

Consumer Survey of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Legal Aid Services

Report

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Purpose of the survey

- ✓ Channels of obtaining of information on activities of the Legal Aid Service
- ✓ Establishment of the level of trust towards the Legal Aid Service
- ✓ Identification of functions of the Legal Aid Service and customer needs
- ✓ Establishment of the level of efficiency of the Legal Aid Service
- ✓ Definition of parameters of effective communication activities

Topic of the research

- Assessment of the level of cognizance on activities of the Legal Aid Service and similar services in citizens
- Definition of the level of trust of citizens towards the Legal Aid Service and similar services
- Definition of level of awareness of citizens on functions of the Legal Aid Service and their attitude towards its usefulness
- Quality of services rendered by the Legal Aid Service
- Quality of services rendered by similar agencies
- Level of correspondence between the functions of the Legal Aid Service and current needs
- Identification of qualitative differences between the center and regions
- identification of communication channels for increasing of awareness and trust in regard to the Legal Aid Service

Technical information

For attaining of the purposes of the survey the following was implemented:

Quantitative survey – size of the sample – 320 interviews.

Tbilisi:

- ✓ 50 respondents, who have benefited from services rendered by the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services. Completed cases.
- ✓ 100 respondents, who are planning to apply to the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Service. Ongoing cases.
- ✓ 10 interviews with the staff of Tbilisi bureau of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Service.

Rustavi:

- ✓ 50 respondents, who have benefited from services rendered by the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services. Completed cases.
- ✓ 100 respondents, who are planning to apply to the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Service. Ongoing cases.
- ✓ 10 interviews with the staff of Rustavi bureau of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Service.

Qualitative survey, 3 focus groups:

- ✓ 2 focus groups with participation of those citizens, who have already received services rendered by the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Service.
- ✓ 1 mixed focus group with legal experts working in different spheres.

Main part of the report

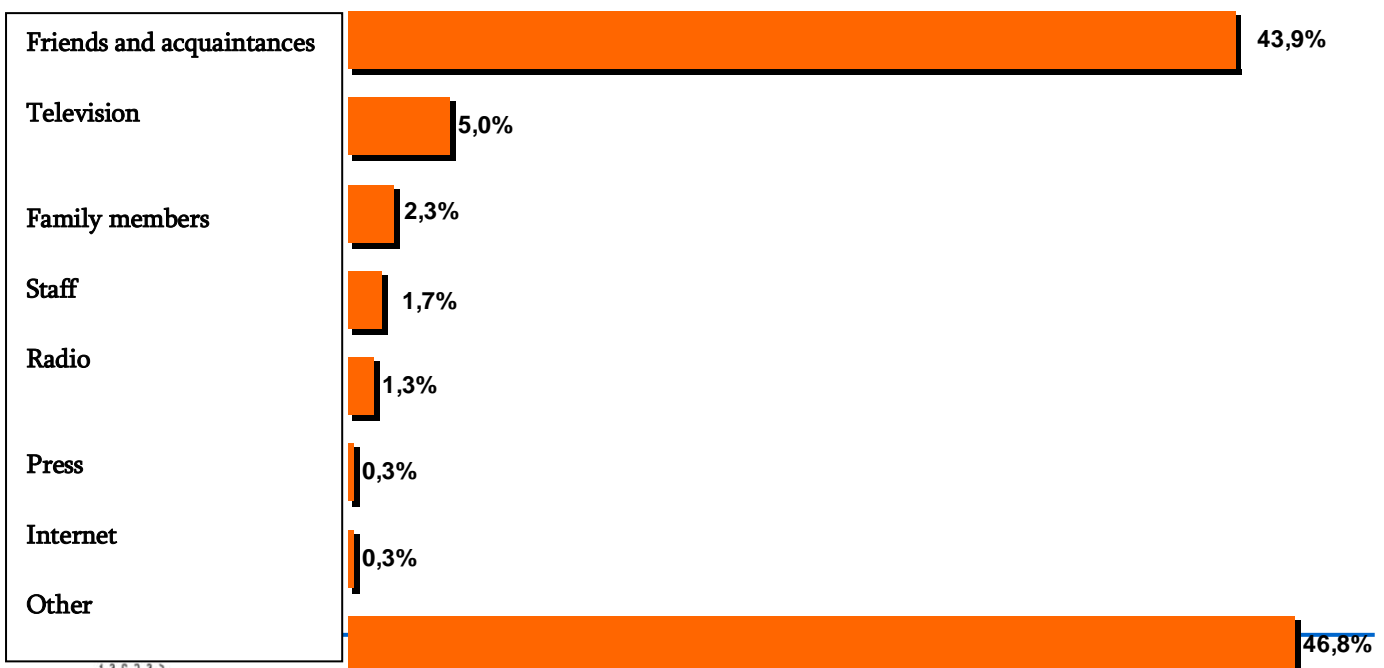
1. The level of awareness of activities of legal aid service and similar services

1.1 Channels of obtaining of information on the Legal Aid Service

In the process of conducting of the survey was posed the following question:

- *Please answer, where did you first obtain information on existence of the Legal Aid Service?*

Respondents were provided with the listing of different sources of information and were supposed to select those sources, from which they obtained given information. Responses were distributed in the following manner:



- ✓ **43.9%** of interviewed respondents stated, that they received information on the Legal Aid Service through their **friends and acquaintances**.
- ✓ **46.8%** of respondents stated, that they received information from other sources.

Following data in percentage was especially noteworthy too:

- Such means of information, as **television, radio, press and internet** was mentioned by the minimal number of respondents. The total of percentage in such case amounted to **6.9%**. As main means of information was stated **personal relations and friends**.
- The response **“other”** was highest in percentage. In the response under “others” are implied representatives of the **law enforcement bodies, patrol police and investigative organs**. As we have found out in case of detention of suspects staff of the investigative bodies provide information on the Legal Aid Service to the relatives of the detained. Respondents of given category have not listed other sources of information.

Such cases were more frequent in **Tbilisi -63.3%**. In **Rustavi** number of such cases was **30.5%**. At the same time in Rustavi was quite high percentage of responses like **“friend and acquaintances” - 59.6%**.

Judging by the above mentioned percentages we can state, that **communication activities of the Legal Aid Service were/are conducted inadequately and with certain drawbacks**.

Given observation is further confirmed by direct observing of activities of the legal aid bureaus.

Tbilisi bureau:

- ✓ **Communication activities are not conducted. The bureaus are basing their activities on the functions, prescribed by the law and render their services mainly to the IDPs and representatives of the vulnerable layer of population. Citizens apply to the bureaus only upon provision of information by law enforcement bodies.**

Statistical data: after conducting of interview with the head of Tbilisi bureau it became clear, that in the period from January 4 till January 22 of current year the bureau received 150 applications, out of which only 14 were submitted by citizens themselves, while the remaining were referred to by the law enforcement bodies.

Rustavi bureau:

- ✓ **Actively conducts meetings with population.**

Statistical data: During the period of conducting of the survey, i.e. in the period from January 4 till January 22 of current year Rustavi bureau conducted meetings with the population twice. According to conducted interviews we can conclude, that on daily basis on average around 10 citizens applied to the bureau on their own.

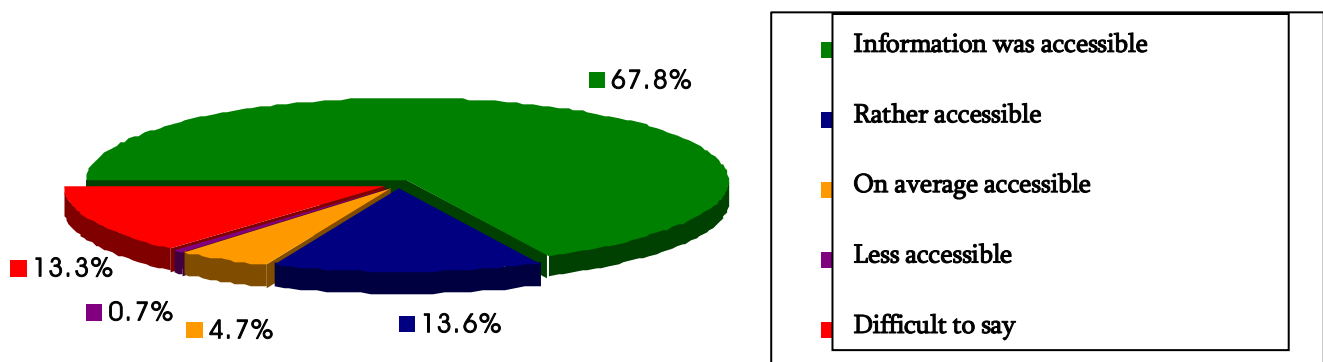
As a result of such active communication campaign of Rustavi bureau increasingly high number of respondents stated as the source of information “friends and acquaintances” - 59.6%.

In general population is not sufficiently informed regarding existence of the Legal Aid Service due to inadequate communication activities. Rustavi bureau managed to eliminate this drawback due to its individual initiative and conducted meetings with the population. In those towns where such meetings were not conducted, the level of awareness of population was the lowest.

1.2 Accessibility of information on the Legal Aid Service

The level of awareness of activities of the Legal Aid Service is related to general cognizance of existence of such service.

to the question: *In general was information on Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free legal Aid Services accessible to you?* We received following responses:



➤ In general responses “rather accessible” amounted to 81.4%.

Aggregate percentage data is pretty high but it is interesting to analyze the data in percentage by cities, i.e. by bureaus:

	Tbilisi	Rustavi
Accessible	44.7%	90.7%
Rather accessible	22.7%	4.6%
Averagely accessible	7.3%	2.0%
Less accessible		1.3%
Difficult to say	25.3%	1.3%

Tbilisi:

- Accessibility higher than average - 67.4%-ს.
- Difficult to assess accessibility of information - 25.3%-ს.

Presumably, such responses are caused by the fact, that majority of relatives of the suspects receive information on Legal Aid Service from the staff of the law enforcement bodies.

Rustavi:

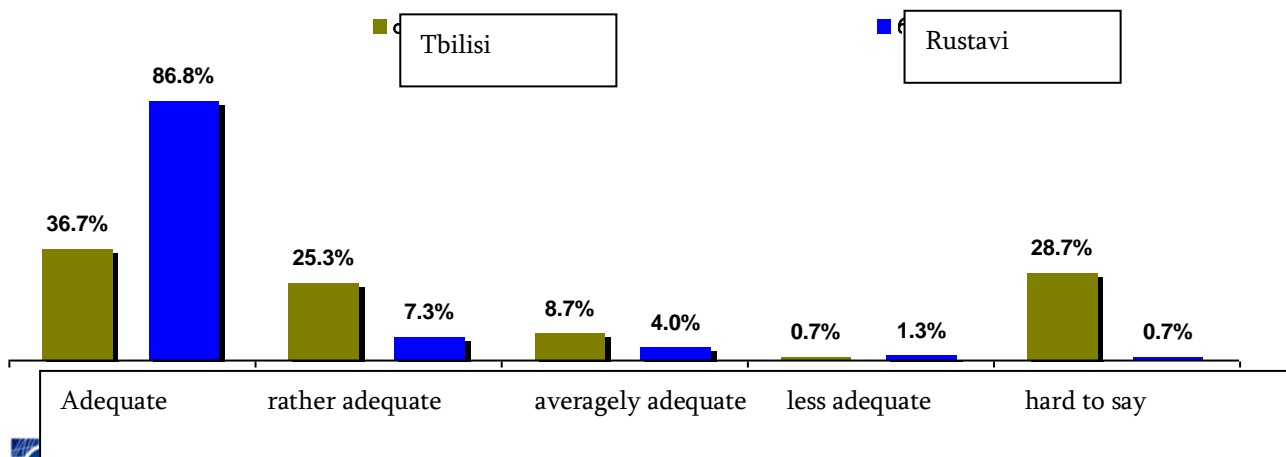
- Accessibility higher than average - 95.3%-ს.

Presumably, such accessibility of contact data is preconditioned by active communication measures conducted by the staff of Rustavi bureau.

1.3 Comprehensiveness of initial information obtained on activities of the Legal Aid Service

Situation is similar in regard to assessment of adequacy of initial contact information on Legal Aid Service.

How would you assess comprehensiveness and adequacy of initial information obtained by you in regard to Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services?



As becomes clear from the diagram:

- In case of Tbilisi the assessment “adequate” was stated in 61% of cases. It is difficult to say for 28.7% of respondents.
- In case of Rustavi the assessment “adequate” was stated in 94.1% of cases.

Similarly as before adequacy of initial information on legal aid service is provided by active communication strategy of Rustavi bureau.

1.4 Level of accessibility of information on services rendered by the Legal Aid Service and related costs

In the table below are provided responses of the interviewed in regard to the services and related costs:

Tbilisi							
	Included	Not included	I don't know	It is free for everybody	It is free for certain category	It is not free	I don't know
Legal consultations on any legal issues	26.0%	3.3%	70.7%	14.0%	12.0%	0.0%	74.0%
Compiling of legal documents in regard to civil and administrative cases	21.3%	2.0%	76.7%	10.0%	12.0%	0.0%	78.0%
Services of treasury lawyer (public defender) in criminal proceedings	95.3%	2.0%	2.7%	40.7%	52.0%	0.0%	7.3%
Services of treasury lawyer (public defender) in civil proceedings	18.0%	4.0%	78.0%	9.3%	9.3%	1.3%	80.0%
Rustavi							
	Included	Not included	I don't know	It is free for everybody	It is free for certain category	It is not free	I don't know
Legal consultations on any legal issues	81.5%	2.0%	16.6%	78.8%	7.3%	0.0%	13.9%
Compiling of legal documents in regard to administrative cases	76.2%	0.7%	23.2%	74.8%	7.9%	0.0%	17.2%
Services of treasury lawyer (public defender) in criminal proceedings	71.5%	2.6%	25.8%	73.5%	6.0%	0.0%	20.5%
Services of treasury lawyer (public defender) in civil proceedings	37.7%	15.2%	47.0%	53.0%	3.3%	11.9%	31.8%

Answers of the respondents can be considered separately in regard to each specific service, but in given case the most noteworthy was the response “I don’t know”, which was states in regard to the listing of services, as well as in regard to their value.

- In case of Tbilisi the response “I don’t know” is quite frequent except for “Services of treasury lawyer (public defender) in criminal proceedings
- In case of Rustavi response “I don’t know” is almost everywhere the least frequent.

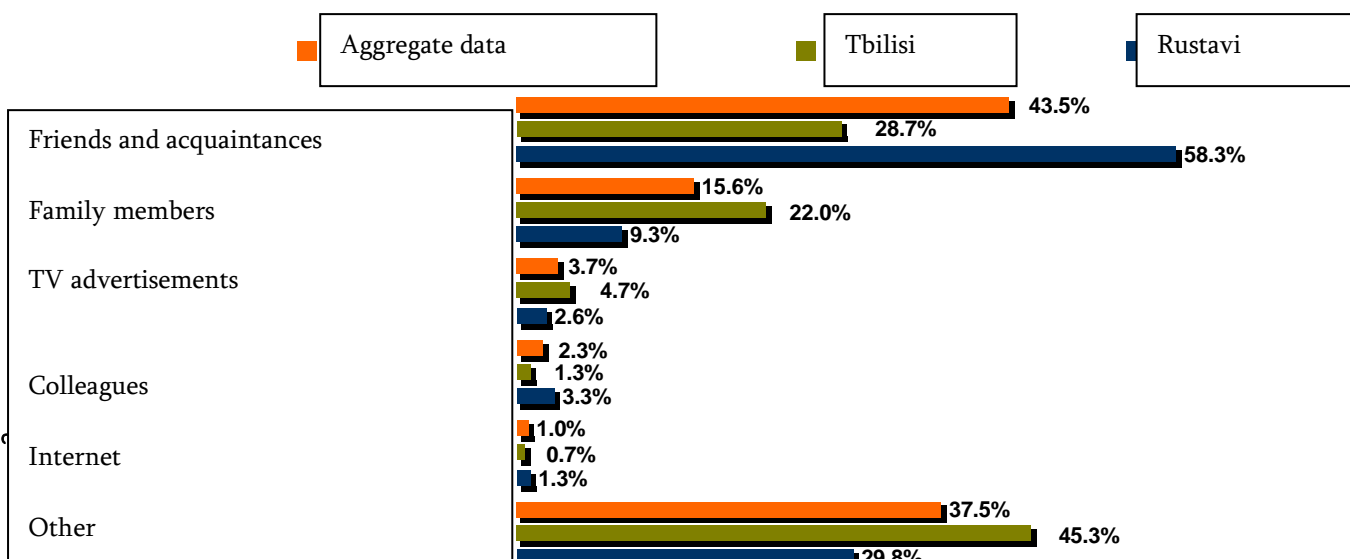
Such sharp difference in percentages of those, who responded “I don’t know” is caused by the fact, that in Tbilisi the level of awareness of citizens is extremely low, consequently, respondents are aware of only those services and their costs, which they have received directly. As to other services, the respondents are not aware of them. The level of awareness of respondents of Rustavi is much higher. The only sphere, where the level of information is not sufficient is in case of “services of a treasury lawyer in civil proceedings”.

2 Assessment of the level of trust of citizens towards the Legal Aid Service and similar services.

2.1 Persons, recommending applying to the Legal Aid Service for receiving of services

For the purpose of receiving of any services as a rule potential clients select service provider for certain reasons. The choice is affected by the recommendations, received in regard to certain service providers. We decided it expedient to identify in the process of the survey as to who was recommending to the respondents to apply to the Legal Aid Service.

Please state if you took into consideration anybody’s advice or recommendation when you applied for services to the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services?



In response “other” here too is implied staff of the law enforcement bodies.

Percentage data of responses basically follows the same pattern as in case of stating of sources of initial information in regard to Legal Aid Service. Namely:

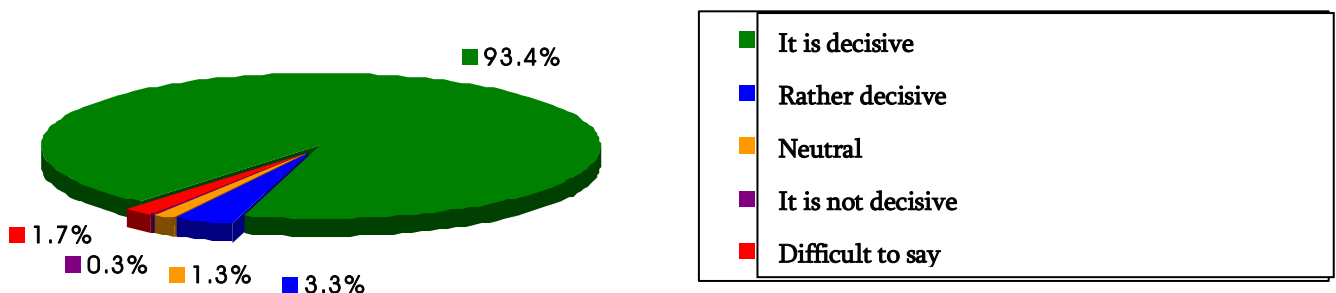
- ✓ In Tbilisi the cases, when the staff of the law enforcement bodies is recommending application for services is still very high - 45.3%.
- ✓ In Rustavi the more frequent answer was “recommended by friends and acquaintances” - 58,3%.
- ✓ Number of respondents, who states that they arrived to such decision due to the TV advertisement was 3.7% (aggregated data).

The above referred data is once again indicating to insufficiency of communication activities.

2.2 Importance of financial factors in the process of obtaining of legal aid services

In the process of the survey it was also considered expedient to establish importance of financial factor in the process of application for legal aid services. The respondents were asked the following question:

Please state, how decisive is financial factor when you want to receive legal aid services?

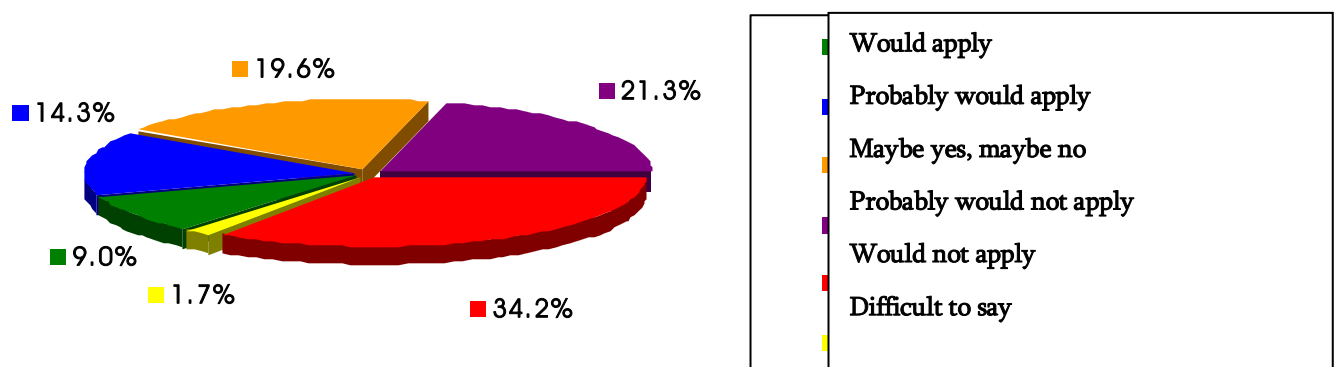


- ✓ For majority of the respondents – i.e. 93.4% financial factor was decisive in the process of applying for legal aid services.
- ✓ Differences between Tbilisi and Rustavi offices were not identified.

Consequently, the fact that the Legal Aid Service envisages free aid is decisive factor, preconditioning high number of the applicants.

Given conclusion is further confirmed by responses to the following question, posed within the framework of the survey:

Would you apply for services to the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services in case if it was not free and you had to pay for services in same manner as in case of other service providers?



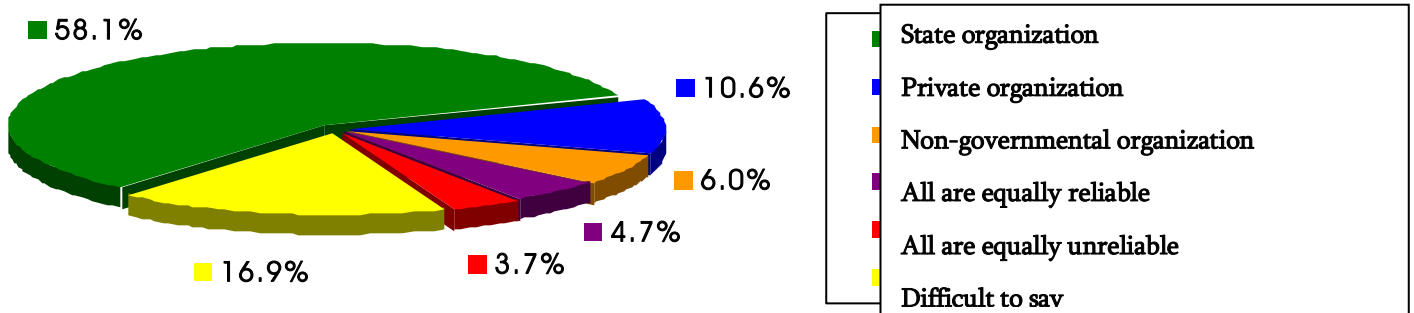
More than half of the respondents, i.e. 55.5% stated, that probably they would not have applied for services in case if it was not free

One fifth of the respondents stated, that maybe they would have applied for services, or maybe not. Presumably, this would have depended on the cost of the services. At the same time they stated, that they would have taken into consideration the fact, that as a rule legal aid providers are not state organizations. Usually the level of trust towards state organizations is low. Consequently, if the services provided by the Legal Aid Service were not free but chargeable as in case of other agencies, around 70% of the surveyed would not have applied for such services.

2.3 Reliability of the Legal Aid Service and identification of the Legal Aid Service

It was interesting to determine which organizations were perceived by respondents as more reliable- state, private or non-governmental.

What do you think, in case of legal aid services which organization would be more reliable, state, private or non-governmental?



58.1% of the respondents consider that in case of legal aid services state organization would be more reliable.

At one glance such response of respondents is illogical, that is why these responses need to be analyzed more indepthly.

Survey was conducted among those respondents, who are planning to apply for legal aid services (ongoing cases) as well as with those respondents, who have already benefited from such services (closed cases). In both cases legal aid services were free. The responses related to trustworthiness of the services are preconditioned by the quality of rendered services. Majority of respondents are satisfied with the quality of received services and consequently, the level of trust is high. At the same time we should keep in mind following circumstances:

- **Absolute majority of surveyed respondents have not received any other legal aid services. I.e. the respondents have no opportunity of comparing quality of services with other agencies that provide similar services.**

The above conclusion is driven on the basis of answers of respondents to the question, when the services would **be chargeable and not free**. If as one of the components for comparison would be taken the cost of services and if we also take into consideration that for majority of respondents **financial factor** is extremely important, **we can assume that the level of reliability of services, rendered by the state agency would reduce substantially.**

It should also be noted, that only 92.7% of respondents were able to define type of services rendered. They stated that the Legal Aid Service was state agency.

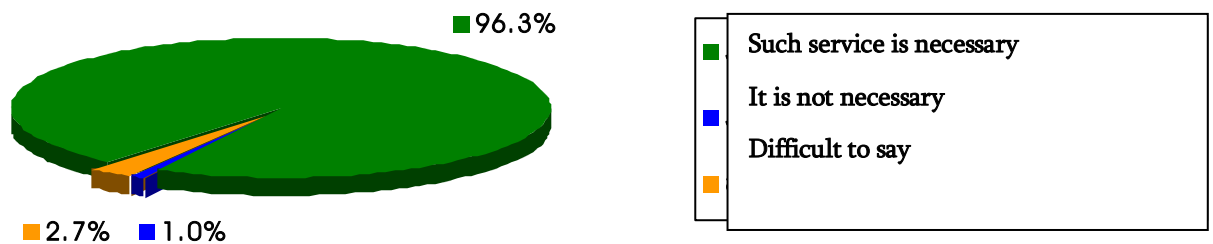
There were minor differences identified in case of Tbilisi and Rustavi respondents. In case of Rustavi more respondents find it difficult to define status of the service provided, than in Tbilisi.

3 Citizen's attitude in regard to cognizance of functions of the Legal Aid Service and the need for such services

3.1 Reliability of the Legal Aid Service taking into consideration its origin and identification of the legal aid service

Taking into consideration socio-economic and financial factors majority of interviewed respondents consider it extremely important, that **free legal aid service should be operating**.

What do you think, taking into consideration current socio-economic state of population is it necessary to have state legal aid service, which would provide free services to population?



Around 91.7% of respondents consider that such service should be state service. Major differences between respondents if Tbilisi and Rustavi were not identified.

4 Quality of services rendered by the Legal Aid Service and similar services

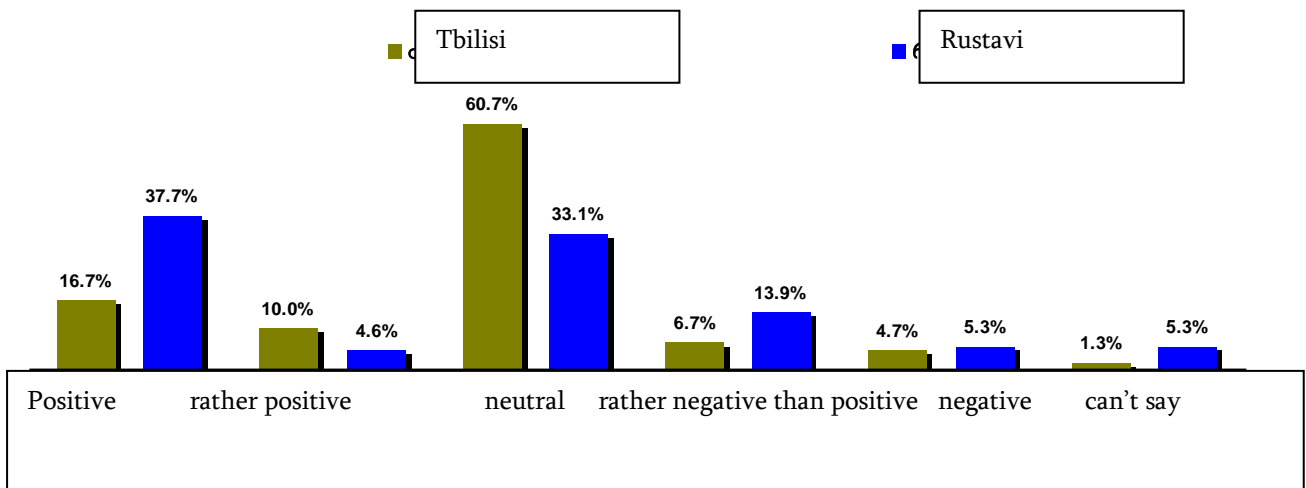
4.1 Attitude towards Legal Aid Service

Along with awareness sin regard to Legal Aid Service it was important to identify initial disposition of citizens towards the service and changes in the attitude after receiving of services. Within the framework of the survey was posed the following question:

Please state what was your attitude in general towards the Legal Aid Service before you received any services?

- 46.8% of respondents stated, that their attitude was neutral.
- 34.5% of respondents stated, that their attitude was positive.

The above reflected percentages are more or less logical, as generally attitude towards anything is preconditioned by the level of awareness. In given case the high number of responses with neutral attitude is not surprising, while the positive attitude is more interesting. For further analysis we decided to compare data by cities.



It becomes clear from the diagram, that

- ✓ In Tbilisi number of respondents, who have neutral attitude is 60.7%.
- ✓ In Rustavi number of respondents, who have neutral attitude is 33.1%.
- ✓ In Rustavi number of respondents, who have positive attitude is 42.3%.

Consequently, high number of persons, who have neutral attitude towards the service is preconditioned by Tbilisi respondents, while large number of persons with positive attitude is preconditioned by Rustavi respondents. This is once again indicative of inadequate activities of Tbilisi bureau in regard to dissemination of information on the services.

Attitude of the respondents after **first interview** changes for the positive. Majority of respondents - **91.7%** state that their attitude has changed for the **positive** after first meeting with the staff of the service.

Approximately the same attitude is prevailing generally towards legal aid services. For the purposes of the survey it was important to identify initial impression of respondents and their further impressions. It is clear from the responses, that their **initial attitude is remaining unchanged**.

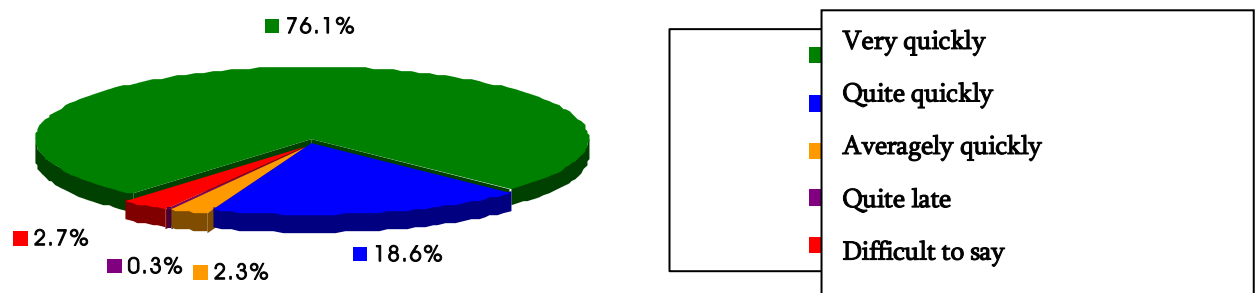
Qualitative differences between the cities were not identified.

4.2 Reception and identification of the issue

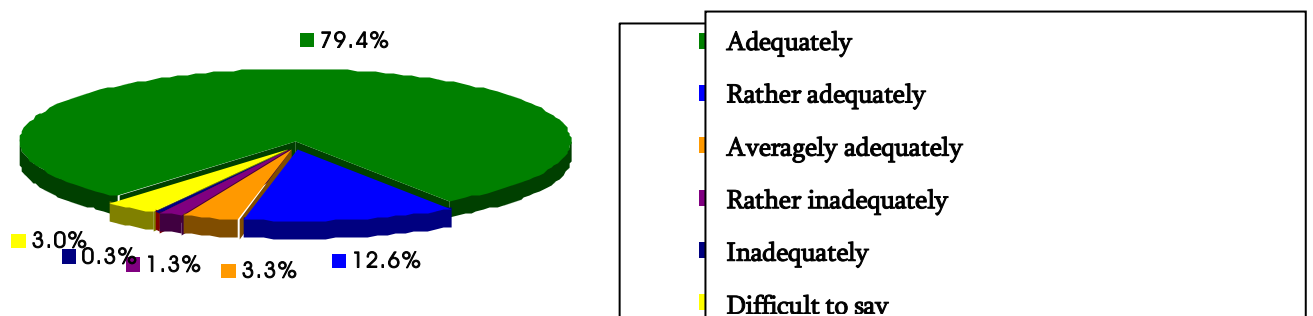
Attitude is formed from the very first meeting between the service provider and beneficiary. Consequently, it was interesting for the purposes of the survey to assess reception at the Legal Aid Service. For this purpose respondents had to answer to the following question:

Please recall and share how quickly did you get in touch with the staff of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services, whom you needed to get in touch with?

- ✓ 94.7% of respondents stated, that they got in touch with this person very quickly.



- ✓ 92.0% of respondents state, that the staff of the agency analyzed their issue very comprehensively and adequately.

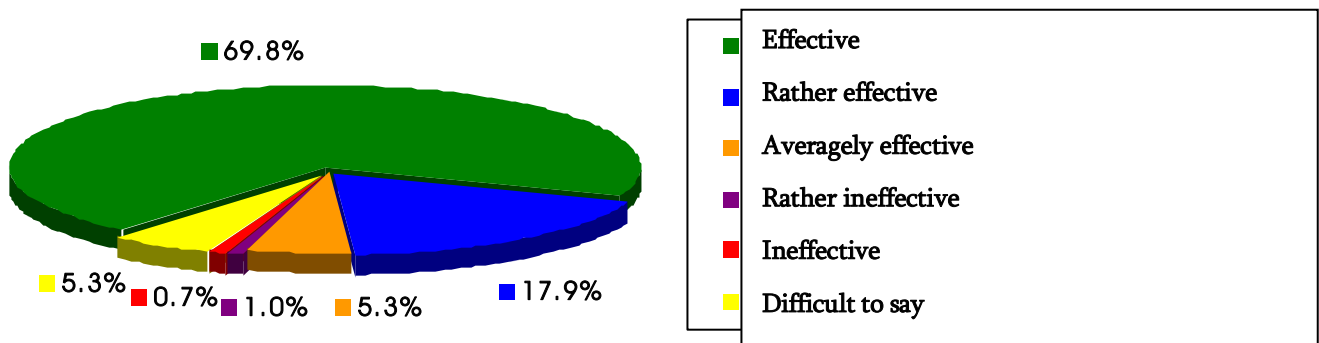


- Qualitative differences between Rustavi and Tbilisi were not identified.

4.3 Effectiveness of ways of solving of problem of the applicant and deadlines for solving of the issue

Along with analysis of reception and effectiveness of solving of issues it was interesting to identify how respondents were assessing effectiveness of ways of solving of their problems.

How would you assess efficiency of ways of solving of your problems, planned by the staff of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services?



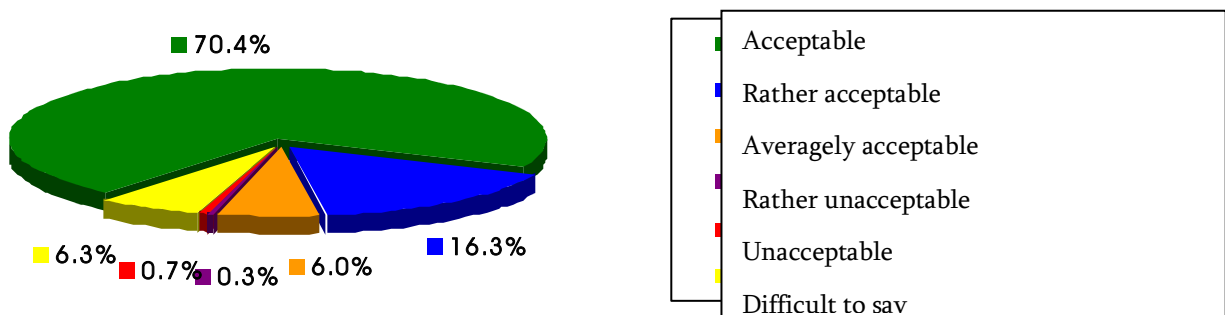
- 87.7% of respondents assess planned ways of solving their problem as rather effective.

We should view this data quite carefully. Respondents are ordinary citizens, who do not have legal education. At the same time majority of respondents did not have opportunity for comparative analysis of given issue. Consequently, solutions offered by the staff of the agency **could have seemed effective to them.**

Situation is similar in regard to the deadlines for solving of respondents' problems.

Were the deadlines of solving of your problems, proposed by the staff of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services were acceptable for you?

- 86.3% of respondents stated, that it was rather acceptable.



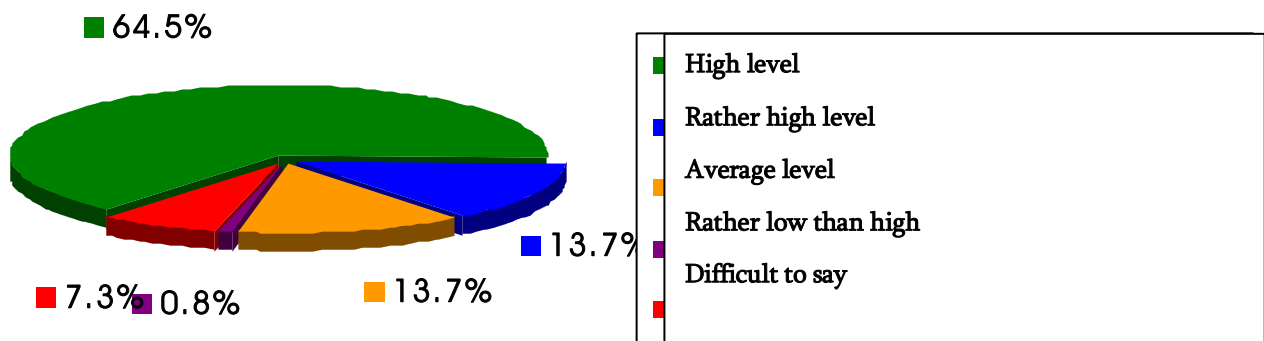
Here too due to the lack of possibility of comparative analysis we should not blindly trust high percentage of positive responses in regard to efficiency of services and deadlines.

- **Qualitative differences between Rustavi and Tbilisi were not identified**

4.4 Assessment of professionalism of the staff of the Legal Aid Service

For the purpose of assessment of professionalism of the staff of the Legal Aid Service question was posed to those respondents, who have already received legal aid (completed cases, 100 interviews).

How would you assess the level of professionalism of the staff of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services?



- **78.2% of respondents assess the level of professionalism of the staff as rather high.**

Percentage data is quite high, but if we again keep in mind high rate of respondents, who stated that proposed solutions were effective (87.7%) and deadlines for settling of the issue acceptable (86.3%) we shall see, that assessments of high level of professionalism in percentage are only 10% less. It could be that proposed solutions and deadlines are absolutely effective and acceptable, but the staff of the bureau was hindered by some external factors while trying to implement the plans. If we analyze in given direction, then assessment of respondents is not objective either in regard to deadlines and proposed solutions, or in regard to professionalism of the staff.

In any case objectiveness of assessment of respondents can be doubted again due to **inability of comparative analysis**.

4.5 Services rendered by similar legal aid agencies

In the process of analysis of the results we often mentioned inability of comparative analysis. That is why it was interesting to identify whether respondents have received any services from other agencies and assess the level of satisfaction. As we have found out only 6 respondents have applied to other legal aid services (out of 100 respondents).

The result was following:

1 case – “substitution of the article, on the basis of which charges were brought” – respondent applied to other legal aid service in hope that the article could have been substituted, but as he has found out other service could not help with that too.

5 cases – “due to criminal charges brought against respondent” – the respondent could not receive adequate services from other legal aid agencies, as the offence belonged to the category of criminal offences. The services have provided some legal consultations, but have not represented interests of the respondent in front of the court.

Out of all respondents (300 persons) only 34 respondents applied for services to other legal aid agencies. It is difficult for them to precisely identify what kind of agencies they were.

“state organization” – respondents were referring as state organizations to some of the NGOs as well, such as Young Lawyers’ Association. They have not stated any public service within this category.

“private organization” – respondents refer to as private organization ‘private lawyers’. Company was states only in one case and it was “Meparidze and company”.

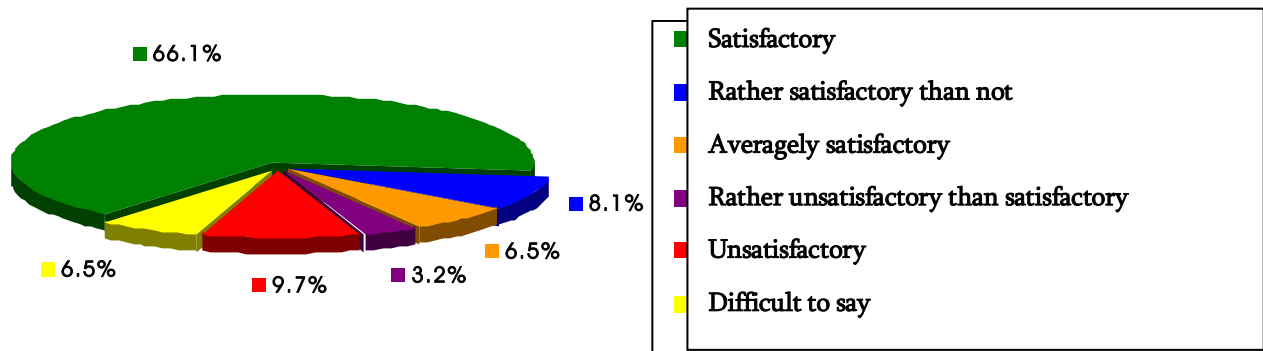
Half out of 34 respondents are not satisfied with the outcomes of the received services.

Total number of respondents, who applied to other agencies for receiving of legal aid is 11% of the total sample. Consequently, conducting comparative analysis on the basis of such small number and extrapolation of results is not possible.

4.6 Outcomes of services rendered by the Legal Aid Service

Along with assessment of quality of services, rendered by the Legal Aid Service on the basis of different criteria it was also interesting to identify the level of satisfaction of respondents.

How satisfactory was the result of services, rendered by the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services?



- ✓ According to 74.2% of respondents services rendered by the agency were rather satisfactory.

Given results were further confirmed by responses received in regard to the following question:

What was the outcome of proceedings, did the court rule in your favor?

- ✓ 71.0% of respondents stated “yes”.

Generally customer satisfaction is determined on the basis of outcome of services. Consequently, if for 71% of respondents the outcome was what they were expecting and considered as favorable, efficiency of working of the service can be assessed by the same indicator and it would be 71%.

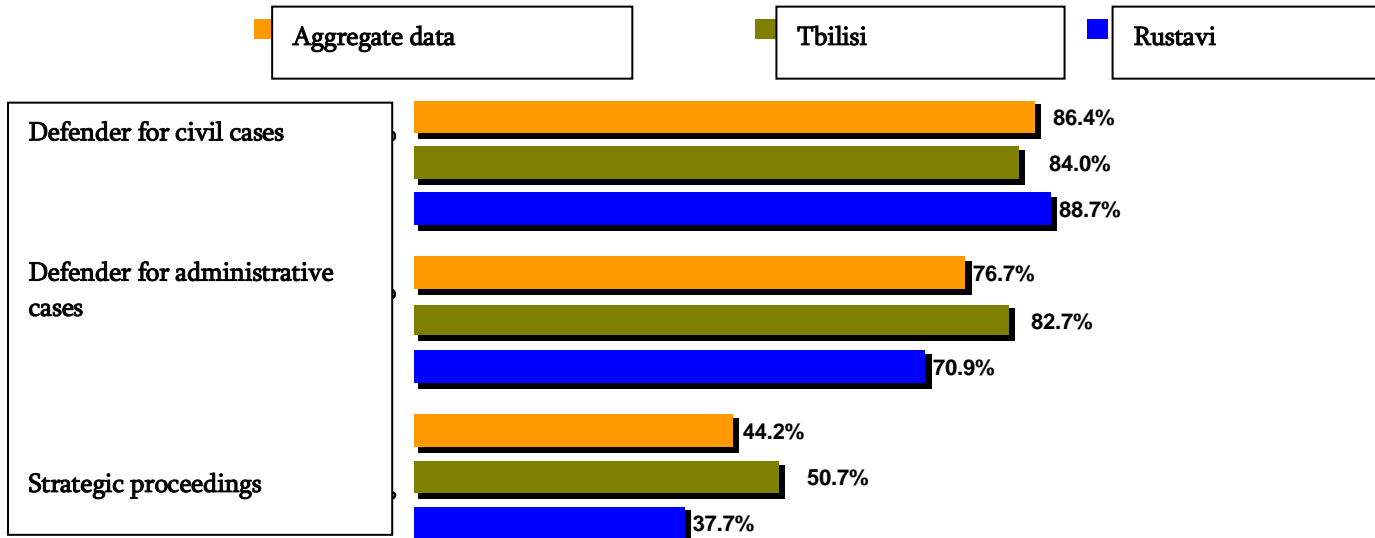
- Qualitative differences between Tbilisi and Rustavi were not identified.

5 The level of correspondence of functions of the Legal Aid Service with the current needs

5.1 Listing of functions of the Legal Aid Service

It was interesting for the purposes of the survey to identify opinion of the respondents in regard to what kind of functions the service should have.

In your opinion should the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services provide following services:



Listing of the services was proposed by the interviewer. The respondents could also themselves state the service that they considered necessary. The respondents did not state any other service apart from proposed.

Given fact is once again indicating that citizens do not have sufficient knowledge in legal sphere.

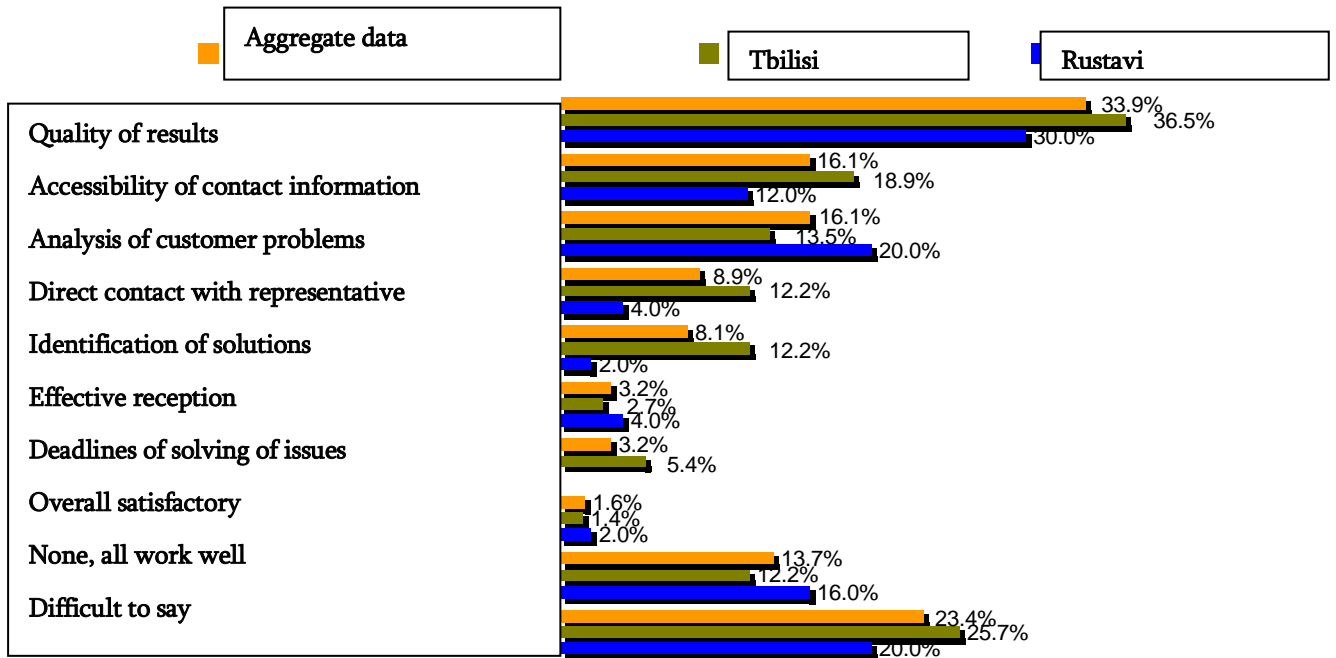
It is clear from the diagram that according to majority of surveyed respondents within functions of the service should be civil proceedings, administrative proceedings and strategic proceedings.

If we take into consideration, that due to socio-economic state of population majority of respondents consider, that existence of free legal aid services is very important, it is logical, that they would also like to expand functions of such service

- Qualitative differences between Tbilisi and Rustavi were not identified.

5.2 Spheres of activities, that the Legal Aid Service is recommended to improve

Responses received to the question “*Judging on the basis of experience of interaction with Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Services what do you thin in which areas the agency should improve its services?*” Actually repeat positive and negative trends identified in the process of consideration of other issues.



- 33.9% of respondents were advising the agency to improve the provided services. These are those respondents, the outcome of whose cases was not favorable for them.
- 16.1% of respondents were advising improvement of accessibility of contact information. These were the respondents, for whom it was difficult to access this information.

Spheres listed on the diagram are describing the level of satisfaction of customer in relevant areas.

- Qualitative differences between Tbilisi and Rustavi were not identified.

6 Identification of channels of communication, which shall improve the level of trust and cognizance of Legal Aid Service

6.1 Rating of information channels

As we have states in the first chapter of the analysis only minimal number of respondents stated that **television, press and radio** were sources of their information. Number of such respondents was 6.9%.

As main source of information were mentioned **personal relations, which includes information provided by representatives of law enforcement bodies to the relatives of the suspects** and in case of Rustavi it is information obtained through meetings organized by the bureau.

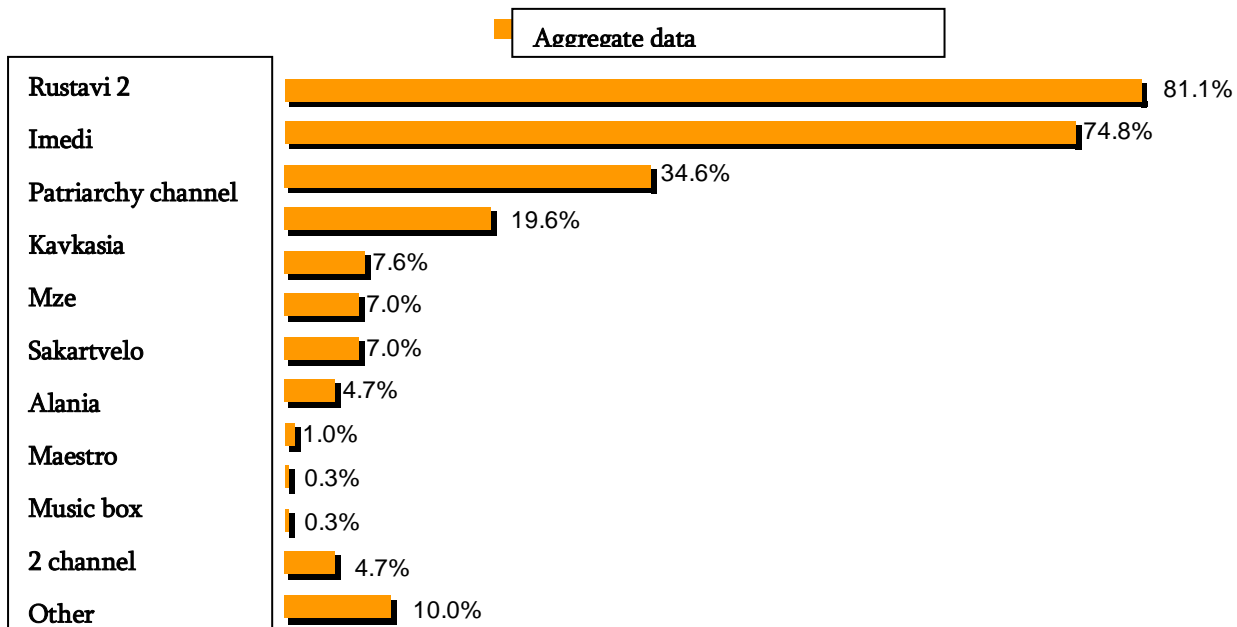
As we have seen in case of Tbilisi initial attitude of respondents is neutral, while Rustavi respondents are disposed more positively.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned we can reiterate the point, that Tbilisi bureau is disseminating information insufficiently. Activities of Rustavi bureau for dissemination of information are justified, but at the same time such communication activities are not sufficient for massive dissemination of information. At the same time Rustavi bureau disseminates information only in Rustavi (Kvemo Kartli).

For the purpose of promotion of active dissemination of information within the framework of the survey we have identified rating of different information sources.

TV channels

Which TV channels do you watch?



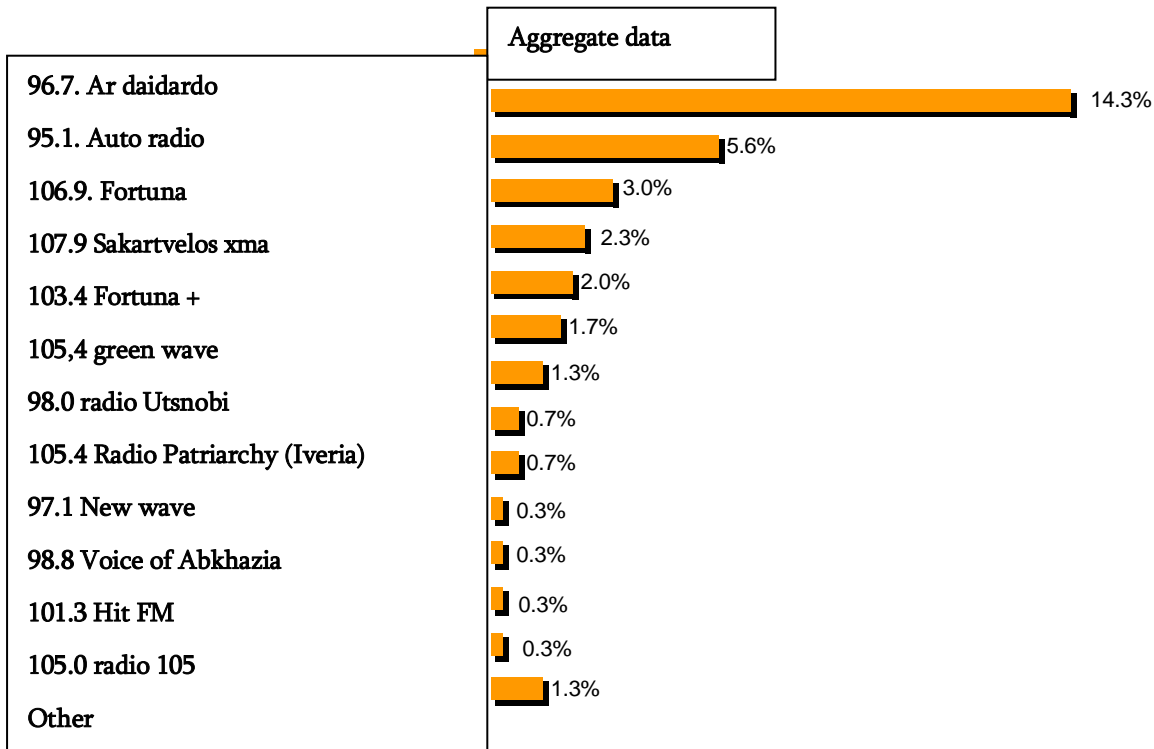
To the question; **Which TV channel do you trust the most?** Were mainly stated 3 channels:

- **Rustavi 2** **24.60%**
- **Imedi** **17.50%**
- **Patriarchy** **8.60%**

Other TV channels were stated as trusted only in 5% of cases.

Radio channels

Which radio channels do you listen to?



We have also defined the level of trust towards the radio channel.

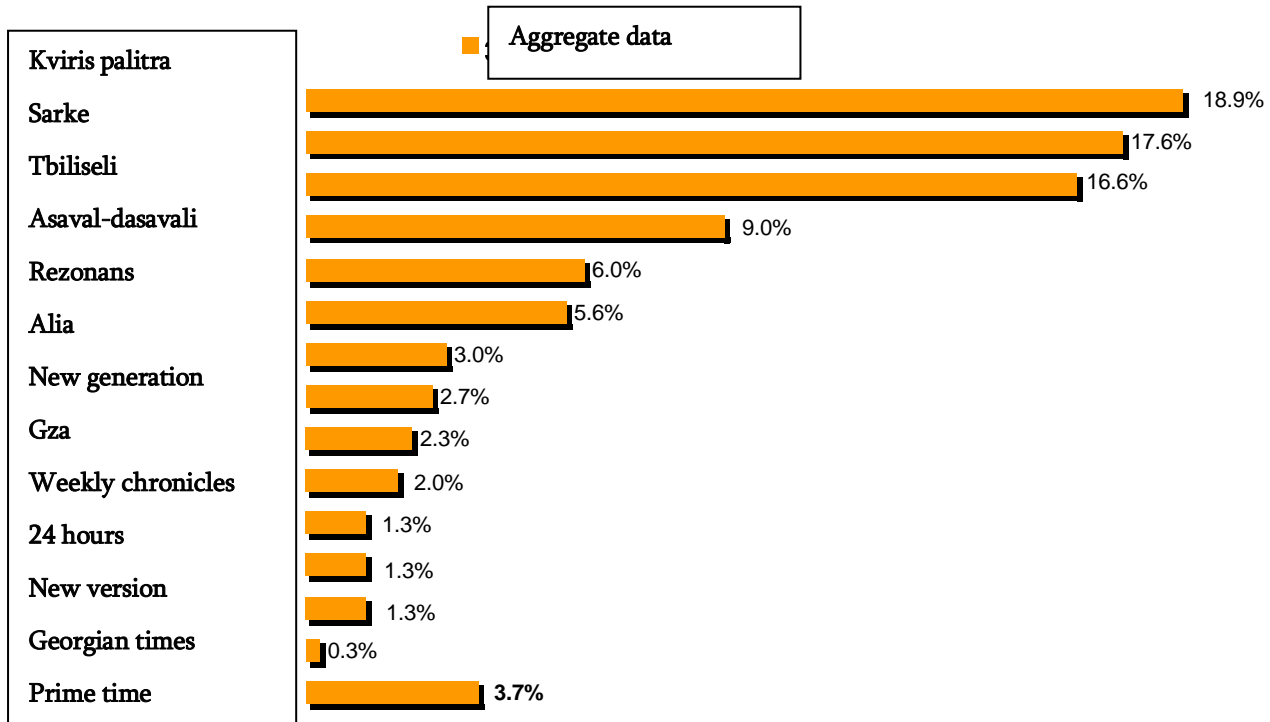
Which radio do you trust the most?

- 96.7 Radio Ar daidardo 30.90%
- 95.1 Auto Radio 10.30%
- 107.9 Voice of Georgia 7.40%
- 106.9 Fortuna 5.90%

Other radio channels have been assessed as trustworthy in 5% of cases.

Press

Which magazine/newspaper do you read?



To the question “*which magazines and newspapers do you trust the most*” were named three newspapers:

- Kviris Palitrda 19.4%
- Tbiliselebi 11.6%
- Sarke 10.9%

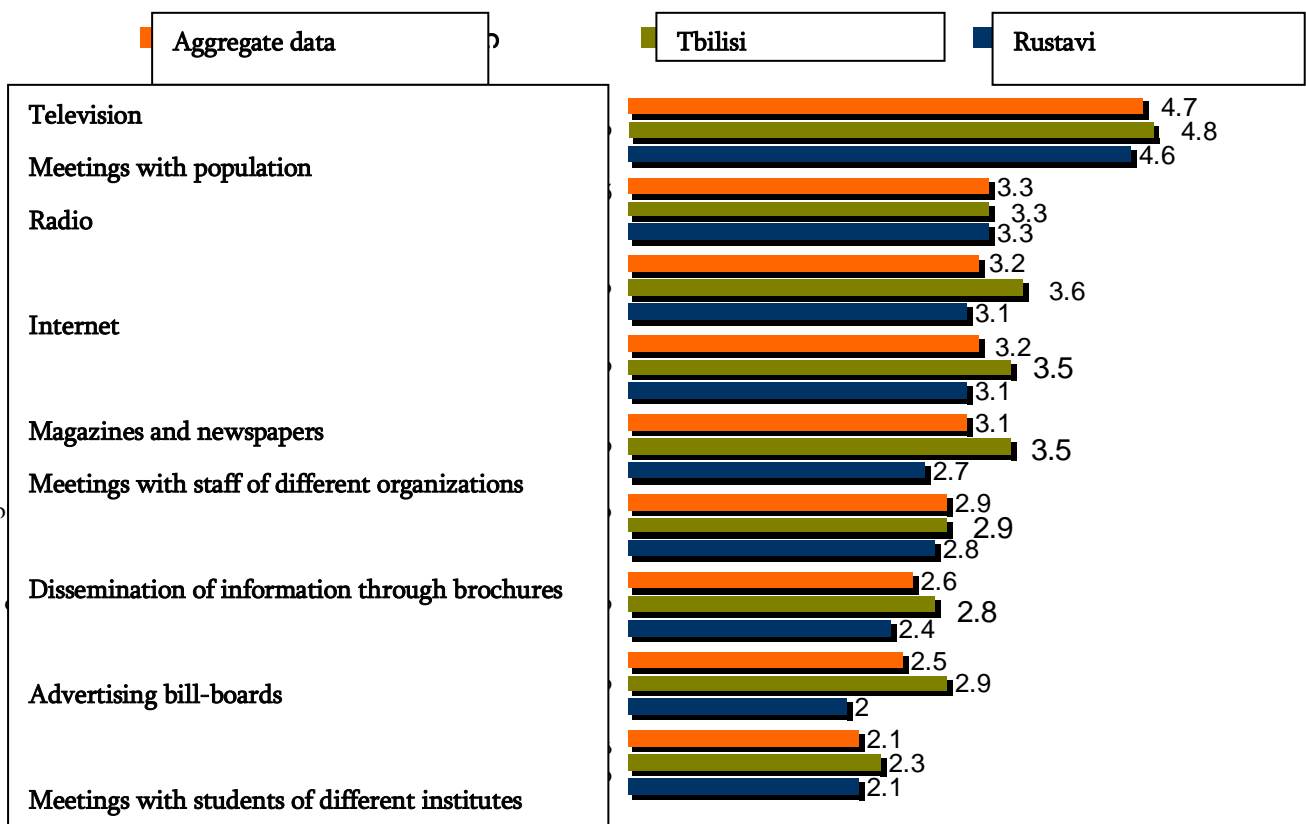
Target audience of the survey was selected taking into consideration specificity of the survey. That is why it should be noted, that assessments of target group of given survey repeat the results of other surveys, conducted on the principle of general aggregate data. Consequently, in case of planning of survey for identification of rating of media results of this survey can be used.

6.2 Rating of most effective sources of information

Apart from establishing rating of media for the purpose of identification of ways of most effective ways of dissemination of information on Legal Aid Service the following question was posed to respondents:

What do you think which means of information shall be the most effective to disseminate information on activities of the Legal Aid Service? Please name 5 means of information dissemination. In the first place name the most effective, then less effective and so on.

Answers were distributed in the following manner:



Data on the diagram represents assessments according to 5 score scale, where 5 means “the most effective”, while 1 means “the least effective”.

As we see from the data almost all means of dissemination of information is considered as effective. Among the, the most effective is:

- Dissemination of information through TV

- Dissemination of information through meetings with population
- Dissemination of information through radio

For effective communication campaign can be used results of rating of means of information dissemination provided by respondents.

7 Focus groups

We did not identify different attitude in regard to cognizance on activities of the Legal Aid service in focus groups.

Differences were mainly identified in definition of the level of customer satisfaction with the quality of rendered services. Some citizens invited for group discussions received the best quality services. Consequently, the level of customer satisfaction was quite high.

In case of one respondent he applied for assistance to Legal Aid Services after recusal of his lawyer, because the latter was asking for additional amounts for not very clear reasons. Such decision was reached due to financial factor, but the person was extremely satisfied with rendered services.

Citizens consider it necessary that such service exists. The idea was expressed, that number of lawyers working in the bureau may be insufficient and it should be increased.

In the opinion of citizens activities of Free Legal Aid Service should be focused on correct processing of cases. If the citizen wants to defend his case without assistance of a lawyer, the agency should help with processing of documentation and providing of legal consultations. If the citizen needs assistance of a lawyer, it should be providing such services.

The fact, that free legal aid service is under the Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Free Legal Aid Service citizens do not have maximal trust towards it. On one hand it was stated, that some staff of the service may be partial in regard to some cases. This may happen in such cases, if the state or a state organization is involved as a party to litigation. According to respondents the lawyer is representative of a state organization and this shall have certain impact on the legal proceedings.

On the other hand association with the Ministry is viewed as a positive factor, as the service is under the Ministry and the staff of the service knows the internal affairs and processes of the Ministry well. Consequently, lawyers working in the service know legal details quite well.

The level of trust is quite low towards representatives of the non-governmental organizations as well. In given case is dominating opinion, that staff of the free legal aid service under the Ministry shall not be impartial if the other side of litigation is state organization.

Respondents consider that lawyers shall anyway be afraid of loosing their jobs, which can be caused by the fact of hierarchy and close linkages between the state bodies.

According to respondents free legal aid service should be organization, where citizens can receive adequate services. I.e. if the citizen applies to the state, the Free Legal Aid Service is perceived as state, but citizen should receive the same services, as he can receive in private organization, where he has to pay. The financial factor should not play the most important role in case of receiving of legal aid services. The citizens should have the feeling that free does not mean poor quality. In such case the level of trust of citizens towards the service shall increase.

According to

Respondents consider, that the fact, that such free legal aid service exists is very important for the society. Taking into consideration socio-economic state of the society establishment of such free legal aid service is correct decision. Importance of such free legal aid services is more important taking into consideration the fact, that citizens consider the cost of such services especially high.

At the same time respondents think that free legal aid services should be provided to all citizens, notwithstanding their social status. Respondents think, that those persons, who are not under the poverty line and are not refugees are in heavy circumstances anyway for the following reasons:

1. They may not be under the poverty line, but their financial standing does not allow for hiring of private defenders.
2. Ordinary citizens do not know the level of professionalism of different lawyers. But despite this they think, that hired lawyer is professional, while in reality it is not necessarily so and they do not attain expected results. Citizens can not establish themselves the level of professionalism of lawyers as they do not know the relevant criteria. On the other hand the state organization shall not allow its staff to be unprofessional, as it shall have extremely negative impact on its image and the perception of state services being of poor quality shall further deepen.

in the opinion of respondents even in case if they had sufficient funds and needed legal aid they would still apply to the state agency and for them financial factor would still be decisive, as if it is possible to receive adequate quality service free of charge then they would not have incurred expenses for the purpose of receiving such assistance.

Consequently, respondents would not apply to private legal aid services due to high prices and possible lack of professionalism.

as to non-governmental organizations respondents stated, that they would not apply to them as NGOs try to identify such elements of the case, which would make it outstanding and might strain the situation. Organizations, which are belonging to opposition are oriented not towards successful outcome of legal proceedings but on PR. Those persons, who were defended by representatives of state agencies felt higher level of security than in case of being defended by any other organization, as the state is more demanding in regard to representatives of civil service and can hold them liable more easily than representatives of NGOs. Respondents also stated that in case of private lawyer he does not feel responsible in front of anybody or any agency.

As to representatives of NGOs, their attitude was different, i.e. some of them stated, that they would have applied to an NGO, while some stated they would apply to private legal aid company or lawyer. As reason for this was stated partiality or indifferent attitude of a lawyer towards the case. It was stated, that approaches of private organizations or NGOs is more effective.

Respondents characterized staff and lawyers of the legal aid service as highly professional persons with positive features. In their opinion staff of the legal aid service is extremely responsible, objective and punctual, which is clearly obvious from their attitude towards citizens.

Even in those cases, when the legal proceedings did not end in favor of the citizen, in majority of cases citizens were blaming for this not the lawyer, but the prosecutor and the judge. According to information provided by respondents and judging by their own experience the lawyer in the legal proceedings practically has no rights. the lawyers try to do everything what they can within the limits of the law, but the same law limits their rights to the maximum, while the rights of prosecution and the judge are expanded to the maximum. Consequently, if in the process of legal proceedings respondents have come across certain occurrences, which were not favorable for them, they blame for this the judge and prosecutor and think that they are partial and not objective.

In regard to improvement of the services, rendered by the Free Legal Aid respondents stated two aspects:

1. It is advisable that the staff of the service know foreign languages or the service has translator on the list of staff.
2. The service should have the staff, which shall be knowledgeable in legislation of foreign countries and can provide assistance to other lawyers in the legal proceedings.

According to representatives of NGOs the Free Legal Aid Service should have a controlling organ, which shall study the cases entrusted to the lawyers of the service and shall establish the level of

professionalism of the staff. At the same time there should be the system of incentives for the staff. The controlling organ and the system of incentives shall increase efficiency of work of the lawyers.

In the process of discussions of the focus groups was considered the issue of competitiveness of the service. It was stated, that the service is fully competitive in comparison to private and non-governmental organizations.

when the respondents were asked if “Tbilisi lawyer”, the service established by Tbilisi Municipality can be considered as competitor, respondents stated, that this service, which is also free, can not be viewed as competitor to Legal Aid Service, as lawyers in “Tbilisi lawyer” are not highly professional. There was mentioned one case, when “Tbilisi Lawyer” could not provide adequate legal aid and the person was referred to the Legal Aid Service. The fact, that services can be provided by a student, even if he is an excellent student, is not acceptable, as despite huge theoretical knowledge that these students may possess, they can not have sufficient practical experience.

It was also stated, that effective communication activities can be conducted through TV advertisement on channels with high rating but at the same time it was noted, that this was only subsidiary, or preparatory means for provision of information.

As the most effective means of communication was stated meetings with population, during which population receives full information on activities of the service. No question, which may be posed by citizens should remain unanswered at such meetings.

It was also stated, that for dissemination of information shall be effective to conduct meetings with student organizations and unions, but such meetings should not be conducted in a boring and formal manner, but an interesting format should be selected, which shall make the student want to pass on information to their peers and other persons. The brochures of the service should be disseminated and the main purpose of the brochures should be provision of contact information on the service.

8. Main findings

- 1. Information on the Legal Aid Service is provided to the relatives of the suspect by the staff of the law enforcement bodies.**
- 2. Communication activities of the Legal Aid Service were/are conducted with certain drawbacks and are not efficient.**
- 3. Communication activities of Tbilisi and Rustavi bureaus are fundamentally different from each other.**
- 4. Communication activities, conducted by Rustavi bureau were extremely successful.**

5. presumably in those cities, where the bureaus do not conduct meetings with population the level of awareness regarding activities of the Legal Aid Service is substantially lower.
6. In Tbilisi relative accessibility of contact data on the service is 67.4%, while in Rustavi it is 95.3%.
7. The level of comprehensiveness initial information, obtained regarding the Legal Aid Service is assessed in the same manner, as the level of accessibility of contact data.
8. Differences in Rustavi and Tbilisi in regard to the comprehensiveness initial information and the level of accessibility of contact data are caused by communication activities, conducted by the bureaus.
9. In Tbilisi respondents are aware only of those services and costs of services, which they have received themselves. The level of awareness in regard to these aspects is pretty low in Tbilisi, while in Rustavi the respondents are much better informed. Only in regard to one aspect the level of awareness was not high in Rustavi.
10. Persons, recommending applying to legal aid service in Tbilisi are representatives of the law enforcement bodies, while in Rustavi these are friends and relatives.
11. For majority of interviewed respondents 93.4% financial factor is decisive in the process of receiving of legal aid service. Differences between Tbilisi and Rustavi were not identified.
12. In case if services provided by the Legal Aid Service were not free, around 70% of the respondents would not have applied to it.
13. Absolute majority of respondents have not applied to other agencies for receiving of legal aid. I.e. respondents can not provide comparative assessment of services, consequently the level of reliability of services provided by the state organization can be doubted.
14. Majority of respondents correctly define type of legal aid service.
15. Majority of interviewed respondents consider it important, that free legal aid service is operating and they consider that such service should be established by the state.
16. Neutral attitude towards the Legal Aid Service is mainly preconditioned by Tbilisi respondents, while positive attitude towards the service is preconditioned by Rustavi respondents. This is once again indicated to the fact, that communication activities of Tbilisi bureau are not effective, while Rustavi bureau is more successful in given sphere.
17. Attitude of respondents changed for the positive after initial interaction with the staff of the bureau.
18. Majority of respondents assess positively reception of the bureau and their ability to analyze problems.
19. For 71% of respondents outcome of the cases after received legal aid was in their favor that is why effectiveness of the service can also be assessed as 71%.
20. In functions of the Legal Aid Service should be included provision of legal aid in civil and administrative proceedings, as well as strategic proceedings.
21. Main problematic aspect in functioning of the service is communication activities.

8 Recommendations

On the basis of analysis of the data of the survey the following recommendations were elaborated:

1. Despite positive assessment of reception and ability to analyze problems it is not expedient not to ensure follow up on activities of the bureaus in the long-term perspective, especially that functions of the bureaus in the process of conducting of the survey were quite limited. The human resources that the bureaus have are sufficient for implementation of these functions. If as a result of survey assessment of reception and ability of analyzing of problems was not positive, the state of affairs in the bureaus would have considered as critical. Such situation may happen in case if staff of the service shall implement their functions inadequately, or when functions of the service shall expand and number of staff shall not be increased correspondingly.
2. In Tbilisi bureau there is slight insufficiency of human resources. Consequently it is expedient to increase number of staff.
3. Due to inability of comparative analysis we can not trust high percentage of positive responses in regard to effectiveness of solutions and acceptability of deadlines.
4. It is expedient to include on the list of staff translators who know European and Asian languages. In Rustavi bureau translator who knows Azerbaijani language is necessary.
5. It is expedient to hire a person, who shall be knowledgeable in foreign legislation and shall provide recommendations in regard to ongoing proceedings.
6. The scope of services should be expanded. It is very important to provide services in the sphere of civil proceedings.
7. Number of beneficiaries should increase and the service should not limit itself only with provision of services to IDPs and socially vulnerable layers of population.
8. It is expedient that the service has a controlling body, which shall study activities of the lawyers of the service and define the level of their professionalism.
9. It is expedient to establish the system of incentives for lawyers, which shall be performance based and decisions shall be reached by the controlling body.

The most problematic area in the period of conducting of the survey was communication activities:

10. It is expedient to plan series of advertising on channels with high rating, such as Rustavi 2 and Imedi.
11. In the process of advertising should be provided statistics of successful legal proceedings.
12. Along with advertising through TV channels meetings with population should be conducted.

13. The meetings do not need to be grandiose and impressive. They can be conducted in usual environment, where potential beneficiaries shall feel themselves comfortable.
14. Meetings should be conducted in such language, which is easily understandable for beneficiaries.
15. The meetings should be informational. Any question that ordinary citizens may come up with should be answered.
16. Meetings should be conducted in such manner, that potential beneficiaries shall have feeling that the state is caring about them through establishment of free Legal Aid Service.
17. Meetings should be conducted in higher educational institutions. They should be conducted in such format, which shall be interesting for students.