before	19	54,3	54,3	54,3
	The efficiency of the activity decreased slightly	8	22,9	22,9	77,1
	The efficiency of the activity decreased significantly	6	22,8	17,1	94,3
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

More than half of respondents (54,3%) believe that their organization is as effective, as it was before and about quarter (22,9%) think that the effectiveness of their organization has decreased slightly.

Main barriers for the development of the civil society organization in Tajikistan



During in-depth interviews one expert stated that NGOs are on the verge of survival and not in a position to develop their organizational development.

NGOs are now in decline, most are on the verge of survival, they are not in a position to support and develop their organizational development, to cope with the work of independent experts. The curfew is made up of several NGOs with projects and financing.

Respondents think that mostly negative public opinion about the activities of the civil sector is formed by media Tajikistan because there is no cooperation between media and civil society sector, media in Tajikistan is dependent on government, civil society organizations themselves also do not provide media with sufficient information about their activities and public opinion is formed not only by media coverage, but also state bodies are also engaged in this.

On one of the events, representatives of the media working in Khatlon and Rashta expressed their opinion on the work of civil organizations, stating that these organizations do not represent any benefit to society. I believe that this opinion among media representatives in those regions was formed precisely because of the lack of cooperation with civil organizations and NGOs. Since there is no cooperation between them, there is no awareness of civil organizations and their activities.

The media activities in this direction are very important. The media have a great influence on public opinion, however, as mentioned above, this is not done at a sufficient level.

Well, depending on which end to approach, if today we speak about the real situation in Tajikistan, then if the authorities say so, almost 95% of the media in Tajikistan wakes up writing, as they will be told.

Civil society in Tajikistan does not take its due place, and this is not only the task of the media, to acquaint the society with the activities of civil sectors. In order for a civil society to have a good image, they need to work more and more on the needs of their subscribers, on the needs of groups associated with these organizations, so that they have a positive image.

Unfortunately, public opinion on the civil sector is formed not only through coverage of its activities in the media, but also state bodies are engaged in this. To date, we can confidently say that public organizations are fully recognized by state structures and cooperation between the public sector and state structures is fully established. In this regard, the work of civil society in Tajikistan is not so obvious.

How optimistic or pessimistic are you about the future of the civil sector in your country?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	14	40,0	40,0	40,0
	Very optimistic	11	32,5	31,4	71,4
	Very pessimistic	4	14,7	11,4	82,9
	Pessimistic	4	12,8	11,4	94,3

40% of respondents are “Neither optimistic nor pessimistic” about the future of the civil sector in Tajikistan and about one third (32,5%) of respondents are “very optimistic” about the future of the civil sector in Tajikistan.

I believe that to date, thanks to the efforts of the old Soviet thinking - to limit the diversity of opinions and points of view in society, has contributed to the difficulty of the work of civil organizations. And these «difficulties» we can overcome only with the help of our daily work in this direction, so that each organization can fulfill its mission in society.

I would like journalists to come to us more often and to be interested in the way things are going with us. They covered what women are doing in the framework of our project. We have in our budget an article «Communication with the Public», but we wanted the media’s interest in us not only for the sake of money.

The only thing that I would like to note is that our journalist would not be hampered by cooperation with organizations in the likeness of ours, especially since this cooperation is for good and free of charge.

In your opinion, what will happen to the civil sector in the next 3-5 years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Will develop	9	25,7	25,7	25,7
	Without changes	8	22,9	22,9	48,6
	Will cease to be popular	6	17,1	17,1	65,7
	Become pro-government	5	14,3	14,3	80,0
	Will close	4	11,4	11,4	91,4
	Become backstreet	3	8,6	8,6	100,0
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

More than quarter of respondents (25,7%) think that civil sector in their country will develop, about quarter (22,9%) think that there will be no changes in civil sector in their country.

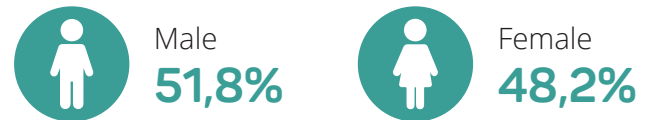
More than one third of respondents (37,1%) are somehow interested in politics and about one third (31,4%) are very interested in politics.

UZBEKISTAN



What's your gender?

Overall 83 representatives of civil society organizations took part in survey in Uzbekistan.



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	43	51,8	51,8	51,8
	Female	40	48,2	48,2	100,0
	Total	83	100,0	100,0	

Who are you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NGO	44	53,0	53,0	53,0
	Online activist	24	28,9	28,9	81,9
	Civil activist	13	15,7	15,7	97,6
	Other	2	2,4	2,4	100,0
	Total	83	100,0	100,0	

More than half of respondents (53%) identify themselves as NGO, more than quarter (28,9%) as online activists and 15,7% as civil activists.

What is your occupation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Environment	17	20,5	20,5	20,5
	Education and Research	14	16,9	16,9	37,3
	Health	12	14,5	14,5	51,8
	Social services	9	10,8	10,8	62,7
	Development of local communities	7	8,4	8,4	71,1
	Culture	6	7,2	7,2	78,3
	Professional or business association	6	7,2	7,2	85,5

Protection of rights and advocacy	4	4,8	4,8	90,4
Other	4	4,8	4,8	95,2
Charity	3	3,6	3,6	98,8
Religious	1	1,2	1,2	100,0
Total	83	100,0	100,0	

The type of activity of more than one fifth of respondents (20,5%) is environment. 16,9% work in education and research area and 14,5% in health area.

The five important functions that civil society organizations fulfill in Uzbekistan



Does your organization have its own website?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	48	57,8	57,8	57,8
	Yes	35	42,2	42,2	100,0
	Total	83	100,0	100,0	

More than a half of respondents (57,8%) indicated that their organization has no website.

In which social networks is your organization represented in?



Facebook
79,5%



Instagram
43,4%



Twitter
19,3%

Which social networks do you use?



Facebook
74,7%



Instagram
62,7%



Twitter
25,3%



Youtube
15,7%



Odnoklassniki
12%

Information sources for CSOs in Uzbekistan

Frequently used information sources for civil society organizations in Uzbekistan



News sites



News in Facebook



TV News



Radio News

Least used information sources for civil society organizations in Uzbekistan



Newspapers



News in Twitter



Blogs

Where and how do you check the information received?



People («living sources»)
77,1%



Publications in other media
74,7%



Web sites
63,9%



Social networks
59%

How do you collaborate with the media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I take part in various TV and radio programs	31	37,3	37,3	37,3
	I am writing column / rubric in the media	28	33,7	33,7	71,1
	I send press releases to the media	10	12,0	12,0	83,1
	Initiate an interview for the media	9	10,8	10,8	94,0
	I invite media to events	5	6,0	6,0	100,0
	Total	83	100,0	100,0	

More than one third of respondents (37,3%) take part in various TV and radio programs, another more than one third (33,7%) write column/rubric in the media in order to collaborate with media.

NGOs in Uzbekistan think that media are not covering their events, activities because media think that they are not relevant and not interesting. Media do not collaborate with NGOs and do not come when they invite them to their events.

Very bad. It is always said that our events are not relevant and not interesting. How many times journalists were invited from the Central Television to our environmental actions or holidays? Never came. Several websites such as central newspapers and magazines - fully ignore the topic of NGOs.

Not very well. Since many media outlets are not informed about the activities of NGOs.

NGOs covered by republican and regional media are not satisfactory.

Civil society organizations in Uzbekistan collaborate

More effectively with:



Proficient experts



Young experts



Print media



Online news agencies



Narrowly specialized experts

Least effectively with:



National government bodies



TV



Press services of state bodies



Radio stations

NGOs think that media in Uzbekistan underestimates the importance of NGOs.

Unfortunately, the media in Uzbekistan still clearly underestimates non-profit organizations - they have not yet taken up an informational niche that is adequate to their activities. Turning to the activity of NGOs, the journalist has the opportunity to offer alternative solutions to social problems to the state, targeted assistance, to show the algorithm of actions in acute life situations, that is, not only to inform their audience, but also to influence positive changes in society, work with disabled people, women and youth, reintegration and rehabilitation of victims of violence and human trafficking, training of college graduates' professional skills, training in family business etc.

NGOs in Uzbekistan think that media does not cover the activities of NGOs on a proper level, that they publish analytical materials very rarely.

Today, the activities of NGOs are covered by local and national media. But it cannot be said that all Uzbek media cover the activities of NGOs at the proper level. There are no analytical materials, mainly highlighting the activities carried out by NGOs.

Currently the activities of NGOs in the country are poorly covered, mainly in information genres. There are no analytical materials on the activities of NGOs.

An expert from Uzbekistan thinks that the effective way is to publish experts' opinions and recommendations in online platforms and create public resonance on them then state officials will listen to them.

The only way that today is the most realistic for independent analysts is the publication of their products in independent media and online publications. Moreover, social networks and Internet publications are becoming increasingly important - thanks to a large audience, attention to the community, opportunities for greater resonance, both as for public and as for official structures.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media

Affects more

M=3,06;
SD=1,09

"Resolving social issues at the family level"

M=3,02;
SD=1,02

"Resolving social issues at the community level"

M=2,98;
SD=1,04

"The activities of public organizations and activists"

Affects less

M=2,51;
SD= 1,06

"Making political decision"

M=2,50;
SD=1,08

"Resolution of social issues at the country level"

M=2,42;
SD=1,22

"Changes in legislation"

Expert from Uzbekistan stated that his country is still in its infancy and government do not consult with representatives of civil society.

I do not have exact information, but I see that some experts are attracted to the government especially on economic issues. Another issue, say, the fight against corruption, in the field of human rights, the development of the media, the protection of cultural heritage is much less involving experts. In the country there is a very big lack of institutionalization of such spheres. Any developed country has a stable practice of inviting representatives of civil society, consult with them and hold joint meetings. Uzbekistan is still in its infancy.

Personal contacts are important in cooperating with media in Uzbekistan. Most NGOs have their own personal contacts among journalists with whom they work together.

There are personal contacts. And I write official letters with treatment. Often I do not receive feedback from newspapers for example. DO NOT consider it your duty as something to report, I generally send them material to publish but they throw it to «trash» ... But there are also pleasant exceptions and very responsible professional journalists.

NGOs in Uzbekistan think that media do not form any public opinion about the activities of the civil sector because they do not collaborate with them and do not cover their activities. The public in Uzbekistan do not know what NGOs are and what they do. Media keeps distance from NGOs because they give them unnecessary trouble and the media keeps silence about activities of NGOs.

If it's honest, then they do not form anything at all. They mainly describe political, cultural, and economic events in the country, but not public events. As if we do not exist. Ask what NGOs are in Uzbekistan, people do not know. NGOs are being pressured; we give media a lot of unnecessary trouble. And the media take a position of «silence».

They can form both positive and negative impact on the population about the role of NGOs. But NGOs themselves are able to spread information about themselves in social networks, on the Internet, on their web sites, through clients already received.

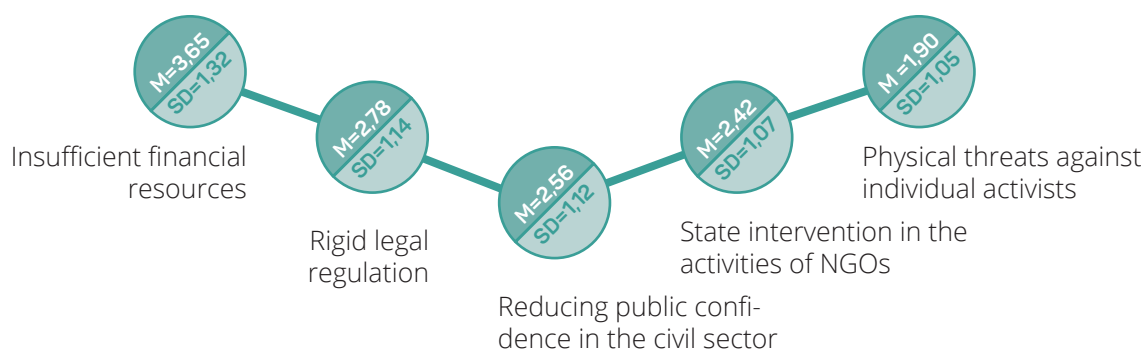
Today the general public has no idea what the NGOs are doing. Because the media have very little coverage of their activities. Therefore, an effective mechanism for partnership between NGOs and the media should be developed.

Has the effectiveness of your activity changed recently?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It is as effective, as it was before	49	59,0	59,0	59,0
	The efficiency of the activity decreased slightly	13	15,7	15,7	74,7
	The efficiency of the activity decreased significantly	9	10,8	10,8	85,5
	It became ineffective	8	9,6	9,6	95,2
	Other	4	4,8	4,8	100,0
	Total	83	100,0	100,0	

More than half of respondents (59%) believe that their organization is as effective, as it was before, 15,7% think that the efficiency of their organization decreased slightly.

The main barriers to the development of civil society organizations in Uzbekistan



Experts condemn that civil society in Central Asian countries are not active and the very concept of civil society in the form that was formed in Europe is not acceptable in Central Asian countries. They think that society itself also does not lead an active life and do not demand their rights. In Uzbekistan government created what is called «prongo» in English «organizations that are created by the government itself» or trade unions as from the times of the Soviet Union.

Now a certain revival of civil society is observed in comparison with the Karimov era, there are certain trends towards openness and activation. This is especially evident in social networks to a large extent. But from the point of view of the organized civil society creation of the activities of non-governmental and independent organizations, I do not see any significant improvement. There are certain legal restrictions for the creation of government organizations and independent media. After 2004, the policy began to deteriorate, included mandatory financial registration, began to exercise strong control over them, you could not open an account in banks, except two of them: the National Bank and Asaka Bank. I do not know, since these draconian measures were canceled or not, most likely not. Of course, the government claims that there they have some non-governmental organizations. But how does this rule the government under control or what is called «prongo» in English «organizations that are created by the government itself» or trade unions as from the times of the Soviet Union. Trade unions were also, in principle, part of civil society, in total independent trade unions were not.

The activities of the civil sector in the country are not very active. Because the very concept of civil society in the form that was formed in Europe are not acceptable the countries of the East. And society itself also does not lead an active life, and everything is transformed into a traditional form.

Expert from Uzbekistan says that there is no donor organization to support media and journalists in Uzbekistan:

Almost no lawyers who are not afraid to take up the defense of those whom the authorities for one reason or another decided to imprison or fined. A year ago there were two such people - Sergei Mayorov and Polina Braunerg (she died last year). The rest of the lawyers were afraid, because in such cases the authorities, less than one or another pretext, took away from too active defenders a license to practice law, that is, deprived them of the opportunity to work in their profession. Of the Western organizations that give grants and theoretically could support some structures of civil society, in Uzbekistan there are only two - the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Adenauer Foundation. (The rest were expelled from the country after the Andijan events of 2005.) But these two funds do not support journalists and the media, they are afraid that they will not be expelled from the country, they support only some cultural and educational projects.

Currently, there are 8200 NGOs operating in Uzbekistan. But the coverage of their activities in the media is not at the proper level. The media cover only those NGOs that are active. Therefore, often the general public has no idea what an NGO is. Often media coverage of local NGOs is very low. Therefore, an effective mechanism of partnership between NGOs and the media should be developed.

I very much want to hope that the authority of the public sector will be supported and increased, and the media will become worthy partners, not silent observers.

The media should tell the young people the right way. I would like to see more educational materials published in the media. Also, more media should be involved in covering the activities of other NGOs. But often these materials are given only inorganic terms.

At present, the state performs its functions not at the expense of strengthening the power, but by attracting the institutions of civil society. It is known that if the world view, the ideological level of citizens corresponds to the rates of democratic changes, then a favorable ground for democratization

of governance is created. First of all, the society itself must be aware and decide how to implement democratic changes and deepen the process of democratization. This is important place of the media. Assuming that non-commercial organizations, mass media, Mahalla, family, personality and other subjects are among the important democratic institutions of civil society, it should be emphasized that development outside state and public organizations is one of the principal ways of forming a civil society. At present, thousands of non-governmental public organizations operate in our country. At a new stage, along with the expansion of a number of such organizations, a sharp increase in their authority and place in the life of society is implied. In every society, a strong state can transfer its functions to social structures. If social structures function adequately in the management of society, if they take responsibility for the formation of the foundations of civil society, if they ensure the free participation of every citizen in the management of society and the state, then such society is recognized as strong.

How optimistic or pessimistic are you about the future of the civil sector in your country?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	33	39,8	39,8	39,8
	Optimistic	20	24,1	24,1	63,9
	Very optimistic	11	14,3	13,3	77,1
	Pessimistic	9	13,8	10,8	88,0
	Very pessimistic	6	8,0	7,2	95,2
	Total	83	100,0	100,0	

More than one third of respondents (39,8%) are “Neither optimistic nor pessimistic” about the future of the civil sector in Kazakhstan and about quarter (24,1%) of respondents are “optimistic” about the future of the civil sector in Uzbekistan.

Expert from Uzbekistan tells about quasi-governmental organizations by nature in their country which does not perform their direct functions:

Civil society was very developed in the 1990s, when the government strongly supported the moves of activists and NGOs. We remember that almost all international NGOs operated in the country and Tashkent was the center of Central Asia. However, since 2005 the situation has changed. By 2016, it can be said that the NGO practically ceased to exist, as well as civil society. Activists were massively convicted and many of them simply began to leave the country. Official statistics show that in Uzbekistan more than 8,000 NGOs have been registered, but they are all quasi-governmental organizations by nature and do not perform their direct functions. For example, such institutions of civil society as mahalla, women’s committee, farmers association, youth union (these organizations have their own structural units in each district, city and region) and other de jure organizations are NGOs, but de facto carry out government assignments and do not work for the good of the people. The situation began to change with the change of power in 2016, which radically changed the state approach to communication with citizens. Of course, it’s too early to say that the laws and regulation of NGO activities have changed, but the state bodies began to listen to civil society. They adopted Development Strategy on

February 7, 2017 lays a dialogue with the people and the obligation of state bodies to communicate and ask for an opinion on their activities. Summarizing, it can be said that the current policy actively promotes direct dialogue between state bodies and civil society. Having a political will and NPA, the civil sector is heavily controlled by law enforcement agencies and there is no freedom.

In your opinion, what will happen to the civil sector in the next 3-5 years?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Will develop	45	54,2	54,2	54,2
Without changes	25	30,1	30,1	84,3
Become pro-government	5	6,0	6,0	90,4
Will cease to be popular	3	3,6	3,6	94,0
Become backstreet	2	2,4	2,4	96,4
Other	2	2,4	2,4	98,8
Will close	1	1,2	1,2	100,0
Total	83	100,0	100,0	

More than half of respondents (54,2%) think that civil sector in their country will develop, about one third (30,1%) think that there will be no changes in civil sector in their country.

According to an expert from Uzbekistan, the country has still to go a long way to form independent NGOs which will replace “prongos” created by government.

First, we need to remove the draconian legal barriers in the area organized by civil society for the creation of an independent organization. Because, experts as a rule work in some analytical centers. In many countries, including in the space of the former USSR, there are many analytical centers. They have the opportunity to show themselves, create offices, receive funding, collect information and conduct analyzes. Based on this, they make recommendations to the government. The government notices them and invites them to a consultation. As if the chain of such conditions is absent in Uzbekistan. There are some centers, but they are based on the control of the government. We still have a permissive nature in Uzbekistan, a permissive regime for the creation of civil organizations. According to the law, it should not be so, but in practice such a permissive mechanism operates. If you are applying as an independent organization for MINYUZ for registration on one or another of the proposals refuses.

According to an expert from Uzbekistan there are few human rights defenders in country, only about 20-30 people for 32 million population.

If you mean human rights organizations, then in Uzbekistan there is one officially registered - «Ezgulik» («Mercy»); its registration became one of the conditions of the West for cooperation with Uzbekistan in the early 2000s. There are several unofficial - the Initiative Group of Independent Human Rights Defenders of Uzbekistan (IGNPU) and the Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan (PAH). There is a branch of the International Organization for Human Rights (IHRC). But in fact, even these groups do not exist, there are only their founders - Surat Ikramov, Elena Uralayeva, Marat Zakhidov. In total, about ten to one and a half human rights defenders work in Uzbekistan. The most notable of them are Surat Ikramov, Vasily Inoyatova, Abdurahmon Tashanov, Shukhrat Rustamov, Elena Uralayeva, Malokhat Eshankulova, Uktam Pardaev. Perhaps, two or three more people I did not mention. There are about a dozen independent journalists and several activists who defend some important positions for them in the media. The number of such people in the whole country with a population of approximately 26-30 million people (official figures of 32 million - postscript), I would have determined in 20-30 people. Of course, not taking into account the «religious» of all stripes.

Comparative Analysis

	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
Important functions that civil society organizations fulfill in society	<p>"Support national development",</p> <p>"Encourage tolerance and cultural diversity",</p> <p>"Audience training",</p> <p>"Provide advice, guidance and direction for daily living"</p> <p>"Monitoring and critical study of political leaders"</p>	<p>"Support national development",</p> <p>"Encourage tolerance and cultural diversity",</p> <p>"Audience training",</p> <p>"Influence on public opinion"</p> <p>"Desire for social change"</p>	<p>"Support for government policy"</p> <p>"Desire for social change"</p> <p>"Provide media information that is necessary for political decision-making"</p> <p>"Motivate people to participate in political activities"</p>	<p>"To develop patriotism",</p> <p>"Encourage tolerance and cultural diversity",</p> <p>"Audience training",</p> <p>"Support national development"</p> <p>"Desire for social change"</p>
Civil society organizations collaborate with	<p>Proficient experts,</p> <p>Young experts,</p> <p>Print media,</p> <p>Online news agencies</p> <p>Narrowly specialized experts</p>	<p>Proficient experts,</p> <p>Online news agencies,</p> <p>Young experts,</p> <p>Local government bodies</p> <p>Narrowly specialized experts</p>	<p>Local government bodies,</p> <p>Regional public authorities,</p> <p>Proficient experts</p> <p>National government bodies</p>	<p>Proficient experts,</p> <p>Young experts,</p> <p>Print media,</p> <p>Narrowly specialized experts</p>
Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects more	<p>"The activities of public organizations and activists"</p> <p>"Resolving social issues at the community level".</p>	<p>"The activities of public organizations and activists"</p> <p>"Resolving social issues at the community level".</p>	<p>"The activities of public organizations and activists"</p> <p>"Resolving social issues at the community level"</p>	<p>"Resolving social issues at the family level"</p> <p>"Resolving social issues at the community level".</p>
Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less	<p>"Resolution of social issues at the country level"</p> <p>"Resolving social issues at the family level"</p>	<p>"Making political decision"</p> <p>"Changes in legislation"</p>	<p>"Resolution of social issues at the country level"</p> <p>"Resolving social issues at the family level"</p>	<p>"Resolution of social issues at the country level"</p> <p>"Changes in legislation"</p>
Main barriers to the development of civil society organizations	<p>"Insufficient financial resources",</p> <p>"State intervention in the activities of NGOs"</p> <p>"Rigid legal regulation"</p>	<p>"Insufficient financial resources",</p> <p>"Reducing public confidence in the civil sector"</p> <p>"Rigid legal regulation"</p>	<p>"Insufficient financial resources",</p> <p>"Physical threats against individual activists"</p> <p>"Rigid legal regulation"</p>	<p>"Insufficient financial resources",</p> <p>"Rigid legal regulation",</p> <p>"Reducing public confidence in the civil sector"</p> <p>"State intervention in the activities of NGOs"</p>

	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
What do you think about the future of the civil sector in your country?	"Neither optimistic nor pessimistic"	"Neither optimistic nor pessimistic"	"Neither optimistic nor pessimistic"	"Neither optimistic nor pessimistic"
Are you interested in politics?	Little interested	Somehow interested	Somehow interested	Very interested

Important functions that civil society organizations fulfill in society differ in all four countries. The functions *"Support national development"* and *"Encourage tolerance and cultural diversity"* were indicated as one of the important functions by organizations in all three countries except for Tajikistan. All three countries except for Kazakhstan answered that the function *"Desire for social change"* was one of the important functions. *"Support for government policy"* was indicated as one of the important functions of civil society organizations in Tajikistan. *"Influence on public opinion"* is one the important functions of civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan. Civil society organizations in Uzbekistan indicated that *"To develop patriotism"* is one of their important functions. Civil society organizations in Kazakhstan answered that *"Provide advice, guidance and direction for daily living"* is one their important functions.

Civil society organizations in all four countries collaborate with *proficient experts*. All three countries except for Tajikistan collaborate with young experts and *narrowly specialized experts*.

Civil society organizations in Tajikistan collaborate with *regional public authorities and national government bodies*. With print media mostly collaborate civil society organizations in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Civil society organizations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan collaborate with *online news agencies*. With *local government bodies* mostly collaborate civil society organizations in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects more *"The activities of public organizations and activists"* in all three countries except for Uzbekistan. In all four countries Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects *"Resolving social issues at the community level"*. In Uzbekistan civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects more *"Resolving social issues at the family level"*.

Civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less *"Resolution of social issues at*

the country level" in all three countries except for Kyrgyzstan. In Kyrgyzstan civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less *"Making political decision"*. In Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less *"Changes in legislation"*. In Kazakhstan and Tajikistan civil society organizations' collaboration with media affects less *"Resolving social issues at the family level"*.

"Insufficient financial resources" is one of the main barriers to the development of civil society organizations in all four countries. *"Rigid legal regulation"* is one of the main barriers to the development of civil society organizations in all three countries except for Kyrgyzstan. *"State intervention in the activities of NGOs"* is one of the main barriers to the development of civil society organizations in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. *"Physical threats against individual activists"* is the main barrier to the development of civil society organizations in Tajikistan. *"Reducing public confidence in the civil sector"* is the main barrier to the development of civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Civil society organizations in all four countries are *"Neither optimistic nor pessimistic"* about the future of civil sector in their countries.

Civil society organizations in Kazakhstan are *little interested* in politics and in Tajikistan are *somehow interested* in politics.

The governments in all four countries are changing the institutional environment in which citizens engage, establishing legal barriers to restrict the functioning of media and civic society organizations and reducing their autonomy from the state. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan civic space is shrinking driven by higher government restrictions on media and CSO entry.

In all four countries all expressions of citizens' collective action, including voting, political parties, social movements, civic associations, and other less conventional spaces for policy deliberation, are imperfect. Therefore, citizens,

to strengthen their influence in the policy arena, need to engage through multiple mechanisms designed to solve collective action problems.

According to most respondents, Ministries of information are seen as propaganda machines—with the primary purpose of pushing out information biased toward “any government in power”—with no real capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue with constituents.

Agencies and bureaus charged with collecting and managing government data and statistics are often under resourced and frequently lack the capacity to carry out their mandates.

The following recommendations for Governments and Civil society organizations apply to all four countries as they are all important for them.

Recommendations to the Government

- Substantial support from the state, media and public structures;
- support civil society engagement with government;
- promote an enabling environment for civil society and the media to build public support for more accountable democratic governance;
- to start dialogue to foster cooperation and trust between the government, civil society and the media;
- governments should create an environment that is conducive to the effective functioning of CSOs and the media – by reducing restrictions;
- enhanced accountability and transparency is required within government and its agencies;
- increase the availability of reliable information—such as generating evidence on the performance of public officials—and increasing the accessibility of that information—such as strengthening the independence of media outlets or aligning the targeting and timing of information with the political process;
- promote greater accountability and government responsiveness;
- the willingness and ability of government to speak with citizens must be coupled with a willingness and ability to listen to them, incorporate their needs and preferences into the policy process, and engage local patterns of influence and trusted sources of information;
- to strengthen effective government communication capacity;
- to communicate with information intermediaries such as opinion leaders (experts) and various forms of media at the national and local levels;
- to engage in effective two-way communication with various constituencies;
- to hire communication professionals who will work throughout government, taking the public’s pulse on timely issues; consulting relevant constituencies; and collecting, packaging, and disseminating information likely to be of public interest;
- to implement Open Government Initiative which includes various public consultation mechanisms in diverse policy domains and provides all interested parties access to a vast array of government databases.

Recommendations to the Civil Society Organizations

- It is necessary to create stronger communications between NGOs and the media;
- NGOs need to develop the information field more actively, to create websites, to update information more often;
- now most of the NGOs sit on formal websites that do not provide quality information about their activities;
- placement of materials in newspapers and TV is very expensive, like creating websites;
- further development of media education is associated with the development of a civic approach that focuses not just on improving the media competence of students, but on increasing media activity of the population. «That, in turn, will stimulate the development of civil communications, ensuring the formation and development of civil society»;
- help build integrity and reduce the risk of corruption in country;
- build public support for more accountable democratic governance;
- to foster cooperation and trust between the civil society and the media;
- to carry out monitoring and advocacy work within state structures;
- engage actively in public debates dealing with the risk of corruption;
- help to promote the need for investment in integrity, transparency and accountability;
- welcome calls for greater transparency and accountability within their own organisations in the interests of legitimacy and public transparency;
- foster policies that strengthen transparency and more widely disseminate information;
- promote public deliberation—spaces and processes that allow group-based discussion and weighing of alternative preferences—which will help level the playing field in the policy arena;
- increase citizens' participation in local governance which is instrumental in improving the quality of deliberation and the legitimacy of decisions by clarifying the needs and demands of local constituencies;
- to strengthen institutionalization of civil society organizations.

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