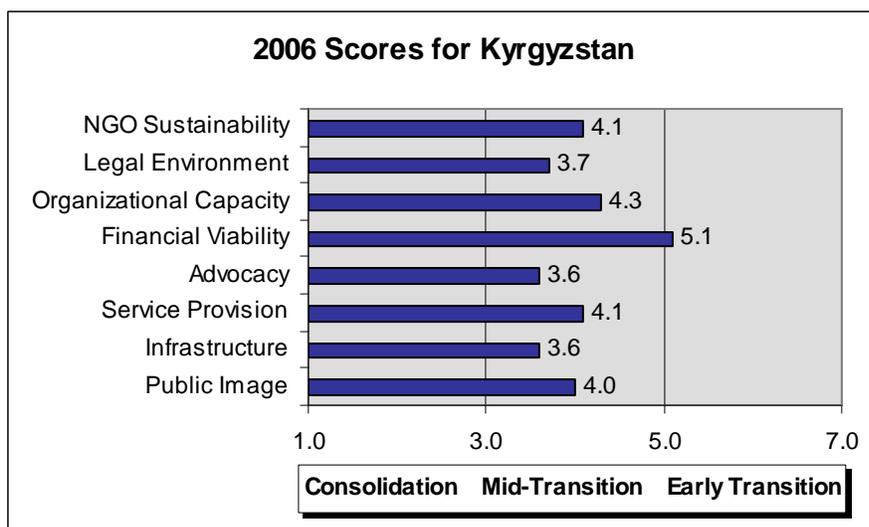


Kyrgyzstan



Capital: Bishkek

Polity: Republic

Population:
5,213,898

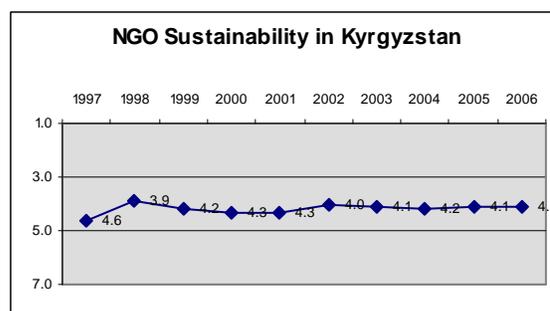
**GDP per capita
(PPP):** \$2,000

NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.1

Over the past year, the NGO sector continued to expand its role in Kyrgyzstani society. As they become more active in the country's development, NGOs are increasingly scrutinized and even harassed by government officials. The Ministry of Justice reported on April 1, 2006 that there are 12,173 entities registered as not-for-profit organizations; experts estimate that approximately 2,000 to 2,500 of these registered organizations are active. As in previous years, the NGO sector remains largely dependent on foreign funding. Domestic organizations, however, continue to improve their ability to diversify their funding, and rely more on charging fees for the services they provide.

This year, NGOs again found themselves with significant opportunities to influence the government. This was especially true with regard to the process of reforming the Constitution. The process for drafting the Constitution was difficult, however, and after months of debate government officials passed their own draft Constitution with little input from NGOs. The NGO sector, however, was instrumental in bringing the constitutional issue to the fore of national politics, and NGOs

gained significant experience advocating for reform, influencing government officials, and presenting a united front.



NGOs generally maintain strong relationships with local governments and regularly collaborate with local officials on projects (e.g. training, budget hearings, and research.) Following the 2005 regime change and the subsequent change in local governments, NGOs had to develop relationships with the new local officials, a development that was initially reported as a setback by many NGO experts. Over the past year, however, NGOs have solidified these new relationships and developed new partnerships.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.7



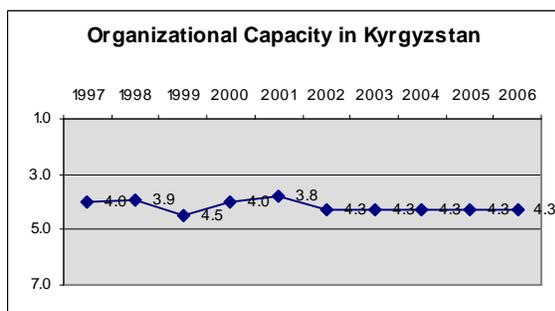
Over the past year, the legal environment experienced little change, and remains generally supportive of NGO activities. Politically-charged organizations, however, experienced some harassment and intimidation from the government. The process for registering new

organizations is free and presents few barriers. Once registered, new organizations are able to engage in economic activities, though as in previous years, NGOs are largely unaware of the different ways to generate income or compete for government contracts.

As in the past, many organizations complain that local attorneys lack an understanding of NGO laws and legal issues. As a consequence, when organizations are harassed by local law enforcement agents, tax inspectors, and others, they do not have adequate legal representation. To address the issue, USAID initiated a project in the Central Asia region to provide NGOs and the media with legal assistance.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.3

While some organizations in urban areas have strong organizational structures, internal management, and a well-trained staff, most NGOs in Kyrgyzstan are small, unorganized, under financed, and staffed by individuals with little or no management training. Many organizations depend on one or two leaders who understand and are committed to their organizations' missions.



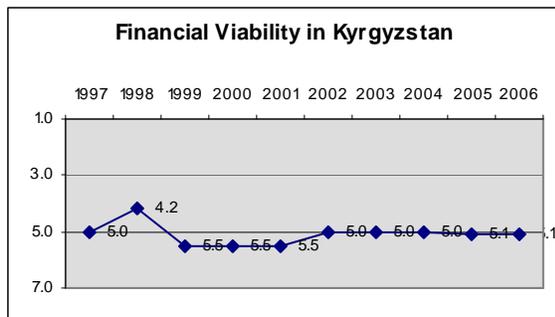
While some organizations continually improve their organizational capacities, most NGOs lack a basic understanding of NGO management, the need for strategic plans, financial management, or the legal framework in which they operate. Some organizations have boards of directors, but they are rarely used effectively. Similarly, few organizations clearly define the different roles of their boards of directors and staff. Though the sector has improved, most organizations depend solely on the funds they receive through grant programs, which makes it difficult to pay their staff regular salaries and attract young professionals. Most organizations continue to recruit volunteers from high schools and universities to support their activities.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.1

Despite the relatively stable economy, the financial condition of most NGOs remains unchanged. Local philanthropy remains weak and other economic opportunities for NGOs

are limited. The relationship between the NGO and business sectors remains underdeveloped, and business support for NGOs is rare. Individual philanthropy also remains weak. The financial support from

individual parliamentarians during the 2005 elections ended in 2006, though opposition leaders in the “For Reform” demonstrations were able to provide NGOs with some support.



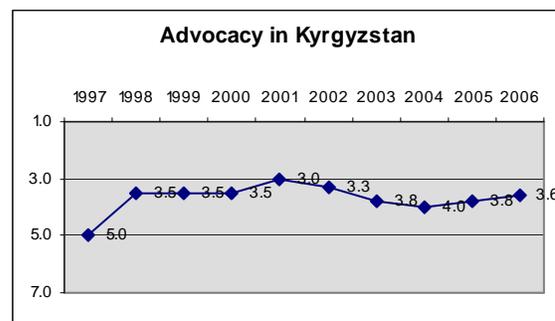
While the decrease of foreign funding continued to limit the availability of grants, NGOs were able to forge new partnerships with other organizations and local governments. In 2006, some local governments continued to support NGO activities, and more organizations took advantage of a law that allocates funds for local

ADVOCACY: 3.6

Building on the advocacy successes of 2005, the NGO sector took a more active role in advocating for a variety of causes in 2006. Many advocacy campaigns, such as monitoring of human rights, reporting on conflicts, and ensuring government compliance with the law, continue from year to year. Over the past year, three issues on which NGOs advocated are particularly significant: the constitutional reform process, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) working groups, and the debate over entry into the HIPC program. Though the government included civil society in the constitutional reform process and MCA, NGO advocates had limited success. The draft Constitution that was finally approved was drafted unilaterally by government officials and criticized by civil society.

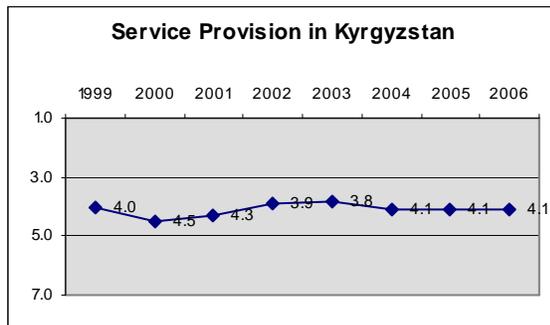
civic organizations. Under the law, the Ministry of Finance may provide grassroots organizations with seed grants through local governments. Despite significant bureaucratic obstacles, including a requirement that an application be reviewed by local and national government, more organizations were successful in securing funding. Other support from the government is limited to providing space for events and other in-kind donations.

The ability for NGOs to engage in fundraising is limited by scarce economic opportunities and the lack of capacity. Some organizations are increasingly charging fees for their services, which has improved their abilities to engage in various activities. Some organizations earn income by providing local officials with training, advising businesses, and publishing training materials. In keeping with a recent trend, some NGOs are striving to increase their levels of transparency by publicizing their financial and project reports.



NGOs at the local level often have productive relationships with government officials, though their advocacy efforts are generally limited to participating in budget hearings. Only a few of the larger organizations are able to have a national presence and organize nationwide advocacy campaigns.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.1



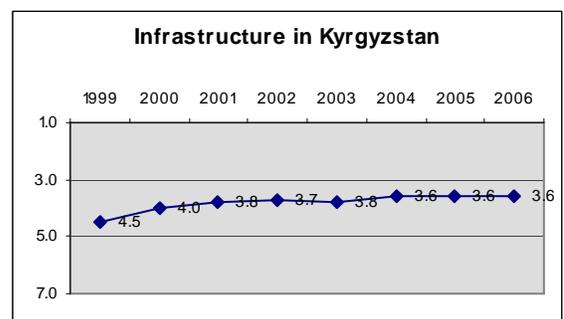
While some organizations provide consulting and training services for a fee, and are even

eligible to compete for government contracts, the economy is not yet strong enough to offer significant fundraising opportunities for NGOs. There are a few well-established organizations that are able to provide services such as training, materials development, reporting and analysis, but most NGOs still lack the capacity and knowledge to access existing markets. While still limited, opportunities for charging fees for services to other NGOs, political parties, and government ministries, is an increasingly accepted practice.

INFRASTRUCTURE: 3.6

NGOs in Kyrgyzstan enjoy access to a number of resource centers that offer training and other services, though they are unavailable in small towns and rural areas. The Civil Society Support Centers that were funded by USAID through 2006 provided technical assistance, access to computers, information, and legal services. The NDI Information Centers for Democracy, funded in part by the U.S. State Department, offer NGO activists infrastructural support by providing access to media resources, facilitating discussions, and providing meeting spaces. Other organizations provide a variety of training opportunities, including a training of trainers program, which has led to a cadre of local trainers. Donors also fund resource centers that provide internet services and computer training to NGOs. Media resource centers in Bishkek, Osh, and Karakol host frequent press conferences. Most resource centers are located in oblast or rayon centers,

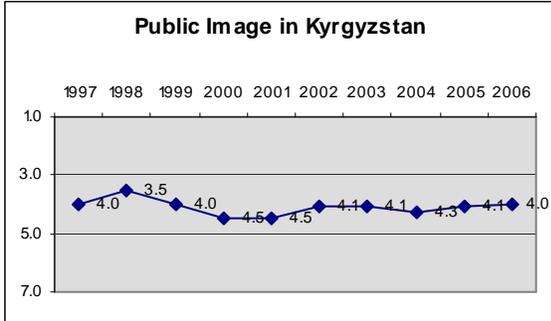
leaving organizations in the regions with inadequate access to communications and information. Two youth groups, Kel Kel and Birge, created popular listserves that provide organizations with information about civil society, government activities, and grant opportunities. The Foundation for Tolerance International publishes the Early Warning for Violence Prevention newsletters, which monitors areas of potential conflict in Kyrgyzstan.



PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.0

The general population, especially outside the urban centers, remains relatively uninformed about the NGO sector. As in previous years, however, both the independent and state-controlled media have increased their coverage of NGO activities. The series of demonstrations in 2006 focused media

attention on some organizations and civil society leaders. The national media's coverage was largely negative, while the independent media was more critical of government officials and supportive of civil society actors.



Overall, the independent media does not actively seek out information on NGO activities. Most organizations continue to lack skills in media and public relations, though in 2006, more NGOs held press conferences to announce new activities and campaigns.

A recent poll funded by USAID found that over 50% of the population has never heard of an NGO. Those with some knowledge of NGOs, however, have generally favorable or neutral opinions. Few citizens report that they have been positively affected by NGO activities.