

EVALUATION SUMMARY



Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Policy and Evaluation

FREEDOM Support Act Undergraduate Program

The purpose of the evaluation was to document the outcomes and impact of the FSA Undergraduate Program and to assess the degree to which it has been successful in meeting its goal of giving participants academic knowledge, exposure to community service, and practical training in an internship to enable them and motivate them become leaders in their home countries. To do so, the attitudes and behaviors of the alumni were compared to a sample of program semi-finalists and a random sample of university graduates who had never applied to any exchange program.

Key Findings

Note: Each percentage is reported with alumni first, followed by semi-finalists and random cohort.

- **Willingness and commitment to serve as leaders and change agents**
 - Alumni give significantly stronger self-assessments on a battery of life skills associated with leadership abilities than either the semi-finalists or the random cohort.
 - Alumni are significantly more active in community service (43%, 30%, 20%) and significantly more likely to be employed (75%, 69%, 58%).
 - Alumni are more likely to be employed in the dynamic private sector; moreover, they are significantly more likely to work in the international arena (64%, 16%, 4%).
- **Understanding of civil society and the United States**
 - Alumni believe that they have a much better understanding of U.S. politics (95%), culture (100%), and economics (89%) as a result of the program.
 - Alumni are significantly more likely to support equal rights for all citizens (74%, 71%, 61%).
 - Alumni are less likely to condone the paying of bribes (73%, 71%, 57%) and less likely to believe it is justifiable to avoid paying taxes (6%, 12%, 12%).
 - Alumni are significantly less likely to believe that America is a violent country (6%, 11%, 29%) and that Americans only care about material things (41%, 48%, 63%).
- **Forging continuing links with the United States**
 - Alumni are more likely to be in contact with American expatriates (64%, 48%, 15%) and U.S. businesses (41%, 25%, 3%); they are also significantly more likely to use U.S. websites (93%, 76% and 29%).
 - Within the last year, 90% of alumni received a letter from an American friend and 76% received more than 10 letters. Twenty-four percent of alumni hosted one American visitor and 4% hosted more than 10 visitors.

Project Information: Aguirre International collected data for the evaluation from March through August 2002 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Structured face-to-face interviews were administered to 1170 individuals: 484 alumni, and two distinct control groups consisting of 333 semi-finalists and 353 randomly selected university students of similar age who had not previously applied for an educational exchange program.

Program Information: The FSA Undergraduate Program offers year-long academic exchanges for second and third year university students from twelve NIS countries. The primary goal of the program is to increase alumni's willingness and commitment to serve as leaders and agents of change by contributing to economic and democratic reform and development in their home countries. Since its inception in 1993, nearly 2,000 students have come to the United States to attend American universities and colleges, participate in internships and be immersed in community service activities.

Contact Information: For more information regarding this evaluation, or to request a copy of this report, please contact the Office of Policy and Evaluation at (202) 632-6325, by email at ECAevaluation@state.gov or by mail at State Annex 5, 2200 C Street NW, Washington, DC 22301.

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